

## WESTERN PERCEPTION TOWARDS NUCLEARIZATION: CASE STUDY OF PAKISTAN AND INDIA

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### Abstract

The nuclearization and proliferation of nuclear weapons in South Asia is always remaining a matter of international concern, particularly since the two newest entrants to the nuclear club have an adversarial relationship. The series of nuclear tests conducted by, India and Pakistan in 1998, have confirmed their nuclear capability. The possibility of a nuclear conflict between both countries cannot be ruled out by the world community. Since 1998, an endless debate has begun in the West, expressing apprehension on a nuclear arms race and proliferation of nuclear weapon and accidental or intentional use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). The nuclear tests was criticized by the whole world, especially by the major powers which decided to impose sanctions on both countries and stressed to sign the NPT and CTBT immediately. Due to internal pressure both countries not only refuse to sign these treaties but process of nuclearization is still in progress. The main purpose of the article is to examine the perception of the EU during 1971 till 1998 towards this sensitive issue related to nuclearization and proliferation of nuclear weapons in South Asia region.

**Keywords:** nuclearization and proliferation, sanctions, dawning realization, comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT), nuclear disarmament

### Introduction

The nuclearization and the issue of the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) remain the most important concern for the major powers as regards the South Asian security scenario, particularly when the two newest entrants to the nuclear club have an adversarial relationship. In the month of May 1998, both South Asian countries, Pakistan and India, carried out their respective series of nuclear tests and declared themselves as the sixth and seventh nuclear powers respectively. The possibility of a nuclear conflict between both countries cannot be ruled out by the world community, including the European Union (EU). Since then, an endless debate has begun in the West, expressing apprehension on a nuclear arms race and proliferation of nuclear weapon and accidental or intentional use of WMD. A part from this, tit-for-tat missile testing has deeply affected the political, economic and security scenario of the region. The nuclear tests conducted by both countries have been criticized by the whole world, especially by the major powers. The US, Japan and some European countries decided to impose sanctions on both countries and stressed upon the two countries to sign the NPT

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and CTBT immediately. Due to internal pressure both countries not only refuse to sign these treaties but the process of nuclearization is still in progress.

- Why did Indo-Pak opt for nuclearization?
- Who was responsible for starting the nuclear race?
- What are the implications of the nuclear tests for South Asia itself?
- What were the actions and reactions of European countries?
- How did they interpret the ground realities in South Asia in the light of the shedding of ambiguity in the realm of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan?

These are some of the questions that are to be discussed in this article and finally give a conclusion. The process of nuclearization in South Asia began, when India began its nuclear programme in early fifties with the creation of the Institute for Fundamental Research under Dr. Homi Bhabha. Bhabha established nuclear research facility in 1945, with the assistance of Tata family; New Delhi succeeds in gaining support from three of the world's major nuclear exporters - Canada, United States and France.<sup>1</sup> In 1956, India became the first South Asian country to have a research reactor using US supplied enriched uranium. When China carried out a nuclear explosion in 1964, Bhabha stated publicly that India was capable of producing a nuclear bomb within eighteen months. Since then, the Indian leaders began diverting a major chunk of their resources to build a nuclear device. In this period, Pakistani officials warned Western powers that India could use the plutonium from the Trombay reactor to make a nuclear device, but this had no effect on them. India on its part tried to **convince** the world by differentiating that its nuclear programme was for peaceful purposes and not for military purposes.<sup>2</sup> India conducted nuclear test in 1974 at Pokhran and called the test a "Peaceful Nuclear Explosion" (PNE), while impishly christening it the "Smiling Buddha". This was a very important event which transformed the political and security scenario of South Asia. It also gave the world a dawning realization of the failure of its efforts to contain the nuclear proliferation in the regional context. The West instead of imposing punitive measures against India for flouting the non-proliferation regime accepted the Indian claim that the explosion was a PNE. Rather than penalizing India in any way, the US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger declared that Washington would continue the shipment of nuclear fuel even without new assurance from the New Delhi that they would not use it in producing any further nuclear devices.<sup>3</sup>

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto then President of Pakistan reacted strongly to Indian test and said Pakistan must develop its own "nuclear capability". He declared:

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<sup>1</sup> Amin Shahid *The EU's Policy on Nuclear Proliferation and the Nuclearization of South Asia* 'in Naveed Ahmed Tahir, (ed.), *European Union-Asia Relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Problems Prospects and Strategies*, Karachi: ASCE, University of Karachi, 2000.p.229

<sup>2</sup> Amin Shahid, *Pakistan Foreign Policy*, Karachi Oxford Press Karachi, 2007, p.78.

<sup>3</sup> Amin Shahid *The EU's Policy on ..... Nuclearization of South Asia*, op.cit, p.230

We will defend our country using any means necessary and build a nuclear capability second to none. We will eat grass for 1000 years, if we have to, but we will get there.<sup>4</sup>

Basically, three factors compelled Pakistan to advance its nuclear program, first the Indo-Pakistan wars, second the pusillanimous reaction of the great powers on the Indian nuclear explosion and finally the growing gap between the conventional weapons capabilities of India and Pakistan.

Nevertheless, Pakistan proposed to India the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (NWFZ) in the region in 1974. When this proposal was rejected by India, Pakistan signed a contract with France in October 1974, for the construction of a reprocessing plant at Chasma. But soon after the American Congress's Symington Amendment the US applied intense pressure on both France and Pakistan to cancel the project. In September 1977, the US discontinued military and economic aid to Pakistan when it refused to cancel the deal with France. The UK also advised Islamabad to cancel the deal with Paris. Soon after, swallowing its world renowned national pride, France gave in to US pressure and decided to renege on the contract. There were reports that US Secretary of State Dr. Kissinger had threatened Bhutto that if he went ahead with the nuclear programme, the US would make a "horrible example" of him. "Bhutto's partisans were convinced that this threat was actually carried out when he was overthrown in a military coup d'etat in 1977 and was executed two years later".<sup>5</sup>

The constant allegations by the West, that Pakistan was pursuing a clandestine nuclear weapons programme stopped abruptly when the need arose for the US and its allies to recruit Pakistan as a frontline state to counter the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. The US President felt no hesitation in issuing the annual certification required by congress that Pakistan was not trying to develop nuclear weapons. The US legislation forbade military and economic assistance to countries that were trying to develop nuclear weapons.<sup>6</sup> New Delhi was annoyed by the US offer of military aid to Pakistan, designed to bolster the country's defences in view of the Soviet threat. Also, while opposed to Pakistan's nuclear programme for peaceful purposes, India officially affirmed its right to produce nuclear weapons, and successfully launched a four-stage rocket, of its own design, to place a satellite into orbit.<sup>7</sup>

In turn, Islamabad was alarmed by India's nuclear and aerospace programme, large weapons purchases from the Soviet Union, attempts to expand its armament industry. Tension was defused somewhat in June 1981, when both countries agreed that the parameters of their defence requirements should be fixed and that both sides maintain the ratio of arms levels. In late eighties, Pakistan conceded that its scientists had got the nuclear technology, but at the same time reaffirmed its resolve to refrain from using the

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<sup>4</sup> Amin Shahid. *Pakistan Foreign Policy*, op.cit, p.78

<sup>5</sup> Shahid Amin *'the EU's Policy on ..... Nuclearization of South Asia*, op.cit, p.231

<sup>6</sup> Ahmed Tahir, Naveed, (ed.), *A Survey of EU-Pakistan Relations in the Contemporary Regional & International Setting: Political, Security, Economic and Development Aspects*, Jean Monnet Project Paper, Karachi: Area Study Centre for Europe University of Karachi, 2002, p.116

<sup>7</sup> Farmer.B.H. *'Pakistan Foreign Relation with India'* in *South Asia 2009*, Europa Regional Survey of the World, 5th edition Routledge London, 2008, p. 456.

technology for building nuclear weapons. In December 1988, relations between Pakistan and India improved when Indira Gandhi's successor, Rajiv Gandhi, visited Islamabad for discussions with the new Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto. At this meeting, both leaders signed three agreements, including a formal pledge not to attack on nuclear facilities of each other.<sup>8</sup> In 1989, Pakistan tested its nuclear-capable 'Hatf-2 missile with a payload of 500 kilograms and a range of 300 kilometers.<sup>9</sup> However, soon after the Geneva accord was signed and the Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, the US applied sanctions against Pakistan with a vengeance. The US however, did not succeed in getting of Pakistan to reverse its nuclear programme.

However, the US and the European countries doubted Pakistan's intentions and demanded from the latter that it roll back its nuclear programme and sign the NPT. The US imposed sanctions on Pakistan under the Pressler amendment. Islamabad reacted strongly to the sanctions and declared that it was an unjust move. In March and June 1994, the Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto described India's Prithvi missile test, as 'provocative' and warned of a missile race in the region.<sup>10</sup> The situation further deteriorated in 1997 by public statement made by the former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif that Pakistan possessed an atomic bomb and was prepared to use it against India. Pakistani officials were quick to explain that, although Pakistan had acquired the nuclear capability, it had decided not to do so, and would restrict the use of nuclear technology to peaceful purposes.<sup>11</sup>

After about 44 years of untiring efforts and three years of actual negotiations, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was presented to international community for signature in September 1996. The CTBT states: "Each state party undertakes not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion, and to prohibit and prevent any such nuclear explosion at any place under its jurisdiction or control".<sup>12</sup> The nuclear treaty can, however, come into force only if the stipulated 44 states (including India and Pakistan) sign and ratify it. These states include recognized nuclear powers and those which are believed to have the capability of building nuclear weapons. It is an unusual requirement for the adoption of a treaty as far as global practice is concerned. "The CTBT brings the international community closer towards the ultimate goal of a totally denuclearized world".<sup>13</sup>

India's record on nuclear non-proliferation is not very commendable. It refused to sign the NPT and justified its refusal by dubbing the treaty as discriminatory. Likewise, it was the only country that firmly opposed the signing of the CTBT, though ironically, it was India that had first proposed a nuclear test ban in 1954 and in the beginning had adopted a constructive approach.<sup>14</sup> Unlike India, Pakistan in the seventies and eighties took some major initiatives to promote the cause of nuclear non-proliferation in South

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<sup>8</sup> Farmer.B.H. opcit p. 456

<sup>9</sup> *Nuclear Issues* .Web Site [www.southasianmedia.net](http://www.southasianmedia.net)

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>12</sup> Article 1 of CTBT

<sup>13</sup> Shahid Amin 'the EU's Policy on ..... Nuclearization of South Asia, op.cit, pp. 234-235.

<sup>14</sup> Ahmed Tahir, Naveed, (ed.), A Survey of EU-Pakistan Relations ...Setting, op.cit., p.117

Asia, though unfortunately, India opposed these on various pretexts. India's attitude revealed the insincerity of its claims that its nuclear programme was peaceful. It also showed that it was not truly committed to nuclear disarmament. In 1972, Pakistan, for the first time, advocated in the UN General Assembly the creation of a NWFZ in the Indian Ocean. On other occasions, Pakistan proposed the following: that both countries simultaneously accept full scope of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards; that a mechanism be established for mutual inspection of each other's nuclear installations; both should issue a joint declaration renouncing the manufacture of nuclear weapons; the establishment of a NWFZ in South Asia; a conference to be convened under UN auspices (with the participation of all countries of South Asia) to discuss the matter of nuclear nonproliferation in the South Asian region; an Indo-Pakistan treaty to ban nuclear testing; and a five-power conference to discuss the nuclear issue in South Asia. To this conference, besides India and Pakistan, the US, Russia and China would be invited to participate. Pakistan's moral position was strengthened when many of these proposals received overwhelming support in UN.<sup>15</sup> Despite the fact that the EU countries fully supported these proposals, neither the US nor the EU chose to remind India about its rigid record on nuclear proliferation or to publicly appreciate Pakistan's positive attitude. Instead, pressure was all the time exerted upon Pakistan to sign the CTBT and the NPT, irrespective of whether India did so or not.<sup>16</sup> The reason behind India's delaying tactics on the CTBT negotiations was revealed in June 1997, when the Indian government announced that it had successfully tested its new Prithvi intermediate-range nuclear missile capable of carrying a nuclear payload that could target deep within Pakistan or China. India's development of nuclear tipped missiles has started the arms race in the region. Pakistan responded on April 14 and 15, 1998, by testing two advanced nuclear-capable ballistic missiles of its own. This was certainly not calculated to encourage warmer relations with the right wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) that had come to power in India in March 1998.<sup>17</sup>

On May 11, 1998, the newly elected government declared that it had tested three nuclear detonations and two days later another two tests had taken place at Pokhran in the northern state of Rajasthan. India's nuclear explosions for the second time came as a high surprise to the whole world. Interestingly, no one could guess that India was going for nuclear tests. Even the United States could not predict about it.<sup>18</sup> Indian PM Vajpayee said the tests were necessary to ensure India's security. Pakistan was considered as a main menace to its security. But India has believed that its quest for nuclearization should be seen in a wider perspective. India's larger security risks are from China, which has border dispute with India. Moreover, the Pak-China axis further danger India's security.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, India earnestly believed that by acquiring nuclear weapon status, it would gain international attention which in turn would enhance India's international and regional prestige on one hand and facilitate its entry into the UN Security Council as a permanent member on the other hand. New Delhi's action was

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Shahid Amin 'The EU's Policy on ..... Nuclearization of South Asia, op.cit, p.236

<sup>17</sup> Farmer.B.H. op.cit.p.456

<sup>18</sup> Upreti B.C 'Contemporary South Asia' Kalinga Publication New Delhi ,2004, p.119

<sup>19</sup> Upreti B.C, op.cit pp.120-121

widely condemned by the international community and at the same time Islamabad was urged by many not to retaliate. Immediately after the tests were conducted in the Pokhran desert, Australia, Germany, Japan, the United States, and several other nations imposed a range of economic and trade sanctions to punish India for the tests. The World Bank also called off a meeting that was scheduled to meet in June to discuss economic assistance to India. Some of these countries withdrew their ambassadors to New Delhi for consultations on the policy implications of the development. The Chinese government strongly condemned the tests, urging countries around the world to pressurize New Delhi to end its nuclear programme. However, France, Russia, and the United Kingdom, all nuclear states, refrained from imposing sanctions on India.<sup>20</sup>

The EU's reaction to the situation was watched with great interest around the world, for its responses to crisis situations were now considered important, not only because it was increasingly accepted as an independent actor on the international scene, but also because two of its member states - France and UK - are declared nuclear powers. Most of the EU member states in their statements dubbed the Indian tests as a grave danger to global peace and showed some understanding for Pakistan's concern for its security.<sup>21</sup> Germany, more sensitive about matters related to peace and nuclear weapons announced on May 12, 1998, that it had called off the overseas development aid talks with India. The talks were to be held in Bonn and were to focus on a potential 300 million marks (\$169.2 million) of new funding for environmental and infrastructure schemes, as well as projects to combat poverty. German officials said Bonn would discuss with its EU and G-8 partners what actions to take against India. The government of Denmark, Holland and Norway froze financial assistance. Sweden cancelled a three-year assistance agreement worth \$ 119 million with India.<sup>22</sup>

In a formal statement immediately after the series testes by India, the EU Foreign Ministers condemned the tests as representing "a grave threat to international peace and security" but made no mention of possible sanctions against New Delhi.<sup>23</sup> The G8 of which some of the major EU states are also members denounced the Indian nuclear tests and they insisted on Pakistan not to conduct its nuclear tests. They pointed out that Pakistan should take the high moral ground by eschewing the nuclear option. The EU's response to the Indian nuclear tests demonstrated the fact that after the initial shock and condemnation and expressions of concern for the security of the South Asian region, the Union's main concern was to protect its commercial, economic and political interests. Since, India is considered a huge potential market for EU goods and investments, the EU countries were apparently careful not to alienate it.<sup>24</sup>

Soon after the Pokhran tests , the US, the EU, Japan and other countries started putting immense pressure on Nawaz Sharif's second regime (1997-99) not to retaliate with nuclear testing, though it was acknowledged by the media and the leadership in the West that Pakistan had its genuine security concerns. Islamabad was warned that if it went

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<sup>20</sup> Keesing's Record of World Event, News Digest for June 1998.Vol.44, pp.42-43.

<sup>21</sup> Ahmed Tahir, Naveed, (ed.), *A Survey of EU-Pakistan Relations ...Setting*, opcit, p.110

<sup>22</sup> Dawn, Karachi, May 13, 1998

<sup>23</sup> Shada Islam ,*'EU to Oppose Sanction Against India'* Dawn, May 15, 1998

<sup>24</sup> Ahmed Tahir, Naveed, (ed.), *A Survey of EU-Pakistan Relations ...Setting*, opcit, p.110

ahead with the explosions, it too would have to face economic sanctions. But on the other hand, it was told that if it resisted the temptation, it would not only stand on a moral high ground but could also get substantial economic assistance and other benefits. There were hints that if it desisted from nuclear testing its huge foreign debts, that were crippling its economy, could be waived. However, all the promises from the West of political support and economic assistance were vague with no solid assurance for Pakistan's legitimate security concerns. German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel told reporters that Bonn favoured an increase in IMF spending in Pakistan. He said: "This may be a good idea if Pakistan declared that it won't retaliate". French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine said it was important to "maintain dialogue" with India, adding that in any case "sanctions don't work". He said: "Whenever a complicated issue arises, it is not enough to brandish sanctions". Vedrine insisted "India is ready to listen to us."<sup>25</sup>

The US also did not show great enthusiasm to help in improving Pakistan's economy or to strengthen its conventional military capabilities which could counterbalance India's nuclear weapons. Undoubtedly the Indian tests posed the severest security challenge to Pakistan since the latter became an independent state. With the widening disparity in conventional weapons between the two countries the New Delhi's nuclear actions severely changed the strategic balance of power in the region. Also the aggressive speeches and statements emanating from New Delhi by prominent Indian politicians following the nuclear tests verged on nuclear blackmail and highlighted threat to Islamabad in New Delhi's newest offer to set up its domination in South Asia. The credibility of Pakistan's nuclear capability was also questioned by the Indian media. This was a sort of challenge to Pakistan "to come out of the closet" if it really had the capacity to build a device. Indian leaders' statements became increasingly warlike. India went to the extent of warning Pakistan to vacate Azad Kashmir and the Indian Interior Minister Lal Krishna Advani issued the following menacing statement: "India's bold and decisive step to become a nuclear weapon state has brought about a qualitative new stage in Indo-Pakistan relations, particularly in finding a solution to the Kashmir problem. It signifies India's resolve to deal firmly and strongly with Pakistan's hostile design and activities in Kashmir."<sup>26</sup>

The Chief Minister of the puppet state government of Indian-occupied Kashmir egged on the Indian government to launch a decisive battle against Pakistan to once and for all solve all issues. Abdullah, a pro-Indian Kashmiri Muslim said, "It was time to give Pakistan a tough response for the 'proxy war' it was waging in Kashmir". He said: "The time has come to show them our strength". Abdullah exhorted the Indian government to take action against Pakistan.<sup>27</sup>

It was an insecure situation for Pakistan's security which could lead to a misadventure and miscalculation in the sub-continent. Pakistani politicians, especially the rightists and religious parties, threatened to launch a campaign to overthrow the government, if it delayed conducting nuclear tests. Thus, the Pakistani public opinion was tremendously

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<sup>25</sup> Dawn, May 20, 1998

<sup>26</sup> Dawn, May 19, 1998.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

in favour of carrying out nuclear tests. Besides, the military and the bureaucracy, which are influential in decision-making, also applied strong pressure on the government. It was in any case highly skeptical about the dependability of any kind of security assurances coming from the West, in particular from Washington which, in the popular perception, had let down Pakistan twice in times of critical need, in the wars of 1965 and 1971 against India.<sup>28</sup>

There was no doubt whatsoever in the minds of Pakistani strategists that without a nuclear umbrella, Islamabad was highly vulnerable. It became absolutely necessary to abandon the nuclear vagueness policy, and show its nuclear capability openly. Such a step, it was felt, would restore the strategic balance in South Asia and would help preserve peace and security. Thus, to establish nuclear strategic balance and deterrence in South Asia and for his own self-defence and security, Pakistan detonated five nuclear devices on May 28, 1998 in Chaghi (Baluchistan). Two days later, Islamabad tested one more nuclear warhead. It is not clear as what exactly the capacity of nuclear explosions was. Some say that it was between 30-35 kilotons, other 15-18 kilotons, while the Western media opined that it was 2 kiloton.<sup>29</sup> Soon after the tests, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said: "We have settled the account of the nuclear blasts by India ... for the safety of our nation." "What happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki would not have happened if Japan had a nuclear capability. The American nuclear capability forced Japan to declare defeat in the World War II, he added in explaining his rationale. It was in Pakistan's interest to build the minimum deterrent capability considered necessary for the country's security.<sup>30</sup>

### **The European Response to the Nuclear Tests**

With these tests, India and Pakistan become the world's sixth and seventh declared nuclear powers respectively, joining the USA, Russia, the UK, France and China. Main concern of both countries, at this time, was to get formal international recognition of status as nuclear powers. The tests conducted by India and Pakistan drew wide criticism throughout the world. The response of the European countries, in this regard varied from country to country. Some chose to freeze economic aid, some halted new development projects, and others favoured discontinuation of multilateral credits. All of them, however, were united in condemning the nuclear explosions and appealed to both protagonists to avoid doing more tests and sign the nuclear proliferation treaties. Some of the major countries, realizing the fact that the main reason of the arms race was the festering Kashmir dispute, advocated that the two protagonists should enter into a dialogue to try and resolve this core issue by peacefully. The sanctions were expected to have a more debilitating impact on Pakistan than on India because Pakistan was more heavily dependent on international economic assistances.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Shahid Amin 'The EU's Policy on ..... Nuclearization of South Asia, op.cit, p. 240

<sup>29</sup> Upreti B.C, op.cit p.119.

<sup>30</sup> Dawn, May 29, 1998.

<sup>31</sup> Maatinudin Kamal, 'Nuclearization of South Asia – The European Response', in, Naveed Ahmed Tahir (ed.), 'Pakistan and Post Ideological Europe: Prospect for Cooperation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Countries' Karachi: ASCE. University of Karachi, 2000, p. 30.

The Pakistani nuclear tests were denounced by the EU which voiced its apprehensions over the heightened security risks in the region. These tests, it was pointed out, would negatively affect the security atmosphere in the South Asian region. Brussels warned Islamabad that it could no longer be 'business as usual with Pakistan'. However, realizing that the country would face severe economic problems if sanctions were imposed, Brussels also recommended that loans to Pakistan by international lending agencies should not be withheld, but delayed. The EU leaders were quick to point towards the indiscretion of India and Pakistan in spending huge amounts of money on a dangerous arms race, whilst their social development efforts suffered owing to lack of resources. The following the EU Presidency statement was issued which stated that, "The EU is dismayed and disappointed at the news of nuclear tests by Pakistan. As with India's nuclear tests, the EU condemns this action which runs counter to the will expressed by 149 signatories to the CTBT to cease nuclear testing, and to efforts to strengthen the global non-proliferation regime. India's nuclear tests have undermined the stability of the region. Pakistan's nuclear test has made the situation worse". Despite, the EU had firmly "urged Pakistan to exercise maximum restraint and that it has not done so".<sup>32</sup>

The EU leaders at a summit in Cardiff, Wales on June 17, 1998 once again called on both nuclear states to sign the non-proliferation treaties and to make serious efforts to improve their bilateral relations. The EU would consider 'further measures' if they failed to do so. The European Parliament on June 18, 1998 in a resolution adopted in Strasbourg urged member states "to prevent export of equipment, materials and technology which could contribute to nuclear armament programmes or manufacture of nuclear missiles in either India or Pakistan".<sup>33</sup> The EU adopted a common position on October 26, 1998, which defined the Union's objectives and possible contribution with regard to encouragement of non-proliferation of nuclear and ballistic missiles, confidence-building measures and prevention of conflict in the South Asian region.<sup>34</sup> The EU expressed willingness to play a role in promoting non-proliferation and confidence-building in the South Asian region. The UN Security Council resolutions, passed in May 1998, condemning the tit for tat nuclear tests by both countries were welcomed by Brussels. These resolutions emphasized "Such testing is contrary to the de-facto moratorium on the testing of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and to global efforts towards nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. "The EU statement in this regard expressed full support for the position of the international community, as expressed in the UN Security Council Resolution 1172, and called upon the two South Asian rivals to implement all the goals set out in this resolution "including the cessation of the development of ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons, and accession to the NPT as it stands".<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Bulletin EU 5-1998 Common Foreign and Security Policy (17/22)- Published in Brussels on 29 May 1998 [www.europa.eu/bulletin/en/1998/htm](http://www.europa.eu/bulletin/en/1998/htm).

<sup>33</sup> Dawn, June 19, 1998.

<sup>34</sup> Dawn, October 27, 1998.

<sup>35</sup> Ahmed Tahir, Naveed, (ed.), *A Survey of EU-Pakistan Relations ...Setting*, opcit.p.113

### Reactions of South Asian Neighbours

The nuclearization of India and Pakistan has undoubtedly altered the security environment in the region. The other South Asian states felt insecure and vulnerable because of this development. When tests were conducted in May 1998, the smaller South Asian states openly expressed their fears. Though there was no official reaction from the government of Bangladesh, Begum Khalid Zia the then leader of the opposition reacted strongly and said that the nuclearization had endangered peace and stability in the region. Sri Lanka avoided a knee jerk reaction but, the government in a statement expressed its deep concern over the nuclear tests. It expressed the fear that it could lead to a further deterioration in bilateral relations of two major South Asian protagonists, India and Pakistan. Nepal a small land-locked country, a signatory of NPT and CTBT also expressed apprehension over India's nuclear tests. Nepal was also concerned that the development could further strain Indo - Pakistan relations. The United Marxist-Leninist Party (UML), the main opposition political party of Nepal, also criticized India for its test. The Maldives also expressed unhappiness about nuclear proliferation in the region. President Abdul Gayoom, President of Maldives, who was the then Chairman of the SAARC, as a sign of protest postponed his customary visit to SAARC countries. He also impressed upon the SAARC countries the need to contain the situation arising out of nuclear proliferation in the region. The tiny Kingdom of Bhutan was the only country which congratulated India for its Bokhara II test. The Bhutanese King declared that Bhutan considers India as its closest friend and well-wisher and therefore increase in its power was in Bhutan's interest.<sup>36</sup>

### South Asia after Nuclearization

Soon after the nuclear tests, both newest nuclear powers Pakistan and India gave assurances to the world community in the Lahore Declaration (1999) that nuclear weapons had been acquired by two responsible nations of the region and that the region would never fall victim to any strategic miscalculation of the two leaderships. The declaration stated that:

- The two sides shall engage in bilateral consultations on security concepts, and nuclear doctrines, with a view to developing measures for confidence building in the nuclear and conventional fields.
- The two sides undertake to provide each other with advance notification in respect of ballistic missile tests, and shall conclude a bilateral agreement in this regard.
- The two sides are fully committed to undertaking national measures to reducing the risks of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons under their respective control.
- The two sides further undertake to notify each other immediately in the event of any accidental, unauthorized or unexplained incident that could create the

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<sup>36</sup> Upreti B.C *op.cit*, pp. 121-122.

risk of a fallout with adverse consequences for both sides, or an outbreak of a nuclear war between the two countries, as well as to adopt measures aimed at diminishing the possibility of such actions, or such incidents being misinterpreted by the other.

- The two sides shall establish the appropriate communication mechanism for this purpose.
- The two sides shall continue to abide by their respective unilateral moratorium on conducting further nuclear test explosions unless either side, in exercise of its national sovereignty, decides that extraordinary events have jeopardized its supreme interest.<sup>37</sup>

### Conclusion

If closely evaluate the West's policy towards the nuclearization in India and Pakistan just after the tit for tat nuclear tests by the two countries in May 1998, we find some gap between its avowed principles and its actions, which reveals dual standards. For instance, the EU conveniently ignored the history of the Indian nuclear program and its ambition to gain a predominant position in the region. It is quite evident that the US and Europe were more anxious to obstruct Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear capability than they were about India's nuclear ambition which had become quite overt after its so-called Peaceful Nuclear Explosion way back in 1974. The major western powers exerted maximum pressure on Pakistan to rollback or at least to freeze its nuclear capability, instead of trying to rein in India's nuclear ambitions. Likewise they did not bother to make any efforts to assuage Pakistan's genuine security concerns, by at least promising help to achieve parity with India in conventional weapons and by collectively guaranteeing its security. The two main reasons for its attitude can be found firstly, in the fact that Pakistan is a Muslim country which has stuck to its stand of supporting the cause of the dispossessed Muslim causes. The Western powers fear more so after 9/11 that if the reins of power were to fall into the hands of extremists, the nuclear technology not only be transferred to countries in the Islamic world, thus endangering Israel's and their own security, but could also trigger a nuclear war in South Asia. Another reason for the muted cautious EU response to the Indian nuclear tests was the China factor. China since the mid-eighties has begun to emerge not only as an important economic power but also as a formidable military power. The perception is strongly prevalent in some circles in the West that the Chinese nuclear and conventional might and its alleged designs in the Indian Ocean could be effectively countered by powerful India possessing nuclear weapons. The West apparently has not been able to understand the respective motives of India and Pakistan in carrying out their nuclear tests. Pakistan never sought the nuclear option, until India conducted its first test in 1974, without caring for world opinion. This action betrayed the ambitions of India, and Pakistan strongly felt that it would have to develop nuclear weapons to strengthen itself vis a vis India. Thus from the seventies onward it began to make all out efforts to acquire nuclear know-how. At the same time, however, Pakistan took several initiatives in the UN and

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<sup>37</sup> Effendi Maria Saifuddi, *Pakistan-India Peace Process: Summits in Focus (1999-2005)* Regional Studies (Islamabad), Vols. xxiv, No.3, summer, 2006, p.81

with India from time to time at the bilateral level to keep South Asia free of nuclear weapons. The 1998 tests by India and Pakistan's tit-for-tat response however destroyed the prospects for a nuclear free South Asia. However it is an encouraging sign that after nearly coming to bolus on quite a few occasions both countries have begun to gradually recognize the futility of confrontation and the need to resolve all outstanding issues through peaceful negotiation and dialogue. Having been colonial powers in the past, the Europeans in contrast with the Americans, have a deeper understanding of South Asian politics and the psyche of this region's people. This definitely gives them an edge over the United States in the diplomatic arena. However, it is essential that the Europeans realize the necessity of exercising their influence in a positive manner and also resolve to use their diplomatic skills to help secure a durable peace and stability in the region. The article further argues that the policymakers of both India and Pakistan are quite aware of the fact that it would be mutually beneficial to explore new and innovative avenues of cooperation and collaboration in different fields firm up the existing relationship. However what need both sides is to resolve the crisis only by diplomatic means not the military methods. War, therefore, is no longer or at least should not be an option .Possible military action would cause turmoil in the whole region.