

UNCLASSIFIED



BACKGROUND PAPER

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Subject: Nuclear Situation in India and Pakistan

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1. Purpose: To provide Senator Daschle and staff with information for their trip to India and Pakistan

2. Major Points:

a. Both nations possess small stockpiles of nuclear weapons, which both demonstrated in underground test explosions of May of last year, and both have the scientific and industrial infrastructure to enlarge and maintain their stockpiles. Both have military aircraft to deliver these weapons and both have ballistic missiles inherently capable of carrying nuclear weapons.

b. The two nations are not equals. India is seven times larger than Pakistan in population and almost four times larger in area. Neither is industrialized on a European scale (India with a population almost one hundred times larger has an economy approximately the size of that of Belgium) but India possesses a robust economy. Pakistan is heavily in debt.

c. India's leaders have unanimously and steadfastly opposed signing the Treaty for



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the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a Non Nuclear Weapon State, describing the Treaty as discriminatory. Fearful of its giant neighbor and despite its poverty, Pakistan will not give up its nuclear weapons as long as India possesses them and in May of last year demonstrated its readiness to match India in nuclear weaponry by exploding small devices immediately following India's test explosions. Without India's agreement to the NPT there is little chance Pakistan will adhere. For its part, India is very likely motivated to develop nuclear weapons by a perception of nuclear inferiority to China.

d. Both nations are expected to try to improve their nuclear weapons, i.e., increase the explosive force, reliability and variety of types, as far as possible. Scientists in both countries could learn better how to do this from further nuclear testing. While Pakistan is not likely to take the lead in additional test explosions, it would certainly follow suit should its rival conduct another test or tests. Similarly Pakistan is not likely to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) without India showing the way. And India has shown its reluctance to adhere first, by its refusal in 1996 immediately after taking part in the Conference to write the Treaty and again, within the life of the present government without reaching agreement during a series of negotiations lasting more than one year between the Indian Minister for External Affairs Jaswant Singh and the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott.

e. Recently returned to power after national elections the government of India has created a draft nuclear use policy which it has submitted for consideration to the nation. The policy provides for 'effective, credible nuclear deterrence and adequate retaliatory capability should deterrence fail'. The retaliatory force will be based on a 'triad of aircraft, mobile land based missiles and sea based assets'. The policy also promises that India will not be the first in any conflict to use nuclear weapons and that it will not use them against a state neither possessing nuclear weapons itself nor allied with a nuclear weapon state. Pakistan has declined to agree with India not to be the first to use nuclear weapons saying it must be free to use these weapons to ensure its survivability in a conflict with the much stronger India. After its success this past summer in turning back a Pakistani supported assault upon its territory in Kashmir, the Indian government will probably be able to rally its people to accept this doctrine.

f. Over the coming months India will add details to its nuclear use policies, such as quantities and kinds of weapons, their deployment and exact contingencies of use although all conditions are not likely to be made public. The existing document clearly places authority for release of nuclear weapons in the 'person of the Prime Minister or the designated successor' although India will have to bring its military into planning as its nuclear doctrine matures.

g. Under its new military government Pakistan too will prepare a nuclear use doctrine but knowledge of its terms may be restricted to the military. Use authority is expected to reside in the self appointed national leader, General Pervaiz Musharraf. Although Pakistan will not promise not to be the first to use nuclear weapons against its rival, it is not likely to test the undoubted retaliatory capacity of India by using these weapons unless its leaders believe India is seriously threatening Pakistan's existence.