

C. Pre-empt. India and Pakistan have not travelled far down the nuclear road as yet. There are known hazards just ahead. These may be pointed out and prevented, to the benefit of all concerned. A mid range policy goal is to help South Asia avoid nuclear escalation and risk, from weaponization and deployment of weapons of mass destruction. Risk reduction is needed in at least two areas: accidental war, and the environment

Breathing room is needed by the states in their confrontation with each other. As the maps given earlier make clear, there is no margin for error in military judgement, no time for second thoughts. Hotlines will not help much in case of accident or impetuosity. CBM's are no help against airborne ICBM's. The imperative for a preemptive strike in case of conflict is even more frightening in a nuclear South Asia. The subcontinent requires measures to insert a 'pause and reflect' mode on potential nuclear war.

Methods evolved during the West's Balance of Terror may be applied to South Asia. What is needed, to coin a phrase, is 'pre-emptive de-alerting' and 'pre-emptive de-targeting'. As part of a security dialogue, or bench marking exercise, agreement by the two states to forgo hair triggers, and programmed targets, would be a service to security. Keeping warheads separate from missiles, installing full command and control measures, and advanced fail safe devices are well known international safeguards. Many others exist which undoubtedly are being explored by the military establishments in South Asia. There is a potential role for external but fraternal military cooperation in instituting nuclear management.

Similarly, now is the moment to instill awareness of nuclear environmental hazards. Stepped up nuclear programmes means additional byproducts, spent fuel, and potential for seepage. No nuclear state has fully solved such problems, and all proposed solutions are economically prohibitive. Once again, human security in a direct way is endangered by the nuclear tests and their aftermath.