

has generally increased, and efforts to justify such positions have become ever-more strained.¹³ Beyond this lies an established record of past progress in stabilizing existing nuclear relationships at progressively lower levels of armament which cannot be denied. To ignore past progress and the prospect of more based upon debatable judgements concerning the future integrity of the disarmament process appears premature and ultimately counterproductive.

Curiously, the document's call for the pursuit of a number of discrete arms control, stability and confidence-building measures tends to undercut its earlier suggestions that pursuit of a minimum deterrent represents India's only viable option. In fact, given probable threats, a number of the initiatives advanced could prove more valuable to the cause of security, stability and ultimately disarmament than the deterrent itself.

Feasibility

Economic and Technical Constraints

Creation of a nuclear deterrent along the lines proposed represents a technically demanding and economically costly enterprise. As outlined, such a deterrent requires high force survivability, robust C3I, reliable weapon systems, and a range of systems explicitly devoted to security and safety of the arsenal and all that sustains it.

Certainly given India's economic and technological capabilities, the creation of a viable nuclear force is conceivable. India has long possessed a relatively modern industrial sector with expertise in nuclear energy, missile development and arms production. It also boasts solid capabilities in space satellite communication and software design. More broadly, while government debt represents a lingering problem, recent IMF projections report current economic expansion at 5.7% of real gross domestic product, and suggest continued economic growth in the near future (i.e. real GDP estimated at 5.5% for year 2000).¹⁴

The stated objectives of the force envisaged (i.e. deterrence of nuclear attack via the threat of retaliation-in-kind) would also tend to reduce the economic and technical investment required to achieve the deterrent outlined.

In this regard, P. K. Subrahmanyam – an articulate advocate of a minimum deterrent – contends that costs associated with such an arsenal can be kept down by virtue of the strategy's limited character and goals. A strict no-first-use pledge (i.e. nuclear retaliation only after absorbing

¹³ In this regard, recent years have witnessed a gradual narrowing of US first-use options to retaliation for CBW attacks – an implicit recognition that justification for its retention is becoming more difficult.

¹⁴ "Pakistan, India Urged to Boost Incomes", *Dawn* (Internet Edition) (23 September 1999), p. 1.