

its creation. Theoretically, while a properly configured minimum deterrent should be impervious to the size and sophistication of opposing arsenals, an arms race in the region could well work to drive costs upward. In that event, India could be forced not only to invest ever-greater resources in maintaining the survivability and integrity of its nuclear systems, but in the conventional capabilities needed to insure that the nuclear threshold remains high.

A range of "opportunity costs," would also attend the arsenal's pursuit. Resources devoted to a nuclear arsenal inevitably represent dollars taken away from a range of other economic and social programs (e.g. eradicating poverty, unemployment, low living standards, improving the domestic energy sector etc). The expenditure required to develop India's minimum deterrent could reportedly meet 25% of the yearly costs of sending every Indian child to school.²⁰ Add to this the losses in assistance which would flow from the continuation of international sanctions, and the economic implications of such a force are even more profound.²¹ In fact, the domestic political fallout associated with such penalties could ultimately prove prohibitive.

Toward A Nuclear Dyad?

Such considerations suggest that for the near-to-medium term, any Indian deterrent would inevitably involve a scaled down version of the arsenal proposed – most likely a "dyad" featuring a combination of manned bombers and missiles.

Given past service preferences and the need to control the costs associated with maintaining high survivability of forces and effective C3I, primary emphasis would be placed on the former.²²

Doctrine governing the force could be identical to that advanced in the advisory (i.e. NFU), and would similarly be premised on the survivability of nuclear striking power – i.e. insuring that any adversary could not discount the possibility of some nuclear retaliation even after an initial strike. Yet shortfalls in current nuclear capabilities would require force augmentation to insure a credible second-strike.²³ Indeed, while India already possesses such a capacity vis-a-vis Pakistan,

²⁰ See Peter Lavoy, "Costs of Nuclear Weapons in South Asia", *Electronic Journal* 2:4 (September 1999), p. 3.

²¹ According to the World Bank, it is likely that the imposition of sanctions on India and Pakistan have been harmful to both countries – preventing trade and halting the majority of foreign capital inflows. See "Nuclear Tests Affect the Region's Growth Rate: World Bank", *Dawn* (Internet Edition) (23 September 1999), p. 1.

²² According to Arnett, heavy investment in bombers suggest that the Indian Air Force (IAF) would prefer this platform over missiles. Furthermore, they would likely rely upon the Anglo-French Jaguar for nuclear delivery. See Arnett, "Facts and Fiction".

²³ Criteria for judging a credible second-strike capability are inevitably vague. In general, such a capacity requires possession of a force capable of inflicting "unacceptable damage" on an adversary following absorption of an initial strike. Yet judgements concerning what an adversary regards as "unacceptable" cannot be known with certainty