

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The test detonation of nuclear devices by India and Pakistan in the summer of 1998 surprised many and engendered renewed worldwide calls for proliferation controls. Despite the resultant international condemnation, both states have forged ahead with the development of delivery systems, command and control technologies and nuclear doctrine. The danger of further proliferation, to say nothing of the potential for a nuclear conflict in the subcontinent, has led governments worldwide to seek options for mitigating the problems these developments have created and, if possible, roll back India and Pakistan's nuclear programmes.

A similar, albeit not so far advanced, nuclear stand-off between Argentina and Brazil was resolved in the early 1990s, when both states, despite a long history of poor relations, agreed to dismantle their respective nuclear weapons programmes. Security perceptions and military governance gradually gave way to democratization and social discomfort with the nuclear option, while the desire for domestic stability and American investment eased the transition. While similar conditions exist in India and Pakistan, the problem is exacerbated by dominant external security threats (China and, from Pakistan's perspective, India), religious differences, the simmering Kashmir conflict and the perceived need for nuclear technology to bolster industrialization. Popular support for the nuclear option in both nations complicates the issue, as does the fact that with the 1998 tests, both states crossed a significant line.

A number of diplomatic, aid-oriented and arms control solutions are available to Canada to help mitigate the India-Pakistan nuclear crisis. However, international solutions to this problem will, by virtue of the size of the two states in question and the advanced state of their nuclear development, be large, difficult to design, and even more difficult to implement. The Government would be well advised to proceed cautiously, in concert with like-minded allies, and with due regard for the legitimate security and domestic concerns of the states involved.