CHAPTER 3

NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND BALLISTIC MISSILES ON THE SUBCONTINENT

'SHOW OUR STRENGTH AND SILENCE OUR ENEMIES'[1]

Background - Long Term Rivalry

3.1 This chapter traces the development of India's and Pakistan's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs. It looks at the escalating tension and the intense arms competition between the two countries during the period prior to the nuclear blasts in May 1998.

3.2 Military rivalry has dominated the relationship between India and Pakistan since partition in 1947. From that time and against a backdrop of brooding hostility and deep-seated distrust, India and Pakistan have fought three wars - in Kashmir during 1947-48; in the Punjab area in 1965; and in former East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, in 1971.

3.3 Created in the shadow of a much larger and powerful India, and unable to claim victory in its three wars with this unfriendly neighbour, Pakistan measures its security status against India's military strength. But it was the war in 1971 in which Pakistan lost nearly a fifth of its territory, former East Pakistan, that has left deep and lasting scars and clearly shapes Pakistan's security concerns. This humiliating loss exposed Pakistan's vulnerability to India's military might and steeled Pakistan's resolve to protect its territorial integrity. The tension between the two countries is aggravated by their dispute over Kashmir. Since the 1980s, India and Pakistan have been fighting on the Siachen Glacier in north-eastern Greater Kashmir and since 1989, a violent anti-Indian insurgency has been simmering with each side accusing the other of inciting conflict.[2]

3.4 These two traditional foes, with a common border and engaged in a long running and bitter feud over Kashmir, are trapped in a 'reactive cycle' in arms development and production.[3] Each carefully tracks the activities of the other and although India possesses far superior conventional military strength, Pakistan

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1 Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee quoted in Praful Bidwai and Achin Vanaik, 'A Very Political Bomb', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, July/August 1998. Internet site: http:// www.bullatomsci.org/issues/yearindex.htm. Dr Peter Friedlander provides an analysis of media reports on this statement, see Submission, no. 44, vol. 3, p. 205.

2 See Mr Christopher Snedden, Submission no. 19, vol. 1, pp. 189–90 for more details.

3 'India and Pakistan', Chapter 10 in *1997 Strategic Assessment: Flashpoints and Force Structure*, National Defence University, November 1996.
Internet site: http://www.ndu/edu/ndu/inss/sa97/sa97pre.html (25 August 1998)

endeavours to keep up with developments in India's military technology. Even though both countries may wish to reduce their defence burden, the weight of history and the fear of aggression fuelled by mutual suspicion determine their security planning.[4]

3.5 China complicates the geo-political situation in this region. India and China see themselves as rival regional leaders and their relationship is uneasy. In 1962, China and India fought a brief but bloody border war; a war regarded by India as a major and ignominious defeat and which shattered its sense of military security.[5] Two years later, in October 1964, China further asserted its standing in the region as a powerful and potentially dangerous adversary when it tested its first atom bomb. The border issue between the two countries remains unresolved.

3.6 The relationship between India and China is further strained by the close links that China has developed with Pakistan, particularly the assistance it is believed to have given Pakistan in developing its nuclear and missile technology. India views this Sino-Pakistan collaboration as a serious and direct threat to its security interests.[6]

Bombs for Peace

3.7 Pakistan assesses its security situation against India's position; India, in turn, defines its security situation in light of China's military force. When China exploded its nuclear bomb in 1964 and embarked on a program to modernise its military technology, India was spurred to develop its own nuclear program.[7]

3.8 It took India almost ten years, but in May 1974, at the Pokhran site in the Rajasthan desert, it detonated its own atomic bomb - a 'peaceful' 12 KT fission nuclear device. Since that time, the Indian scientific community has kept abreast of developments in global nuclear theory and technology and has continued its own research and development program into nuclear weaponry. India has maintained and expanded its complex of laboratory and industrial support activities necessary to support a nuclear weapons program but, until 1998, had refrained from conducting further tests.[8]

3.9 The strength of Pakistan's determination to keep pace with India's nuclear developments was signalled as early as 1965 when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto told the National Assembly of Pakistan that 'If India builds the bomb, we will eat grass and

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4 ibid.

5 See K. Subrahmanyam, 'Dimensions of National Security', *Frontline*, vol. 14, no. 16, 9–22 August 1997. Internet site: http://www.the-hindu.committee/fline/index.htm; Dr Debesh Bhattacharya, *Committee Hansard*, 20 July 1998, p. 4.

6 K. Subrahmanyam, 'India Nuclear Policy—1964–98', *Nuclear India*, Jasjit Singh (ed.), Knowledge World, New Delhi, 1998, p. 50; Dr Mohan Malik, *Committee Hansard*, 20 July 1998, pp. 46–50.

7 See comments by Dr Mohan Malik, *Committee Hansard*, 20 July 1998, p. 59.

8 David Albright and Mark Hibbs, 'India's Silent Bomb', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, September 1992; D. Sampathkumar, 'The Force of Sanctions', Cover Story, *Frontline*, vol. 15, no. 11, 23 May–5 June 1998.

leaves, even go hungry. But we will get one of our own, we have no alternative'.[9] India's nuclear explosion in 1974 tested Pakistan's resolve to follow India down the nuclear weapons path. It forced Pakistan to consider seriously its options in regard to developing its own nuclear weapons program.

3.10 Pakistan's leading missile and nuclear scientist, Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan, maintained that India's military activities drove Pakistan to make nuclear weapons. He explained that the separation of East Pakistan in 1971 weakened Pakistan but the Indian nuclear explosion in 1974 brought a qualitative change. For Pakistan, the need to neutralise India's superior nuclear weaponry by establishing a degree of symmetry in their nuclear arsenals became clear.

3.11 Despite pressure from foreign powers, especially the United States, to forgo the development of a nuclear weapons program, Pakistan determinedly and clandestinely set about developing its nuclear capability. According to Dr Khan, Pakistan attained the capability to explode a nuclear device in 1984 but kept this quiet because there was no provocation to declare its status.[10]

3.12 Thus, over the years there has been a gradual maturing of India's and Pakistan's missile and nuclear programs. Both countries have followed a policy of nuclear ambiguity; that is, they have built up their nuclear capability but without going openly nuclear.

3.13 Although secrecy surrounds India's and Pakistan's nuclear programs, strategic analysts have, especially since the end of the Cold War, predicted that India would be compelled to declare its nuclear weapon status. The end of the Cold War brought about a realignment of alliances and caused nations to reassess their security interests. India lost its superpower friend and strategic ally, the Soviet Union, and with it a loss of global prestige and a weakening of its military standing in the region. India stood alone and as its influence waned, its rival, China, was gaining greater prominence and recognition as a world and regional power. Strategic affairs analyst Dr C. Raja Mohan explained:

> The strong relationship that New Delhi had built up with Moscow during the Cold War and the belief that the central balance between the U.S. and USSR was immutable allowed India the luxury of keeping its nuclear option open. But the collapse of the Soviet Union, the emergence of China - once India's peer - as the second most important power in the world, the consequent disorientation of India's foreign policy and the fear that India will forever be

9 Quote taken from *Dawn*, 21 November 1965 cited in Prithvi Ram Mudiam, 'Indo-Pakistan Nuclear Rivalry: Need for a Modus Vivendi', *Strategic Analysis*, A Monthly Journal of the IDSA (Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, New Delhi), vol. 20, no. 3, June 1997. Internet site: http://www.idsa-india.org/an-jun-9.html.

10 Interview with Pakistan nuclear scientist, A.Q.Khan, 'We Can Do a Fusion Blast', *Frontline*, vol. 15, no. 12, 6–19 June 1998.

> marginalised in the Asian and global geopolitics forced New Delhi to reconsider its nuclear policy in the 1990s.[11]

3.14 Speculation about India's readiness to go nuclear firmed in December 1995, when American newspaper reports, based on leaked United States intelligence, suggested that India was preparing a test site at Pokhran to conduct a nuclear explosion. India did not categorically deny the allegation but rather dismissed the reports as 'highly speculative'.[12]

3.15 The changing geopolitical situation in Asia together with the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995 and the successful conclusion of negotiations on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1996 placed even greater domestic pressure on India to clarify its nuclear weapon status. In September 1996, strategic analyst Brahma Chellaney asserted that India's refusal to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was strongly supported by political parties and public opinion in India. He wrote:

> Now the government faces mounting domestic pressure to end the unilateral test moratorium it has observed since conducting its sole nuclear detonation in 1974. A spate of recent articles in the national press urge the government to go overtly nuclear.
>
> Wedged between nuclear armed China and nuclear-capable Pakistan, India sees its interests as demanding either a global drive to delegitimize and eliminate nuclear weapons or to weaponize its own nuclear option.[13]

3.16 Jasjit Singh, Director of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, clearly spelt out and reflected the thinking of some influential analysts in India at this time. He maintained:

> China is the biggest military power in Asia, and its power is growing. There are many strategic uncertainties that India will have to contend with in the coming years and decades. But it is clear that China does not pose a threat in a way that India cannot adequately deal with. The issue thus is not a question of a threat from China, but the fact that if India has to maintain its independency of policy and action, it must have adequate means of self-defence, whether conventional or nuclear. The challenge is in ensuring the

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11 C. Raja Mohan, 'Nuclear Balance in Asia', The *Hindu*, 11 June 1998. Cited *Indian Media Responses to India's N-tests*, Government of India, Department of External Affairs, *Discover India* Internet site: http://www.meadev.gov.in/govt/nuclear/hin11.jun.htm (11 September 1998).

12 Zia Mian and A.H. Nayyar, 'A Time of Testing', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, July/August 1996, vol. 52, no. 4; *CRS Issue Brief*, '94041: Pakistan–US Relations', 7 November 1996; Vipin Gupta and Frank Pabian, *Investigating the Allegations of Indian Nuclear Test Preparation in the Rajasthan Desert: A CTB Verification Exercise Using Commercial Satellite Imagery*, CMC Paper, July 1996. Internet site: http://www.ca.sandia.gov/casite/gupta/intro.html (28 October 1998). K. Subrahmanyam, 'India Nuclear Policy', *Nuclear India*, J. Singh (ed.), Knowledge World, New Delhi, 1998, p. 50.

13 Brahma Chellaney, 'Why India, Pushed Against the Wall, Could Go Overtly Nuclear', 20 September 1996, *Pacific News Service.*
Internet site: http://www.pacificnews.org/pacficnews/jinn/stories/2.20/960920-india.html

> autonomy and strength to deal with future coercion or military pressure. It is in this context that India will require a nuclear deterrent. China and India have signed agreements in recent years to maintain peace and tranquillity based on the principle of mutual and equal security. The concept of equal security could become meaningless, or worse, a mirage, if nuclear asymmetry is perpetuated. [14]

3.17 He could see three possible ways for India to resolve the challenges of this asymmetry in order to safeguard its security—obtain extended deterrence linked to an alliance with a nuclear weapons state; global nuclear disarmament; or acquire an independent nuclear deterrent. The first option he argued worked against the very principles of an independent India; the second option, the most desirable one, offered no short or medium-term guarantees because actual progress in disarmament could take decades. He concluded, therefore, that India was faced with hardly any choice 'but to look seriously at acquiring a nuclear deterrent at least until disarmament becomes an established reality'.[15]

Ballistic Missile Program

3.18 A nuclear deterrent does not depend solely on a nuclear device but also on the ability to deliver the weapon. Thus: 'A true nuclear deterrent embraces a proven warhead mated with a proven delivery system…delivery systems are the other half of the deterrence equation. They must be tested and deployed before a deterrent force is complete.'[16] India and Pakistan did not neglect the second part of the nuclear deterrent equation. In line with advances in their respective nuclear weapons program, India and Pakistan have pushed ahead with the development of their own missile programs.

India's Ballistic Missile System

3.19 The beginnings of India's indigenous ballistic missile program go back to the establishment of the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) in 1983. The IGMDP now comprises five major missile systems—the short-range surface-to-surface missile Prithvi (Earth); the intermediate-range ballistic missile Agni (Fire); the short-range surface to air missile Trishul (Tridend); the medium-range surface-to-air missile Akash (Sky); and the smokeless high-energy anti-tank guided missile Nag (Cobra).

3.20 The two largest missiles, the Prithvi and Agni, are of direct relevance to India's production of an effective delivery system for nuclear warheads. They were developed in close association with India's space industry. India first tested the short range Prithvi in 1988 and has tested this system on a number of subsequent occasions.

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14 Jasjit Singh, 'The Challenges of Strategic Defence', *Frontline*, vol. 15, no. 8, 11–24 April 1998.

15 ibid.

16 Andrew Koch and Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, 'Subcontinental Missiles', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, July/August 1998, vol. 54, no. 4.

On 27 January 1996, India successfully launched a 250km 'extended range' version of the Prithvi.[17] Thirteen months later, the missile was launched from a mobile launcher for the first time. The Prithvi is capable of hitting a target deep within Pakistan; its range covers all of Bangladesh, parts of China and Burma.[18]

3.21 Wary of advances in Indian missile technology, Pakistan monitored carefully the development of the Prithvi. In June 1997, the Indian Prime Minister I. K. Gujral denied reports that his country had deployed the missile near the border with Pakistan. He stated 'India has the capability of manufacturing the Prithvi and it has not, I repeat not, deployed Prithvi in any part of India, more so near the border.'[19] However, in August 1997, the Indian Government announced it had decided to 'accord high priority to the next phase of the Agni program'.[20]

3.22 The longer range Agni was first tested in May 1989 and has been tested several times since. During its last trial in February 1994, the Agni successfully hit its designated target after travelling 1,400km, approximately 1,100km short of its projected range of 2,500km. In December 1996, Indian officials, acknowledging developments, described it as a 're-entry technology demonstration' but have over time sent confusing messages about its status.[21]

3.23 In September 1996, there were indications from official sources that the Agni program was to be revived. But in the following December, the Indian Government announced that it would not put its Agni Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile into production unless its national security was under threat.[22] The following March, however, the Indian Prime Minister told Parliament that India had not halted development of the Agni. Four months later the Government announced that it had given high priority to the next phase of its Agni program.[23] This next stage in development is likely to involve further tests to convert the missile from a 're-entry technology demonstration' into a deployable weapon system.[24]

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17 'India Plans Further Prithvi Missile Tests', *News and Views*, CDISS (Centre for Defence and International Security Studies, UK), September 1996. Internet site: http://www.cdiss.org/mdnews.htm.

18 'India Test Prithvi SRBM [February 24]', *News and Views*, CDISS, February 1997.

19 Sandeep Unnithan, 'India Has Not Deployed Prithvi: PM', *Indian Express*, 12 June 1997. Internet site: http://www.expressindia.com/ie/daily/19970612/main.htm.

2020 'Asia's Accelerating Missile Race', *News and Views*, CDISS, August, 1997.

21 'Agni "Could be Deployed within Three Months" ', *News and Views*, CDISS, December 1996.

22 *News and Views*, CDISS, September, December 1996 and June 1997.

23 Lora Lumpe, 'Zero Ballistic Missiles and the Third World', *Arms Control Today*, vol. 14, no. 1, 1 April 1994; *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 20 May 1998, p. 5; *News and Views*, CDISS, September 1996, March 1997; August 1997.

24 *News and Views*, CDISS, March, August 1997.

Pakistan's Ballistic Missile Program

3.24 During the 1980s the growing demand for, and use of, ballistic missiles was clearly demonstrated during the Iran–Iraq war of 1980–88 and during 1988–89 war in Afghanistan. Aware of India's ballistic missile program and of the use of missiles in modern day warfare, Pakistan embarked on its own ballistic missile program. Under the leadership of Dr Abdul Khan and, reportedly, with co-operation from the Government of the People's Republic of China, Pakistan gradually moved ahead with the development of the Haft-I, with a range of 80km, and Haft-II, with a range of 300km. Haft II is a battlefield weapon and not capable of strategic intimidation or deterrence.[25]

3.25 The launch of the Indian Prithvi in 1988 gave impetus to Pakistan's missile program.[26] Pakistan tested the two short-range missile systems Haft-I and Haft-II in early 1989. Since the launch of the Agni intermediate-range ballistic missile in 1989, Pakistan has accelerated its efforts to develop its own missile system.[27] In mid 1991, the US imposed sanctions against Chinese and Pakistani companies and the government agencies allegedly involved in the transfer of some missile technology from China to Pakistan. In August 1993, the United States Administration determined that China had again transferred M-11 missile related equipment to Pakistan and imposed sanctions on missile-related trade with Chinese and Pakistani aerospace organisations.[28] In November 1992, China reportedly transferred 24 M-11 missiles to Pakistan.[29]

3.26 Allegations and reports of Chinese assistance to Pakistan have persisted. In March 1996, Senator Nunn referred to a clear statement given by the Director of Central Intelligence that China actively assisted Pakistan in providing missiles and nuclear technology to Pakistan. He told the US Senate:

> Mr Chairman, the intelligence community continues to get accurate and timely information on Chinese activities that involve inappropriate weapons technology assistance to other countries, nuclear technology to Pakistan, M-II missiles to Pakistan, cruise missiles to Iran.[30]

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25 'Pakistan Set to Unveil "Ghauri" MRBM in March', Current Missile News, *News and Views*, CDISS, February 1998.

26 'A Silent Partner', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 15 May 1998.
Internet site: http://www.janes.com/mainset.html.

27 Ben Sheppard, 'Too Close for Comfort: Ballistic Ambitions in South Asia', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, January 1998, vol. 10, no. 1.

28 Lora Lumpe, 'Zero Ballistic Missiles and the Third World', *Arms Control Today*, cites Federal Register, 17 July 1991; Robert Shuey and Shirley A. Kan, 'Chinese Missile and Nuclear Proliferation: Issues for Congress', *CRS Issue Brief*, IB92056, 2 February 1995.

29 Lora Lumpe, ibid., cites R. Jeffrey Smith, 'China Said to Sell Arms to Pakistan, *Washington Post*, 4 December 1991, p. A10.

30 Congressional Record, Senate, 2 March 1996 p. S2657; see also Congressional Record, 12 June 1996, p. S6139.

3.27 During 1997, competition in the missile race between India and Pakistan intensified. Pakistan's test of the Haft-3 in July 1997, which reputedly reached a range of 800km, probably moved India to assert that it would place a high priority on the next phase of its 2,500km range Agni missile program. This in turn provoked Pakistan into suggesting that its engineers had recently developed a 1,500km missile referred to as the 'Ghauri' which was intended to counter the resumption of the Agni's program.[31]

Ballistic Missile and Nuclear Proliferation

3.28 As 1997 drew to a close, fears about the proliferation of missile development and production heightened as an action-reaction pattern between the two South Asian countries fuelled suspicions about each other's intentions.[32] At this time Pakistan's concerns about escalation in the ballistic missile programs combined with speculation about India going overtly nuclear.

3.29 India's nuclear ambitions and its hegemonic designs was a dominant theme running through Pakistan's foreign policy polemics.[33] On 20 November 1997, in an address on 'Arms Control and Disarmament', the Permanent Representative of Pakistan at the Chemical and Biological Weapons Institute in Washington stated:

> …there is always the possibility that India may be tempted to conduct a nuclear test, as it has in the past. Others may even acquiesce in and grant India the status of a nuclear weapon state. Pakistan cannot accept this situation in the light of its own security concerns, nor can it abandon its fundamental doctrine of 'ambiguity'.

3.30 In relation to ballistic missiles, the Permanent Representative went on to say, 'Pakistan is deeply concerned about the production and deployment of Indian ballistic missiles against Pakistan. We will be obliged to take appropriate steps to respond to this new and qualitatively enhanced threat to our national security'.[34]

3.31 The increasing popularity of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its menacing rumblings about inducting nuclear weapons further worried Pakistan. The BJP had publicly committed itself on numerous occasions to bring India's nuclear weapons out of the closet.[35] In their party manifesto of 1998 the BJP pledged 'To re-

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31 'Asia's Accelerating Missile Race', *News and Views*, CDISS, August 1997.

32 Aabha Dixit, 'Missile Race in South Asia: Linear Progression Required to Cap Race?', *Security Analysis*, IDSA, September 1997.

33 See Amit Baruah, 'The South Asian Nuclear Mess', Cover Story, *Frontline*, vol. 15, no. 12, 6–19 June 1998.

34 Address on 'Arms Control and Disarmament' by the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations at the Chemical and Biological Weapons Institute in Washington, 20 November 1997.

35 'Indian Hindu Opposition Warns of War with Pakistan', *Reuters*, 31 August 1994 and 8 April 1996; Zia Mian and A.H. Nayyar, 'A Time of Testing?', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, idid.

evaluate the country's nuclear policy and exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons'.[36] The BJP made plain that it:

> …shall not compromise on national sovereignty and security. The current situation and regional war politics demand us to have a nuclear weapons program in India and the BJP party will take India to be a nuclear power. We do not wish to see India blown apart by Pakistan or China because we did not possess the deterrent nuclear power.[37]

3.32 The election of the BJP in March 1998 deepened Pakistan's fears. Pakistan again drew attention to the situation developing on the subcontinent and the severe provocation it was experiencing. On 2 April 1998, the Pakistani Prime Minister sent a letter to the Heads of State of the United States, Russia, China, Japan, Italy, Belgium, Spain and Germany. In part it stated:

> The recent policy pronouncement by the new Indian Government to 'exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons' has qualitatively altered the security environment in our region besides dealing a serious blow to efforts at promoting non-proliferation at the global and regional levels.
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> …
>
> We have every reason to believe that the Indian policy pronouncement connotes a giant step towards fully operationalizing Indian nuclear policy.
>
> Unfortunately, the international community has continued to disregard the series of escalatory steps taken by India during the recent years on the nuclear and ballistic ladder.
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> …
>
> Pakistan will be obliged to take cognizance of these alarming developments and it cannot but exercise its sovereign right to adopt appropriate measures to safeguard its security.[38]

3.33 Within the week, on 6 April, Pakistan tested its new ballistic missile called the Ghauri with a maximum range of 1,500 kilometres. Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif explained that the test flight was part of his country's integrated missile Research and Development (R&D) Programme and conferred on Pakistan a credible indigenous missile capability. A Pakistani Foreign Affairs spokesman stated that the Ghauri missile 'primarily relates to our security needs which is of fundamental importance to us. Our sovereignty, territorial integrity and national interest is

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36 'National Security', *Bharatiya Janata Party—Manifesto 1998*.
Internet site: http://www.indiagov.org/elec98/manift/bjp.htm (2 September 1998).

37 Dr Krishna M. Bhatta and Dr Mahesh Mehta, 'Nuclear Issue', *BJP Homepage (Policy on Major Issues).*
Internet site: http://www.bjp.org/major/nuclrkb-1.html (2 September 1998).

38 Press Briefing by Foreign Office Spokesman, Government of Pakistan, 4 May 1998.

sacrosanct.'[39] Given Pakistan's lack of advanced technical infrastructure and a defence industrial base, some analysts believed that Pakistan did not possess the indigenous capability to develop a medium range ballistic missile and questioned Pakistan's claim that the Ghauri was indigenously developed. They strongly suspected that North Korea and China might have provided assistance.[40]

3.34 The newly unveiled Ghauri missile, with the capability of striking deep into Indian territory and named after a twelfth-century Muslim raider who defeated a Hindu ruler, Prithvi Raj Chauhan, held important symbolic significance for Pakistan.[41] The successful launch of this missile demonstrated that it could now keep in step with India's growing missile capability.[42] The Ghauri may have been Pakistan's answer to India's Prithvi but it also prompted India to push further ahead with its missile program.[43]

3.35 The launch of the Ghauri together with the announcement by Pakistan that it was in the process of developing a longer-range ballistic missile, the 'Ghaznavi', marked a significant escalation in the expanding South Asian nuclear and missiles competition. Statements at the time, such as Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan's assertion that India was ready to carry out a nuclear explosion at any time[44] and a headline in the *Hindustan Times* which carried the warning '"Ghauri" can carry N-Warhead',[45] only inflamed an already tense situation.

3.36 Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes responded to Pakistan's show of strength by stating that Pakistan's missile test came as no surprise. He added that 'China has been supplying missile technology to Pakistan despite having given an undertaking to the United States to do no such thing'. In a statement he described China as the mother of the Ghauri and asserted 'we are aware of constant outside assistance to Pakistan in this field despite the existence of multilateral export control regimes, unilateral declarations of restraint and supply restrictions on producer

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39 'Pakistan Test Fire Ghauri Missile: A Landmark in Country's Defence History', *Pakistan Government Homepage*, Internet site: http://www.pak.gov.pk/govt/ghauri.htm (18 September 1998)

40 'Pakistan set to Unveil "Ghauri" MRBM in March', *News and Views*, CDISS, February 1998 and 'Update on the Ghauri: the Evidence to Date', News Analysis, *News and Views*, CDISS, May 1998; *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 16 April 1998 and 15 May 1998: see paras 24–5.

41 Andrew Koch and Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, 'Subcontinental Missiles', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, ibid.

42 'Ignore Pressure, Develop More Missiles: Tarar', *Hindustan Times*, 20 April 1998; Internet site: http://www.hindustantimes.com/nonfram/250699.archive.asp See also *News and Views*, CDISS, February 1998.

43 David C. Wright, 'An Analysis of the Pakistani Ghauri Missile Test of 6 April 1998'. Security Studies Program, MIT, 12 May 1998. Internet site: http://www.fas.org/news/pakistan/1998/05/980512-ghauri.htm (17 August 1998).

44 *Jane's Weekly Defence*, 15 May 1998; *Hindustan Times*, 20 April 1998.

45 *Hindustan Times*, 8 April 1998.

countries.'[46] He drew attention to India's Prithvi short-range ballistic missile, which he maintained was capable of hitting any target in Pakistan. He emphasised 'we are capable of dealing with the situation in Pakistan. There is no part of Pakistan that is outside the range of Prithvi.'[47]

3.37 The Indian Prime Minister reinforced Fernandes' message. He asserted that India would not be 'a silent spectator to arms building exercise started by the neighbouring Pakistan'. He insisted that 'India is prepared to face any challenge and if necessary steps will be taken to counter new challenges'.[48] India raised the stakes by announcing plans to launch a low-orbit remote-sensing surveillance satellite over the subcontinent to monitor all missile testing activity early in 1999.[49]

3.38 As May 1998 approached, the political rhetoric became increasingly bellicose with India turning on China as a major threat to its security. Early in May, Fernandes declared China as the 'potential threat number one' with its military and naval involvement beginning to 'encircle' India along the border with Pakistan, Myanmar and Tibet.[50] He pointed to the transfer of missile technology and nuclear know-how to Islamabad by Beijing; the nuclear weapons stockpiled in Tibet along the borders with India; the extension of military air fields in Tibet; China's involvement in training and equipping the Myanmar army; the conversion of Coco islands near Andaman and Nicobar into a surveillance post for monitoring India's activities; China's plans to transform the island into a major naval base; and China's fast expanding navy 'which will be getting into the Indian Ocean fairly soon'.[51] One newspaper quoted Fernandes as saying 'the predecessor regimes had not ruled out the nuclear weapons but the new Government has ruled them in'.[52]

3.39 The extent to which such statements were an attempt to galvanise public opinion against China and in favour of nuclear testing or a genuine reflection of India's fears is difficult to assess. Nevertheless, within days the Indian Prime Minister authorised the detonation of five nuclear weapons.

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46 The *Hindu*, 'Fernandes Sees No Threat From The Ghauri', 10 April 1998, Internet site: http://www.hinduonline.com/thehindu/archives.htm; Praveen Swami, 'A Hawkish Line On China', *Frontline*, vol. 15, no. 11, 23 May–5 June 1998.

47 Missile Resources, CDISS, *Hindustan Times*, 15 April 1998.

48 'India Ready to Face Any Challenge, Says PM', The *Hindu*, 18 April 1998, p. 11.

49 Arjuna Ranawana, 'A New Threat to Stability: How Will India Answer Pakistan's Missile Test?', *AsiaWeek*, 1 May 1998. Internet site: http://www.pathfinder.com/asiaweek/constant/archive.html; *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 24 April 1998.

50 'China is Threat No. 1, says Fernandes', *Hindustan Times*, 4 May 1998.

51 *Hindustan Times*, ibid.; Ajay Singh, 'Playing with Fire', *AsiaWeek*, 29 July 1998.

52 *Hindustan Times*, ibid.