

India's Strategic Vision

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India's strategic vision, from the beginning, has been shaped by the historical and geopolitical situation in which it has been placed and how it has perceived its own security. From independence, one can trace a pattern until the 1990s, in which India responding to the regional and international geopolitical situation, based on its own security perceptions. To a large extent, India's nuclear tests in 1998 acted as a catalyst in reorganizing its security perceptions and, in the process, its strategic vision as well.

In his speech at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP) in June 2005, Pranab Mukherjee, India's defense minister hinted at the reason behind India's response to international issues. He said, "Several developments in the 20th century, with their roots in imperial history, affected India's traditional relationships with its neighborhood. Perhaps the most fateful was the partition of India. Viewed from this perspective, it can be argued that the first half of twentieth century was a decided aberration in the evolution of India's historical and traditional relationship with the outside world...While colonialism disrupted our traditional links, the Cold War delayed their restoration. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War has provided an opportunity to recover our traditional, historical linkages that had become weak during the Cold War years, and to rediscover our interest in a wider and increasingly integrated global community."¹²

This essay attempts to look into India's strategic vision in three parts. The first part traces the history of India's vision. The second part looks at the contemporary perceptions and

¹² "India's Strategic Perspectives," Address at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Washington, DC (June 27, 2005), <http://www.usindiafriendship.net/viewpoints1/mukherjee.htm>.

reasons behind the evolution of such thinking. The last part looks at the challenges facing India's strategic vision.

India's Strategic Vision: A Short History

India's strategic vision from the initial decades until the end of Cold War was shaped by several factors. India's freedom struggle and initial social, economic and political challenges in the first two decades made nonalignment her strategic vision. Perceived and explained by Jawaharlal Nehru, India's strategic vision during his era was mainly shaped by his personal convictions and beliefs. Nehru "dominated both the formulation of the (foreign) policy and its implementation to an extent and degree, for which in peace time there are few parallels in any other democratic country."¹³ This vision did not come from below or emanate from collective decision making, either in the Parliament or the cabinet. The Ministry of External Affairs also did not play any significant role in shaping India's strategic vision; it was only during the post-Nehru period when there was a serious attempt to reorganize the ministry.¹⁴ Although the Congress was the predominant party during the 1950s and 1960s, there were other political parties offering alternate visions, but they had neither had the strength inside nor outside the Parliament to effectively convey it. The Jana Sangh (today's BJP party), during this time favored nuclear weapons, establishing relations with Israel, and alignment with the West.¹⁵ However, nonalignment and Nehru's personality shaped the initial decades of India's strategic vision.

¹³ See MS Rajan, "India's foreign policy under Nehru," in MS Rajan, ed., *India's Foreign Relations during the Nehru era*, (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1976) p.vii.

¹⁴ NM Khilnani, "The Organization of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs," *India Quarterly*, Vol.23, No.4, 1975

¹⁵ See MA Kishore, *Jana Sangh and India's Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: 1969)

Externally, the Cold War and India-China War of 1962 played an important role in defining the vision as well. The Cold War was perceived as an “all out struggle between two ideologies, two systems, two blocs, two states and when it was at its height, between two men.”¹⁶ Between the capitalist and communist ideologies; between parliamentary democracy and proletarian dictatorship systems, between NATO and Warsaw Pact blocs; between the United States and the Soviet Union, and between Joseph Stalin and John Foster Dulles.¹⁷

Given these internal and external conditions, Nehru’s nonalignment was based on his personal convictions on how he saw India and its future. In his own words, “I can understand some of the smaller countries of Europe or some of the smaller countries of Asia being forced by circumstances to bow down before some of the greater powers and becoming practically satellites of those powers, because they cannot help it. The power opposed to them is so great and they have nowhere to run. But I do not think that consideration applies to India... India is too big a country herself to be bound down to any other country, however big it may be.”¹⁸ Elsewhere, he mentioned in the Parliament, “...let us not be frightened too much of the military might of this or that group. I am not frightened and I want to tell it to the world on behalf of this country that we are not frightened of the military might of this power or that. Our policy is not a passive policy or negative policy.”¹⁹

Nehru’s legacy was followed by his daughter Indira Gandhi, whose strategic vision was based more on the regional and international system of the 1960s-1980s. The Cold War, Indo-Pak War of 1971, the American support to Pakistan, and the growing China-Pakistan relationship defined India’s strategic vision during her period. Thus, India’s strategic vision during the Cold

¹⁶ KPS Menon, *India and the Cold War* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, 1966) p.2

¹⁷ KPS Menon, *India and the Cold War* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, 1966) p.2.

¹⁸ Jawaharlal Nehru, *India’s Foreign Policy* (New Delhi, 1966) p.80

¹⁹ S.Gopal, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Second Series, Volume Five* (New Delhi: JN Memorial Fund, 1987) p.499.

War era was primarily shaped by two prime ministers of India. The negative fallouts of such a process, to a large extent, affected its security apparatus in terms of decision-making.

To conclude, the initial phase of India's strategic vision was shaped by the following factors. First, the Cold War influenced India's security discourse and subsequently its vision. External threats were seen as being the primary sources of insecurity. Military security became synonymous with national security; building a strong and powerful military apparatus was seen as essential to safeguard India's security interests. Nuclear weapons were seen as a symbol of power and providing a security guarantee.

Second, as mentioned above, the security policies and strategic vision of India were determined more by its charismatic political leaders, rather than by institutions including the Parliament, cabinet and concerned ministries. It was only in 1999 that the National Security Council was born.

Third, neither India's defense policy nor its strategic vision is formally enunciated in a document. One can only trace them in various statements, annual reports of ministries, and policy decisions to understand what constitutes India's strategic vision. There was not even a defense policy document. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defense in 1997 requested that the government of India "examine the feasibility of preparing a formal National Defense Policy document for being placed before the government." In its second report (1996-97) it stated that "the committee was informed that there is no formal written document called India's Defense Policy...in the absence of any documents explaining articulated policy with stated national objectives and national interests, it was not possible for the policy to be analyzed and modified." Outside the government, many independent analysts have written extensively on the

need for a long-term national security strategy.²⁰ The Kargil Review Committee established in the aftermath of the Kargil War in 1999 also highlighted this issue.²¹

Finally, until the 1990s, the Government of India was reluctant to promote an independent strategic culture that provides critical inputs to the government and its vision. Understanding the importance of an independent strategic culture, leading strategic analyst K Subrahmanyam, mentioned very early that “it is one of the strange ironies of the situation that in spite of this criticism being voiced for well over a decade, and the country having gone through two major wars and a border skirmish, there has been no effort to study the reasons underlying this state of affairs, and to suggest concrete remedial steps.”²²

India’s Strategic Vision: The Contemporary Scenario

As mentioned above, India’s strategic perceptions have undergone significant changes in the last decade, especially since its nuclear tests. Shiv Shankar Menon, India’s foreign secretary, recently discussed the changes that have taken place in the last six decades; externally, the end of the Cold War, accelerating processes of globalization and the salience of transnational challenges characterize the global situation, while internally economic growth and modernization are transforming Indian society.²³ He specifically underlined that “our engagement with the global economy is growing rapidly, with trade in goods and services now exceeding US\$330 billion.

²⁰ See Brahma Chellaney, “Challenges to India’s National Security in the New Millennium,” in Brahma Chellaney ed., *Securing India’s Future in the New Millennium* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1999) pp.583-588; Kapil Kak, “Directions of Higher Defence-II,” *Strategic Analysis*, July 1998; Gurmeet Kanwal, “India’s National Security Strategy in a Nuclear Environment,” *Strategic Analysis*, December 2000, pp.1591-1628;

²¹ See *From Surprise to Reckoning: The Kargil Review Committee Report* (New Delhi: Sage, 2000)

²² K. Subrahmanyam, “Academic Contribution to National Security Policy Formulation in India,” *The Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses Journal*, January 1969, Vol.1, No.2, p.82.

²³ See Speech by Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon on “India and International Security” at the International Institute of Strategic Studies, <http://meaindia.nic.in/speech/2007/05/04ss01.htm>

Our needs from the world have changed, as has our capability. And this is reflected in how India perceives its own future, its ties with its neighborhood and its approach to the larger international order.’’²⁴

India’s strategic vision then is shaped by the following factors. One should take into account in each of these visions that there is both an inherent logic and a conundrum.

*A Peaceful Periphery*²⁵

It is a geopolitical reality that India is in the middle of South Asia, abutting other countries. India’s borders with its neighboring countries are born with inherent problems. The physical nature of India’s borders makes its relations extremely difficult and torturous in dealing with its neighbors. Its borders are land-based, sea-based, riverine, and mountainous. More importantly, these borders are long and porous; they have also not been completely delineated and demarcated. Even today they remain illogical and ill-defined. The India-Bangladesh (4350 km) and India-Nepal (1750 km) borders for example are completely porous, which results in substantial illegal movement of goods and people.

Besides the borders, the nature of their political systems and their evolution pose a challenge to India. Not all these countries have been democratic, although they enjoyed a democratic system during their political development. Weak states, bad governance, and the problems of nation building in these countries have resulted in the emergence and growth of non-state actors, posing a serious threat to the entire region. These non-State actors have grown

²⁴ See Speech by Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon on “India and International Security” at the International Institute of Strategic Studies, <http://meaindia.nic.in/speech/2007/05/04ss01.htm>

²⁵ The phrase was used by Shiv Shankar Menon in one of his addresses. See Speech by Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon on “India and International Security” at the International Institute of Strategic Studies, <http://meaindia.nic.in/speech/2007/05/04ss01.htm>

powerful in recent years and have international linkages. To cite an example, today, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has an air force, perhaps the only non-state actor to have one.²⁶ It also has a well-established sea wing, which poses a serious threat to India's security.²⁷

The emergence of non-state actors challenging the state has serious implications for social stability in the region, in turn affecting India's security. Bangladesh today is facing serious threat from radical Islam.²⁸ Many have hinted at the international linkages of these radical groups in Bangladesh, besides suggesting the presence of al Qaeda in Bangladesh.²⁹ In Pakistan, the presence of al Qaeda, Taliban, sectarian, and jihadi groups pose a serious challenge not only to the state, but also to the region, on both sides of its borders.³⁰ Although the violence has come to an end, the Maoist and political crises in Nepal are far from over.³¹

Failed States Index 2007³²

²⁶ N Manoharan, "Air Tigers' Maiden Attack: Motives and Implications," IPCS Issue Brief 45, April 2007

²⁷ A leading Indian analyst on Sri Lanka wrote: "A country of India's size and resources should not merely assess the dangers emanating from a changing strategic environment. It should also zealously safeguard its autonomy in decision-making. New Delhi should develop the political will to pursue courses of action that promote India's national interest. India should work with the objective of neutralising the Sea Tigers at the earliest opportunity." See V. Suryanarayan, "Sea Tigers: Threat to Indian security," *The Hindu*, 28 July 2004

²⁸ See "Bangladesh Today," Asia Report N°121, 23 October 2006

²⁹ See "Bangladesh's 'al-Qaeda links'," http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/2357171.stm, 24 October 2002; Subhash Kapila, "Bangladesh's Islamic Fundamentalists and Al Qaeda Presence: A Survey," SAAG Paper 1031, June 2004, <http://www.saag.org/papers11/paper1031.html>.

³⁰ The International Crisis Group (ICG) has published a series of reports on the threats faced by Pakistan from these non-State actors. See "Discord in Pakistan's Northern Areas," Asia Report N°131, 2 April 2007; "Pakistan: Karachi's Madrasas and Violent Extremism," Asia Report N°130, 29 March 2007; "Pakistan's Tribal Areas: Appeasing the Militants," Asia Report N°125, 11 December 2006

³¹ See the following reports for the contemporary situation in Nepal: "Nepal's Maoists: Purists or Pragmatists?," Asia Report N°132, 18 May 2007; "Nepal's Constitutional Process," Asia Report N°128, 26 February 2007; "Nepal's Peace Agreement: Making it Work," Asia Report N°126, 15 December 2006.

³² Data is extracted from "Failed States Index Scores,"

http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=229&Itemid=366

Rank	Country	Demographic Pressure	Movement of Refugees and IDPs	Group Paranoia & Group Vengeance	Human Flight	Uneven Economic Development	Sharp Economic Decline	Criminalization of the State	Deterioration of Public Services	Arbitrary use of Rule of Law	Security Apparatus: "State within State"	Rise of Factionalized Elites	External Intervention	Total
1	Sudan	9.2	9.8	10	9	9.1	7.7	10	9.5	10	9.9	9.7	9.8	113.7
2	Iraq	9	9	10	9.5	8.5	8	9.4	8.5	9.7	10	9.8	10	111.4
8	Afghanistan	8.5	8.9	9.1	7	8	8.3	8.8	8	8.2	9	8.5	10	102.3
12	Pakistan	8.2	8.5	9	8.1	8.5	5.8	8.7	7.1	8.7	9.5	9.5	8.5	100.1
14	Myanmar	8.5	8.5	9.1	6	8.9	7.6	9.1	8.3	9.8	9	8.2	4	97
16	Bangladesh	8.6	5.8	9.6	8.4	9	6.9	9	7.4	7.8	8	9.5	5.9	95.9
21	Nepal	8.1	5.2	8.9	6.1	9.2	8.2	8.5	6.6	8.8	8.3	8.5	7.2	93.6
25	Sri Lanka	7	8.6	9.5	6.9	8.2	6	8.9	6.5	7.5	8.7	9.2	6.1	93.1
66	Maldives	8	7	4.9	7	4.9	7.3	7.9	7.1	7.7	6.1	7.2	6	81.1
110	India	8.3	3.2	7	7.1	8.9	4.6	4.8	6.7	5.4	5	5.6	4.2	70.8

Finally, most of these states in India's periphery are unstable on various indicators. The Failed States Index 2007 published by *Foreign Policy* and the Fund for Peace shows the problems in India's periphery. Among the top twenty five countries in this index, six are in to South Asia and its immediate neighborhood. Afghanistan ranks eighth and Pakistan twelfth, with Burma and Bangladesh fourteenth and sixteenth, respectively. Nepal and Sri Lanka are ranked twenty first and twenty fifth, respectively.

Extending the Neighborhood: From South Asia to Southern Asia

India's regional strategic vision is no more limited strictly to the South Asian region. Today it considers Central Asia, West Asia, Southeast Asia, and China as a part of its extended neighborhood in Southern Asia.

The logic of extending this regional vision is based on the several factors. Central and West Asia are two regions, important for India, especially for economic reasons. With a booming economy, India's energy security needs are closely linked with both these regions in its West. Furthermore, this region is also important for other reasons, as explained by the defence minister of India, "The Gulf forms parts of our strategic neighborhood and important source of energy, home to over the 3.5 million Indians, and a major trading partner. Parts of it are also a source of ideology, funding and recruits to the cause of Islamic radicalism and terrorism. Iraq remains volatile. Iran's nuclear intentions and the response of the international community have introduced a new factor of uncertainty in an already highly disturbed region."³³

Second, India shares land and maritime borders with three Southeast Asian countries – Myanmar, Thailand, and Indonesia – which is a geographical reality that went unnoticed or under-noticed for a very long time. Only recently, India has started thinking in terms of a "Look East Policy."

What is the road map for India to achieve this vision in its extended neighborhood? Here, according to Foreign Secretary Menon, "the key to ensuring long-term stability and security in Asia lies is the collective ability of Asian countries to build mutual economic stakes in each other, and to construct open regional security architecture, as ARF and other organizations are attempting to do."³⁴

³³ "India's Strategic Perspectives," Address at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Washington, DC (June 27, 2005), <http://www.usindiafriendship.net/viewpoints1/mukherjee.htm>

³⁴ Speech by Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon on "India and International Security" at the International Institute of Strategic Studies, <http://meaindia.nic.in/speech/2007/05/04ss01.htm>

Shaping a New International Order and Building Strategic Partnerships

India's global strategic vision is based on shaping a new international order that includes the United States, the European Union, China, Russia, Japan, and India. The logic behind this global strategic vision is explained by Shyam Saran, then foreign secretary in May 2006. He noted, "If we look at the emerging international landscape, the way India looks at it, we see that in the foreseeable future this landscape is likely to be influenced by and continue to be influenced by a constellation of major powers. Among them, of course, the United States, the European Union, China, and Russia. We include India as well today as also Japan, not only because of political, military and the economic power that they are likely to wield but also because the capabilities they could bring to bear in tackling a whole range of global, regional situations as well as crisis situations."³⁵

Second, some of the issues that India faces are not limited to its immediate or extended neighborhood, but are international in nature. Terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, energy security, and environmental threats are significant international issues that India needs to tackle at the international level.³⁶ While international terrorism poses a serious threat to most democratic countries, India has a peculiar situation in which it is fighting groups that are local in nature, but have international linkages. The trafficking of arms and narcotics, money laundering, and smuggling are also transnational issues with which India must contend.

³⁵ See "India and the Emerging World Order," Address by Shyam Saran, Foreign Secretary of India at IISS, London, 25 May 2006.

³⁶ Invariably these issues are identified as core in terms of India's global concerns in various statements and speeches by political leaders and foreign ministry officials. See Speech by Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon on "India and International Security" at the International Institute of Strategic Studies, <http://meaindia.nic.in/speech/2007/05/04ss01.htm>; "India and the Emerging World Order," Address by Shyam Saran, Foreign Secretary of India at IISS, London, 25 May 2006;

On the positive side, the international community could learn something from India's experience with tackling terrorism. At least two issues are worth mentioning. First, despite having the third largest Muslim population, there have been no Indian Muslims who have taken part in the international jihad. In other words, up to this point, there have been no credible reports to prove that Indian Muslims have become a part of the al Qaeda movement. Second, despite human rights violations, India's record of fighting insurgency and terrorism has been commendable. For example, it has not used its air power to fight militancy anywhere in the country. It has been pursuing a successful policy of working with the civil society in its fight against militancy. Salva Judum and Village defense committees are two such examples in India's counterinsurgency strategy in fighting the Naxalites and terrorists in Kashmir respectively.

Third, weapons of mass destruction and their safe custody is a cause of concern to India as well. The presence of non-state actors with an interest to acquire these weapons makes the threat posed by WMD lethal and a cause of global concern. What happens in Iran and North Korea has a direct impact on India's security, as was seen in the recent unearthing of a nuclear black market, with linkages with Pakistan's nuclear program. India, has long argued that the international nuclear regime is flawed and refused to sign nuclear treaties such as the NPT and CTBT. Many critics in India have been arguing that the international nuclear regime is failing or already failed. However, the most important question that New Delhi needs to address is now: Is a weak or unstable international nuclear regime in India's interests? Is it not in India's interest to strengthen the international nuclear regime?

Toward achieving the above objectives and realizing its international strategic vision, India is seriously engaged in building strategic partnerships with the five above-mentioned countries/groupings – the United States, European Union, Russia, China and Japan. However, these strategic partnerships are at different levels of development.

Realizing India's Strategic Vision: Challenges Galore

Realizing India's strategic vision in its periphery, extended region and international levels, will require facing the following challenges.

Given the problems discussed in part II, a stable, moderate and democratic South Asia is in the interests of India. But how can this be achieved? What efforts should India pursue to make this regional strategic vision come true? Shiv Shankar Menon commented recently on the importance of this regional strategic vision and a road map to achieve it, saying, "From India's perspective, we are acutely conscious that a peaceful periphery is a prerequisite to sustain our growth and development. The challenge, therefore, is to encourage our neighbors to see the possible gains from a more active engagement. In the last decade, countries like Bhutan and Sri Lanka who have sought to leverage India's growth to their benefit have benefited greatly. Our hope is that this will embolden our other neighbors to do the same. For its part, India is prepared to take a long term view of these relationships and to take unilateral steps to put them on a better footing."³⁷

³⁷ Speech by Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon on "India and International Security" at the International Institute of Strategic Studies, <http://meaindia.nic.in/speech/2007/05/04ss01.htm>

India's vision for a peaceful periphery and the way to achieve it is not shared by most of its neighbors. This is where the challenge lies in achieving India's regional strategic vision. Most of the other countries in the region are not willing to follow the example of Bhutan and Sri Lanka in building a relationship with India. Even Sri Lanka, vis-à-vis the Tamil and LTTE issue, would like to pursue an alternative policy, not totally in conformity with the Indian perceptions and plans.

Second, if these countries decide to pursue an independent policy, affecting India's interests in the long run, India unfortunately does not have influence – be it economic, political or military – to pressure them. Manmohan Singh, in one of his speeches mentioned, “the strengthening of democracy in (the) region will...restore to South Asia as a whole a unique place, and a place of great importance in the community of nations.”³⁸ Will India be able to influence democratic forces to prevail or be able to pressurize non-democratic institutions to lie low in its neighborhood? In short, does India have the political will to impose democratic governments in the region? India's reach on this crucial issue is limited. Nor is India keen on exporting democracy to its neighborhood. Shyam Saran, made this clear, saying, “Our policy is very clear. We do not believe in the export of ideology. We do not believe in the imposition of democracy or democratic values on any country. But if there is an interest in any country in our democratic experience or in institution-building...This is the spirit in which we have contributed to the UN Democracy Fund.”³⁹

Third, external interests and presence, though at times exaggerated, also play a role in distancing the regimes in India's neighborhood from New Delhi. Fourth, India has yet to take adequate “unilateral steps” in a “war footing” to reach out to its neighbors. Nor has it been able

³⁸ “India : The Next Global Superpower?” Manmohan Singh's speech at the HT Leadership Summit, New Delhi, 17 November 2006, <http://pmindia.nic.in/speech/content.asp?id=449>

³⁹ “India and the Neighborhood,” Address by Shyam Saran, 14 February 2005

to make SAARC a success story, so that India could move along with the rest of South Asia as a region.⁴⁰

Finally and most importantly, India has yet to reach an understanding with Pakistan on crucial issues, despite a peace process in place since 2003. Until India reaches an understanding with Pakistan, and effectively realizes that a stable Pakistan is in India's interest, regional peace is impossible. A bleeding Afghanistan at war with itself and with its neighbors, including Pakistan and Iran, has far-reaching implications for India.

India also faces many challenges in realizing its global strategic vision. Effective international cooperation on terrorism is still a major task. For starters, there are certain structural problems in addressing international terrorism. While al Qaeda is a major international threat it has not made any efforts to open a new front against India to this point. However, most of the militant groups that India is fighting are not international terrorists. Therefore, most of the militant groups that India is fighting in India's Northeast and Kashmir are not outlawed elsewhere. For example, out of more than fifty militant groups, only three have been banned by the United States due to being "foreign terrorist organizations" – Harakat-ul-Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Toiba.

⁴⁰ Shyam Saran, the then foreign secretary, in a meeting organized by the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis explained the challenge: "India would not like to see a SAARC in which some of its members perceive it as a vehicle primarily to countervail India or to seek to limit its room for maneuver. There has to be a minimal consensual basis on which to pursue cooperation under SAARC, and that is the willingness to promote cross-border linkages, building upon intra-regional economic complementarities and acknowledging and encouraging the obvious cultural affinities that bind our people together. If there continues to be a resistance to such linkages within the region, even while seeking to promote linkages outside the region, if the thrust of initiatives of some of the members is seen to be patently hostile to India or motivated by a desire to contain India in some way SAARC would continue to lack substance and energy." See "India and the Neighborhood," Address by Shyam Saran, 14 February 2005.

On the other hand, India has made significant contributions in maintaining global peace, mainly through taking part in international peacekeeping operations; India has contributed close to 90,000 troops in more than 40 countries under UN peacekeeping operations.⁴¹

Second, on creating a new international nuclear regime, India has a long way to go. Unfortunately, India seems to be caught up between its own rhetoric of complete nuclear disarmament and an inflated national prestige based on nuclear weapons. Undoubtedly, complete nuclear disarmament is desirable and most Indians share national pride because it is a nuclear weapons state. However, both claims have been exaggerated by subsequent governments to pursue India's nuclear weapons program. It was a good strategy at a time, but at the present, India has to move beyond its stated position. Now that India has become a nuclear weapons state, it is in its interest to have a stable nuclear regime to which India contributes.

In fact, the process has already begun. Menon highlighted the changed realities when he said, "We maintain our voluntary moratorium on tests, are ready to engage in negotiations in a non-discriminatory fissile material cut-off treaty, and we enforce strict and comprehensive export controls, which have now been harmonized with those of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime. We have scrupulously not transferred enrichment and reprocessing technologies to countries that do not have them, and have supported international efforts to halt their spread. Recent events have shown that a new global consensus on non-proliferation is required, based on an equal partnership of responsible states. As a responsible nuclear power with impeccable credentials on nonproliferation, we are ready to be a partner against proliferation, working closely to create a new consensus on which to move forward."⁴²

⁴¹ See "Role of Indian Army in Peace Keeping Operations," in Maj Gen Dipankar Banerjee and Ramesh Thakur eds., *Emerging Challenges in UN Peace Keeping Operations* (New Delhi: Samskriti, 2006), pp. 233-243.

⁴² Speech by Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon on "India and International Security" at the International Institute of Strategic Studies, <http://meaindia.nic.in/speech/2007/05/04ss01.htm>

Third, building partnerships also have its own problems with at least two crucial countries – the United States and China. The Indo-U.S. nuclear deal is under extreme pressure and the Sino-Indian rapprochement is going slower than before. As for the nuclear deal, it is under pressure over certain technical issues such as reprocessing the spent fuel and not going for further nuclear tests.⁴³ Regarding China, although there have been ten rounds of negotiations between the principal negotiators, recent statements by the Chinese foreign ministry underline the tensions and the hard road ahead. After the tenth round of negotiations between Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo and Indian National Security Advisor MK Narayanan in April 2007, Yang Jiechi, the new Chinese foreign minister, in early June 2007 stated that the mere presence of populated areas would not affect Chinese claims on the boundary.⁴⁴ This is in contradiction with the earlier understanding reached between the two countries which said, “in reaching a boundary settlement, the two sides shall safeguard due interests of their settled populations in the border areas.”

One is not sure, why such a statement was made by the Chinese Foreign Minister. Are the parameters being changed in China’s engagement of India? Is there an internal struggle within the Chinese foreign policy establishment? Or is China upset with the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal and the growing Indo-U.S. strategic partnership that it sees as anti-Beijing?

Shyam Saran made the following observations of India’s objectives: “We would like to expand our strategic space, we would like to increase the autonomy of our decisionmaking, we

⁴³ For the different perspectives on the deal, see the following: Manpreet Sethi, “Indo-US Civilian Nuclear Cooperation: Reprocessing Issue Reconstructed,” IPCS Issue Brief 47, June 2007; “Nuclear deal: on the brink of disaster,” *The Hindu*, 9 June 2007; “123, and why we don't go,” *The Indian Express*, 1 May 2007; “Indo-US Nuclear Deal: Where are the Blocks?,” Report of the Seminar held at the IPCS on 18 May 2007, <http://www.ipcs.org/Nuclear.jsp>; “123 Semantic Subterfuges,” *Asian Age*, 15 May 2007; George Perkovich, “Faulty Promises: The US-India Nuclear Deal,” *CEIP Policy Outlook*, September 2005

⁴⁴ “China draws another hardline on Arunachal,” *The Indian Express*, 7 June 2007

would like to be able to contribute to the emergence of an international order which is conducive to the pursuit of our interests.” How India will balance these three issues will remain its greatest challenge. India achieving its strategic vision will depend on how it is able to convey its vision to the rest of the international community, convince them of its merits, and carry its interests forward along with the other great powers.