



CISS Analysis on

Overcoming Pakistan's Nuclear Dangers by Mark Fitzpatrick (International Institute for Strategic Studies Adelphi Paper, IISS)

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Introduction

The book titled "*Overcoming Pakistan's Nuclear Dangers*" written by Mark Fitzpatrick of IISS London has made a detailed study of Pakistan's nuclear program. The author suggests normalizing Pakistan's status as a nuclear weapons state under certain conditions termed as 'nuclear normalcy'. The author analyzes several dynamics of Pakistan's nuclear deterrence policies, regional nuclear deterrence in South Asia and associated risks, such as nuclear terrorism, arms race, and opportunities and suggests a way forward for stability in the region.

As opposed to the existing dominant narrative/culture available on Pakistan's nuclear program seen as hostile by many Pakistanis, the author of this book has taken a balanced approach towards the topic under discussion. Mr. Mark Fitzpatrick at many places in the book has put forth Pakistan's rationale of adopting certain nuclear related policies currently under debate, such as development of tactical nuclear weapons, treaty issues of CTBT and FMCT and nuclear doctrine. The book, however, does not support many of the positions taken by Pakistan on these issues but does give the context in which these policies were adopted.

While the author has discussed at length apprehensions prevailing in certain quarters about nuclear terrorism emanating from Pakistan, and does not dismiss the possibility of its occurrence entirely, the book appreciates measures taken by relevant Pakistani authorities, the NCA and the SPD, for developing and maintaining a robust nuclear safety and security regime. Citing these measures the author dismisses the perception emanating from western authors about the potential transfer of nuclear weapons and technology to Saudi Arabia by

explaining policy consequences and security measures taken by SPD to prevent proliferation of nuclear know how.

The author explains the reasons for Pakistani position on CTBT and FMCT in a comprehensive manner but disagrees with the approach taken by Pakistan on these treaty matters. He argues, in his suggested path for Pakistan to attain nuclear normalcy, that if Pakistan is confident of its cold testing abilities then acceding to CTBT can be a good diplomatic coup against India. Similarly on FMCT, the author holds that by unblocking FMCT negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament (CD) Pakistan can ensure that India's fissile material availability remains at the current level.

On Pakistan's development of tactical nuclear weapons for short range ballistic missiles, the arguments in the book are not different than those already given by several authors against this strategy. The author maintains by citing research papers and unnamed official sources that Pakistan has not decided to delegate the launch authority to local commanders. But he is skeptical about it. He goes on to argue that there are also dangers of theft, sabotage, inadvertent use and detonation through conventional strikes linked with introduction of battlefield nuclear systems that undermines stability.

More interesting is the idea of 'nuclear normalcy' presented by the author which is the central thesis of the book. The idea is to treat Pakistan as a 'normal' nuclear state by integrating it with global nuclear order provided the country is prepared for policy readjustments in certain areas. The areas identified by the author are: restraint in declaratory policy, practices that ensures safety and security and compliance with the global non-proliferation regimes i.e. adhering to CTBT and FMCT.

In analyzing this thesis of the author, the following points need careful consideration:

The problem with the idea of nuclear normalcy is that like rationality in international relations it is a subjective term with no standard definition. Pakistan is already a normal nuclear state with good record in nuclear safety and security arena and restraint in declaratory policy. This fact is recognized by the author too,

but what he is really trying to implicitly recommend is that Pakistan should not diversify and expand its nuclear capabilities and options under the Full Spectrum Deterrence posture adopted by it in response to rapidly changing regional strategic realities.

In any case, the idea of nuclear normalcy is a question of high politics. Nuclear normalcy deal between the US and India (leading to nuclear deals with other powers as well) has a geopolitical context. The US wanted to win India over to its side so that it can use it as a bulwark against China. This vision requires regional countries of South Asia, especially Pakistan, to withdraw its India specific pressure instruments ranging from low intensity actors, regional politics and strategic deterrence (reference: possible future deployment of battlefield range nuclear weapons by Pakistan). This US vision of South Asia however, does not promote Pakistan's own geopolitical interests in the region.

While the author of the book mentions the geopolitical context of nuclear normalcy with India, he fails to clarify Pakistan's place within the new American geostrategic vision and its negative implications for it. More specifically, the author has not identified the geopolitical context for a nuclear normalcy deal for Pakistan and hence there is a lack of connectivity in the argument for nuclear normalcy. If the US vision for South Asia is anchored around three principles of its rebalancing to Asia – Pacific i.e. containment of China, propping up India and pressurizing Pakistan to subsidize India's growth in the region, then there is no attraction for Pakistan for a nuclear normalcy deal.

The author is dismissive of concerns in Pakistan regarding US intentions towards Pakistan and its nuclear program and labels them as paranoia. The argument presented by the author that Abbottabad raid by US Special Forces should not be taken as attacks on well guarded nuclear and missile storage sites appears sophisticated but misses a critical point. What Abbottabad raid signified was that with enough ground support of its intelligence network and assets within Pakistan coupled with sophisticated tactics, US took a risk and was able to blunt Pakistan's outer layer of air defenses and intelligence and its SEAL commandos were able to reach the target undetected and unchallenged.

Moreover it is also a matter of intentions coupled with capabilities. From time to time US officials have hinted publicly that concrete plans are in place in the event of a Pakistani nuclear emergency. For instance, during Senate hearing for her confirmation as secretary of State in 2005, the then-National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice was asked by Sen. John Kerry what would happen to Pakistan's nukes in the event of an Islamic coup in Islamabad. "We have noted this problem, and we are prepared to try to deal with it," Rice said in response.

US military presence in Afghanistan and its vast intelligence network in the region offer it greater flexibility regarding such an operation against Pakistan in future. Other examples can also be cited e.g. the US black budget intelligence leakages by Edward Snowden but the point is that Pakistan's concerns about the US intentions cannot be termed as paranoia. However it can be argued that the possibility of such an eventuality seem low, and potential cost for the US may be unbearable.

Thirdly, on a more technical level the conditions attached by Mr. Fitzpatrick regarding readjustment of policies by Pakistan on FMCT and CTBT also do not promote Pakistan's interests. Regarding CTBT, Pakistan needs to keep its options of hot testing open even when its cold testing capabilities have matured. As Pakistan modernizes its nuclear weapons program and operationalizes plutonium based miniaturized warheads of low yield, there may arise the need to move beyond cold testing towards hot tests. Acceding to CTBT closes options for Pakistan's maneuverability in this regard. On FMCT, Pakistan has already taken a firm position at the CD forum in UN and is well explained by the author. Although there is a vibrant debate in Pakistan how best to calibrate the current Pakistani posture *vis a vis* FMCT at the CD, but here too the argument of keeping Pakistan's options open in relation to warheads count is relevant. Other arguments regarding this debate are presented well in the book.

In the overall assessment, this book contains no new argument of which policy makers and academics at the global, regional and national levels are not already aware. The idea of nuclear normalcy introduced in this book however is likely to generate a new debate within the global strategic community and policy circles and will help address a long held wider question of how to integrate the *de facto* nuclear states into the global nuclear order. Whether some criteria for such

nuclear states will be adopted as a result of this debate, which also address legitimate security concerns of these states as well, only future will tell.

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CISS Analysis on Nuclear Security Summit Process and Pakistan

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Introduction

The third nuclear security summit, which is a biennial conclave of heads of the governments from around the world, concluded in the Dutch capital The Hague in March 2014. The summit focused on securing nuclear materials, strengthening international legal framework and supporting the national efforts to enhance nuclear security.

The idea of the Nuclear Security Summit was advanced by US President Barack Obama during his 2009 Prague speech, when he termed the danger of nuclear terrorism as one of the “most immediate and extreme threats to global security”. This assessment appeared against the backdrop of a sharp increase in the quantity of fissile materials in the world. There were growing calls for recognizing the potential risk related to the possibility that non-state actors might acquire small quantities of weapons-usable fissile materials. Moreover, so far, states have treated nuclear security as their national responsibility. The existing nuclear security regimes aim at strengthening national measures to compensate for weak international legal regimes. To address the multitude of security challenges relating to the fissile materials available in the world, President Obama called for engagement between states and international nuclear organizations at the highest political level. Thus was born the Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) Process.

The United States hosted the first summit in 2010. It is the baseline for summit process which underlined three objectives. 1) Reducing the amount of dangerous nuclear material in the world, 2) Improving the security of all nuclear material and radioactive sources, 3) Improving international cooperation on securing loose nuclear materials. South Korea hosted the second summit in 2012. It addressed security at nuclear facilities and states pledged to enhance their national practices. Since 2012, seven states have removed nuclear materials from their territories and more than a dozen states have taken steps to reduce their stockpiles of fissile

materials and strengthen security of the materials they possess. Today only 25 states in the world have one kilogram or more of weapons-usable fissile materials. Thus, number of states with sensitive and dangerous nuclear materials has decreased substantially. This is significant progress since the commencement of the NSS process.

In the 2014 summit, the leaders looked at the global nuclear-security system and the international safeguards to control spread of fissile materials. 35 nations pledged to adopt international guidelines as national law to improve nuclear security in their respective states and have also agreed to allow independent experts to “evaluate their security procedures for nuclear material.” But major nuclear weapons states including China, Russia, India and Pakistan did not join this initiative.

During the Prague speech President Obama had pledged to secure all vulnerable nuclear materials in the world by the end of 2013, but this goal has not been achieved yet. This was primarily because critical international legal agreements that have the capacity to increase the security of potentially vulnerable fissile materials are not in force. The 2005 Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material has not come into force yet because of insufficient number of ratifications by state parties.

Efforts at securing potentially at-risk nuclear materials have been complicated by the narrow approach taken during nuclear security summits. States only offer initiatives on voluntary basis because they still consider nuclear security as their sovereign national responsibility. States are reluctant to adopt openness because of their legitimate security concerns. These apprehensions have held the leaders back from engaging in productive discussions on measures that all states could adopt and implement to evolve an effective and verifiable global or regional nuclear security regime. Thus, a system is not yet in place for safeguarding all fissile materials. An international regime giving confidence that all states have effectively secured their fissile stockpiles, and that states are accountable to each other or to an international or regional oversight organization for the security and safety of fissile material has yet to be agreed to by all states.

Pakistan has been an active participant in all the three Nuclear Security Summits since commencement of the process. During the Seoul Summit in 2012, Pakistan

offered to open its Nuclear Security Training Centers for other states as it can act as a regional and global center of learning and training. Pakistan also announced the deployment of Special Nuclear Material Portals on major entry and exit points to check the illicit transportation of fissile materials. During the March 2014 security summit at The Hague Pakistan expressed its resolve to enhance nuclear security and engage with international community to promote nuclear safety and security.

Nevertheless, Pakistan maintained that institutionalizing the NSS process was not advisable. It reposed confidence in the existing global nuclear security architecture that encompasses measures taken by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the United Nations. Moreover, it called for revision of global nuclear regime on the principles of non-discrimination and equality. For Pakistan, unfinished part of the NSS process is a step towards its recognition as a legitimate nuclear-weapon state.

Pakistan also refused to join the call for adopting international guidelines on nuclear security as its national law. This was primarily because of concerns regarding evaluation of its nuclear security regime by external experts. It can be argued that there need not be concerns regarding this proposal as Pakistan has already adopted international guidelines as its national law, after reviewing them according to Pakistan's own requirements. This refers to the Strategic Export Control Act of 2004 which also follows the NSG and other international guidelines, on nuclear security. Pakistan has gained greater credibility as a result of adopting these measures.

Pakistan has faced international pressure over the specter of nuclear terrorism due to growing instability in the country. In the last few years, however, Pakistan has improved its nuclear security apparatus and has also engaged with international community to address latter's apprehensions. Similarly, NSS meeting at The Hague was an opportunity to address important questions at the highest political level internationally. Such a high level engagement signaled to the world that Pakistan is a responsible nuclear weapon state and is committed to fully cooperate with the international community to ensure safety and security of its fissile materials.

The Nuclear Security Summit process is a welcome move to encourage responsible state behavior. However, the post-Summit environment is tangled with challenges that threatens to overshadow the NSS future prospects despite some achievements so far. It is therefore important to first identify these challenges to forge critical international will in order to sustain momentum initiated by the NSS process.

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