Citation: Azad, T. M., & Rehman, M. (2020). International Misperceptions about Pakistan's Nuclear Security. *Global Strategic & Security Studies Review* , *V*(IV), 9-19. https://doi.org/10.31703/gsssr.2020(V-IV).02

International Misperceptions about Pakistan's Nuclear Security

Pages: 9 – 19 | Vol. V, No. IV (Fall 2020)

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Abstract *This paper aims to outline the international misperception about Pakistan's nuclear programme and analyses the origins of each critique, but also the measures Pakistan has put in place to rectify it. Furthermore, some issues will remain, but remain issues for all states with nuclear weapons and are not unique to Pakistan. These cases are outlined, and it is argued that these should be seen as international issues and that Pakistan should not be singled out for such failings. This paper is primarily aimed at scholars of security and strategic studies to inform them of the origins of the international perceptions, but also how the country has responded. The paper, therefore, may also assist international scholars who observe Pakistan's nuclear programme externally to acquaint them with the considerable efforts Pakistan had undergone since 1998 when it first conducted its nuclear test.*

Key Words: Nuclear Weapons, Pakistan, Security, International Perception

Introduction

> *Misperception involves a discrepancy between the psychological environment of the decision-makers and the operational environment of the "real world"* (Levy, 1983, p.79).
>
> *Jack S. Levy*

Pakistan's nuclear programmes have faced a range of international concerns, and foreign perspectives of Pakistan's nuclear programmes are not complimentary. Concerns range from the efficacy of its nuclear weapon command and control, the safety and security of its nuclear weapons, and even the security of Pakistan's nuclear expertise and technology. In general, concerns have been triggered by certain events or episodes in Pakistan's history, and Pakistani authorities have worked hard to correct these mistakes, implementing organizational, procedural, and physical measures in light of such criticisms. Nonetheless, this paper argues that this history combined with the amplifying effect of modern media, a fixation on outdated case studies by foreign analysts, and a disconnect between non-proliferation and arms control scholars, with security professionals, means the international perception of Pakistan's nuclear programme remains poor.

Global Worries

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, it was generally perceived that terrorists might use nuclear devices, fissile material or radioactive dispersal devices (RDD) against any state to accomplish their political objectives. Therefore, nuclear fissile material, radioactive sources,

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DOI: 10.31703/gsssr.2020(V-IV).02 | URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsssr.2020(V-IV).02
p- ISSN: 2708-2121 | e-ISSN: 2708-3616 | L- ISSN: 2708-2121

storage facilities and nuclear installations are under serious potential security threats since the tragic events of September 11, 2001 (Abdul, 2008, pp.221-222).

Though the threat of nuclear terrorism has been addressed by the global community in a very serious manner, unfortunately, it has not been able to develop a comprehensive strategy to mitigate this threat. According to Pavel Podvig, current global nuclear security regimes are not sufficient to address nuclear material and installation safety and security. Podvig further states that in every country, security culture is different. While developing a nuclear security culture, every state has placed its own priorities and regulations. However, the ultimate objective of all nuclear-weapon states is to keep their nuclear assets under effective command and control with infallible security.

After September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks concerns of the increasing propensity of mass casualty terrorism raised concerns of nuclear terrorism up the international political agenda. Despite the association of the threat with non-state actors, this threat is not linked with any particular nuclear-weapon state or region and has a wide range of implications. The general concern was the transfer of nuclear fissile material, nuclear weapons or technology required to build bombs by the (so-called) rogue states (Potter & Hansell, 2013, p.1). After September 11, 2001, Al-Qaida's quest to acquire nuclear weapons was taken more seriously (Potter, 2013, pp.7-8), adjusting this threat perceptions from previously hypothetical concerns into policy outcomes (EURO, 2007, p.3).

Outlining Perception

Pakistan is placed at a very critical Geo-political location with world focus constantly glaring at it for many decades. Mostly, it receives international attention from conflict with India, domestic terrorism.

In the wake of perilous situations after 9/11, Pakistan's nuclear weapons security has attained prime focus in an international debate. It is obvious that international worries about Pakistan's nuclear weapons are generally communicated and emphasized by the international mass media. In the age of electronic and print media, it has become very easy to make or break a perception about any individual, group or state. The international community knows mainly what it learns through the media. There are various other questions and concerns raised by Western security experts and analysts. However, these questions and concerns are mostly based on self-threat assessments, secondary sources and deductive arguments.

Pakistan's perspective on such perceptions is equally important to comprehend. Since 1998, when Pakistan became a nuclear-weapon state, the international community has raised various security concerns about its nuclear programme. According to Naeem Salik, "Pakistan's nuclear weapon programme has always been at the centre of one controversy or another" (Salik, 2011, p.1). From nuclear proliferation to nuclear security matters, the global community has raised several questions over Pakistan's nuclear weapons. In the post 9/11 scenario, concerns have been shown by the USA and some Western states over the security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons and fissile material. They have deliberately tried to discredit the national command and control system (Ali, 2007, p.5). Ian Bremmer and Maria Kuusisto have elaborated on the causes and consequences of nuclear weapons security in Pakistan. In their article, they have explained that although Pakistan has significantly developed its national command and control system and impressively established its operational procedures, 'the 9/11 terrorist attacks, A. Q. Khan case in 2004, and the terrorist attacks in Pakistan, particularly on military installations, triggered concerns in the international community that Pakistan's control over its nuclear weapons may be weak. This perception has wide-ranging strategic diplomatic, political, and economic implications for Pakistan" (Bremmer & Kuusisto, 2008, p.7). Pakistani officials believe that these concerns are exaggerated and they have no credibility. Thus many questions arise, like: "Why is the international community, especially the West, so pessimistic about Pakistan's nuclear weapons? Why Pakistan's nuclear security has been questioned?

In Evan Braden Montgomery's view, "in Pakistan, ongoing political instability and popular unrest, as well as suspicions that members of Pakistan's military, intelligence, and scientific establishments continue to sympathize with and perhaps even support violent Islamist groups, have exacerbated fears that Pakistan's nuclear weapons may be vulnerable" (Montgomery, 2010, p.4). Pregenzer (2003), while mentioning the nuclear security threats in Pakistan, has also argued that greater political instability in Pakistan and uncertain reactions towards terrorist organizations lead to global worries about Pakistan's nuclear weapons' security (p.2). He has added that the absence of a "no-first-use" nuclear doctrine may lead to a crisis situation. The role of command and control authority in Pakistan has also been criticized by many Western analysts. Furthermore, while stating the global concerns, Bruno Tertrais has categorized the threat in three different scenarios (Tertrais, 2012a, p.11):

- WMD-related Transfers
- Losing Control of Nuclear Weapons
- Deliberate Nuclear Use

He has stated that in Pakistan, there is a possibility of horizontal proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In another scenario, there is a possibility that the command and control system collapses and nuclear weapons fall into the hands of non-state actors. In the worst-case scenario, there is a possibility of unauthorized use of nuclear weapons. While talking about changing global perception about Pakistan, Toby Dalton has categorized the following trigger points:

- September 11, 2001 incident in the USA
- The terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001
- A.Q. Khan case in 2004
- TTP emergence in 2007
- Mumbai attacks in 2008
- Attacks on military installations in Pakistan
- U.S operation in Abbottabad against Osama Bin Laden in May 2011

According to Toby Dalton's point of view, the above-stated incidents have brought about a major change in global thinking about Pakistan's nuclear image. A.Q. Khan episode has always been repeated while dealing with Pakistan in its nuclear security management. The weak social fabric with a loud religious faction supporting violence and causing disruption to the smooth flow of general social life and ever-changing types of terrorism in Pakistan has added fuel to the fire.

The case of A.Q. Khan has created the ultimate sense of mistrust in Pakistan's commitment to nuclear non-proliferation. According to Clary (2010), "Pakistan's past inability or unwillingness to control the A. Q. Khan nuclear supplier network further amplifies international concerns" (p.3). Veda (2012) has narrated his views about Pakistan in such a way that the A.Q. Khan network misused its authority, and that the international community observes Pakistan as irresponsible and an unreliable state that is involved in nuclear proliferation worldwide (p.55). While mentioning nuclear security concerns, he has further articulated four threat scenarios about Pakistan's nuclear weapons (Veda, 2012, pp.59-63):

- Threat from within the organization
- Terrorists attempting to steal nuclear material or technology
- Loss of control over nuclear weapons due to political instability
- Non-state actors and the threat to nuclear weapons

These scenarios project that Pakistan's nuclear weapons are not only insecure from terrorists or non-state actors, but there are threats from within the relevant organizations. Terrorists or non-state actors, with insider help, can steal or control nuclear weapons. Chaim Braun, while addressing nuclear security threats in Pakistan, has highlighted several security threats associated with Pakistan's nuclear plant's expansion plans:

- Protection of Spent Fuel Storage Pools.
- Fissile Material Diversion from Nuclear Power Stations.
- Terrorists Could Attack, Seize, and Take over These Nuclear Stations.
- Using a Means of Transport to Attack Station (Veda, 2012, pp.63-64).

Chaim Braun perceives that terrorists can attack civil nuclear storage facilities. In his view, terrorists can also attack during the transportation of fissile material of nuclear weapons from one facility to another. Bruce Riedel's articulation and worries about Pakistan's nuclear weapons are also very similar. He has further added that Pakistan is rapidly developing its nuclear weapons. In 2009, Riedel had "explored" that "Pakistan has more terrorists per square mile than anyplace else on earth, and it has a nuclear weapons programme that is growing faster than anyplace else on earth" (Riedel, 2009).

It is a fact that Pakistan is continuously facing a series of terrorist attacks. According to Tertrais (2012a), Pakistan's official statements do not address the security of fissile material in a storage facility (p.21). There is a perception that Pakistan only addresses the security of nuclear weapons but makes little efforts to secure its civil nuclear facilities. On the other hand, Pakistan declares its nuclear research and development programme as properly managed and well protected. Nevertheless, conspiracies about Pakistan's nuclear weapons' security are continuously growing.

Pakistan's nuclear weapons are also labelled an "Islamic Bomb". While explaining the international concerns, Salik (2011) has stated that Pakistan's nuclear programme was also incorrectly judged as the "Islamic Bomb", which creates sensitivity and political opposition amongst the pro-Israel lobbies in the United States. In this mistrust, further speculations were created about Pakistan (p.2). While explaining this notion, Musharraf (2006) has categorically addressed Western concern (p.288):

No one else's bomb is called Hindu, Jewish, Christian, capitalist, or communist, yet somehow our bomb becomes "Islamic" as if that makes it illegitimate. The idea is illogical and essentially racist. This is an example of how Muslims continually feel unjustly singled out and alienated.

By giving Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme a religious identity, the world is more exposed to the pessimistic approach. There are a lot of ambiguities and misperceptions while addressing Pakistan's case. According to Ian Anthony, "because of the serious security situation in Pakistan, we can assume that its nuclear weapons are not secure". Like others, he has referred to the terrorist attacks on military installations in Pakistan, domestic and regional security environment and insider threats. While elaborating on the characteristics of the state, Paul Podvig has mentioned that Pakistan has a fragile society with numerous domestic security issues. According to his point of view, no state has a perfect nuclear security system. While discussing Pakistan's nuclear security issues, Paul Podvig has also expressed the same concerns.

During the last two decades, Pakistan has witnessed serious security challenges, thousands of deaths, and huge economic and infrastructural losses. These factors have created a perception of "insecurity" about Pakistan's nuclear weapons. According to Mathias Dembinski, after North Korea, Pakistan is the second country where rogue elements or terrorists could get control over its nuclear weapons. He has argued that ambiguity in nuclear warheads and fissile materials is a big challenge, and nuclear security arrangements are not good enough in Pakistan.

Through analyzing the global assessments and assumptions, some scenarios have been highlighted here to understand that what perceptions have been developed about Pakistan's nuclear programme and how these misperceptions have been mastered during the last two decades? These are as follow:

Insider Threats

It is the most serious assumption of the international community that Pakistan's nuclear weapons industry has an insider threat which may lead to some dangerous consequences. This perception has been developed by some Western security analysts and policy-makers on the basis of some

personal information and sources. According to Clary (2010), "the insider threat is perhaps the most serious hazard faced by the Pakistani arsenal" (p.24). During the last few years, terrorist attacks on different military installations have clearly shown that some insider elements were involved. This factor has led to further conspiracy theories and ambiguities about nuclear weapons' security in Pakistan.

It has always been repeated by some Western analysts that Pakistan's nuclear industry has insider threats that could bring severe challenges for Pakistan. According to Bunn, Harrell, and Malin (2013), "there is a very real possibility that sympathetic insiders might carry out or assist in a nuclear theft, or that a sophisticated outsider attack (possibly with inside help) could overwhelm even the most stringent defences" (p.6). Pakistan is consistently developing its nuclear stockpiles and increasing its fissile material. Pakistan is also developing some new nuclear power plants. As the number of nuclear facilities is increasing in the country, they would generate more vulnerability to insider threats. In Paul K. Kerr and Mary Beth Nikitin's argument, "the main security challenges for Pakistan's nuclear arsenal are keeping the integrity of the command and control structure, ensuring physical security, and preventing illicit proliferation from insiders" (Kerr & Nikitin, 2016, p.2). People involved in nuclear management affairs possess all the know-how about nuclear technology. Their intentions and motivations are very important to understand. In the case of Pakistan, it has been perceived that people in the nuclear profession have more tendencies to be inclined towards "religious extremists". So, the probability of insider threat is serious.

The insider threat has been further categorized into different forms and scenarios. The role of military units and citizen scientists that are directly involved with nuclear weapons development has been further divided into various stages and parts.

Threat Perception at Civilian Level

Civil nuclear scientists and management have their role in the principal part of nuclear weapons development. They are mainly involved in mining, milling, uranium/plutonium enrichment, weapon designing, loading, mantling and coding of weapons. Nuclear scientists have more insight, information, and access. There is a history of scientists' involvement worldwide in illegal activities like proliferation, selling sensitive information, weapon designs and architectures.

Pakistan has always been taken as a test case after the issue of A.Q. Khan network and two renowned Pakistani scientists' visit to Afghanistan. The brain drain of nuclear scientists is another concern. Pakistan has developed a large nuclear infrastructure with thousands of nuclear scientists and engineers. So, there are assumptions that if the state collapses or is in a situation of crisis, scientists may leave, migrate or join some other private companies. Furthermore, there is a threat perception that civil nuclear scientists can sell or transfer the sensitive nuclear material, technology, designs or device to rogue elements like Al-Qaeda (Levi, 2009, p.23).

Threat Perception at Military Level

The role of the armed forces in Pakistan has been a dominant factor. The global community perceives the military as the prime authority to control and manage nuclear weapons and related technology in Pakistan (Mistry, 2003, p.124; Schaffer, 2004, p.11). There are various factors that influence the military's decision-making abilities. Pakistan's society is composed of various ethnic groups, diverse cultural and social backgrounds. Presence of diverse elements in military force that may have sympathy with extremist groups would be a highly worrisome issue. In addition, there are assumptions that accidental use of nuclear weapons in times of crisis may occur because of rogue elements in military units. Some nuclear experts have expressed their views that a few threat perceptions are plausible in the military:

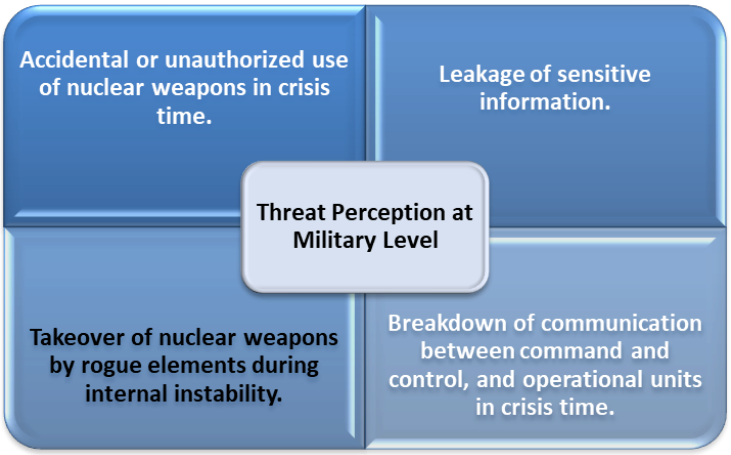

Figure 1: Threat Perception at Military Level

These concerns suggest that nuclear weapons, even under military control, are not safe. There are concerns of the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons in situations of crisis. Furthermore, there could be an insider source or sympathizers in relevant military unit or rank, which could leak sensitive information to non-state actors, or they can take control over nuclear devices. The most worrisome concern is the breakdown of communications between the command and control authority and operational units during a situation of crisis. Although there is no specific parameter to judge the degree of threats to Pakistan's nuclear weapons from insider threats, assumptions and perceptions are not in favour of Pakistan. Many analysts claim that insider threat will be the core challenge for Pakistan's nukes. According to Paul K. Kerr and Mary Beth Nikitin, "The main security challenges for Pakistan's nuclear arsenal are keeping the integrity of the command structure, ensuring physical security, and preventing illicit proliferation from insiders" (Kerr & Nikitin, 2016, p.2).

Threats from Al-Qaeda and Taliban

After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union in 1989, the Taliban emerged as a strong group in Afghanistan (Goodson, 2011, p.165; Isby, 2011; Laub, 2014). Later on, the Taliban strengthened its structure and set up its government. A large number of mujahedeen and warlords who participated in the Afghan-Soviet war supported the Taliban's regime in the country. The arrival of Osama Bin Laden with his fighting force, "highly experienced from Afghan-Soviet war," boosted the Taliban's control over the disturbed land. Thereafter, Bin Laden introduced Al-Qaida and showed his intention to acquire nuclear devices. After the September 11, 2001 incidents, the U.S. started a war against terrorism to eliminate Al Qaida and its associates, including the Taliban regime.

Since then, it has been assumed that the Taliban or Al-Qaida are trying to attain nuclear devices, and they might get some help from nuclear Pakistan. These assumptions and speculations are further linked to other conspiracy theories. There have been several reports published during the last decade that Al-Qaida was pursuing nuclear material and know-how to make nuclear bombs. According to Sokolski and Tertrais (2013), "Al-Qaeda and other jihadist groups showed an interest in gaining access to nuclear weapons and materials, and some attacked nuclear-related facilities in Pakistan" (p.3). A few letters, handmade designs to develop a bomb and process for HEU were found in Afghanistan. Similarly, a Taliban-type regime has been assumed to take control inside Pakistan itself. Fears have been raised that religious extremists who are close to or have sympathies with the Taliban would take over the government in nuclear Pakistan. So, there will be severe consequences of this regime change in Pakistan. Militant control in the Swat Valley in 2007-08 and then military operation Rah-e-Najat, 2009 in response raised several questions.

The emergence of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) (Siddique, 2010) in Waziristan and other places in 2007 and their activities in urban areas have also been observed as a threat. The interlinked threat is the penetration of Al-Qaida elements in TTP and their mutual terrorist activities in Pakistan. There are assumptions that both have an interest in Pakistan's nuclear weapons directly or indirectly. There is another aspect that the Taliban and Al-Qaida have sympathizers in the country who could help these elements. According to Matthew Bunn et. al., Pakistan is facing a high-risk situation (Bunn et al., 2013, p.5). This is because of the current turmoil in different areas of Pakistan. Furthermore, elaborating the threat scenarios, Bunn et al., argues that "with Al-Qaeda's core leadership located there, a dangerous Taliban insurgency, and a range of highly-capable terrorist groups with links to the Pakistani state, Pakistan's nuclear assets face a greater threat from extremists seeking nuclear weapons than any other stockpile on earth" (Bunn et al., 2013, p.5).

Stealing of Nuclear Weapons

This is another menacing scenario that has been developed by Western analysts. Terrorists or rogue elements can steal nuclear devices from the nuclear weapon facilities in Pakistan. Although the chances of stealing nuclear devices are not very high, still, there are many risks present. During the last few years, Pakistan has increased its nuclear stockpiles and quantity of weapon-grade highly enriched uranium and plutonium. This development can provide more vulnerability to nuclear weapons. In Chakma (2009) view, theft of nuclear weapons from Pakistan does not seem possible because it does not keep its nuclear weapons in the assembled form (p.125). But, he further argues that there is a serious concern about fissile material, which is more likely to fall into the hands of terrorist groups which may use it in Radiological Dispersal Devices (RDDs) and materialize it. Levi (2009) argues that "subversion of state control over Pakistan's nuclear weapons or materials could lead terrorists to acquire nuclear materials or weapons" (p.23).

Lack of Transparency

Nuclear transparency is one of the leading issues in nuclear non-proliferation regimes. Lack of transparency creates doubts and threats of secondary proliferation. What is the exact number of nuclear weapons, the exact quantity of fissile material and the locations of nuclear installations? None of the nuclear-weapon states has answered these questions. Records predict that not a single nuclear-weapon state has declared the accurate numbers of its nuclear weapons and weapons-grade material. "Lack of transparency in nuclear programmes leaves room to doubt the security surrounding each country's nuclear arsenal and the safeguards preventing accidental launches" (Khan, 2008, p.65). Nuclear transparency concerns regarding Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme are deep. According to Annette Schaper, there is a lack of transparency in Pakistan's nuclear weapon programme, so it is very difficult to understand its efforts and arrangements to secure its nuclear weapons. Furthermore, it is difficult to estimate its cooperation with the global community.

Transparency in nuclear development will clarify Pakistan's position. Many nuclear experts have the same view about Pakistan's nuclear programme. Lack of transparency further multiplies with many assumptions, challenges and threats. According to Michael A. Levi and Michael E. O'Hanlon, "Pakistan is the most worrisome case: it has nuclear weapons, little transparency, and a brittle government that might someday be replaced by a much more extreme regime with sympathies toward terrorist groups" (Levi & O'Hanlon, 2004, p.109). lack of transparency further affects the accountability process. According to Annette Schaper "transparency of stockpiles would avoid unnecessary ambiguities and would contribute to the prevention of potential new arms races and competitions" (Schaper, 2005, p.3).

Attack on Nuclear Facilities

Nuclear facilities are soft targets for non-state actors. Many Western analysts strongly assume

that nuclear facilities in Pakistan are under threat. Pakistan has confronted many suicide attacks and terrorists' struggle with entering into sensitive military installations. There have been several incidents of terrorists' attacks on military installations during the last few years. Some Western analysts assume that a few of the targeted installations were keeping nuclear weapons. Attacks on Mehran Base, General Headquarters (GHQs), Wah cantonment, Kamra airbase and military generals' assassinations have always been quoted on several occasions (Mohanty, 2013, p.64).

Although there is no known history of terrorist attacks on a nuclear facility, the current wave of terrorism may affect Pakistan's nuclear facilities. Global nuclear security analysts assume that the expansion of the nuclear programme would offer increased threats and vulnerabilities. It is further assumed by western analysts that terrorist groups can attack nuclear facilities to accomplish their objectives. Braun (2008) has categorized terrorists' motivation to attack nuclear installations in Pakistan in three parts (pp.278-279):

1. The desire to obtain radioactive or fissile material for the construction of radioactivity dispersion devices or nuclear weapons;
2. The intent to create significant damage to the station, nearby population, the environment, and the country as a whole as revenge for some government actions inimical to terrorist interests; or
3. The desire to force the government to accede to some terrorists' demands and modify its policies accordingly.

Terrorists do understand the catastrophic capabilities of nuclear technology. Terrorists estimate that it would be very helpful for them to attack any nuclear facility and pressurize the government to fulfil their demands. It has been proved that terrorists have always tried to acquire advanced and sophisticated weapons to accomplish their political objectives. There are perceptions that the Taliban, Al-Qaida or their sympathizers can attack nuclear installations in Pakistan. In 2012, there was a reported threat by the Taliban to attack the nuclear facility in Dera Ghazi Khan, Punjab (Salik & Luongo, 2013). However, according to Bruno Tertrais, "radical Islamists are generally proud of Pakistan's nuclear capability and have so far shown little interest in attacking the country's nuclear infrastructure" (Tertrais, 2012b, p.23).

Civil-Military Relations

While having concerns over many other issues in Pakistani society, one of the most debatable issues in the state of the civil-military relationship. It has become a common perception that it is the military that controls the entire nuclear day-to-day affairs. The military not only has control over the state's defence and foreign affairs but also controls domestic politics. While elaborating the historical background, Sebastien Miraglia explains that since 1978 when General Zia-ul-Haq took control of the government and sent Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to prison, the military eventually debarred the civil leaderships from all kinds of decisions of nuclear weapon development (Miraglia, 2013, p.850). With the passage of time, the military's influence has increased in all kinds of decision-making in the nuclear field in Pakistan. At present, although Pakistan has established a command and control system that includes both civil and military leadership, the final say remains under military command. Bruno Tertrais suggests that even though the Prime Minister is the head of the National Command Authority (NCA), there is a conviction that Pakistan's military is the actual authority to make the final decision to use nuclear weapons because all armed forces chiefs are involved in the Employment Control Committee(Sokolski & Tertrais, 2013, p.5). This narration further deepens on the theory that a country that possesses nuclear weapons and has a war history cannot establish a strong nuclear command and control system. While implementing the organizational theory, Sebastien Miraglia elaborates that a nuclear weapon state cannot adopt a fully assertive nuclear command and control system if it has disturbed civil-military relations and complicated nuclear doctrines (Miraglia, 2013, p.843).

The distance between institutional leaderships has put a negative impact on decision-making abilities. It is believed that due to the lack of strong political leadership and effective governance,

there is an imbalance in the nuclear management system. The unhealthy relationship between civil-military leadership keeps both sides distant in times of crisis. While discussing civil-military relations during peacetime and crisis time, Miraglia has elaborated that even in peacetime, the military leadership keeps the civil leadership's role limited in national security policy and inside details of nuclear weapons development (Miraglia, 2013, p.850).

Feroz Hassan, while narrating the global worries about Pakistan's nuclear programme, has elaborated three interdependent components that are at the base of this oscillation in national politics (Khan, 2010, pp.148-149):

1. First is the debate between the presidential versus parliamentary system.
2. Second are poor civil-military relations, which have bedevilled the evolution of stable democratic governance in the state.
3. The third is the dominance of bureaucratic power over the representative government or elected leaders. The civil bureaucracy is believed to be heavily under the influence of the military and intelligence agencies, which are euphemistically referred to as the "establishment."

Further assumptions discussed by Western analysts are that civil leadership does not know about the size and characteristics of the nuclear weapons programme. According to Sebastien Miraglia, without having concrete knowledge of a state's nuclear weapon programme development, civil-military relations will remain troublesome (Miraglia, 2013, p.851). The history of civil-military relations has always been quoted while defining the influence of the military in the country. Civil leadership and bureaucracy have always searched for a soft corner while establishing relations with military bureaucracy. This image has no positive reflection at the global level. Further questions have been raised on the role of military leadership during a crisis situation. The distance between civil-military leadership during peacetime further increases during times of war or crisis. Some analysts believe that there are several factors that determine the civil-military relationship in Pakistan:
Western analysts believe that the above-stated factors are enough to determine the civil-military relationship in Pakistan. Weak political culture and bad governance have undermined the credibility of civil institutions. Nuclear weapons under the direct control of military command and the absence of strong civil leadership in the nuclear establishment multiplies the chances of threats. In such scenarios, a strong and efficient nuclear command and control system is not possible, according to the Western perspective.

Conclusion

International concerns regarding Pakistan's nuclear weapons are usually based on hypothetical statements and assumptions. Most of the literature available on this subject is produced by Western authors and analysts. Indian analysts and researchers have also contributed to the predominant bias on Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme. It is deficient in primary resources. Perceptions on the basis of theoretical assumptions are presumably politically motivated. A safe and secure nuclear programme is a prime objective of Pakistan. Only a safe and secure nuclear weapon system can guarantee strategic stability in the South Asian region. Unfortunately, Pakistan's narrative has been insufficiently shared with the world. Though, sacrosanct the paucity of literature and research work has hugely damaged the international perception of Pakistan's nuclear weapon programme. Pakistan remained preoccupied with politically restless in its larger portion of life. The unreliability of Pakistan's political sources is one of the reasons for the lack of confidence in their security-specific programme. However, Pakistan should address international misperceptions and share its perspective worldwide.

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