

PRESS RELEASE

Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu, Thiru Banwarilal Purohit released the book "The Strategy Trap - India And Pakistan Under The Nuclear Shadow"

Thiru. Banwarilal Purohit, Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu released the book "The Strategy Trap - India And Pakistan Under The Nuclear Shadow" authored by Lt Gen Prakash Menon in the function organised by Wisdom Tree and Takshashila Institution at Raj Bhavan, Chennai today (26.09.2018).

Hon'ble Governor said, "I am happy to be here for releasing the book titled "The Strategy Trap - India and Pakistan under the Nuclear Shadow" authored by Lt Gen Prakash Menon. The book seeks to analyse the prevailing military situation in the Indian Subcontinent with specific reference to the defence capabilities of India and Pakistan over whom hovers a nuclear shadow. The various options available to both countries to resolve the problems that appear intractable have been beautifully covered in the book.

The various chapters focus on a variety of issues that provide us with an insight onto the global scenario with regard to nuclear capabilities.

The only countries known to have detonated nuclear weapons and acknowledge possessing them are (chronologically by date of first test) the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, and North Korea. Israel is believed to possess nuclear weapons, though, it does not acknowledge having them. Germany, Italy, Turkey, Belgium and the Netherlands are nuclear weapons sharing states.

Nuclear weapons have changed this conventional understanding of war by making victory impractical in the context of nuclear-armed adversaries. According to the military strategist Bernard Brodie, 'Thus far, while the chief purpose of the military establishment had been to win wars, after the advent of nuclear weapons, its chief purpose was to avert them'.

The lessons of the Berlin Crisis of 1961, Cuban Crisis of 1962 and the US-Soviet nuclear alert during the Arab-Israeli 1973 War and several other near-mishaps and incidents provide a fairly clear picture of the impact of

mutual nuclear vulnerability on political decision makers. Precautionary defensive measures, coupled with restraint and flexibility and an overall tendency for caution, had influenced the behavior of opponents. In these crises, the consequences of nuclear war weighed heavily on the decisions that were finally arrived at.

It was May 18th 1974 when the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre presented Dr Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam with a memento of a banyan tree bonsai which had a statue of a smiling Buddha under it. "The Buddha has smiled" was the code used by scientists to declare that the nuclear test has been successful.

After India's first nuclear test which was carried out in Rajasthan's Pokhran, no nuclear tests took place till 1998 when the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee decided that it was time for the country to announce its nuclear status with a huge bang.

India was able to carryout this test in total secrecy. "The 58 Engineers were specially chosen for the crucial task of maintaining the shafts in which India's nuclear devices would be tested. They were told to take all measures to ensure total secrecy. So effective were the tactics that when India carried out five nuclear tests in May 1998, it went down as one of the biggest intelligence failure of those nuclear countries who were snooping on Pokhran to alert the World if there was any such design.

In August 1999, a draft nuclear doctrine was released by India for public debate. The draft embraced the policies of minimum deterrence, no first use (NFU) and civilian control. According to India's nuclear doctrine, the essence of sustaining nuclear deterrence in the Indian context devolves on the achievement and projection of the capability to absorb the first strike from a potential adversary and assure retaliation by residual nuclear weapons that will result in unacceptable damage.

The Indian nuclear doctrine is a good example of strategic communication. It conveys with clarity India's intent, capability sought, conditions for use and the type of command and control to be exercised.

Unlike the bipolar Cold War nuclear situation, India is faced with a tripolar one. These complexities could be compounded if terrorists and non-state actors get access to nuclear weapons, a possibility that cannot be ruled out entirely. This presents a situation that is unique and unprecedented for India as a nuclear power.

After the Kargil Conflict, three schools of thought emerged in India. Some believed that a conventional war with Pakistan is no longer practical because of the possibility of the war escalating beyond the nuclear threshold, and matches Pakistan's official view. Other are of the view that a war limited in space, time and objectives is possible and Kargil was cited in support of the argument which has also been India's official view. A third group believes that full-fledged conventional war is possible, because Pakistan's nuclear threats are bluffs that must be called, since Pakistan could well be decimated, even though we could also suffer severe damage.

India's actions as a mature nuclear power has so far contained India-Pakistan force exchanges to levels that have not threatened the threshold that could be classified as limited war.

According to the author India is, also making robust efforts to deploy missile defence systems. The process is underway and according to the head of India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), is in a very advanced stage of development. However it is this very development of missile defences by India that runs the risk of being the catalyst in pushing its adversaries to expand their nuclear inventories and provide the momentum for an arms race. However, India's nuclear doctrine being based on a credible minimum deterrence philosophy could minimise the possibility if the rationale for missile defences development is restricted, at least, initially, to protecting only India's command and control elements in New Delhi, primarily against rogue elements.

The possibility of miscalculations by policymakers in a crisis situation always exist. Richard Ned Lebow in his study of crises and wars states that 'policymakers are prone to distort reality in accordance with their needs even in situations that appeared relatively unambiguous'. The more numerous and

ambiguous the signals, the easier it becomes to do this, for 'uncertainty is a breeding ground, not of restraint but of irrational confidence'. As most situations are likely to be usually fraught with uncertainty, wishful thinking arising from it cannot be precluded.

After the successful nuclear test on July 16, 1945, which was the very first nuclear detonation, the Manhattan project lead manager J. Robert Oppenheimer recalled:

We knew the world would not be the same. A few people laughed, a few people cried, most people were silent. I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture the *Bhagavad Gita*. Vishnu is trying to persuade the prince that he should do his duty and to impress him takes on his multiarmed form and says, "Now, I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds." I suppose we all thought that one way or another.

While possession of nuclear capabilities is a powerful deterrent the way forward for progress is to be planned with caution, courage and common sense.

In the book the author echoes the same view as he explains the need for co-operation and the need to avoid confrontation. Books such as these written by military experts like Lt Gen Prakash Menon help to achieve a better understanding of the complex road ahead.

I wish him well and am thankful to him for the opportunity given by the occasion to address senior officers of the Indian defence forces. May success greet India in all its endeavours".

On this occasion, Lt Gen Prakash Menon, Lt Gen PR Shankhar, Prof. Gopalji Malviya, Ms Priya Ramachandran and other dignitaries participated.

Raj Bhavan, Chennai -22

Date : 26.09.2018

Sd/-

Joint Director (PR)