

Leadership, Strategy and Norms: A Study of India's No First Use Policy of Nuclear Weapons

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis titled “**Leadership, Strategy and Norms: A Study of India’s No First Use Policy of Nuclear Weapons**” is my original work carried out in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, India, under the supervision of Dr. Pahi Saikia, Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, India. This thesis, or any part of it, has not been previously submitted to any other University or Institute for any other degrees.

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Certificate

This is to certify that the thesis titled “**Leadership, Strategy and Norms: A Study of India’s No First Use Policy of Nuclear Weapons**” submitted by Yuvaraj Gogoi for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, Assam embodies original research work carried out under my supervision and guidance. This thesis, or any part of it, has not been submitted to any other University or Institute for any other degrees. He has fulfilled all the requirements as mandated by the Rules of the Institute for submission of thesis.

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Dedicated to My Parents

Late Phoni Gogoi

and

Mrs. Monju Gogoi



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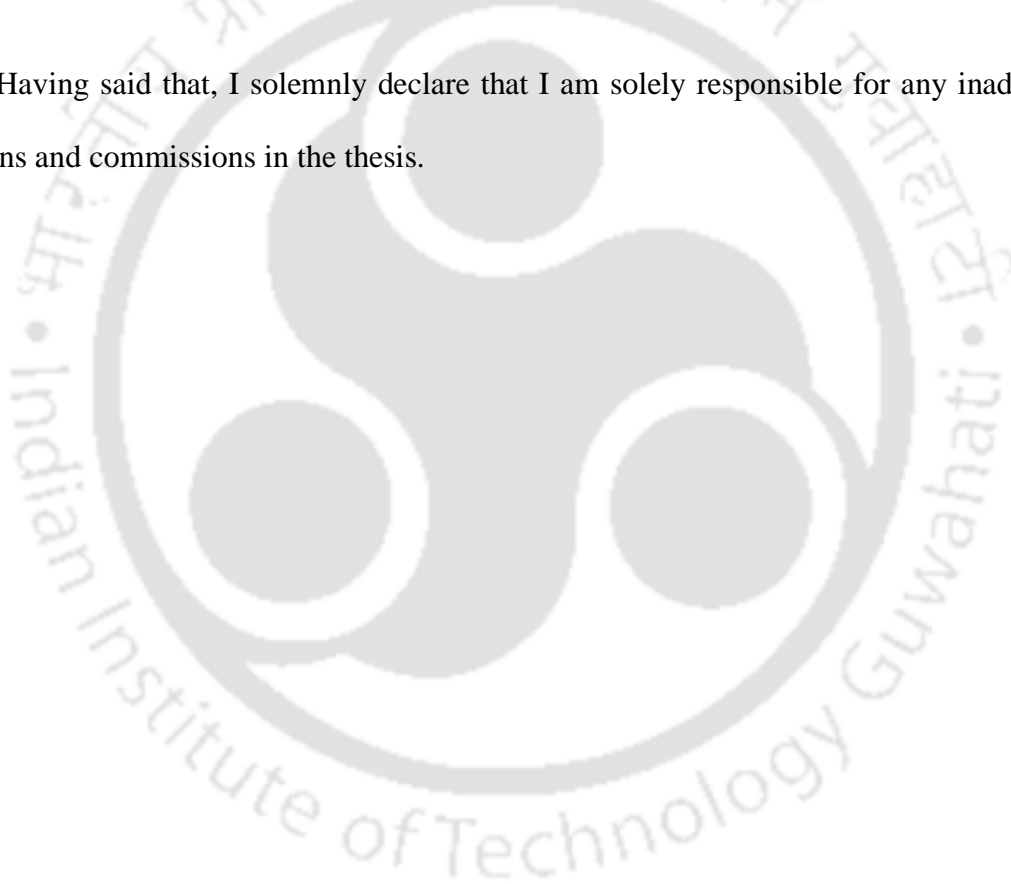
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Having said that, I solemnly declare that I am solely responsible for any inadvertent omissions and commissions in the thesis.



ABSTRACT

India framed a draft nuclear doctrine in 1999 and the official nuclear doctrine in 2003. Both these documents highlighted with certain variations that India would adhere to a No First Use (NFU) policy of nuclear weapons. This thesis seeks to explore the rationale behind the NFU policy of India. It examines the probable factors: actors, strategy, and norms that may have influenced India's decision to adopt the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine.

While there is a voluminous literature on India's nuclear journey, the studies available have not been able to deeply analyse the probable reasons behind India's adoption of the NFU policy. This thesis attempts to address this particular research gap while examining the agents, strategic, and normative factors that may have influenced the NFU policy. The study will try to contribute to the existing theoretical debates on International Relations (IR) literature on the NFU policy of nuclear weapons.

Through an analysis of a questionnaire survey, the content analysis of respondent's overall feedback, selected documents relating to India's nuclear policy, and selected books and articles, the thesis argues that any attempt at explaining the NFU policy of India with the help of a single factor will not be a complete picture. While strategic logic is a relatively more important factor, it is incomplete in itself. The normative factors, the social construction of norms against the violence of the use of nuclear weapons, and the role of political leaders and strategic experts supplement the strategic logic.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEC	Atomic Energy Commission
AICC	All India Congress Committee
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BJS	Bharatiya Jana Sangh
BMD	Ballistic Missile Defence
CCS	Cabinet Committee on Security
CND	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
CTBT	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
DAE	Department of Atomic Energy
DND	Draft Nuclear Doctrine
DRDO	Defence Research Development Organisation
FU	First Use of Nuclear Weapons
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
IDSA	Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (Presently known as Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses-MPIDSA)
IR	International Relations
IRBM	Intermediate-range Ballistic Missile
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Systems
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
MIRV	Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicles
MRBM	Medium-range Ballistic Missile
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
NFU	No First Use of Nuclear Weapons
NPT	Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty

NSA	National Security Advisor
NSAB	National Security Advisory Board
NSC	National Security Council
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
ORF	Observer Research Foundation
PM	Prime Minister
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
PNE	Peaceful Nuclear Explosion
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPG	Strategic Policy Group
SRBM	Short-range Ballistic Missile
TNW	Tactical Nuclear Weapons
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

India framed a draft nuclear doctrine in 1999 and the official nuclear doctrine in 2003. Both these documents highlighted that India would adhere to a No First Use (NFU) policy of nuclear weapons. This thesis aims to analyse why India adopted an NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. It examines the probable factors, namely actors, strategy, and norms, that may have influenced India's decision to adopt the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. Thus, it seeks to explore the rationale behind the NFU policy of India.

While there is a voluminous literature on India's nuclear journey, the studies available have not been able to deeply analyse the probable reasons behind India's adoption of the NFU policy. Most studies cite strategic reasons and brush aside other normative factors and the role of political leaders and strategic experts that might also be responsible for India's NFU policy. Furthermore, some studies make only a cursory reference to the reasons behind the NFU policy of India. The NFU policy is also merely considered a declaratory policy. This thesis attempts to address this particular research gap while examining the actors, strategic, and normative factors that may have influenced the NFU policy. The study will try to contribute to the existing theoretical debates on the NFU policy of nuclear weapons.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The thinkers and practitioners of realism view nuclear policy and decision-making mostly in terms of strategic logic. Whereas, the constructivists have tried to bring in the importance of normative factors in explaining nuclear policy and decision-making. The NFU policy of India is also mostly seen as a policy driven by strategic considerations. However, no sufficient attempt has been made to look at the influence of political leadership, strategic experts, and normative factors behind this policy. The factors and actors that shaped the NFU policy of India have not been adequately explored.

Nuclear weapon states adopt two particular stances in their nuclear doctrines regarding the use of nuclear weapons. One is the first use (FU) stance, and the other is the NFU policy. NFU policy refers to the commitment of a nuclear weapon state not to use nuclear weapons first. So far, China and India are the only two nuclear weapon states that have included an NFU policy in their nuclear doctrines. The NFU policy of India has generated plenty of debates in policy-making and academic circles. Some thinkers have criticised or dismissed this policy as unproductive or counterproductive. On the other hand, some others have argued that the NFU policy carries excellent merit and brings regional stability.

The NFU policy of India was adopted in the draft nuclear doctrine by the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) and in the official nuclear doctrine by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) during the tenure of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. However, the writings of strategic experts like K. Subrahmanyam and General K. Sundarji and speeches of political leaders like Atal Bihari Vajpayee referred to the NFU policy much before these doctrinal developments. So, while looking at the factors and the agents that may have led India

to adopt an NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine, one has to examine the genesis of India's NFU policy.¹

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- i) To understand why India adopted the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine.
- ii) To analyse the role of strategic factors on the NFU policy of India.
- iii) To explore the possible role of political leadership and strategic experts in shaping the NFU policy of India.
- iv) To identify the role of normative factors, if any, on the NFU policy of India.

1.4. Research Questions

Some of the pertinent questions concerning the NFU policy of India that need to be addressed are: a) to what extent India's NFU policy is influenced by strategic choices, b) to what extent the NFU policy of India is influenced by the role of individual political leaders and strategic experts, and (c) what is the role of norms (if any) in the choice of India's NFU? The thesis is an attempt to explore answers to these questions.

1.3. Rationale of the Study

India declared itself as a nuclear weapon state in 1998. Many studies have been made on India's nuclear history, policy, nuclear doctrine, and the NFU policy. While a large body of literature exists on India's NFU policy, very few studies explain substantively the conditions under which the country might have adopted this policy in its nuclear doctrine. As stated above, extant literature mainly points to strategic factors as the main driver of the rationale behind the NFU policy of India. However, there have been very few attempts at explaining the influences

¹ This aspect has been analysed in Chapter 3 of the thesis.

of political leadership, strategic experts, and normative factors on the NFU policy of India, if at all. Thus, the NFU policy of India has rarely been looked upon beyond the prism of strategic logic. It also raises the question of whether nuclear policymaking is solely influenced by strategy or strategic factors and whether leadership and norms have any role in nuclear decision-making.

Two decades have elapsed since the implementation of the official nuclear doctrine of India that contains an NFU policy of nuclear weapons. Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee formally implemented the NFU policy in India's nuclear doctrine. Successive Prime Ministers Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi supported and continued this policy (Kanwal, 2014; Dalton, 2019; MacDonald, 2020; Rajagopalan, 2022b). Even much of India's nuclear policy has remained unchanged during the Modi regime, and the misgivings about the change of the NFU policy during this tenure are also unfounded so far (Rajagopalan, 2022b). Though there has been demand from different sections for review of the India's nuclear doctrine and the NFU policy from time to time, it remains a core policy of India's nuclear doctrine. The continued adherence to this policy by different Indian Prime Ministers explains that the NFU policy of India has yielded some dividends. Thus, the rationale of this policy deserves some special attention on its merit, and the factors and actors that may have influenced its inclusion in India's nuclear doctrine need to be studied in more detail. In terms of scope, this thesis is not concerned with studying all the features of India's nuclear doctrine, nor is it an exploration of the benefits and disadvantages of the NFU policy. Instead, it seeks to explore the factors and agents that shaped the decision to adopt the NFU policy in India's nuclear doctrine.

1.4. Concepts

This section tries to conceptualise the important terms used in the thesis:

Leadership:

The word 'leadership' here refers to the role of political leaders and strategic experts who might have an influential role in shaping India's decision to adopt the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. Leadership is crucial in foreign policy, national security and nuclear policy decision-making, and public policymaking. Rosenau (1963) noted that various actors and their behaviour play a crucial role in determining the success and defining the constituent elements of foreign or any public policy.

Strategy:

According to Rajagopalan (2005), strategy is some sort of:

peacetime contemplation about how military forces will be used in war, the preparation that result from it in terms of the types of weapons acquired, the kind of force postures that are adopted, the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that are instituted and the training given to those who are to use these weapons. (p.12)

In another way, strategies are volatile and tailored solutions for particular problems (Rajagopalan, 2005b, p.12). Doctrines are, in a sense, different from strategies in that their changes occur at a slow pace, unlike strategies. Doctrines denote a military organization's perception of prospective war and preparedness for such war (Rajagopalan, 2005b, p.12).

Ali Ahmed (2014/2018) pointed out the nuances of policy, doctrine, and strategy. Policy denotes a broad range of objectives and standards concerning the use of nuclear weapons. On the other hand, doctrine can be conceived as an assortment of rules of conduct to carry out initiatives like retaliation. Strategy subtly means choices based on policies and in tune with doctrines (Ahmed, 2014/2018, pp. 16-17). However, despite these differences, one can notice some co-relationship. As Jasjit Singh (2001) rightly pointed out, nuclear doctrine

determines nuclear strategy, which shapes the nuclear command and control system responsible for operating that strategy in tune with the nuclear doctrine (p.147).

This thesis uses the word strategy primarily to refer to the various strategic and geopolitical factors that might have shaped India's NFU policy.

Norms:

Norms refer to "collective expectations for the proper behaviour of actors with a given identity" (Katzenstein, 1996, p.5). Norms "either define (or constitute) identities or prescribe (or regulate) behaviour, or they do both" (Katzenstein, 1996, p.5). In the words of Martha Finnemore (1996), norms are "shared expectations about appropriate behaviour held by a community of actors" (p.22). Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) said that norms are "a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity" (p.891). For Annika Bjorkdahl (2002), "Norms are intersubjective understandings that constitute actors' interests and identities, and create expectations as well as prescribe what appropriate behavior ought to be" (p. 20). Norms in this thesis refer to those normative factors and ideals that might have influenced the adoption of the NFU policy in India's nuclear doctrine.

Each norm has a context and history of its own. There are several stages of the genesis of a norm. In this context, Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) pointed out three crucial stages: norm emergence, norm cascade, and internalisation. Norm entrepreneurs such as states, institutions, or even individuals such as global leaders play a pivotal role in the emergence of norms. At the stage of norm internalisation, "norms may become so widely accepted that they are internalized by actors and achieve a 'taken-for-granted' quality that makes conformance with the norm automatic" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p.904). Norms "can be regulative (ordering and constraining behaviour), constitutive (defining identities), evaluative (assessing behaviour) and prescriptive (regulating behaviour)" (cited in Ogden, 2010, p.304).

Policy:

According to R. V. Vaidyanatha Ayyar (2009), “A policy is a set of decisions which (a) sets out directives for immediate or future action or conduct; or (b) lays down guidelines for the implementation of action or conduct already approved” (p.1). In the words of J. E. Anderson (2003), policy refers to “a relatively stable, purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern” (p.2).

Public Policy:

Michael Shires (2004) noted, “Public policy refers to the process whereby the members of a geographic area or political unit make choices that address their areas and issues of concern” (p.350). Regarding the application of the term ‘public policy’, he argued, “The term public policy is used not only to describe that process and its consequences, but also the general set of tools and mechanisms through which these choices are made” (Shires, 2004, p.351). Public policy also denotes an academic discipline of research and training (Shires, 2004, p.351). Goodin et al. (2006) claimed that policymaking involves choices under different material, social, political, and ideational constraints (p.21). Persuasion is an important element of public policies. The people at large must be persuaded about the efficacy of public policies (Goodin et al., 2006, pp.5-7). Another policy dimension concerns changes (Goodin et al., 2006, pp.24-26). Policies are formulated in response to problems (Goodin et al., 2006, p. 26).

Clarke et al. (2021) defined national security as a form of public policymaking. Though security policymaking involves multiple actors, their agendas revolve around national interests (Clarke et al., 2021). Narang and Staniland (2012) observed that a strategic core plays a crucial role in framing national security policymaking in India. Nuclear policymaking is one of the areas that come under national security policymaking. Put differently, nuclear policymaking is one of the most critical aspects of national security policymaking of the nuclear weapon states.

The ones at the higher echelons of power are at the helm of affairs regarding nuclear policymaking.

Nuclear Doctrine:

A nuclear doctrine is a set of guidelines designed to outline nuclear strategy and structure the development of nuclear forces (Khanijo, 2016). It is a doctrine that constitutes “a subset of the larger concept of military doctrines” (Shankar & Paul, 2016, p.2). There are two types of nuclear doctrines: (i) aggressive or offensive nuclear doctrine and (ii) non-aggressive or defensive nuclear doctrine (Latif, 2014).

NFU policy:

It is self-explanatory that the NFU policy comes under the umbrella of nuclear policymaking. This thesis is concerned with the rationale behind the NFU policy of India and the actors and institutions influencing this decision. The NFU is a declaratory policy about not using nuclear weapons firsthand. Lanoszka and Scherer (2017) defined the NFU policy as a commitment “not to be the first to use nuclear weapons against an enemy” (p.345). Dalton (2019) observed, “An NFU policy essentially constitutes a promise, backed by a survivable nuclear arsenal, to only use nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear attack. The logic is simple and effective: you don’t nuke me, and I won’t nuke you.”²

Rajagopalan and Mishra (2014) noted that it is a pledge adopted by some nuclear weapon states (NWS) like China and India that “they will not resort to the use of nuclear weapons unless they are attacked first with nuclear weapons” (p.199). Subrahmanyam observed that the NFU policy includes the doctrine of deterrence. The NFU policy is also based

² Retrieved October 16, 2023, from <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/09/26/much-ado-about-india-s-no-first-use-nuke-policy-pub-79952>

on a credible retaliatory nuclear force structure that seeks to prevent an enemy from launching pre-emptive nuclear attacks (Halperin et al., 2009).

1.5. Methodology

This study conforms to the qualitative research tradition. According to Allan Bryman (1989):

Qualitative is a research design which reveals many different emphases from quantitative research. Probably the most significant difference is the priority accorded the perspectives of those being studied rather than the prior concerns of the researcher along with a related emphasis on the interpretations of observations in accordance with subjects' own understandings. (p. 112)

Qualitative research relies on a plethora of methods, such as ethnography; participant observation; textual and narrative analysis; feminist inquiry; deconstruction, and survey research, to name a few (Gabrielian, 1999, p. 169). This study also adopts an explanatory and analytical perspective.

Content analysis and semi-structured questionnaire interviews were used in this study to collect and analyse data. Content analysis may be defined as:

systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics. It includes careful examination of human interactions, the analysis of character portrayals in TV commercials, films, and novels; the computer driven investigation of word usage in news releases and political speeches; and so much more. (Neundorf, 2002, p. 1)

In the words of Krippendorff (2019), “*Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use* [emphasis in original]” (p.24).

This study used the content analysis tool to examine nuclear doctrines, official statements of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), questions raised at Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, and other available data sources on nuclear issues. First of all, the study made a content analysis of three documents related to nuclear issues, namely opening remarks by the National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra on the eve of the release of the draft nuclear doctrine, the draft nuclear doctrine, and the official nuclear doctrine of India. Secondly, it conducted a content analysis of the respondents’ feedback in the questionnaire. Thirdly, the study made a content analysis of the questions at Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and posed to the Ministry of External Affairs from 2000 to 2022. In each of these three cases, the content was coded into three types, and the number of their repetitions or appearances was examined. Code 1 stands for political leadership and strategic experts, Code 2 denotes the role of strategic and geopolitical factors, and Code 3 indicates the role of normative factors in India’s decision to adopt the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. Fourthly, it also carried out a content analysis of selected books and articles on the NFU policy of India. Here, whether coded content appeared in at least one instance was examined. Detailed results of the content analysis of these books and articles and the reference list of all these books and articles are included in the appendix. Thus, the study will use content analysis for primary and secondary sources.

The study also made use of questionnaire responses from various strategic experts, retired diplomats, top-ranked veteran military officers, officials at MEA, academics, eminent journalists, nuclear scientists, and researchers to arrive at its objectives. Responses were collected through online questionnaires. Responses from the questionnaire have been

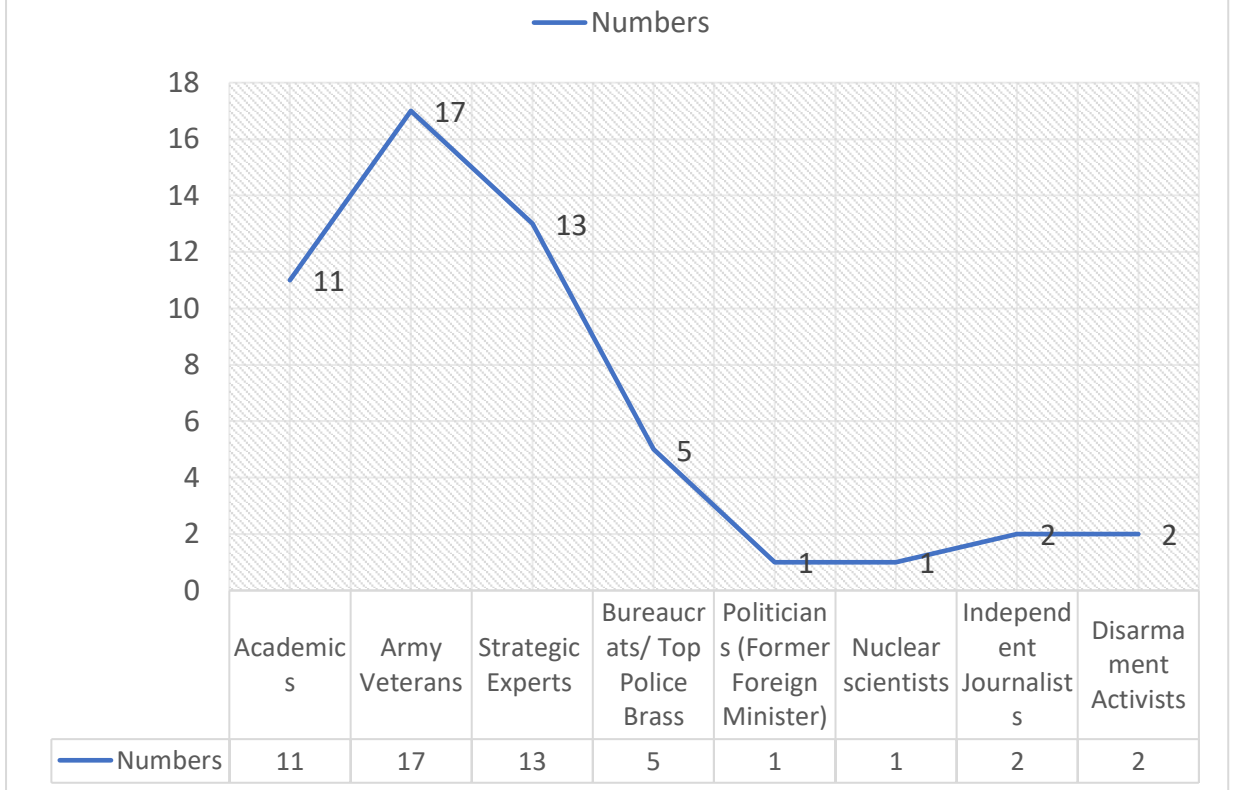
graphically represented in the thesis, and the results are analysed. The questionnaire includes eight questions on India's NFU policy or themes related to the NFU policy. Most of the questions were multiple choice, and the last question was subjective, where the respondents were asked about their overall viewpoint about why India adopted the NFU policy. The respondent's overall feedback has also been analysed in the thesis.

A total of 52 questionnaire responses were collected and analysed for the present study. The respondents include 11 academics, 17 army veterans, 13 strategic experts, 5 bureaucrats and top police brass, 1 politician (former foreign minister of India), 1 nuclear scientist, 2 independent journalists, and 2 disarmament activists as shown in the figure below. While most of the respondents were from India, a few were from different countries. The following figure shows the different categories of questionnaire respondents:

Figure 1.1

Categories of Respondents

Categories of Respondents



The study used purposive and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling, by definition, refers to a method of sampling “where the researcher selects what he/she thinks is a ‘typical’ sample based on specialist knowledge or selection criteria” (Walliman, 2006, p. 79). On the other hand, snowball sampling is a sampling process “where the researcher contacts a small number of members of the target population and gets them to introduce him/her to others” (Walliman, 2006, p.79). The samplings used are purposive in that only people with expertise in nuclear and strategic issues were approached for the questionnaire responses. The samplings also fall into the category of snowball sampling as the study includes questionnaire responses from the leads given by the respondents.

This study made use of both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources used in this study include questionnaire responses from foreign policy experts, military veterans, intellectuals, academics, journalists, nuclear scientists, and disarmament activists, government documents on nuclear issues, parliamentary debates, the questions raised in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha on nuclear issues, official statements of the Ministry of External Affairs, India and archival materials.

Secondary sources such as books, journals, newspaper articles, and online web materials were also collected and analysed in the study. Sources from reputed libraries and repositories of India like Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (New Delhi), Jawaharlal Nehru University Library (New Delhi), Delhi University Library (New Delhi), Ministry of External Affairs Library (New Delhi), Andhra University Library (Vizag), Aligarh Muslim University Library (Aligarh), Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati Library (Guwahati) and Gauhati University Library (Guwahati) were used in this thesis.

1.6. Plan of the Thesis

Chapter 1: Introduction

The introduction provides background of India's No First Use (NFU) policy of nuclear weapons and an overview of the Chapters included in the thesis. The Chapter discusses the statement of the problem, rationale, scope of the study, the methodology used to conduct the study, concepts, and the plan of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The second Chapter provides a detailed review of the literature. The Chapter also tries to analyse the existing literature on the NFU policy of India. The Chapter uses mainstream IR

theories to explain India's choice of the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. The Chapter will highlight the gap in the existing literature about the NFU policy of India.

Chapter 3: India's Nuclear Doctrine and the History of the No First Use Policy

The third Chapter provides an overview of the key elements of India's nuclear doctrine with a particular emphasis on the history of the NFU policy of India. It will also highlight the history of the NFU policy in international relations. The Chapter also provides a glimpse of India's nuclear force structure.

Chapter 4: No First Use Policy of India: The Role of Political Leadership and Strategic Experts

The fourth Chapter examines the role played by the political leadership and other strategic experts in framing the NFU policy of India. It explores the roles of PMs like Atal Bihari Vajpayee and strategic experts like K. Subrahmanyam and General K. Sundarji in the adoption of the NFU policy by India.

Chapter 5: No First Use Policy of India: The Role of Strategic Factors

The fifth Chapter analyses and examines the strategic factors, geostrategic elements, and regional rivalries that may have driven India's decision to adopt the NFU policy.

Chapter 6: No First Use Policy of India: The Role of Normative Factors

This Chapter will delve into the role of normative factors in influencing India's NFU policy. It also explores whether the NFU policy can be seen as a socially constructed 'norm' against the violence of the first use of nuclear weapons.

Chapter 7: Summary

This final Chapter will try to summarise the key arguments and findings of the thesis.

The Chapter will also highlight the limitations and further implications of this study.



CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

2.1. Introduction

Why do some states adopt the NFU policy of nuclear weapons while others do not? Five nuclear weapons states, the United States (US), Russia, England, France, and China, signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Israel, India, and Pakistan acquired nuclear weapons capability but have not signed the NPT. North Korea, the recent nuclear weapon state, was once a signatory of the NPT but withdrew from the treaty. Different countries have different nuclear policies. Some pursue relatively 'transparent' nuclear policies, while others (e.g., Israel) have ambiguous ones. Different policies have been adopted in the nuclear doctrines regarding the use of nuclear weapons. Out of all the nuclear weapon states, only two states, China and India, explicitly adopted the NFU policies. Other nuclear weapon states have maintained a first use (FU) policy in their nuclear doctrines and posture. This Chapter will focus on the theoretical background of the NFU policy of India. The purpose of this Chapter is to analyse the existing literature on the no first use (NFU) policy of India. An attempt has been made to understand the NFU policy using different theoretical perspectives of IR. The Chapter will try to find the gaps in the existing literature and examine different perspectives on the NFU policy of India. The Chapter first highlights an overview of policymaking and national security policymaking. After that, it throws light on the theoretical debate between realism and constructivism on the NFU policy. The next section reviews the body of literature pertaining to the NFU policy of India.

2.2. Public Policymaking and National Security Policymaking

Public policy as a topic has gained importance the world over. Maheswari (1987) noted that public policymaking in India is designed as per the country's constitutional setup. Three things impinge on this process: a parliamentary form of government, federalism, and the constitutional values outlined in the Preamble, fundamental rights, and directive principles of state's policy (p.336). Public policymaking involves many actors and institutions: ministers, bureaucrats, legislators, politicians, pressure groups, and experts that operate in a top-down model (Maheswari, 1987, p.339). Ayyar (2009) observed that three organs are associated with the public policymaking process. These include: 'legislature, executive and higher judiciary (the high courts and the Supreme Court)' (p.1). While non-governmental actors may be influential in public policymaking, they are shaped by governmental bodies and officials (Anderson, 2003, p.3).

The nuclear issue is a national security issue, and the ones at the highest echelons of power make any decisions on this matter. This section seeks to unravel the crucial actors of the national security decision-making level. A pertinent question is what influences the national security formulation of India. As the subsequent analysis will bring to light, an array of factors, actors, and institutions are responsible for this. K. Subrahmanyam (2015)³ observed that policymakers, policy implementers, the Indian Parliament, the Press, and enlightened public opinion are the key players in this context. Mishra (2015) also noted that the role of political leadership is pivotal in nuclear issues (p.8). One could not account for India's nuclear policy without taking into cognizance the role of several key personalities (Mishra, 2015, p.12). He also found that political parties have a role in shaping nuclear decision-making, but their influence is lesser than political leadership (Mishra, 2015, p.21). National security policymaking is a primary concern of every state. Despite heterogeneity, a strategic core has

³ This article was first published in the IDSA Journal 1 (2), January 1969, pp. 82–93.

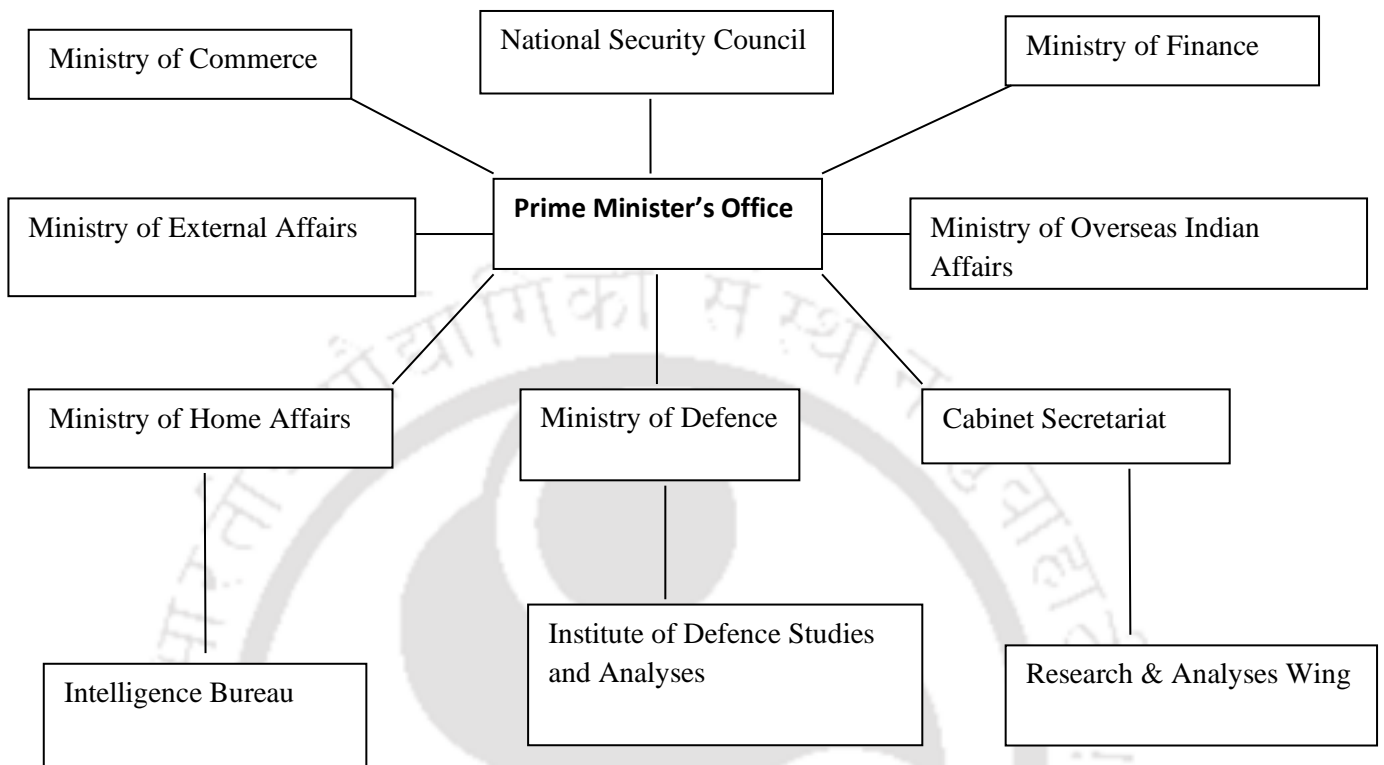
emerged in India's National Security decision-making apparatus, and their worldviews have significantly shaped how India frames and implements its national or foreign security policy (Narang & Staniland, 2012). Thus, though national security policymaking falls within the domain of public policymaking, the former's design and formulation are confined to a core group of elites and institutions.

National Security Council (NSC) is one of the topmost authorities in the country to oversee national security matters and aid and advice the PM in making crucial national security decisions. However, India is not the first country to set up NSC. Several other countries established such councils or committees decades back (Gupta, 2018). K. Subrahmanyam first suggested setting up a National Security Council (NSC). Former PM V. P. Singh set up an incipient NSC in 1990, which was almost non-functional. Former PM A. B. Vajpayee set up the NSC again in 1998 after the Pokhran II nuclear tests (Gupta, 2018).

The decisions of the Prime Minister and his/her personality are quintessentially important in national security matters. Asserting the importance of the Indian Prime Minister and his/her personality, former National Security Advisor (NSA) to the PM of India, Shivshankar Menon (2018) noted that in all countries, foreign and security policies are the province of the individual leaders. Following this tradition, India's has been maintaining its foreign policies under the direct leadership of the Prime Minister since Nehru's times (pp.189-190). John MacDonald (2020) found that Indian PMs play a pivotal role in determining nuclear strategy. The PMs have the final say in nuclear decision-making and strategy. Several governmental wings and institutions assist the PM and the PM's Office (PMO). The following chart helps us understand the institutional influences on the PMO.

Figure 2.1

Governmental and Institutional Influences on PMO



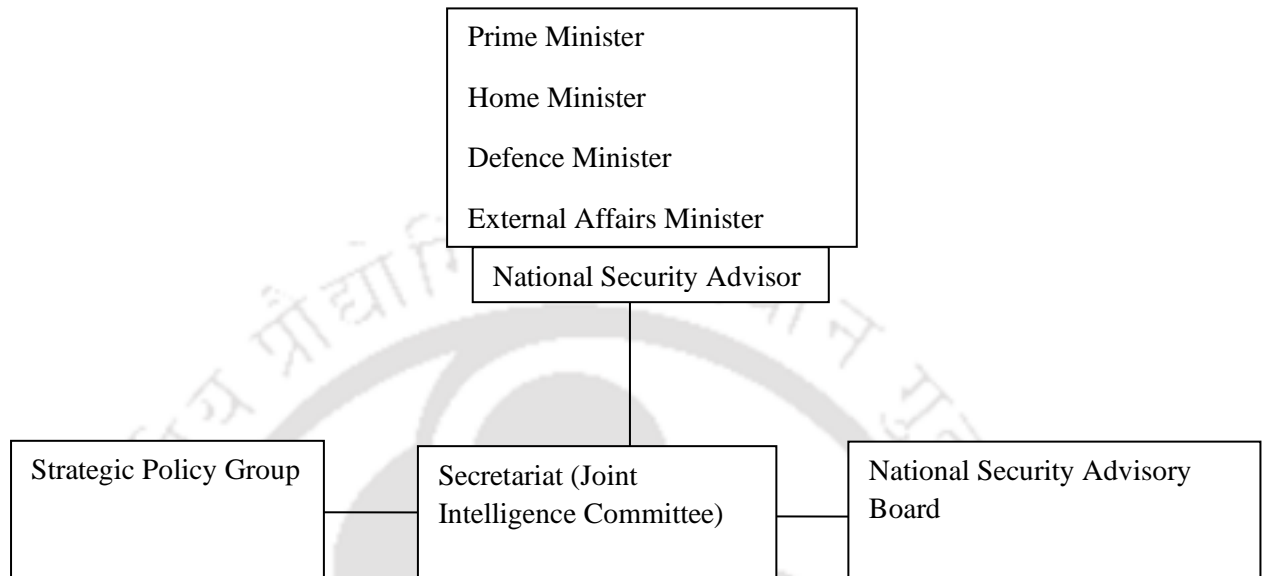
(Source: Ogden, 2017, p.42)

Figure 2.1 suggests that several key departments and wings of the Indian government aid and provide inputs to the PMO for efficient functioning. These include the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, National Security Council, Finance, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, Cabinet Secretariat, Research & Analysis Wing, Intelligence Bureau, and Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis.

We also need to look at the structure of the National Security Council of India to have an idea of how it functions.

Figure 2.2

India's National Security Council



(Source: Concise version from Ogden, 2017, p.44)

Figure 2.2 clarifies that the NSC of India consists of the PM, the Home Minister, the Defence Minister, the External Affairs Minister, and the National Security Advisor (NSA). These political actors play a crucial role in nuclear decision-making. The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) is the final authority in national security matters. The NSC is an advisory body. Interestingly, the draft nuclear doctrine of India was prepared by the NSAB, which is a component of the NSC, whereas the CCS prepared the official nuclear doctrine. The NSAB and the CCS had a role in the inclusion of the NFU policy in India's nuclear doctrine. Rajesh Rajagopalan (2005) observed that the NSAB's draft nuclear doctrine is based mainly on the 'existing statements and the positions made by senior government functionaries' (p.72).

Another observer maintained that the NSAB incorporated government statements relating to nuclear deterrence and posture (cited in Joshi & O'Donnell, 2018, p.153).

Brajesh Mishra was the first NSA of India. He headed the first NSAB that brought out the DND of India, which explicitly included the NFU policy of nuclear weapons⁴. He was succeeded by others like J. N. Dixit, M. K. Narayanan, Shiv Shankar Menon, and the present NSA, Ajit Doval.

The NSC has three other important components- the Strategic Policy Group (SPG), the Secretariat (Joint Intelligence Committee), and the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB). The strategic policy group includes Principal Ministerial Secretaries, Service Chiefs, Head of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO), Intelligence Services, and Reserve Bank Governor. On the other hand, the NSAB includes retired civil servants, retired military officers, academics, and corporate leaders (Ogden, 2017, p.44). The uniqueness of the NSAB, as Gupta (2018) pointed out, lies in the fact that this arrangement is not found in any other part of the world. The NSAB provides insights and advice to the government of India on matters relating to national security. It functions like a think tank. Gupta (2018), who served as the Deputy NSA, noted that the deliberations of the NSAB are kept secret. K. Subrahmanyam was the convenor of the NSAB. The NSAB had a sub-committee that included K. Subrahmanyam, M. K. Rasgotra, Raja Ramanna, Bharat Karnad, and General S. F. Rodriguez (cited in Joshi & O'Donnell, 2018, p.151).

Citing the drawbacks of India's NSC, Gupta (2018) pointed out that NSC lacks teeth as it is just an advisory institution, and its decisions are not binding. The public and political parties are not much concerned about national security issues. Gupta (2018) noted that the

⁴ A content analysis of the remarks made by NSA Brajesh Mishra has been included in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

debates concerning national security remain the prerogatives of a minuscule security community. Leaving the NSC and the NSA outside of the ambit of the business rules of the government has created hindrances for the synching of diverse governmental institutions (Gupta, 2018, p.350). Thus, he claimed that strengthening the NSC is the need of the hour (Gupta, 2018).

2.3. Non-Use and No First Use of Nuclear Weapons: Theoretical Debate Between Realism vs. Constructivism

Before discussing the NFU policy of India, it is necessary to look at the theoretical debate between realism and constructivism on the non-use and the no first use of nuclear weapons. We also need to distinguish between nuclear non-use and the NFU policy. Non-use refers to the act of not using nuclear weapons over a period of time, whereas the NFU policy refers to a nuclear policy of not using nuclear weapons first. This thesis primarily deals with the NFU policy and not with non-use.

Realism is an influential theory of International Relations (IR) that has been around for a long time. Realism stipulates that states are self-interested actors seeking to maximise power, enhance and take care of their security in a world defined by anarchy. The ancient roots of realism as an intellectual tradition can be found in notable works from Greece, Rome, India, and China (Elman, 2007, p. 11). There are different variants of realism. However, some common features can be found among these variants: power, self-help, anarchy, and conflict are part of the nature of the international system.

The quintessence of the realist perspectives on nuclear weapons is the principle of deterrence. Deterrence, by definition, is “the ability of a state to persuade its enemy not to attack because the enemy would then suffer unacceptable losses” (Griffiths et al., 2002/2008, p. 211). Realism maintains that nuclear weapons deter nuclear attacks from other nuclear

weapons-enabled states. Realists assert that nuclear weapons have prevented large-scale and nuclear wars and brought about stability. Some realists even supported the proliferation of nuclear weapons (Waltz, 1981). Another perspective closely related to deterrence is ‘mutually assured destruction (MAD)’, which denotes “(a) relationship between two states in which each can destroy the other’s society even after absorbing an all out attack (or first strike) by the other state. In short, each state has an invulnerable second strike capability” (Griffiths & O’Callaghan, 2004, p.201). Realists generally believe that the twin mechanisms of deterrence and MAD govern the utility of nuclear weapons. If nuclear weapons are not useable weapons, it is because of these two factors.

Ladwig III (2022) argued that states adopt first use posture (a) to avert nuclear threats of enemies, (b) to deter other WMD attacks, (c) to deter conventional military attacks, (d) to provide a nuclear shield to allies, and (e) to ensure sovereignty (pp.75-77). Realists maintain that nuclear states will adopt first use posture against a conventionally stronger enemy and the NFU posture against a conventionally weaker adversary (Sagan, 2011, p.222; Tannenwald, 2022, p.112). T.V. Paul (2009) pointed out that realist writers are sceptical that there is a normative prohibition on the use of nuclear weapons. The realists give the following arguments for the non-use of nuclear weapons: 1) deterrence---either mutual or extended, 2) tactical/strategic unsuitability, and 3) power politics considerations (Paul, 2009, p.16). Furthermore, the reasons for the non-use of nuclear weapons against other non-nuclear weapons states are concern about retaliatory strikes, little military utility, deficit of suitable targets, chances of conventional weapons attack, post-use nuclear contaminations, and complications (Paul, 2009, p.16).

Some critics are quite dismissive that there exists a nuclear taboo at all. For instance, Collin S. Gray said, “(T)he postulate of a nuclear taboo is an ethnocentric delusion on the part

of Western theorists” (cited in Paul, 2009, p.16). Another study by Gibbons and Lieber (2018) argued that the norm of nuclear non-use is more fragile than believed. Paul (2009) noted that realist concerns about nuclear weapons have come from prudence and pragmatism and have not been determined by ethics or norms of morality. The realist position maintains that the use or non-use of nuclear weapons is governed by the principle of consequences rather than appropriateness, as suggested by social constructivists (Press et al., 2013).

Some realists criticise the NFU policy, while others see some merit in it. Realists would say that the states that pursue the NFU policy in their nuclear doctrine/policy do so for strategic reasons, not normative ones. They view “the historical record of non-use as a clear affirmation of the power of deterrence” (Lantis, 2006, p.374). Realists maintain that the states with conventionally superior military capability prefer the NFU policy while the states with relatively weaker conventional military capability adopt the FU options (Sagan, 2011, p.222). For realists, “India would have a no-first-use policy against Pakistan (but not necessarily against China)” (Sagan, 2011, p.223).

On the other hand, social constructivism argues that the meaning of a given social phenomenon, event, or act is socially constructed. Wendt (1995) noted that constructivists and realists have different viewpoints on the constituents of a structure. For neorealists, the distribution of material capabilities makes up the system; on the other hand, constructivists presume it to be social relationships (p.73). Social constructivists assert the mutual constitutiveness of structures and agents. Put differently, “There is a reciprocal relationship between agency and structure” (Kauppi & Viotti, 2019, 154). Kauppi and Viotti (2019) observed that the *structure* for the constructivists means “social relationships and shared meanings, differing on the component elements and their relative importance. These elements may include clusters of rules, norms, principled beliefs, shared knowledge, practices, and even

material elements” (p.151). Wendt (1995) observed that social structures are composed of “shared knowledge, material resources, and practices” (p.73). Agents mean an ‘entity’ operating as an actor in a specific context (Hurd, 2010, p.303). Realism emphasises pragmatism, but there is an in-built assumption of the ‘logic of appropriateness’ in constructivism that actors conform to a specific behaviour because they deem it appropriate.

Constructivism also pays close attention to norms, identity, and interests. Wendt (1995) claimed that even five hundred British nuclear missiles are not a cause of concern in comparison to the five North Korean missiles to the US. He related this to the US assuming Britain as an ally and North Korea as an adversary based on ‘shared understandings’ (p.73). Unlike realists, constructivists believe that anarchy in international relations has no inherent meaning unless meanings are assigned to it. Constructivism also believes in multiple logic of anarchy (Hurd, 2008). It maintains, “Self-help and power politics are institutions, not essential features of anarchy. *Anarchy is what states make of it* [emphasis in original]” (Wendt, 1992, p. 395). This perspective assumes that the decision to use nuclear weapons is governed by the ‘logic of appropriateness’ (Press et al., 2013). The constructivists maintain that there is a taboo associated with the use of nuclear and chemical weapons (Price & Tannenwald, 1996; Tannenwald, 2007). This nuclear taboo emerged after the world witnessed the devastation caused by atomic weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. It grew more robust over time. According to the constructivists, this taboo explains the non-use of nuclear weapons after 1945. The notion of ‘nuclear taboo’ was first mentioned in the writings of Thomas Schelling (Lantis, 2006, p.374). Lantis (2006) observed that “the constructivist nuclear taboo focuses on the ideational sources of national security policy and the power of norms in regulating state behavior” (p.374). Carranza (2018), in a fascinating study, used the logic of nuclear taboo to explain the non-use of nuclear weapons during the Kargil War of 1999 and the border standoff of 2002 between India and Pakistan.

TV Paul (2010) gave a slightly different account of the non-use of nuclear weapons. While for Tannenwald (2005, 2006b, 2007), the nuclear taboo is the primary factor behind the non-use of nuclear weapons, Paul (2010) attributed this fact more to tradition than taboo. He mentioned that the tradition is not as sacrosanct as taboo and may change depending on the material and political exigencies of nuclear states (p.853). Paul (2010) also noted that “(T)he tradition emerged because of a realisation of the horrendous effects of nuclear attack (a material fact) which generated reputation costs” (p.853).

Norm against weapons of mass destruction is an area that has drawn the attention of scholars in recent years. A pacifist argument would hold that if all weapons are potentially destructive, why do some weapons get banned and others not? The pacifist and feminist authors have raised the point that if all weapons can cause mass destruction, it makes little sense to classify some weapons as ‘conventional’ and others as WMD (Hashmi & Lee, 2004, p.9). However, it requires little explanation that a blanket ban on all forms of weapons is neither feasible nor desirable.

Thus, the term WMD cannot be taken at its face value without critical evaluation. The introductory Chapter of the book *Ethics and Weapons of Mass Destruction: Religious and Secular Perspectives*, edited by Hashmi and Lee (2004), is a brilliant critical evaluation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The authors noted the intricate nuances of WMD and other technical difficulties associated with the terms. They even came up with a definition of WMD. WMD constitutes “those classes of weapons most of whose members have the characteristics of being, when used in war, inherently indiscriminate, meaning that their use, with whatever intention, would almost certainly result in the deaths of many civilians” (Hashmi & Lee, 2004, p. 10).

Susan B. Martin (2004) pointed out the difficulties of putting nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons all under the category of WMD, saying that the destructive power of these weapons varies. From the point of destructiveness, nuclear weapons can be rated as the most lethal, followed by chemical and biological weapons (p.33).

These views reveal that there is a politics concerning the classification of weapons of mass destruction. There is a social construction of what is more destructive and violent and what is not. Thus, what constitutes a weapon of mass destruction (WMD) is also, by and large, a social construction. To put it differently, over time, a weapon gets branded as a weapon of mass destruction due to its lethal capacity or other factors like constant lobbying against particular weapons. Once a certain weapon got identified as 'weapons of mass destruction', such identification helped in the emergence of 'taboo' against the use of nuclear and chemical weapons. This taboo emerged due to the large-scale death and destruction that the use of these weapons may create. The US was mindful of this normative element of nuclear taboo and thus refrained from using nuclear weapons in the Korean War, Vietnam War, and Gulf War (Tannenwald, 2007).

The infusion of norms into the study of nuclear politics enriched the field with new insights and ideas traditionally ignored by realist writers (Ruble & Cohen, 2018). If we examine why some states adopt the NFU policy in their nuclear doctrine, from a constructivist perspective, it could be adherence to norms against weapons of mass destruction. Although constructivism generated a rich analysis of the non-use of nuclear weapons, very few constructivist writings are available on the NFU policy of nuclear weapons. Some exceptions include Tannenwald (2022), who argued, "a declared NFU policy is an important way to strengthen norms of nuclear restraint and the nearly seventy-four-year tradition of non-use" (Tannenwald, 2022, p.114). Constructivists claim that the NFU policy reinforces nuclear

restraint and non-use. The NFU policy also serves as a diplomatic tool for the projection of responsible nuclear behaviour of a nuclear state (Tannenwald, 2022, p.114). The existing corpus of literature is, however, silent about whether the NFU policy could be seen as a ‘norm’ against the first use of nuclear weapons.

2.4. Nuclear Policy of India

Let us briefly look at the literature on India’s nuclear policy. Scholars writing on India’s nuclear policy can be broadly divided into two groups, particularly concerning why India went nuclear. One group said that India’s decision to go for nuclear tests in 1998, setting aside its policy of nuclear ambiguity, was primarily driven by domestic politics (Bidwai & Vanaik, 1998; Vanaik, 1998; Sarkar, 1998; Sharma, 1998; Perkovich, 1999, 2002; Jayaramu, 1999; Vanaik & Bidwai, 2002; Frey, 2006 among others). The second group of scholars stressed more on the systemic, external, or security-centric variables to explain the event (Singh, Jaswant, 1998, 2013; Malik, 1998; Ganguly, 1999; 2000; Hu, 2000; Chakma, 2005; Rajagopalan, 2005b; Kennedy, 2011; Menon, 2018 among others). In tune with the second position, some even dubbed India a ‘reluctant nuclear weapon state’ (Subrahmanyam, 2009b, 2012; Kanwal, 2017). Again, some authors emphasized both domestic and external factors. For instance, Kanti Bajpai (2011) looked into the influence of domestic factors on India’s decision to go nuclear without negating the role of external factors or international politics. T. V. Paul (2002) also observed, “Systemic and subsystemic considerations were paramount, and domestic considerations were secondary” (p.95).

George Perkovich’s (1999) *India’s Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation* is one of the finest works on India’s nuclear policy. He argued that domestic factors were instrumental in shaping India’s nuclear policy. He also pointed out the inadequacy of neorealism, rational choice, and nuclear deterrence theories in explaining why and how India’s

nuclear policy evolved. Praful Bidwai and Achin Vanaik (1998) argued that in the 1998 nuclear tests by India, “domestic considerations, not external threats or dissatisfaction with the way the nuclear weapon states have acted, are paramount” (p.51). For them, nuclear weapons are integral to the BJP’s vision of “Hindu India”. Kalpana Sharma (1998) also stated that domestic political issues led BJP to go nuclear. She even called it a ‘Hindu Bomb.’ According to her, “The BJP needed to pull a rabbit out of the hat to silence critics both within and outside the coalition. Operation Shakti-the series of nuclear tests in the Rajasthan desert-seemed the perfect solution” (Sharma, 1998, p.30). Sumit Sarkar (1998) argued that the 1998 nuclear tests could be an extension of BJP and Sangh Pariwar’s (Sangh family) agenda of militaristic nationalism. Frey (2006) also examined domestic politics and actors while explaining India’s nuclear odyssey.

While Perkovich (1999), Bidwai and Vanaik (1998), Sharma (1998), and Sarkar (1998), among others, focused on domestic factors, Ganguly (1999, 2000), Singh, Jaswant (1998; 2013b), Hu (2000) and the likes were stressing more on the systemic level factors or external factors for explaining India’s nuclear policy. According to Hu (2000), India’s perception of its position in international politics led it to go nuclear in 1998. It was perceived that going nuclear would enhance the image of India as a powerful state. K. Subrahmanyam also said, “India’s sole justification for acquiring nuclear weapons is to deter Pakistan and China if ever they resort to nuclear blackmail. There is no other purpose for the Indian weapon” (cited in Sharma, 1998, p.32).

While writing about India’s nuclear policy, Jaswant Singh (1998) noted that the question of India’s tryst with nuclear disarmament received more moralistic treatment than realistic. In recent years, India has tried to engage with the issue of nuclear disarmament in a more realistic way (p. 47). Singh also underlined that security concerns rather than domestic

politics drive the Indian nuclear policy. In other words, he emphasized systemic-level variables more than second-image variables. So, he argued that “(h)ad the tests been motivated simply by electoral exigencies, there would have been no need to test the range of technologies and yields demonstrated in May” (Singh, Jaswant, 1998, p.49). A similar rendition is also found in his book *India at risk: Mistakes, misconceptions and misadventures of security policy* (Singh, Jaswant, 2013). General V. P. Malik (retd), India’s former Chief of Army Staff, argued that the principal reason behind the tests was the constant pressure mounted on India to sign discriminatory treaties like Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). The test was also a reply to the Pakistani nuclear weapons programme (Malik, 2005). Notwithstanding the leaked letter of PM Vajpayee, India’s decision to exercise the nuclear option is influenced by the presence of nuclear weapons rather than particular nuclear threats arising from Pakistan or China (Rajagopalan, 2005, p.69).

Kennedy (2011) also stressed strategic and external factors like failure to get nuclear security from other nuclear powers and diplomatic disappointments behind the 1998 nuclear tests by India. Menon (2018) attributed the test’s reason mainly to the insecurity arising from China and Pakistan and the discriminatory non-proliferation regime.

Yogesh Joshi and Frank O’Donnell (2018) provided an account of the history and trajectory of the nuclear policy of India and the factors that went into its shaping. The perspective they adopted is purely informed by realism. They also discussed the nuclear policies of India’s neighbours Pakistan and China and their probable implications for India.

Runa Das (2008) argued from the perspective of what she calls ‘critical constructivism’ that 1998 nuclear tests under the BJP regime represent “a more complex (and somewhat

shifting) relationship between the Indian state's nationalist /communalist identity and representations of (in)securities than in the earlier non-BJP years" (p.40).

Tellis (2001) highlighted four factors (mainly external) that have influenced the nuclear posture of India. These are the global nuclear regime, regional security imperatives, India's relations with the major powers, and domestic political debates on nuclear issues (p.20).

Itty Abraham (2010) provided an alternate account of the trajectory and the culture of the nuclear bomb in South Asia. So far, the analysis of nuclear policy in the South Asian region has been the sole prerogative of strategic experts and security analysts. It has been pointed out that the views of sociologists and anthropologists have been almost entirely missing or left out from the existing dominant nuclear discourse. In that volume, Abraham and other writers/contributors tried to remove this lacuna in the current literature by highlighting aspects like 'opacity' behind the bomb and 'anti-nuclear imaginaries' in India and Pakistan. Some other works that uncovered India's nuclear history include Subrahmanyam (1998b), Perkovich (1999), Singh, Jasjit (Ed.) (1998), Ganguly (1999, 2000), Basrur (2001), Sardesai and Thomas (Eds.) (2002), Karnad (2008), Das (2008), Tomar (2016), Kennedy (2011), Joshi and O'Donnell (2018) and Joshi (2022) among others.

2.5. India's Nuclear Doctrine

After India went nuclear in 1998, a draft nuclear doctrine (DND) was released in 1999⁵. Though it did not have an official endorsement, it provided some guidelines about India's defence nuclear policy and posture. Swaran Singh (2011) called it the 'most detailed outline of any nuclear doctrine ever' (p.60). He also mentioned that the Indian nuclear doctrine could be

⁵ While India and Pakistan went nuclear almost at the same time, the latter did not have a clear nuclear doctrine that outlines its nuclear posture till date.

influenced by “examples of Chinese and US thinking” (Singh, 2011, p.65). Rajesh Basrur (2000) observed that the draft doctrine played an agenda-setting role in creating an edifice of India’s nuclear posture (p. 610).

Later, India got an official nuclear doctrine in 2003 based on the earlier draft doctrine with specific changes. Thus, the years 1998 to 2003 were crucial for formally shaping the nuclear doctrine (Singh, 2011) and including the NFU policy in it. However, to understand the reasons behind its inclusion, one must look into the history of the NFU policy in a larger context beyond these five years.⁶

A preliminary study of India’s nuclear doctrines (draft and official nuclear doctrines) reveals the inclusion of specific policies like the ‘no first use’ (NFU) option. The contents of these two doctrines will be discussed in the next Chapter. Some of the works that systematically looked into these nuclear doctrines are Gupta (2000b), Kanwal (2000), Khanna (2000), Alam (2002), Vanaik (2005), Kamath (2009), Roy-Chaudhury (2009), Singh (2011), Kazi (2014), Sundaram and Ramana (2018), Tkacik (2017), and Joshi and O’Donnell (2018) among others.

Although the nuclear doctrines have been widely discussed and debated, there are insufficient academic writings on the rationale and the probable factors that may have influenced India’s adoption of no first use policy (NFU) in its nuclear doctrines. Before proceeding to understand this gap in the literature, an attempt has been made to explore it.

India did not have a nuclear doctrine before 1999 or at the time of conducting nuclear tests in 1998. Bharat Karnad (2008) wrote in this regard that between 1974 and 1998 there was no comprehensive thinking on the future nuclear strategy of India (p.83). The reasons why India did not have a nuclear doctrine during this phase were (a) India’s lack of intention to go

⁶ Chapter 3 of the thesis has looked into the historical evolution of the NFU policy of India.

nuclear (b) policy of 'opaque proliferation' (Gupta, 2000b, p.353). However, some scholars noted that the discussion on nuclear doctrine started much earlier. According to Joshi and O'Donnell (2018), it began after the Chinese explosion of nuclear weapons in 1964.

2.6. NFU Policy of India

The NFU is an emerging policy about the use of nuclear weapons. As stated in Chapter 1, the NFU policy refers to a commitment to not using nuclear weapons first against an adversary (Lanoszka & Scherer, 2017, p.345). It "restricts nuclear weapons to a retaliatory role, limiting their purposes to deterrence and assurance, not warfighting" (Lanoszka & Scherer, 2017, p.345).

K. Subrahmanyam observed that the NFU policy adheres to the doctrine of deterrence. It is intended to dissuade an enemy from launching pre-emptive nuclear strikes by maintaining credible and retaliatory nuclear capability (cited in Halperin et al., 2009, p.32). Another scholar noted that the NFU policy is predicated on the notion that decision-makers, being rational beings, would not use nuclear weapons considering the destructive consequences on humanity that might result from its use (Kamath, 2009, p.95).

Existing literature revealed that primarily three factors contributed to the NFU policy of India : (a) strategic factors (Kanwal, 2000, 2015, 2016; Pattanaik, 2001; Rajagopalan, 2005b, 2019; Sagan, 2011; Pant, 2008; Douglas & Doyle, 2014; Kazi, 2014; Joshi, 2015; Tkacik, 2017; Menon, 2018; Kirk, 2020; Desai & Desai, 2021; Subrahmanyam, 2009c, 2009d; Sethi, 2023); (b) the role of political leaders and strategic experts (Kamath, 2007; MacDonald, 2020) and (c) normative factors (Carranza, 2018; Tannenwald, 2021). Some sources have mentioned a combination of two or more of the above factors (Subrahmanyam, 1998a, 2009a; Vohra, 1998; Bhaskar, 1999; Kamath, 2009; Singh, 2011; Singh, Jasjit, 2013a; Sinha, 2020; Rajagopalan & Mishra, 2014; Tellis, 2001; Rajaraman, 2014; Ghoshal, 2016; Tomar, 2016; Desai & Desai,

2021; Ai, 2018; Pant & Joshi, 2018; Menon, 2018; Sundaram & Ramana, 2018; Gupta, 2022)⁷. Some even argued that India adopted the NFU policy to project itself as a responsible nuclear weapon state (Ahmed, 2016). Some authors also suggested that the NFU policy has contributed to stability in South Asia (Rej, 2018). Some looked at the NFU policy as a result of an assortment of factors (Bajpai, 2002; Kamath, 2009; Lodgaard, 2011). However, the existing literature (including most of the sources mentioned above) has not sufficiently examined why India adopted the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. Most sources just made cursory reference to the causes of India's adoption of the NFU policy. Some sources even limit the discussion to the advantages and disadvantages of the NFU policy only.

Kanwal (2000) noted a connection between a country's posture on using nuclear weapons and its conventional military strength. Countries with lesser conventional military capability generally go for the FU policy, and the ones with relatively better conventional military strength can opt for the NFU policy. India could adopt an NFU policy because, against Pakistan, it has better conventional military strength. As far as China is concerned, India is in a position to defend itself despite China's superior military capability. Kanwal (2015) also claimed that the NFU policy is a strategic and rational move as it has granted India several diplomatic and strategic gains that would have disappeared had India adopted an FU policy. The NFU policy is based on the condition that India would retaliate in a massive way in response to an FU of nuclear weapons against it (Kanwal, 2016).

According to Gurmeet Kanwal (2001a), the policy of NFU and non-use against nuclear have-nots are "rooted in a deeply ingrained cultural belief that the use of force to resolve inter-state disputes is a repugnant concept" (p. 1951). Kanwal (2001a) further noted that the NFU

⁷ A content analysis of the selected sources has been made in Chapter 5.

policy of India was not a hastily designed policy but meticulous planning, and decades went into its formulation (p.1964).

Pattanaik (2001) believed that India's NFU policy had been the outcome of India's mammoth military strength and depth and the belief that nuclear weapons are just weapons of deterrence. Pant (2008) noted that the NFU policy promotes stability and enables decision-makers to respond to nuclear crises better (p.86).

Douglas and Doyle (2014) argued that India went for the NFU policy as it provided scope for India to meet all its strategic requirements of dealing with its nuclear neighbours, Pakistan and China (p.84). Kazi (2014) stated that strategic and diplomatic considerations drove the NFU policy adopted by India. Tkacik (2017) claimed that the NFU policy of India is a rational choice to project India as a responsible nuclear power.

Shivshankar Menon (2018) also provided some strategic explanations for India's adoption of the NFU policy. Menon considered strategic reasons as the driving force behind the NFU policy of India. Rajesh Rajagopalan (2019) made one of the finest explanations of the rationale and the advantages of India's adoption of the NFU policy. He argued that strategic logic was the main driver of the NFU policy of India. The nuclear weapons are seen by the Indian strategic community as political weapons meant to reduce nuclear threats (Rajagopalan, 2005b).

Kirk (2020) maintained that from an economic perspective, the NFU policy of India could be called a 'pragmatic stance' as India could not afford to indulge in any unnecessary nuclear arms race with its modest budget. Desai and Desai (2021) also stated the reasons for adopting the NFU policy in India to be strategic. Sethi (2023) claimed that adopting the NFU policy ensures strategic benefits like a 'relaxed nuclear posture' and no extra burden on

leadership in that it puts the possibility of nuclear escalation on the opponent and no insecurity to the adversary.

Another notable work on the NFU policy of India is P. M. Kamath's *Indian Policy of No First Use of Nuclear Weapons: Relevance to Peace and Security in South Asia* (2009). Kamath (2009) put forward some arguments explaining why India adopted an NFU policy. First of all, Kamath saw the genesis of the NFU policy of India in its non-alignment and non-violent foreign policy tradition. He said, "As a reluctant nuclear weapon state, a commitment to NFU is logically and philosophically indicative of policy of restraint in the use of WMD" (Kamath, 2009, p.145). Secondly, according to Kamath (2009), "as a late entrant to the nuclear weapons club, who is yet to be admitted even as a de facto member, it is in India's interest to maintain a low profile on the use of nuclear weapons" (p.145). An NFU clause would have helped India maintain that image. Thirdly, India adopted the NFU clause in its nuclear doctrine because adopting the first use posture would have increased the arms race with China. Fourthly, adopting first use would have put India in a position of 'hair-trigger alertness', which is not economically viable for a developing country. Fifthly, the NFU policy is also beneficial in policy formulation and stabilisation. Sixthly, the NFU policy reduces the chance of accidental nuclear wars or 'nuclear wars by miscalculation'. Seventhly, the NFU policy reinforces that India is not up to an arms race with anyone. Finally, the NFU policy also serves the purpose of confidence-building measures, especially with countries like Pakistan, with whom India has a strained relationship (Kamath, 2009, pp. 144-147). Thus, the factors cited by Kamath pertain to a combination of strategic and normative aspects.

Deepa M. Ollapally (2000), on the other hand, observed that the US influence could be one of the possible factors. However, in practice, India gave more weightage to "domestic elite conceptions of security interests than to outside influence" (Ollapally, 2000, p.68). Another theoretical explanation of the rationale behind the adoption of military/ nuclear doctrines by

India and Pakistan and the elements included therein can be found in an article by Scott Sagan (2011).

One of the top nuclear scientists of India, R. Chidambaram, mentioned that India, as a responsible nuclear power, should keep and continue the NFU option (Peri, 2019).⁸ Sundaram and Ramana (2018) pointed out that the NFU policy “allows Indian politicians and diplomats to portray India as a responsible country, especially by contrasting India with Pakistan” (p.163).

Various Indian Prime Ministers supported the NFU policy before and after the formal adoption of this option in the nuclear doctrines. It has been endorsed by several strategic experts and analysts as well. However, there are also a host of critics of India’s nuclear doctrine and the NFU policy. Bharat Karnad (2008) stated that the Indian government’s obsession with the NFU policy had stymied its strategic deterrent. Many questioned the enforceability and the verifiability of the NFU policy of India. For instance, Sundaram and Ramana (2018) argued that it is “neither a stable nor a reliable predictor of how Indian military and political leadership might actually use nuclear weapons” (p.153). Apart from pointing out the inherent defects of the draft contents, P. C. Chari (1999) called the whole draft a hastily written document. G. Balachandran (1999) criticised the draft doctrine containing the NFU policy as a completely innocuous doctrine with little operational value. He said, “Its only virtue is that nothing in it went very strongly against the sentiment of any member of the NSAB and conversely all members could identify themselves with some portions of it.”⁹ Ali Ahmed (2008a) said that there is a need for more clarity in India’s nuclear doctrine. Kanwal (2001b) argued that the NFU policy of India has come up with a price in that it had to make “an immense strategic

⁸ Retrieved July 22, 2019, from <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/no-first-use-policy-a-good-position-to-keep-dr-chidambaram/article28531080.ece>

⁹ Retrieved July 21, 2019, from http://www.ipcs.org/comm_select.php?articleNo=254

sacrifice and imposed a heavy burden upon itself” (p.51). According to Swaran Singh (2011), “India’s nuclear doctrine seems inadequate in addressing ‘limited war’ scenarios that seek to extend deterrence into actual fighting” (p.66). Some critics claimed that the NFU policy of India has circumscribed India’s recourses in a conflict situation vis-à-vis Pakistan (Dalton, 2019). Scott Sagan (2011) made a scathing criticism of the official nuclear doctrine of India of 2003. He wrote that the doctrine lacked defensive capability. In a bid to become a responsible nuclear power and to infuse realism, India copied elements from the doctrines of the US and the nuclear states (Sagan, 2011, p.254).

It would be wrong to presume that the NFU policy of India is unchanging and unchangeable (Tkacik, 2017). The official nuclear doctrine of 2003 indicates certain changes in the NFU policy. Some scholars argued that India might further dilute its NFU policy (Vanaik, 2015; Tkacik, 2017; Narang, 2018; Joshi, 2015). Suggestions and criticisms have come from certain quarters that India needs to change its NFU policy to become a credible nuclear weapon state and to play a more assertive role in international politics. Some of these have come from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The BJP’s election manifesto indicated such a trend in 2014. It stated that BJP would “(s)tudy in detail India’s nuclear doctrine, and revise and update it, to make it relevant to challenges of current times”¹⁰. In the aftermath of the BJP’s victory, the former defence minister of India, Manohar Parrikar, also commented on the need to revise the NFU policy (Singh, 2016). In 2019, the defence minister of India, Rajnath Singh, hinted at the possibility of modification of the NFU policy (Sen & Laskar, 2019). Suggestions for review came from some other quarters as well. For instance,

¹⁰ Retrieved July 31, 2020, from <https://www.news18.com/news/politics/full-text-bjp-manifesto-for-2014-lok-sabha-elections-679304.html>

Gurmeet Kanwal (2016) stressed that the nuclear doctrine should be reviewed every five years and that the think tanks and individual analysts should also be part of this review exercise. Tkacik (2017) also argued that India is slowly taking steps to do away with the NFU policy. According to Narang (2018), “doctrinally India is likely to continue to rhetorically uphold NFU as a key pillar of its nuclear strategy, which is strictly retaliatory in nature, while continuing to periodically dilute or inject ambiguity into the policy” (p.164).

Nearly 25 years have passed since India formally adopted the NFU policy. The Indian government, under three different Prime Ministers, has adhered to the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine despite ongoing criticisms against the policy itself. Thus, a thorough examination of the conditions why India adopted this policy in the first place is necessary.

Secondly, the existing literature primarily focuses on the pros and cons of India’s nuclear doctrine, the feasibility of the NFU doctrine, and its advantages and disadvantages. However, there is a dearth of in-depth analysis on why India adopted the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine.

Thirdly, most studies on India’s nuclear doctrine and policy have only looked at the NFU policy mostly from a realist and strategic perspective (For instance, Karnad, 2008; Ganguly, 1999; Hu, 2000; Joshi & O’Donnell, 2018). There has not been any serious attempt to explain the normative influences on the NFU policy of India or for that matter the role of political leaders and strategic experts in it. The extant literature has also not attempted to study whether the NFU policy could be seen as a ‘norm’ against the violence of the first use of nuclear weapons.

2.7. Central Assumptions

While drawing from the existing literature analysed in this Chapter, the study examines the probable factors behind India's decision to adopt the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. This study formulates and examines certain assumptions as to what extent:

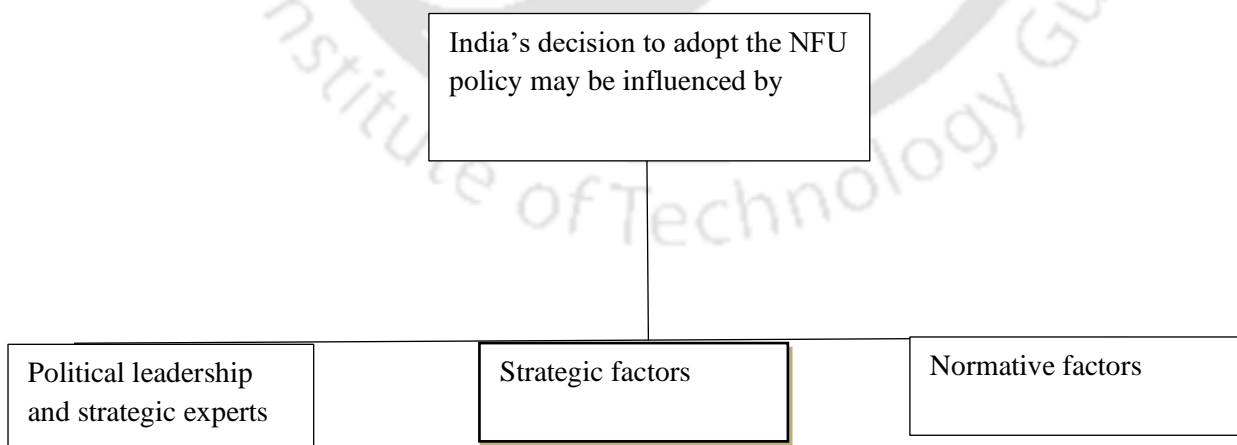
- a) India's NFU policy may be influenced by political leadership and strategic experts;
- b) India's NFU policy may be influenced by strategic factors;
- c) India's NFU policy may be influenced by normative factors

The study argues that (d) while strategic factors are important, normative factors and political leadership and strategic experts also play an important role when it comes to India's NFU policy of nuclear weapons. Thus, the NFU policy of India is a mixed influence of strategic factors, supplemented by political leadership, strategic experts, and normative factors.

The following figure diagrammatically represents the argument stated above:

Figure 2.3:

Probable Determinants of India's NFU Policy



2.8. Summary

This Chapter analysed what existing literature says about the NFU policy of India and reflected on the gaps therein. The reasons for adopting the NFU policy have not been studied in greater detail, barring a few sources. Scholars who wrote about the NFU policy of India focussed mainly on the pros and cons of the NFU policy rather than exploring the reasons for India's adoption of this policy. In several studies, just cursory reference has been made to state why India adopted the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. Furthermore, strategic logic, the role of political leadership and strategic experts, and some normative reasons have been assigned as the reasons for the adoption of the NFU policy of India. However, no attempt has been made for substantive exploration of the factors influencing India's decision to adopt the NFU policy. The extant literature has also not attempted to study whether the NFU policy could be seen as a 'norm' against the violence of the first use of nuclear weapons. The present study will try to explore these areas in the subsequent Chapters.

CHAPTER 3

India's Nuclear Doctrine and the History of the No First Use

Policy

3.1. Introduction

This Chapter will analyse the key elements of India's nuclear doctrine, emphasizing its NFU policy. It will also highlight the history of the NFU policy. Every nuclear weapons state has a unique history of developing its nuclear weapons and the rationale behind them. Every nuclear power has doctrinal guidelines in some form or another that determine its nuclear posture. While some nuclear doctrines are more explicit and transparent in contents, others are ambiguous. Some nuclear doctrines have been dubbed as relatively safer than others. Some nuclear doctrines include the first use (FU) option, while others have adopted the no first use (NFU) policy. Only two of nine nuclear powers¹¹ have included the NFU policy in their nuclear doctrines. The Chapter begins with a discussion of the history of the NFU policy. Then, it explores the evolution of the NFU policy in the context of India's nuclear doctrine. It also briefly throws light on the nuclear doctrines of China and Pakistan vis-a-vis India. The Chapter also analyses the key contents of the draft nuclear doctrine (DND) of 1999 and the official nuclear doctrine of India of 2003. It also makes a brief discussion on the nuclear force structure of India.

3.2. The History of the NFU Policy

¹¹ These include P5 members of the UN Security Council (US, Russia, UK, France, and China) and Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea.

The NFU is an important policy concerning the use of nuclear weapons. It refers to the decision not to use nuclear weapons first. The NFU policy is a form of negative security assurance. According to Gurmeet Kanwal (2001b), an NFU policy is much more than a verbal commitment, so much so that it has to be corroborated by the country's nuclear force structure, deployment patterns, surveillance systems, and level of preparedness of that structure (p.65)

It is not easy to pinpoint the exact date of origin of the NFU policy. According to Gurmeet Kanwal (2001b), "The concept of no first use logically flows out of the current conventional wisdom that the sole purpose of nuclear weapons, if they have a purpose at all, is to deter the use of nuclear weapons" (p.64). Kamath (2009) argued that the NFU policy aligns with the nuclear disarmament project. The idea of the NFU policy was first flaunted by the atomic scientists involved in manufacturing nuclear weapons. Another viewpoint is that the NFU policy emerged from initial attempts to disarmament and ban nuclear weapons alongside diplomatic manoeuvrings (Lewis, 2014, p.20). Popular appeals like the Stockholm Appeal of 1950 also called for imposing a ban on the FU policy of nuclear weapons (Lewis, 2014, p.20).

Kamath (2009) stated that the idea of the NFU policy and its intellectual analysis originated in the US (p.94). It was "Republican Senator from Vermont, Ralph Flanders," who made the earliest reference to "the NFU of nuclear weapons in 1949" (Kamath, 2009, p.96). In a resolution dated June 27, 1949, Flanders argued, "(T)he Atom bomb like biological warfare, wholesale poisoning is not properly a military device directed against the armed forces of the enemy, but rather is a means for the mass murder of civilians" (cited in Kamath, 2009, p.96). Another account says that its origin coincides with the advent of nuclear weapons (Weilier, 1983, p.28). However, K. Subrahmanyam noted that the concept of the NFU policy dates back to the Geneva Protocol of 1925 when no first use of chemical weapons was proposed (cited in Kanwal, 2001b).

George Kennan, too, made an indirect reference to the NFU policy in a memorandum submitted to the Secretary of State on January 20, 1950. He was not keen on using nuclear weapons as 'weapons of first strike' (Kamath, 2009, p. 97). Kennan wrote that the US needs to introspect whether nuclear weapons would be taken as "an integral and vitally important component" or "national arsenal only as a possible means of retaliation" (cited in Kamath, 2009, p.96). However, the domestic debates concerning the NFU policy did not substantially change the US nuclear policy and posture. After the Soviet nuclear tests, the US included a possible FU policy (Feiveson & Hogendoorn, 2003). US President Eisenhower later had a clear FU policy (Feiveson & Hogendoorn, 2003). The subsequent US presidents also continued with the FU policy. The nuclear rivalries of the Cold War did not permit the US to adopt an NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. This FU posture of the US also continued in the post-Cold War period.

Though the US today endorses an FU policy, it must be noted that it has an NFU policy against the non-nuclear weapons states, which are parties of NPT subject to the condition that it is not an attack by a non-nuclear state against the US and its allies to whom the US has security commitments (cited in Feiveson & Hogendoorn, 2003, p.4). Feiveson and Hogendoorn (2003) criticised it as an unnecessary hedged NFU policy.

China became the first to declare an NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine in 1964. It also presented the idea of the NFU policy before the UN General Assembly in 1971 (cited in Kamath, 2009). It made another proposal in June 1982 in the second special session of the UN General Assembly, stating that all nuclear-armed states should agree upon the non-use of nuclear weapons. In the interim, nuclear powers should commit not to use or threaten to use such weapons against non-nuclear states and abstain from the pre-emptive use of nuclear arsenals against one another under all circumstances (cited in Kamath, 2009, p.111).

During the Cold War era, the Soviet Union also promised to adhere to the NFU policy (Joffe, 1985; Feiveson & Hogendoorn, 2003). Soviet Defence Minister Dimitri F. Ustinov said, “Only extraordinary circumstances -a direct nuclear aggression against the Soviet state or its allies-can compel us to resort to a retaliatory strike as a last means of self-defense” (cited in Joffe, 1985, p.608). Scholars like Joffe (1985) and Feiveson and Hogendoorn (2003) doubted the Soviet’s promise of the NFU policy. Joffe (1985) noted that this declaration was not followed in letter and spirit (p.608). Thus, the Soviet Union could not be regarded as a country that has adopted the NFU policy in the proper sense of the term. China and Russia, however, agreed to maintain a bilateral NFU policy of nuclear weapons in 1996. In 1985, India’s former PM Rajiv Gandhi and General Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan agreed not to attack each other’s nuclear installations (Subrahmanyam, 1998b).

After China, India also adopted the NFU policy in its nuclear policy. Although only two countries adopted the NFU policy in their nuclear doctrines, many analysts saw its merits. It has been pointed out in various arms control conferences and campaigns that the NFU policy can help check the outbreak of nuclear wars (Nayan, 2018). Suggestions came from different quarters that other nuclear states like the US and Russia should also adopt the NFU policy. Feiveson and Hogendoorn (2003) highlighted three reasons the US should adopt an unqualified NFU policy. First, the US does not require the first use of nuclear weapons to thwart any attack on it or its allies. Secondly, a FU policy by the US would disrupt international order and the NPT regime. Thirdly, the NFU option would further strengthen the nuclear taboo (Feiveson & Hogendoorn, 2003, p. 93). Fourth, the benefits of the NFU policy are far more significant than those adopting an FU policy (Feiveson & Hogendoorn, 2003, p.97). Similarly, Graham Jr. (1998) argued that adopting an undiluted NFU policy would be crucial in fulfilling the goals of nuclear arms control and disarmament enshrined in Article VI of NPT (p. 115).

The NFU policy can reduce the likelihood of nuclear war in South Asia or anywhere worldwide (Korb & Rothman, 2012). This policy can be a rallying point or a common denominator for the nuclear abolitionist and nuclear supporters, realists, and constructivists. Stressing the importance of the NFU policy, Graham Jr. (1998) said, “No first use is an idea whose time has come” (p.16). Thus, the NFU policy might be an important step toward global nuclear disarmament. However, the NFU policy was criticised as well. For instance, Brad Roberts (2019) argued that the opportune moment for the US to adopt the NFU policy has not arrived and that this option is a ‘step in the wrong direction’ (p. 54).

3.3. The Chinese Nuclear Doctrine and the NFU Policy

As stated above, China is the first country to adopt the NFU clause in its nuclear doctrine and posture. But the NFU policy was not the brainchild of China. Debates and discussions concerning the NFU policy arose much earlier in the US. However, China’s role is significant in understanding the history of the NFU policy.

According to Douglas and Doyle (2014), the main elements of China’s nuclear strategy are “no-first-use (NFU), minimum deterrence and nuclear disarmament” (p.75). Zhenqiang Pan (2018) interpreted that China adopted no first use policy: (a) only to deter nuclear attacks by other nuclear powers; (b) to make the nuclear arms race with other nations redundant, (c) nuclear weapons are not alternative to the conventional forces China might have, and (d) nuclear weapons for China is not an instrument for advancing its foreign policy objectives (pp.116-119).

What factors influenced China to adopt the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine? According to Zhong Ai (2018), traditional Chinese perceptions of ‘harmony’ and ‘defensive’ strategic culture shaped the Chinese nuclear strategy. The NFU policy is envisioned as a part of China’s desire for ‘global nuclear disarmament’ (Douglas & Doyle, 2014). Another factor

that might have influenced China's NFU policy is the external environment. As Douglas and Doyle (2014) categorically stated, "China's nuclear strategy has been shaped by its external environment, most notably by the two Cold War superpowers" (p.78). Thirdly, Mao's leadership and his beliefs also shaped the NFU policy of China (Ai, 2018). Notably, Mao regarded nuclear weapons as "paper tigers" – things that appear frightening, but have no power"¹² (Lewis, 2014, p.19). Fourthly, according to Zhong Ai (2018), China's NFU doctrine is influenced by the concept of nuclear taboo (p.57). Fifth, the NFU policy of China "correspond with the requirements of China's peaceful rise and China's NFU doctrine can also be seen as a powerful counter to the 'China's threat' theory" (Ai, 2018, p.58). Sha Zhukang, China's Director-General of Arms Control and Disarmament, reportedly mentioned in March 1999: "Because of our (China's) own bitter experience of being blackmailed, we have declared to the world we would never be the first to use nuclear weapons" (cited in Kanwal, 2001b, p.56). China faced 'nuclear blackmailing' by both the US and the USSR. The US contemplated nuclear attacks on China on several occasions.¹³ Similarly, after straining Sino-Soviet Relations in the mid-1950s, China considered developing its nuclear arsenal for defensive purposes (Ai, 2018). Leading Indian strategic analyst K. Subrahmanyam (1998b), however, has something different to say about the NFU policy of China. According to him, "As the weakest of nuclear weapon powers at that time, China had every interest in projecting a no-first-use policy" (Subrahmanyam, 1998b, p.27). So, for him, nothing is surprising about the NFU policy of China. In a similar vein, Delpech (2012) said that China adopted this policy due to its modest nuclear capacity (p.51).

¹² Mao later elaborated his views on 'paper-tiger' in the Secretariat Extended meeting of the Communist Party of China in this way: "What I have said is a vivid metaphor, a strategic consideration, and meant for people who have boasted about how marvellous atomic bombs are and who use them to scare kindhearted people" (cited in Pan, 2018, p.20).

¹³ Studies mentioned that there were as many as eight instances where the US had thoughts on using nuclear weapons against China (cited in Singh, S. 1998, p.140; also see, Pande, 2000, p.76).

For some writers like Vipin Narang (2014), the Chinese decision to make nuclear weapons grew out of its aim to balance the possibility of future nuclear coercion and strikes. This decision differs from India and Pakistan's cases as both countries were engaged in conventional wars (pp.122-123). According to Yogesh Joshi and Frank O'Donnell (2018), China's decision to build nuclear weapons came from its ambition to be a great power and to deter US nuclear threats.

After its first nuclear test on October 16, 1964, China stated that it would adhere to the NFU policy of nuclear weapons.¹⁴ The official statement released in October 1964 reads, "China will never at any time or under any circumstances be the first to use nuclear weapons" (cited in Douglas & Doyle, 2014, p.76). Ideally, a country must have an effective second-strike capability before adopting an effective NFU policy. However, the most striking feature of the Chinese NFU policy is that China declared it when it did not have a second-strike capability, and its nuclear arsenal was far behind other nuclear powers like the US and the USSR. While praising the NFU policy of China, Zhong Ai (2018) wrote that China's adherence to the NFU policy is "not just innovative but also a unique contribution for the prevalent nuclear theologies of that time" (pp.33-34).

From time to time, China has been repeating that it would stand firmly with the NFU policy. China also reiterated its commitment to the NFU policy in a 2010 defence white paper (Douglas & Doyle, 2014). In the white paper of 2015, again, it was stated that "China will unconditionally not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states or in nuclear-weapon-free zones, and will never enter into a nuclear arms race with any other country."¹⁵

¹⁴ For a detailed chronology of China's nuclear weapons programme, see Singh, S. (1998).

¹⁵ Retrieved July 28, 2020, from <https://news.usni.org/2015/05/26/document-chinas-military-strategy>

One of the features of China's nuclear strategy is that among the three Asian/ South Asian nuclear states, China is the only state to issue white papers containing official public statements of its nuclear doctrine (Joshi & O'Donnell, 2018). However, this is not to say that China's nuclear strategy, doctrine, and NFU policy are unproblematic. First of all, China has diluted its NFU doctrine over the years. Despite China's assurance of sticking to the NFU policy, several countries like Japan, Taiwan, and the US doubted it. Secondly, the ambiguity of minimum deterrence is another problematic dimension of the Chinese nuclear strategy (Douglas & Doyle, 2014). Thirdly, as pointed out by some analysts (Singh, S., 1998; Khanna, 2000; Joshi & O'Donnell, 2018), the NFU policy of China did not state anything about the use of nuclear weapons on its territory. Thus, the NFU policy may not apply to areas such as Arunachal Pradesh of India, claimed by China as its own. Schneider (2009) criticised the Chinese NFU policy just as propaganda. Moreover, the eighth edition of the Chinese white paper on defence did not mention the NFU policy, causing some global concerns among strategic experts (cited in Zhang, 2013). However, studies showed no proof that China had abandoned its NFU policy (see Zhang, 2013) and would not change its stance (see Zhang, 2008; Sanders-Zakre & Davenport, 2017).

Despite concerns, many believe that China's NFU stance has played an essential role in maintaining nuclear stability in Asia. According to Hui Zhang (2013), China's abandonment of the NFU policy would harm the global disarmament process.

3.4. Pakistan's Nuclear Doctrine

The motive of Pakistan's nuclear policy is straightforward, unlike India's, which is full of ambiguities and paradoxes. Rajagopalan and Mishra (2014) convincingly argued that "over-riding reason for Pakistan's program is the imbalance of power in the Indian sub-continent" (p.15). Just days after India's Pokhran nuclear tests of 1998, Pakistan also conducted six (6)

nuclear tests on May 28 and 30, 1998, and declared itself a de-facto nuclear weapon-enabled state. These were ‘tit for tat nuclear tests’—to evoke a phrase of Kamath (2009). The time of the tests reveals beyond doubt that Pakistan had secretly but systematically followed nuclear weapons production and procurement, and it was just waiting for India to demonstrate it. Without pursuing a long-term nuclear policy, a country cannot manufacture nuclear weapons within a fortnight. Indian PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee (2000a) commented after the nuclear tests by Pakistan, “Can nuclear weapons be developed in just 16 days? Is it possible to launch missiles at such a short notice?” (p.18). Was India oblivious to the nuclear developments in Pakistan all these years? Commenting on Pakistan’s nuclear weapons programme, Vajpayee (2000a) revealed, “No, it (Pakistan’s nuclear programme) was a result of preparations going on for years. We know this, since we have taken quite a long time in preparations and in reaching this stage” (p.18). India and even the US had information that Pakistan was embarking on a task of nuclear weapons procurement with assistance from China (Subrahmanyam, 1998b).

Does the evolution of Pakistan’s nuclear programme¹⁶ have any connection to India? According to Farah Zarah (2000), “Pakistan’s nuclear program has a symbiotic relationship with Indian nuclear policy” (p.145). Some commentators noted that Pakistan’s nuclear weapons programme started three years after the Pokhran-I nuclear tests by India (cited in Pande, 2000). Security concerns from its neighbouring country, India, drove Pakistan’s nuclear policy. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto declared that Pakistan would make nuclear weapons to match up with India one day, even if it takes Pakistan to eat grass or leaves (cited in Singh, 1979). One

¹⁶ For a detailed chronology of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons programme see Kumar (1998). Also, see Rajagopalan and Mishra (2014).

can imagine Pakistan's desperation to build nuclear weapons from this much-quoted statement by Bhutto.

Another source mentioned that Pakistan obtained nuclear weapons capability in 1987 (Kumar, 1998). There were reports that China helped Pakistan in acquiring nuclear weapons. Shivshankar Menon (2018) noted that Pakistan had received assistance from China in its path to nuclearisation since June 1976 (p.170). He also argued, "From the Indian point of view the Chinese and Pakistani nuclear weapons programs are so closely linked and have been so for so long that they may effectively be treated as one" (Menon, 2018, p.171).

Savita Pande (2000) and Vipin Narang (2014) reflected on Pakistan's nuclear programme not in terms of its reaction to India's nuclear power but rather as an attempt by Pakistan to thwart the conventional superiority of India. From a 'national strategic culture' perspective, the military had a clear role in Pakistan's nuclear policy, posture, and doctrine, unlike India, where civilian control is apparent (Sagan, 2011, p.224). Pakistan is the sole state where the military has absolute control over its nuclear programme (Menon, 2018, p.166).

According to Sagan (2011), the 'national strategic culture' perspective would attribute this to the fact that India has colonial historical experiences of distrust of professional military officers and, secondly, the moralism of Gandhian non-violent tradition (p.225). While the second point is convincing, the first one is inadequate to explain the nuclear policies in South Asia.

A study of Pakistan's nuclear policy further reveals that it is purely India-centric. The 1964 nuclear tests by China were a turning point for India. Similarly, the 1974 nuclear tests by India accelerated the nuclearisation of Pakistan. As Rasul Bakhsh Rais (2005) put it, Pakistan wants to maintain a 'rough nuclear parity' with India. Rajagopalan (2005) observed that Pakistan projected its nuclear doctrine to prevent India from asserting conventional military

strength against it (p.37). All nuclear doctrines witness changes in varying degrees. The same applies to the nuclear doctrine of Pakistan as well. Over the years, it has gone through some changes. There has been indication by Pakistani officials and official statements that Pakistani nuclear weapons have been geared toward both conventional deterrence and nuclear deterrence (Rajagopalan, 2005b).

Pakistani nuclear doctrine also generated some debates in New Delhi. In response to the unstarred question No.244 (answered on 28.02.2008 in Rajya Sabha) posed by Shri Balavant alias Bal Apte and Shri Shreegopal Vyas, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, the then External Affairs Minister of India explained that “The Government of Pakistan has not issued a comprehensive ‘Nuclear Doctrine’. However, Pakistan officials on various occasions have stated that the direction of their nuclear weapons programme will be determined by India’s actions.”¹⁷

Thus, Pakistan did not have a formal official nuclear doctrine. Pakistan’s nuclear doctrine became more apparent through the pronouncements or commentaries of top Pakistani military brass and political leaders. Unlike China and India, Pakistan does not have an NFU pledge in its nuclear doctrine. On the contrary, it has a FU policy. This kind of policy is due to its rivalry with India, which is militarily stronger (Krepon, 2017). Ambiguity is an inherent element in the Pakistani nuclear doctrine. The then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif himself, said in a press conference that Pakistani nuclear weapons were “to deter aggression, whether nuclear or conventional” (cited in Sagan, 2011, p.228). India offered an NFU proposal to Pakistan, and the latter declined it on the grounds of the conventional military superiority of the former.

¹⁷ Retrieved July 20, 2019, from https://www.mea.gov.in/rajya-sabha.htm?dtl/11230/Q244_Nuclear_doctrine_of_Pakistan

Vinod Anand (2000) called Pakistan's nuclear programme 'militaristic' and 'aggressive' and that "(I)t revolves around the proactive nuclear policy of first use, tenets of nuclear war fighting, liberal use of threats spiced with an element of irrationality to gain maximum deterrence value for its minimal arsenal" (p. 626). Thus, it appears that Pakistan will not shy away from launching pre-emptive nuclear strikes against India should there be a necessity. Pakistan's nuclear deterrence is sought to thwart not only nuclear attacks from India but also conventional military attacks. The reason for this is that the conventional military strength of India is superior to Pakistan. Lieutenant General Sardar F. S. Lodhi stated that "Pakistan's nuclear doctrine would, therefore, essentially revolve around the first strike option. In other words, we [Pakistan] will use nuclear weapons if attacked by India even if the attack is with conventional weapons..." (cited in Kanwal, 2001b, p. 58). Stating the rationale of the FU policy by Pakistan, Zafar Khan (2015) demonstrated that it is the conviction of the Pakistani policymakers that the FU policy is cost-effective and in tandem with the minimum deterrence policy of Pakistan. While the FU policy is a crucial feature of Pakistan's nuclear doctrine, it is unclear when and which targets will be chosen in India. Explaining the reason behind this, Scott Sagan (2011) said that an explicit description of these situations might invite pre-emptive strikes from India and thereby limit nuclear deterrent options for Pakistan. Pakistan even called the NFU policy of India a farce (Zhara, 1999, p.10). According to Rasul B. Rais (2005), "Pakistan's best bet is that India would be deterred from major conventional war by the declaratory policy of possibly using nuclear weapons first" (p.156).

The inclusion of the FU policy in the nuclear doctrine of Pakistan caused concern in the Indian subcontinent. Scott Sagan (2011) said in this regard that the nuclear doctrine of Pakistan had led the country to nuclear adventurism. However, Rajesh Rajagopalan (2005) argued that the nuclear doctrine of Pakistan is not as dangerous as it is made out to be. Pakistan talks about the FU policy but only as a last resort (p.37). He even argued that "Pakistan's

nuclear doctrine actually ameliorates rather than accelerates risks of a rapid nuclear escalation in South Asia” (Rajagopalan, 2005, p.66). He highlighted the importance of the Kashmir issue in the nuclear policy dynamics of Pakistan. For Pakistani policymakers, annexing Kashmir has been the goal, and nuclear power is the means to that goal. Pakistan also viewed “nuclear weapons as a shield behind which it could sponsor and promote the Kashmir insurgency” (Rajagopalan, 2005b, p.45) at least in the 1990s.

Others, too, indicated that Pakistan would use nuclear weapons as the last option. As the former President of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf, said, “For us, the use of nuclear weapons is an utterly last resort. We conduct ourselves responsibly” (cited in Sagan, 2011, p.241). Gurmeet Kanwal (2001b) said that Pakistan’s pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons against India would be a self-demolition because a retaliatory nuclear strike by India would wipe out the map of Pakistan.

3.5. India’s Nuclear Doctrine

India is the second country to adopt an NFU clause in its nuclear doctrine. Tracking the history of the NFU policy of India is not easy, given that nuclear security issues are national security issues and inherent secrecy is maintained on these issues. Most of the files related to nuclear issues are still in classified forms. Kanti Bajpai (2011) wrote,

By definition, nuclear politics is perhaps the highest of ‘high politics’ and therefore the most shrouded in secrecy. There are few if any documents here, and even if documentation existed, India’s secrecy laws are so stringent that virtually no one can get access to anything important (p.28).

Secondly, various views exist regarding India's nuclear history (some are even mutually contradictory). Such diversity makes tracing India's linear nuclear trajectory extremely difficult.

Thirdly, as pointed out by Rajagopalan and Mishra (2014), "There appears to have been an oral tradition in Indian atomic decision-making; many (though not all) decisions were not committed to paper" (p.8). Therefore, documented history is inadequate to trace India's atomic decision-making. Mishra (2015) also confirmed the presence of an oral tradition of nuclear decision-making in India.

3.5.1. India's Path Towards Nuclearisation

Before going into the details of India's nuclear doctrine and the NFU policy, let us briefly discuss India's path toward nuclearisation.¹⁸ India's nuclear journey started before independence under the careful guidance of the foremost Indian nuclear scientist Homi J. Bhabha. Bhabha's initiative led to the establishment of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) in 1945 by J.R.D. Tata. In the post-independence period, Bhabha and his team continued with this project with the support of former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. The Indian Atomic Energy Commission came into being in August 1948, followed by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), formed on August 3, 1954. The Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) was established by a government resolution dated March 1, 1958. The primary intention behind harnessing nuclear energy during this phase was peaceful; India did not set any specific goals to make nuclear weapons. India's nuclear history and weapons are considered unique as India showed restraint before embarking on its nuclear weapons programme and overtly declaring its nuclearisation. Pant and Joshi (2018) stated that "India's nuclear weapons programme has been an offshoot of its atomic energy programme" (p.3).

¹⁸ The comprehensive analysis of India's nuclear weapons journey is not within the purview of this chapter.

Other nuclear weapon states typically focus on peaceful uses of nuclear energy after procuring nuclear weapons. However, India's case is quite the opposite of this (Pant & Joshi, 2018, p.3).

India took its nuclear weapons program seriously after the Chinese nuclear test in 1964 (Subrahmanyam, 1998b; Tomar, 2016; Joshi & O'Donnell, 2018). In 1964, Bhabha argued, "The explosion of a nuclear device by China is a signal that there is no time to be lost" (cited in Menon, 2000, p. xiii). However, the nuclear threat that emerged from China after its 1964 nuclear tests did not immediately lead to India's full-scale nuclear weaponisation programme (Pant & Joshi, 2018). After India's diplomatic failure to gain security assurances from other nuclear weapons states, India took the path toward nuclearisation (Jayramu, 1999; Kennedy, 2011; Rajagopalan & Mishra, 2014; Pant & Joshi, 2018). The Chinese nuclear tests led to serious debates in India.

Meanwhile, various political parties and Indian media demanded that India make nuclear weapons for its security (Chakma, 2005). A lengthy debate ensued over whether India should make its nuclear weapons. India also sought nuclear protection from the nuclear powers but failed to receive any support. Furthermore, Pakistan's desperate attempt at nuclearisation compelled India to review its nuclear policy. India finally took the path of nuclearisation.

There are two main procedures for obtaining nuclear weapons-(i) obtaining plutonium by processing U-238 and (ii) enrichment of U-235. Dhanda (2010) noted that "India has adopted the first method and Pakistan the second because of their divergent histories of nuclear developments" (p.256). During the regime of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, India conducted a 'peaceful' nuclear explosion' (PNE) in Pokhran on May 18, 1974.¹⁹ The reasons for this test are still shrouded in mystery, and the so-called epithet 'peaceful' has been widely

¹⁹ The nuclear test by India in 1974 is also called as Pokhran I nuclear test while its nuclear tests conducted in 1998 are called as Pokhran II nuclear tests.

debated.²⁰ Notwithstanding the test's result, Pokhran-I gave India a fillip to gather 'design-level data' required for a 'rudimentary nuclear weapon' (Narang, 2014, p.96). India faced global criticism for this event, and it was believed that India may have attained nuclear weapons capability. However, India exercised a policy of nuclear restraint and ambiguity. Noting this exceptionalism of ambivalence and restraint, George Perkovich (2002) wrote that this restraint had separated India from the other nuclear powers, which do not reflect such moral concerns. He also argued, "India was different, and this difference reflected well on humanity's capacity for moral reasoning, for resistance to temptation, for moderation and forbearance" (Perkovich, 2002, p.57).

According to Pant and Joshi (2018), India showed an 'aversion' toward nuclear weapons. The genesis of this aversion can be found in the "ideological underpinnings of India's freedom struggle and inclinations of its post-independence political leadership" (Pant & Joshi, 2018, p.4). However, the discriminatory structure of the existing nuclear regime and the geopolitical realities in which India finds itself made India rethink its nuclear policy. It may be mentioned here that in 1995, NPT was extended indefinitely without addressing the concerns of countries like India regarding the discriminatory nature of the NPT framework. In the meantime, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) debate emerged in 1996. India rejected CTBT like NPT because it failed to address India's concerns.²¹

India finally declared itself as a de facto nuclear weapon state in 1998. There are debates as to why India conducted the tests at that moment.²² Some focussed on domestic factors, while

²⁰ For instance, see Mehdi (1983). Mehdi questioned the 'peacefulness' of the tests.

²¹ It may be noted here that both India and Pakistan have not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). China has signed NPT. It has also signed CTBT but not ratified it.

²² Chapter 2 of this thesis has already highlighted a glimpse of the debate concerning India's nuclear tests in 1998.

others gave more preference to external or systemic factors.²³ According to K. Subrahmanyam (1998b), “While India could have lived with the nuclear option without covert weaponisation in a world where the nuclear weapons had not been formally legitimised, that course was no longer viable in a world of legitimised nuclear weapons” (p.51). The nuclear tests ended all the nuclear ambiguities and restraints India had maintained. Pakistan also declared itself a nuclear weapon state within 16 days after the nuclear tests by India. These two events generated vigorous debates worldwide, and South Asia became the centre of global attention and criticism. Several international organisations and around 150 nations expressed their resentment against the nuclear testing by India and Pakistan (Talbot, 1999). It was thought that these events would lead to the further proliferation of nuclear weapons and the arms race. The West feared that a conventional war between India and Pakistan might get snow-balled into a full-scale nuclear war with catastrophic consequences (Pant, 2010). Notwithstanding these concerns, the nuclear tests of 1998 ended the nuclear monopoly that a select group of countries earned under the umbrella of NPT (Joshi & O’Donnell, 2018).

India’s nuclear weapons programme is considered to be the result of ‘perceived politico-strategic threat from China’ (Pardeshi, 2014).²⁴ But, such a programme came with a cost. Though the intended target of deterrence was China, Pakistan also began its nuclearisation programme. India got sandwiched between two politically hostile nuclear neighbours.

Meanwhile, the UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted resolution 1172 (1998)²⁵ on June 6, 1998, to control further nuclear weapons testing by the two South Asian countries. However, no economic sanctions were imposed by the UNSC against India and Pakistan after

²³ Chapter 2 has explained and analysed these debates.

²⁴ However, some others (especially those who see that Pokhran-II nuclear tests were derived by domestic factors) have been critical of this perception.

²⁵ Retrieved August 08, 2020, from <https://www.un.org/press/en/1998/sc6528.doc.htm>

the nuclear tests conducted by the two countries in 1998 (Hosur, 2010). As a reaction to the Indian nuclear tests, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of China stated that India's nuclear tests would hamper non-proliferation measures and generate dire consequences to the peace and stability of the world, particularly the South Asian region (cited in Yuan, 2001, p.979)

As a reaction to the tests, the US and Canada reneged on their nuclear cooperation with India (Ganguly, 2000). The US and Japan imposed economic sanctions on India (Rajagopalan & Mishra, 2014). The sanctions did not have much impact on the Indian economy (Morrow & Carriere, 1999). Over the years, India succeeded in projecting itself as an emerging and 'responsible' nuclear power. The Western countries gradually changed their attitude toward nuclear India, a country that is not a signatory of NPT and showed interest in civilian nuclear cooperation. In 2008, the India-US Civilian Nuclear Deal came into effect²⁶. India has made civilian nuclear ties with several other countries. It also constantly tries to join the elite Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

In 1999, India issued a draft nuclear doctrine (DND). The initial draft of India's nuclear doctrine was prepared under the guidance of K. Subrahmanyam. But, it did not gain formal recognition from the government. In 2003, this draft was revised. The revised version came to be known as India's Official Nuclear Doctrine. One of the essential principles in both doctrines is the NFU option. However, the official nuclear doctrine of 2003 diluted the NFU policy. India also showed its concern for global nuclear disarmament in the nuclear doctrines. On September 26, 2013, the former External Affairs Minister of India, in his address to a High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament under the aegis of the 68th United Nations

²⁶ For a detailed discussion on the India-US Civilian Nuclear Deal, see Ravi (2018).

General Assembly, reiterated India's commitment to the NFU policy and said that India is ready to negotiate a global treaty on the NFU policy.

3.5.2. A Brief History of the NFU policy of India

While the inclusion of the NFU policy in concrete form could be seen in the DND of India, it would be naive to argue that India reflected on the concept of the NFU policy just after the Pokhran-II nuclear tests. While the years from 1998 to 2003 are crucial for the concrete shaping of the NFU policy of India, one must look at the history of the NFU policy much earlier and in a larger context. Some scholars tried to trace the origin of the doctrine debate in India. One source mentioned the presence of the NFU policy in Indian strategic thinking since India's maiden nuclear tests in May 1974 (Kamath, 2009, pp. 135-136). In a UN General Assembly meeting in 1977, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, as the External Affairs Minister, first evoked the concept of the NFU policy (Kamath, 2009, p. 136). Ali Ahmed (2014) pointed out that it was probably K. Subrahmanyam who anonymously raised the issue of the NFU policy in Indian nuclear thinking around the 1960s (p.22). However, according to K. Subrahmanyam (2003), the NFU posture adopted by India could be found in the Indian strategic thinking of the 1980s and 1990s. Joshi and O'Donnell (2018) divided the doctrinal debate into these phases: before the 1998 test, after the test (before the doctrine): 1998-99, towards the doctrinal debate during 1999-2003, and post-2003 till the present. The present study has categorised the historical development of the NFU policy of India into a number of phases:-

1940s to 1964

As far as the NFU debate from independence is concerned, the debate is non-existent or does not make sense because a country can claim or think about the NFU or the FU policy only if it possesses nuclear weapons or is on the path towards nuclearisation. Put differently, India did not have any vision of making nuclear weapons, let alone possessing them from

independence till Nehru's death. So, the question of NFU or FU's policy on nuclear weapons, for that matter, did not arise at that time.

Proper debate on the NFU policy emerged in India since 1970s only. A source mentioned that Atal Bihari Vajpayee as the External Affairs Minister first evoked the concept of the NFU policy in a UN General Assembly meeting in 1977 (See Kamath, 2009, p. 136). Since independence, Nehru endorsed that India believes in global nuclear disarmament and that India would not make nuclear weapons. This was India's position till Nehru's death and the nuclear tests by China. After that, debates emerged that India should consider making nuclear weapons. The subsequent Prime Ministers broadly adhered to the Nehruvian goal of nuclear disarmament.

1970s

The Indira Gandhi government went for a 'peaceful' nuclear test in 1974. So, only in the 1970s the debates and concerns emerged that India could divert its civilian nuclear programme to a military one and subsequently make the nuclear bombs. Gradually, debates on NFU also emerged in the Indian nuclear discourse among a section of strategic experts and military generals from the 1980s.

1980s

K. Subrahmanyam's (1998b) personal recollection of India's nuclear policy--1964-98 revealed that in the early 1980s, K. Subrahmanyam and Dr. Ramanna proposed to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi that India and Pakistan should sign an NFU agreement. However, Rajiv Gandhi ignored the proposal. In 1985, in a special meeting with Rajiv Gandhi, Subrahmanyam insisted that Pakistan should be convinced to sign an agreement with India to commit to not attacking each other's nuclear facilities and a bilateral NFU policy. This time, Rajiv Gandhi considered his suggestions and directed the concerned officials to take stock of the matter.

Finally, December 1985 saw the fruition of this endeavour when India and Pakistan agreed to adhere to the first of the above two conditions (Subrahmanyam, 1998b). In 1985, General Sundarji headed a committee that recommended minimum deterrence and the NFU policy to the Rajiv Gandhi government (Joshi & O'Donnell, 2018; also see O'Donnell & Ghosal, 2018; Sethi, 2023).

Some initiatives at the inter-state level on nuclear weapons posture were also seen. For instance, on December 31, 1988, the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attacks Against Nuclear Installations and Facilities between India and Pakistan was signed.²⁷

1990s

Raja Ramanna, a minister of state for defence, also raised the issue of the NFU policy in May 1990 (Subrahmanyam, 2004a). However, the NFU policy took a concrete shape only after the Pokhran nuclear tests of 1998. A former foreign minister of India pointed out in a questionnaire response, "*This decision could only be taken only after India became a nuclear weapons power in 1998*".²⁸

General K. Sundarji and K. Subrahmanyam are the two pioneers of India's NFU policy.²⁹ Sundarji and Subrahmanyam were part of important committees on nuclear issues in the 1980s (Sundaram & Ramana, 2018). General Sundarji, in his various writings in the 1980s and early 1990s, advocated the adoption of the NFU policy. For instance, in early 1990s, he wrote about an 'assumed Indian nuclear doctrine with the outlines of this doctrine (Sundarji, 1995b). Similarly, K. Subrahmanyam, in his various articles published in India's leading

²⁷ Retrieved August 11, 2022, from https://www.mea.gov.in/rajya-sabha.htm?dtl/9310/Q_2755_Exchanging_Lists_of_Nuclear_Installation

²⁸ Questionnaire response on July 22, 2022. All statements from questionnaire responses are italicised in the thesis.

²⁹ Their roles in formulating the NFU policy of India have been substantiated in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

dailies, advocated that India need not adopt the FU policy of nuclear weapons. Subrahmanyam (1998b) wrote an article on the issue of the NFU policy on July 30, 1985, in *The Times of India*. In 1994, Subrahmanyam pointed out the crucial elements of the future Indian Nuclear Doctrine, including minimum deterrence and the NFU policy (cited in Rajagopalan & Mishra, 2014).

Former PM VP Singh's government also showed aversion to the first use of 'nuclear capability' in 1990 (Kamath, 2009, p.136). On January 27, 1991, the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attacks Against Nuclear Installations and Facilities between India and Pakistan came into effect. As per provisions of the Agreement, the two countries share information about their respective nuclear installations and facilities on January 01 every year.³⁰ Meanwhile, an official declaration of the NFU policy was made by India to Pakistan formally in 1994 (See Tellis, 2001, p. 302; Sundaram & Ramanna, 2018, p.152).

India formally declared itself as a state armed with nuclear weapons in 1998. After the nuclear tests by India in 1998, former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee made a series of statements wherein he indicated that India would adhere to a policy of the NFU.³¹ He mentioned that India declared a voluntary moratorium on further testing of nuclear weapons. He also gave an interview to *India Today* where he specified India's rationale for going nuclear and the NFU stand. Vajpayee also laid a paper, 'Evolution of India's nuclear policy', in Parliament on May 27, 1998.³² The report highlighted the basic parameters and objectives of India's nuclear programme and the circumstances that led India to go nuclear.

³⁰ Retrieved August 11, 2022, from https://www.mea.gov.in/rajya-sabha.htm?dtl/9310/Q_2755_Exchanging_Lists_of_Nuclear_Installation

³¹ Chapter 4 of this thesis discusses this aspect in detail.

³² Full draft of the paper is included in the Appendix.

Jaswant Singh (1998), a senior adviser on Defense and Foreign Affairs to PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee, reiterated India's commitment to the NFU policy and said that it is 'the cornerstone' of India's nuclear doctrine. George Perkovich's (1999) seminal book *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*, whose draft was completed before the publication of the NSAB's draft nuclear doctrine of India, also mentioned how India's future nuclear doctrine would be and that there would be an NFU policy in it (also see Rajagopalan & Mishra, 2014). In his speeches, Atal Bihari Vajpayee talked about an unconditional NFU policy. But, the NFU policy India adopted in the draft doctrine and the official nuclear doctrine came up with certain qualifiers, as the subsequent analysis will reveal.

India's NFU policy should not be confused with a policy undertaken at the spur of the moment. By the mid-1990s, policymakers and strategic experts showed an inclination towards the NFU policy. Kanwal (2001b) said that it was not a 'hastily formulated policy' and took time to evolve. K. Subrahmanyam (2003) highlighted that the CCS retained the NFU policy in the official nuclear doctrine of India, as suggested by the first NSAB, after six months of detailed discussion and deliberation. It took five years for the official nuclear doctrine to develop an NFU policy with certain qualifiers. But it did not abandon the NFU principle. Thus, the NFU policy adopted by India was a very well-thought-out position.

India's DND was released on August 17, 1999, by the National Security Advisor (NSA), Brajesh Mishra. This draft was prepared by the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB), which is a 27-member group appointed by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to aid and advise the Prime Minister (PM) on national security matters. The NSAB was formed in October 1998. This draft did not have an official endorsement from the Government of India. However, this did not diminish the importance of this doctrine. It remained an unofficial version of India's nuclear doctrine and provided a guideline for India's nuclear weapons

posture. Most importantly, it ended the so-called nuclear ambiguity that India had been maintaining so far. Citing the importance of the draft, K. Subrahmanyam (2002) said, “It is the first step in India proclaiming a restrained and logical nuclear doctrine that will be a kind of model for all other nuclear powers” (p.76).

It was stated in the draft doctrine that India would not be the first to use nuclear weapons against another nuclear weapon state, and it would follow the principle of non-use against a state that does not have nuclear weapons. The draft’s Preamble categorically stated, “...The use of nuclear weapons in particular as well as other weapons of mass destruction constitutes the gravest threat to humanity and to peace and stability in the international system.”³³ The DND made an outstanding contribution to the overall strategic culture and the ensuing debate on nuclear issues (Ahmed, 2014/2018). According to Zhong Ai (2018), “India’s nuclear doctrine is rooted in India’s unique experience, vision of Indian political leadership and strategic culture” (p.101). While some praised the DND, others criticised it as well. George Perkovich (2002) said, “The draft doctrine bore many marks of prestige-seeking, rhetorical posturing, bureaucratic politics, and strategic uncertainty” (p. 51).

2000s-2003

A version of the NFU policy is also found in the official version of India’s nuclear doctrine published in 2003, but this time with certain modifications. India may not refrain from using nuclear weapons if it is attacked with chemicals or biological weapons. Several issues may have led to this change in India’s NFU posture: (a) the Kargil war, which proved that nuclear weapons do not deter small-scale border wars; (b) terrorist attacks, which increased during the period from 1998 onwards to 2003 till the adoption of the official nuclear doctrine.

³³ See the Draft Report of the National Security Advisory Board on India’s Nuclear Doctrine, August 17, 1999.

An Indian Airbus was hijacked and taken to Kandahar in Afghanistan. There were terrorist attacks on the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001, and Akshardham Temple on September 24, 2002. All these, including other factors like the criticism of the NFU policy, might lead to modifications in the official version.

Apart from the NFU clause, other crucial elements of this doctrine include: ‘credible minimum deterrence’ and ‘massive retaliation.’ As indicated in Chapter 2, though clamours have come from some quarters about the need for a change of the nuclear doctrine and the NFU policy, there has not been any change in India’s nuclear doctrine since 2003. Three different Indian Prime Ministers (Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Dr. Manmohan Singh, and Narendra Modi) have primarily adhered to the same principles of the nuclear doctrine for nearly two decades (Joshi, 2015; Pant & Joshi, 2018).

Before the adoption of the official draft of NFU, there were queries in the Parliament regarding the review of the draft doctrine of 1999. The then Minister of External Affairs, Shri Jaswant Singh, replied that the Government had no plans to review the nuclear doctrine.³⁴ However, India reviewed its nuclear doctrine just two years later, in 2003. Thus, even if there were deliberations on reviewing nuclear doctrine, they were kept as closely guarded secrets as national security issues. Files regarding this issue have not been declassified yet. So, the Indian public is still clueless about most of these developments.

3.5.3. India’s Draft Nuclear Doctrine and its Key Elements

As stated above, the draft nuclear doctrine of India (DND) was prepared by the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) in 1999. The doctrine is a carefully worded document

³⁴ Retrieved September 11, 2022, from https://www.mea.gov.in/lok-sabha.htm?dtl/10693/Q_3685__NUCLEAR_POLICY

containing a preamble and a set of objectives and elaborating other vital features. It is visionary because it also stipulates India's long-term goal of achieving global nuclear disarmament. It reflects India's overall perception of nuclear weapons. For instance, the first line of the preamble of the draft doctrine states that "(t)he use of nuclear weapons in particular as well as other weapons of mass destruction constitutes the gravest threat to humanity and to peace and stability in the international system".³⁵ What led to the drafting of the draft nuclear doctrine? Bharat Karnad (2000), who was a member of the NSAB, narrated a first-hand account of his experience in these words:

When the National Security Advisory Board sat down to draft the doctrine certain objectives were very clear in our minds. It was virtually a *carte blanche* given to us by the government meaning that we were not given any idea of the extent and capabilities of the forces India had. What the National Security Advisory Board has to do was to visualise what would ideally suit the country. (p. 112)

According to K. Subrahmanyam, the main elements of the DND are the NFU policy, credible minimum deterrence, civilian control, and commitment to nuclear disarmament. These key elements of the DND have been stated below: --

Credible minimum deterrence

Deterrence is the heart of any modern nuclear weapons programme. Deterrence, by definition, refers to a way that persuades an enemy not to attack the ground that a retaliatory

³⁵ Retrieved February 05, 2020, from <https://www.mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?18916/draft+report+of+national+security+advisory+board+on+indian+nuclear+doctrine>

strike would be far more disastrous. India's nuclear deterrence is based on the assumption that nuclear weapons are political weapons whose purpose is to deter (Kanwal, 2015).

India stated that it would conform to the principle of minimality while building a credible nuclear arsenal. India would maintain minimal nuclear weapons that are credible enough to deter an offensive nuclear state. Former Minister of State for External Affairs Ajit Kumar Panja stated, "India's minimum deterrent is not a fixed quantification, it is a policy approach dictated by and determined in the context of our security environment."³⁶

This provision came under criticism from some analysts that minimal nuclear force cannot be credible. Some are sceptical that India could build a nuclear structure mentioned in the draft doctrine (Gupta, 2000a). Pendyala (2023) observed that China's growing nuclear arsenal may pose a threat to India's minimum credible deterrence position.

No first use of nuclear weapons

This is a cardinal principle of India's DND. The doctrine states that India's nuclear weapons are purely for defensive purposes. India has adopted an NFU policy on nuclear weapons. India would not be the first to launch a pre-emptive nuclear attack on any state. Nuclear weapons would be used as retaliatory measures in case of failure of deterrence against the aggressor. Some have called the NFU policy of India merely a declaratory policy. Again, some others have criticised this sceptical stance of calling the NFU policy declaratory. For instance, Anand (2000) claimed that "India is maintaining no hair-trigger alert or 'launch on warning' type of scenarios, therefore any criticism that India's NFU policy is only declaratory, is devoid of any substance" (p. 626).

³⁶ Retrieved July 24, 2022, from https://www.mea.gov.in/rajya-sabha.htm?dtl/9415/Q_4151_Right_To_Maintain_Minimum_Nuclear_Deterrent

Subrahmanyam (2002) dispelled two significant concerns about the NFU policy of India enshrined in the DND. First is the concern that the NFU policy makes India vulnerable to a first strike. Subrahmanyam (2002) clarified that the present state of technology is insufficient to avert a first strike from an enemy (p.78). The absence of the FU policy does not give a country any apparent leverage, given that the FU policy has utility only in a tactical war (Subrahmanyam, 2002, p.78). Foreign critics often make the second criticism that the NFU policy of India is unverifiable. Subrahmanyam (2002) also called this criticism 'superficial'.

Civilian control of nuclear weapons

Another vital feature enshrined in the DND is that civilian authorities will strictly maintain the nuclear weapons programme and its regulation. While releasing the DND, Brajesh Mishra stated that only elected civilian authorities would be given the power to use nuclear weapons.³⁷

Under such a system, armed forces would be trained only to carry out the exigencies of retaliatory strikes. As India perceived nuclear weapons as political or retaliatory weapons, not as warfighting weapons, the doctrine ensured that regulation of such weapons is maintained by civilian authority. Justifying the decision, Subrahmanyam (2002) wrote that for a country that endorses the use of nuclear weapons only in retaliation, it is not surprising that such weapons would be regulated under a civilian authority (p.80).

Commitment to nuclear disarmament

³⁷ See Opening Remarks by National Security Adviser Brajesh Mishra at the Release of Draft Indian Nuclear Doctrine, August 17, 1999. Retrieved January 31, 2020, from <https://www.mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?18915/opening+remarks+by+national+security+adviser+mr+brajesh+mishra+at+the+release+of+draft+indian+nuclear+doctrine->

A reading of the DND makes it clear that India is committed to the larger goal of global nuclear disarmament. The DND stated, “Global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament is a national security objective. India shall continue its efforts to achieve the goal of a nuclear weapon-free world at an early date”.³⁸

Even the remarks of Brajesh Mishra further prove this point. He said that India continues to adhere to the belief till date that total elimination of nuclear weapons worldwide will increase global security.³⁹

3.5.4. India’s Official Nuclear Doctrine and its Key Elements

On January 4, 2003, the press release of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) summarised the key features of India’s official nuclear doctrine. Rajagopalan (2005) called this press release the most authoritative statement on India’s nuclear doctrine. Despite minor changes, it retained the basic features of the draft nuclear doctrine of 1999. Furthermore, the 1999 draft doctrine is a much-detailed document highlighting the visions, cultural belief systems, and long-term goal of global nuclear disarmament, apart from other features. The official doctrine is, however, a much shorter document.

Apart from other elements, the official doctrine stressed that India aimed to build a ‘credible minimum deterrent’. India would stand by the policy of NFU. It would adopt the policy of non-use against non-nuclear states. The document highlighted that the decision on retaliatory nuclear strikes by India would be under the control of the civilian authority. As a

³⁸ See Draft Report of National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine, August 17, 1999. Retrieved January 31, 2020, from <https://www.mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?18916/draft+report+of+national+security+advisory+board+on+indian+nuclear+doctrine>

³⁹ See Opening Remarks by National Security Adviser Mr. Brajesh Mishra at the Release of Draft Indian Nuclear Doctrine, August 17, 1999. Retrieved January 31, 2020, from <https://www.mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?18915/opening+remarks+by+national+security+adviser+mr+brajesh+mishra+at+the+release+of+draft+indian+nuclear+doctrine>

new condition for launching a nuclear attack, the document highlighted, “in the event of a major attack against India, or Indian forces anywhere, by biological or chemical weapons, India will retain the option of retaliating with nuclear weapons.”⁴⁰ Thus, this is a break from the earlier draft doctrine. It also marks a dilution of the NFU policy.

The doctrine emphasised that the retaliatory nuclear strike by India would cause ‘massive’ and ‘unacceptable damage’. Joshi and O’Donnell (2018) subtly pointed out that “(I)n deterrence literature, the difference between ‘punitive retaliation’ and ‘massive retaliation’ is substantial; the former allows flexibility in response, whereas the latter has no room for concessions” (p.169).

The document talks about a Nuclear Command Authority entrusted with the sole power to grant power to use nuclear weapons. It consists of a Political Council chaired by the Prime Minister and an Executive Council chaired by National Security Advisor. The document also pointed out that the “CCS also reviewed and approved the arrangements for alternate chains of command for retaliatory nuclear strikes in all eventualities.”⁴¹

Some analysts criticised the official nuclear doctrine of India. According to Ali Ahmed (2014/2018), the tone of India’s official nuclear doctrine of 2003 sounds slightly more offensive than the draft nuclear doctrine of 1999. He noted, “The offensive direction of the doctrine is evident from the caveat to No First Use (NFU) over the use of chemical and biological weapons and the use of the term ‘massive’” (Ahmed, 2014/2018, p.106).

⁴⁰ Retrieved February 08, 2020, from https://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/20131/The_Cabinet_Committee_on_Security_Reviews_perationalization_of_Indias_Nuclear_Doctrine+Report+of+National+Security+Advisory+Board+on+Indian+Nuclear+Doctrine

⁴¹ Retrieved February 02, 2020, from https://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/20131/The_Cabinet_Committee_on_Security_Reviews_perationalization_of_Indias_Nuclear_Doctrine+Report+of+National+Security+Advisory+Board+on+Indian+Nuclear+Doctrine

Subrahmanyam (2009a) also criticised this new addition as a copy of the American nuclear doctrine.

Due to these criticisms, some speculated that India might change or abandon its NFU policy. However, Vipin Narang (2018) argued that India is likely to retain its NFU policy. First, intermittent changes to the NFU policy are more valuable than altogether abandoning it. Secondly, any clear departure from the NFU's posture may tarnish India's image as a responsible nuclear power. Thirdly, revising the NFU policy might instill suspicion among other nuclear powers about India's intent (Narang, 2018, pp.163-164).

3.6. Nuclear Force Structure of India

India has built a triad of nuclear forces to strengthen its deterrence capability. India's ballistic missiles stockpiles include Short-range Ballistic Missiles (SRBM) like Prithvi-I (150kms), Agni-I (700kms), Medium-range Ballistic Missiles (MRBM) like Agni-II (2000kms), Agni-III (3000kms), Intermediate-range Ballistic Missiles (IRBM) like Agni-IV (3500kms) and Agni-V (5000kms) and Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM) like Agni-VI (6000kms). Agni I, Agni-II have been deployed, and Agni III, IV, and V are in different stages. Some of these missiles are already inducted, while some are in the developmental phase as indicated in table 3.3. Dhanush (350 kms), K-15 (Sagarika) (700 kms), K-4 (3500 kms), and K-5 (5000 kms). Kristensen and Korda (2018) reported that modernization of the Indian nuclear arsenal has been underway. They estimated that "India currently operates seven nuclear-capable systems: two aircraft, four land-based ballistic missiles, and one sea-based ballistic missile. At least five more systems are in development" (Kristensen & Korda 2018, p.361). India has also been working towards developing Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicles (MIRV) and Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) (Ganguly, 2018). However,

Kristensen and Korda (2018) expressed doubts that India has the capability or willingness to achieve this in the near future.

Table: 3.1

Nuclear Force Structure of India

Delivery Vehicle	Range (km)	Status
<i>Aircrafts</i>		
Mirage 2000H	1800	Partly assigned
Jaguar	1600	Partly assigned
MiG-27	1760	Safety issues arising leading to phase-out/ Retired in 2019 ⁴²
Sukhoi Su-30 MKI	3000	Partly assigned
Rafale	3700	Partly inducted
<i>Land-based missiles</i>		
Prithvi-I	150	Deployed
Prithvi-II	250	Deployed

⁴² Retrieved October 05, 2022, from <https://www.aircosmosinternational.com/article/mig-27-retires-in-india-2741>

Agni-I	700	Deployed
Agni-II	2000	Deployed
Agni-III	3000	Test phase
Agni-IV	3500	Test phase
Agni-V	5000	Test phase
Agni-VI	6000	Under development
<i>Sea-based Missiles</i>		
Dhanush	350	Induction underway
K-15 (Sagarika)	700	Development complete
K-4	3500	Under development
K-5	5000	Under development

(Source: modified version- Joshi & O'Donnell, 2018, pp.21-23; Kampani, 2018, p.152; Kristensen & Korda, 2018; 2022; McLaughlin, 2020)

3.7. Summary

The Chapter highlighted the history of the NFU policy. While the debate concerning the NFU policy emerged in the US, China first adopted this norm in practice. After China, India became the other nuclear power to adopt an NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. The analysis brought to light India's nuclear history marked by restraint and consideration. The Chapter also contextualised and delved into the evolution of India's nuclear doctrine, the journey from the draft nuclear doctrine to India's official nuclear doctrine. It analysed the key features of the draft nuclear doctrine and the official nuclear doctrine. The official nuclear doctrine of India adopted in 2003 retained the essence of the draft nuclear doctrine of 1999 with certain changes. This doctrine includes the NFU policy but has certain caveats. The Chapter also briefly discussed China and Pakistan's nuclear doctrines. The discussion revealed that India and China adopted concrete nuclear doctrines, unlike Pakistan. India and China included the NFU policy in their nuclear doctrines, whereas Pakistan has an exclusive FU policy. The NFU policy of India took time to evolve and was not an abrupt decision taken by India.

CHAPTER 4

No First Use Policy of India: The Role of Political Leadership and Strategic Experts

4.1. Introduction

This Chapter will analyse how and to what extent political leadership and strategic experts played a role in the framing of the no first use (NFU) policy of India. Political leadership and sometimes strategic experts are often part of institutions that shape nuclear policy. This Chapter is grounded in history to examine the role of leadership. For this purpose, the Chapter will analyse the content of original speeches, official statements, and interviews of the relevant political leaders concerning India's nuclear policy. It will also analyse the role of strategic experts in India's decision to adopt the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine.

4.2. Role of Indian PMs in the Shaping of the NFU Policy of India

In Chapter 2, it was indicated that the Prime Minister is the pivot around whom the national and foreign security policy-making revolves. Indian Prime Minister has direct control over nuclear strategy in the sense that he/she can create a narrative of declaratory nuclear policy through interviews and public speeches (MacDonald, 2020, p. 315). The perceptions of individual leaders like the Prime Minister are crucial because they are at the apex of nuclear strategy and decision-making apparatus (MacDonald, 2020). A distinction is due here between the policymakers and policy analysts. Policymakers bring out and design a particular policy, whereas policy analysts, as the name suggests, point out the features, advantages, disadvantages, and alternative suggestions of a particular policy or issue. The study takes political leadership, bureaucrats, and a section of strategic experts who are members of institutions like National Security Advisory Board members as policymakers. Moreover, critics

and analysts are taken as policy analysts. The responses of the policy analysts have been used in the study to substantiate and point out different aspects of the NFU policy of India.

4.2.1. Political Leadership: Role of Vajpayee and the NFU Policy of India

Analysing former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's role in the framing of nuclear doctrine and adoption of the NFU policy of India is crucial. During his tenure, India became a de facto nuclear-weapon state. Just after the nuclear tests in 1998, Vajpayee made a series of statements indicating the rationale, operational framework, and broad principles of India's nuclear weapons programme. He also stated in the aftermath of the Pokhran II nuclear tests that India would adopt the NFU policy even before the release of the nuclear doctrines. The draft nuclear doctrine (DND) and the official nuclear doctrine of India were released during Vajpayee's tenure. Vajpayee's statements contained the essence of the documents that were adopted later. The following section will analyse the important speeches made by Vajpayee on India's nuclear policy and the NFU policy, covering the period of the Pokhran II nuclear tests till the end of his tenure in 2004. Furthermore, to that end, his original speeches from August 1998 to February 2004 have been taken into account. Apart from this, interviews given by Vajpayee to various national and international papers, journals, and magazines have also been analysed.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee held the post of India's PM three times. The first term included just 16 days from May 16, 1996, to June 1, 1996, then another two consecutive terms from March 19, 1998, to May 22, 2004. Apart from being a Parliamentarian, he served as the External Affairs Minister of India from March 26, 1977, to July 28, 1979. He was also the founding President of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The centre-right political party Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) and its predecessor, the BJP, had a dream to create a strong Hindutva nation, and they strongly supported that India should manufacture nuclear weapons (Sharma, 1998). After the Chinese nuclear tests at Lop Nor in 1964, Vajpayee, who was then in BJS, was quite vocal that India should make nuclear bombs. He reportedly said in Parliament, “The answer to an atom bomb is an atom bomb, nothing else” (cited in Sharma, 1998). He believed that India’s manufacturing of nuclear weapons would be a befitting reply to China and its nuclear adventurism. Vajpayee’s insight helped him, among other things, in carrying out the nuclear tests in 1998 and overtly declaring India as a nuclear weapon state. Kamath (2009) noted that Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the then External Affairs Minister, was first said to have proposed the concept of the NFU policy in the UN General Assembly in 1977 (p.136).

After the tests, Vajpayee made a series of statements clarifying the doubts and concerns about India’s nuclear tests in Pokhran in 1998. One thing common in these statements was that India had conducted nuclear tests only for self-defence and not to make threats or mount nuclear aggression on any other state. Vajpayee made a short statement on May 11, 1998, declaring that India had conducted nuclear tests and achieved nuclear weapons capability (Vajpayee, 2000a). Thus, in a nutshell, these statements made by Vajpayee provided a foundation for what the future nuclear doctrine of India would look like.

On May 25, 1998, in an exclusive interview with *India Today*, Vajpayee stated:

We conducted the series of nuclear tests in keeping with our commitment made to the people of India during the elections. It is part of the National Agenda for Governance. The decision to carry out these tests was guided by the paramount importance we attach

to national security. I have been advocating the cause of India going nuclear for well over four decades. (Chawla, 1998)⁴³

Thus, the Vajpayee government justified the tests as a fulfilment of an electoral agenda and argued that the exigencies of national security of the country necessitated the move. Vajpayee also said that immediate compulsions did not guide the tests (Chawla, 1998). He opined that India's decision was taken after deep introspection of the regional and global security realities of over fifty years (Chawla, 1998).

In a suo-moto statement entitled "Nuclear Weapons for Self Defence" in Parliament dated May 27, 1998, Vajpayee clearly stated the rationale behind India's testing of nuclear weapons. On the same day, Vajpayee laid another document called 'Evolution of India's nuclear policy' in Parliament. This document partially fulfilled the hitherto absence of government documents concerning India's nuclear policy in the public domain. The document narrated the entire chain of events that led India to go nuclear, the discriminatory nature of international regulatory frameworks for nuclear policy and non-proliferation, and the vision of nuclear weapons enabled India and its long-term commitment to global nuclear disarmament concisely. The document also depicted India's earlier initiatives in formalising the NFU policy, especially with Pakistan. Manoj Joshi (1999b) observed that this document stated the 'first rudiments' of India's nuclear doctrine adopted later.

Justifying the tests, Vajpayee argued on behalf of the government of India in this way: "Our tests were necessary because of the failure of a flawed non-proliferation regime, and therefore, we categorically reject the notion that these have adversely affected either regional

⁴³ Retrieved February 8, 2020, from <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/cover-story/story/19980525-we-live-in-a-world-where-india-is-surrounded-by-nuclear-weaponry-atal-bihari-vajpayee-828210-1998-05-25>

or global security” (Vajpayee, 2000a, p.24). In his address to the UN General Assembly⁴⁴ in New York on September 24, 1998, Vajpayee (2000a) reiterated India’s commitment to global nuclear disarmament. According to him, the nuclear tests of 1998 have not affected India’s long-term vision of nuclear disarmament. India had already voluntarily declared a moratorium on nuclear testing. This indicated that India has indirectly acceded to the basic requirements of the CTBT.

Justifying the Pokhran-II nuclear tests, Vajpayee (2000a) said on the floor of the UN General Assembly that the ‘deteriorating security environment’ compelled India to go for the tests. He tried to evince that “(T)hese tests were essential for ensuring a credible nuclear deterrent for India’s national security in the foreseeable future” (Vajpayee, 2000a, p.373).

Vajpayee (1998c) narrated at the XVII NAM Summit how India had made efforts since independence toward global nuclear disarmament without success. He added that nuclearization policies pursued by its neighbours led India to go for nuclear weapons. In the immediate aftermath of the test, Vajpayee also wrote a secret letter⁴⁵ to former US President Bill Clinton describing what compelled India to conduct the nuclear tests. Though the letter did not mention the names of China and Pakistan, it is clear that Vajpayee identified these states as posing a threat to India’s security and justified that this led India to go for nuclear tests in its self-defence.

He also said:

⁴⁴ The original deliberation of the speech was made in Hindi.

⁴⁵ The letter got leaked and came out in news. For the full draft of the letter, see The New York Times, dated May 13, 1998. Retrieved October 2, 2020, from <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/13/world/nuclear-anxiety-indian-s-letter-to-clinton-on-the-nuclear-testing.html>

We do not intend to use these weapons for aggression or for mounting threats against any country; these are weapons of self-defence to ensure that India is not subjected to nuclear threats or coercion [emphasis added]. We do not intend to engage in an arms race. (Vajpayee, 2000a, p.15)

Though there is no direct reference to the NFU policy, it can be understood from the above statement from Vajpayee's speech delivered on May 27, 1998, that the NFU policy of India is the outcome of the nuclear non-aggression policy.

On May 30, 1998, Vajpayee (2000a) gave another speech entitled "Nuclear tests for National Security" at his official residence in New Delhi. He re-emphasized India's non-aggressive stance against any foreign country in this speech. On August 4, 1998, in response to a query raised by Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav, Vajpayee clarified that India would not be the first to use nuclear weapons and added that "(T)he thought should be discarded, that other countries use these weapons and we cannot retaliate. Our arsenal is a credible deterrent. Nuclear war shouldn't take place."⁴⁶

During the time of testing of the Agni II missile on April 11, 1999, he again said the testing of the Agni Missile was for defensive purpose only (Vajpayee, 2000b, p.139). He added that Agni Missile "is not meant for aggression against any nation. Rather, Agni is proof of our determination to strengthen our national security so comprehensively that we can defend ourselves" (Vajpayee, 2000b, p.139).

After the tests, Vajpayee constantly tried to assuage fears arising from India's nuclear weapons. For instance, in a statement made in the Parliament, New Delhi, on June 8, 1998, he

⁴⁶ *Indian Express*, August 5, 1998. Retrieved August 18, 2020, from <http://archive.indianexpress.com/Storyold/45333/>

dismissed the UN Security Council Resolution that condemned nuclear tests by India. Vajpayee (2000a) defended India's decision, saying that criticisms made in the resolution were bereft of merit and logic in that they eclipsed India's contribution towards disarmament measures at the global and regional levels (p.24).

He also assured that as a responsible nuclear weapon state, India is committed not to transferring nuclear know-how to any other country to check the proliferation of nuclear weapons. While inaugurating the Kaiga Atomic Power Station on March 5, 2000, he said that while India is committed to a 'time-bound and comprehensive' global nuclear disarmament, it will maintain a credible minimum deterrence till the other nuclear weapons destroy their own 'weapons of mass destruction' (Vajpayee, 2000b, p.209).

An analysis of the statements adduced above also brings to the fore the commitment of India to the goal of nuclear disarmament and its strident criticism of the discriminatory global nuclear order and regimes. During the inauguration of the Kalpakkam Atomic Reprocessing Plant in Chennai on September 15, 1998, Vajpayee, in his speech entitled "Committed to Peaceful Harnessing of Nuclear Power" mentioned:

It is unfortunate that the international nuclear regime today is highly distorted. On the one hand, the traditional nuclear weapons states want to keep the destructive power of nuclear technology in their own hands and resist nuclear disarmament. On the other hand, they restrict the enormous benefits of peaceful nuclear energy from reaching humanity at large that needs it most. (Vajpayee, 2000a, p.219)

Vajpayee also addressed the concerns about the environmental safety of the Indian nuclear programme (especially the civilian nuclear programme). In the inaugural address at the Parliamentary Consultative Committee Meeting of the Science and Technology Ministry, New Delhi, on October 23, 1998, he clarified that India's nuclear program is safe, just as the nuclear

plants of other countries. He also asserted that India never had nuclear accidents nor nuclear radiation-induced diseases in the neighbouring areas (Vajpayee, 2000a, p.221).

Further, on August 15, 1998, Vajpayee claimed, “We have formally announced a policy of No-First Use and non-use against non-nuclear weapons state” (Vajpayee, 1998b)⁴⁷. While addressing the nation on April 11, 1999, on the eve of the testing of India’s IRBM Agni II, Vajpayee (2000b) reiterated, “India remains committed to minimum deterrence, to no-first-use of nuclear weapons, and never to use them against non-nuclear weapon states” (p.139).

Vajpayee was quite aware that the nuclear tests would create worldwide repercussions. Therefore, he tried to assuage the media’s concerns. Some of the themes common to these statements are the adoption of the NFU policy, nuclear weapons as defensive weapons, civilian control, credible minimum deterrence, and avoidance of the nuclear arms race, among others. Here are some examples of Vajpayee’s media statements:

We have repeatedly confirmed our no-first-use doctrine. We do not believe that a nuclear war should be fought and we do not believe that a nuclear war can be won. We believe that it is highly irresponsible to even contemplate the use of nuclear weapons as an instrument of war. Our nuclear weapons are meant purely as a deterrent against nuclear adventure by an adversary.⁴⁸

In another interview, Vajpayee said:

⁴⁷ Retrieved September 26, 2020, from <https://archivepmo.nic.in/abv/speech-details.php?nodeid=9238>

⁴⁸ Retrieved October 26, 2020, from https://www.mea.gov.in/interviews.htm?dtl/4823/Transcript_of_Interview_of_Prime_Minister_Shri_Atal_Bihari_Vajpayee_with_the_Financial_Times

India continues to stress the need for a cooperative thrust to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons by subscribing to such measures as no first-use, and a move away from hair-trigger deployment... We are also committed not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states.⁴⁹

Vajpayee also pointed out the salient features of India's nuclear doctrine: "non first-use of nuclear weapons, non-use against non-nuclear-weapon countries, no nuclear arms race and a credible minimum deterrent. In other words, we shall have an assured response to any use of nuclear weapons against us."⁵⁰

In his interview with *Wen Huibao* on June 21, 2003, Vajpayee said, "We are developing a minimum credible nuclear deterrent, to deter any adversary from using nuclear weapons against India. We have ourselves included the principle of no first use in our nuclear doctrine."⁵¹

An excerpt from Vajpayee's interview with *Haaretz* illustrates the defensive nature of India's nuclear posture:

Our nuclear doctrine is based on an explicit no-first-use policy. We have publicly stated our willingness to sign a no-first-use agreement regionally or internationally. Our

⁴⁹ Retrieved October 25, 2020, from <https://mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?4700/Interview+of+Prime+Minister+of+India+Shri+Atal+Bihari+Vajpayee+with+Asharq+Alawsats+Amir+Taheri+Part+I+and+Part+II>

⁵⁰ Retrieved October 25, 2020, from <https://www.mea.gov.in/interviews.htm?dtl/3896/Interview+with+the+Prime+Minister+Atal+Bihari+Vajpayee>

⁵¹ Retrieved October 26, 2020, from https://www.mea.gov.in/interviews.htm?dtl/4683/Interview_of_Prime_Minister_Shri_Atal_Bihari_Vajpayee_by_Wen_Huibao_Shanghai

nuclear deterrent is entirely defensive in nature and, most importantly, it is under firm civilian control⁵².

In an interview with the Turkish media, Vajpayee reiterated the uselessness of nuclear weapons as practical war-fighting weapons. He mentioned, “We have adopted a doctrine of no first use of nuclear weapons. We believe that it is highly irresponsible to even contemplate the use of nuclear weapons as an instrument of war.”⁵³

In another interview with *Matichon* in October 2003, Vajpayee said, “India’s nuclear policy is firmly predicated on the principle of no first use policy. Our nuclear weapons are meant to deter irresponsible military adventurism; not to fight a nuclear war.”⁵⁴

Thus, the discussion above illustrates that Vajpayee’s statements in and off the Parliament before the release of the draft nuclear doctrine already set the foundation of India’s nuclear doctrine and the principles to be included in the doctrine. On a critical note, Vajpayee’s statements basically reflect an attempt by the Indian government to justify its decision to go nuclear and lessen the growing international criticism against the Indian move. Similarly, his interviews with foreign media aimed to project India as a responsible nuclear power that was not interested in arms race and aggression. Vajpayee government curated these statements to pacify domestic and international reactions to the Pokhran-II nuclear tests.

⁵² Retrieved October 26, 2020, from https://www.mea.gov.in/interviews.htm?dtl/4676/Interview_of_Prime_Minister_of_India_Shri_Atala_Bihari_Vajpayee_by_HaAretz_Israel

⁵³ Retrieved October 25, 2020, from https://www.mea.gov.in/interviews.htm?dtl/4667/Interview_of_Prime_Minister_of_India_Shri_Atala_Bihari_Vajpayee_by_Yeni_Safak_Turkey

⁵⁴ Retrieved October 26, 2020, from https://www.mea.gov.in/interviews.htm?dtl/4657/Interview_of_the_Prime_Minister_of_India_Shri_Atala_Bihari_Vajpayee_by_quotMatichonquot_Thailand

Notwithstanding the fact that the statements primarily indicate the Government of India's attempt to justify its decision of nuclear testing and lessen international concerns, they also testify to Vajpayee's role in the adoption of the NFU policy. Vajpayee institutionalised the NFU policy by including it in the nuclear doctrine. His government officially made the NFU policy an essential feature of India's nuclear.

NSAB and later CCA kept these broad principles in mind while framing the nuclear doctrine of India and included the NFU policy. Vajpayee was India's PM when these two nuclear doctrines were adopted. Vajpayee's role, therefore, has been crucial in shaping India's nuclear doctrine, particularly in the case of the NFU policy of India.

4.2.2. Influence of the Other PMs before Vajpayee in the Adoption of the NFU Policy by India

This section will examine how the decisions were made during the leadership of earlier PMs in India to understand their role in the NFU Policy. Various studies have shown that India's nuclear policy started before independence (Tomar, 2016). In the post-independence period, atomic institutions such as the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) were established during the Prime Ministership of Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru opposed developing nuclear weapons but was hopeful about the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for power generation and other scientific uses. He mentioned in Lok Sabha on July 24, 1957, that:

We have declared quite clearly that we are not interested in making atom bombs, even if we have the capacity to do so, and that in no event will we use atomic energy for destructive purposes. I am quite sure that when I say this, I represent every member of

this House. I hope that will be the policy of all future Governments. [cited in Sharma (Ed.), 1986, p.78]

Nehru's inclination towards Gandhism and non-violence also partly influenced his nuclear aversion. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (Mahatma Gandhi) reportedly called the manufacturing of nuclear weapons a 'diabolical use of science', and Nehru called them 'an evil thing' (cited in Dubey, 2013, p.41). Nehru's aversion toward atomic weapons also led him to favour nuclear disarmament (Pant & Joshi, 2018). The policy of non-alignment adopted by India during Nehru's time reflects his pragmatism. Nehru also deeply understood the role of power in international politics (Pant & Joshi, 2018). Nehru was hopeful that nuclear energy could be harnessed for the betterment of India, particularly in terms of electrical power generation. Furthermore, he did not want to permanently shut down the nuclear option for India. Suggesting this duality, Chaitanya Ravi (2018) called India's nuclear weapons programme 'Janus-faced' in these words, "Nehru used his image as a leader committed to high idealism to publicly announce that India would not acquire nuclear weapons, while always qualifying such statements at key junctures to leave open the possibility of a nuclear weapons capability" (p.36). The subsequent Indian PMs also adhered to this nuclear ambiguity. Atal Bihari Vajpayee removed this veil of ambiguity by completing the Pokhran II nuclear tests.

Views of Vajpayee reveal that adopting the NFU policy is not an abrupt decision. There is some continuity in it. While Vajpayee was the key political leader behind the adoption of the NFU policy by India, his views make it clear that this stance might also be influenced by the security considerations and tradition of the continuity of policies adopted by the earlier Indian PMs concerning nuclear policy and India's overall commitment to global nuclear disarmament.

In an interview with *India Today*, Vajpayee denied that the tests were a radical departure from the policies of previous Indian governments, saying that his government

believed in a nuclear weapons-free world and followed nuclear disarmament policies pursued by earlier governments (Chawla, 1998). Thus, the Indian government planned out the pros and cons of the tests, the likely short-term sanctions, and the long-term payoffs. Secondly, the tests were motivated by security considerations. Vajpayee perceived any attempt to see the tests as a means to divert attention from domestic political realities as ‘cynical’. Third, a broad consensus prevailed among most political leaders and parties regarding the paramount importance of national security issues like the nuclearisation of India.

While India followed a policy of nuclear ambiguity, all Indian PMs since the time of Jawaharlal Nehru had expressed their solidarity with nuclear disarmament. They shared similar viewpoints about the nature of NPT. All of them have viewed the NPT as inherently discriminatory. Former Indian PM P. V. Narasimha Rao rightly pointed out that since 1968, “India has taken a view and that view is that NPT as it was drafted, as it was accepted, is discriminatory. It allows vertical proliferation, it divides the world into nuclear haves and nuclear have-not” (Rao, 1995c, p.130).

In his Independence Day address on August 15, 1998, Vajpayee said that the Pokhran tests were not overnight results. He added that he was trying to extend the remaining work, the foundation of which was laid by former PM Indira Gandhi (Vajpayee, 1998b). He believed that the policies adopted by the earlier Indian PMs regarding nuclearisation were appropriate in the prevailing circumstances. What he did was candid from the changing realities of his times.

In the document “Evolution of India’s Nuclear Policy”, Vajpayee (1998a) said:

Among the earliest initiatives taken by our first Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, was the development of science and inculcation of the scientific spirit. It is this initiative that laid the foundation for the achievement of 11 and 13 May, made possible by

exemplary cooperation among the scientists from Department of Atomic energy and Defence Research & Development Organisation. Disarmament was then and continues to be a major plank in our foreign policy now. It was, in essence, and remains still, the natural course for a country that had waged a unique struggle for independence on the basis of 'ahimsa' and 'Satyagraha'.⁵⁵

Thus, the NDA government under Vajpayee could complete the tests in 1998 because the earlier governments created the foundation for the tests. K. Subrahmanyam recorded the trajectory of the India's nuclear weapons programme in these words:

Though the credit for the order to assemble the weapon goes to Rajiv Gandhi and the credit for restarting the development programme of the weapon after Morarji Desai halted it belongs to Indira Gandhi, it was Narasimha Rao who operationalised it. In other words, there has been a consistent continuity in the Indian nuclear policy under Congress governments. (Subrahmanyam, 2004, p. 595)

Jasjit Singh (2013a) pointed out that the 1998 nuclear tests by India contained elements of both continuity and novelty. On the one hand, the 1998 Pokhran nuclear tests could be seen as 'the continuity and growth of the capability over the years'. However, the decision to declare India as a State with nuclear weapons is a clear departure from the earlier policies (Singh, Jasjit, 2013a, p.74).

There are certain areas in the Indian polity where a broad consensus is seen across party lines. Every government of independent India tried to bolster India's national security in whatever way it could. Chapter 3 illustrated how the policy of nuclearisation evolved in India.

⁵⁵ Retrieved September 13, 2020, from <https://parliamentofindia.nic.in/ls/lsdeb/ls12/ses2/0527059801.htm>

The nuclear weapons tested in India in May 1998 were the culmination of systematic planning over the years. Emphasizing the continuity of India's nuclear policy, Vajpayee remarked that 'restraint and openness' are the unique features of India's nuclear policy (Vajpayee, 2000a, p.16).

India's commitment to nuclear disarmament has been consistent since Nehru's times. Reference can be made to the measures India took in the 1950s toward banning nuclear weapons tests. In the mid-1960s, India worked jointly with other countries for a UN General Assembly Resolution that identified nuclear war as a crime against the human race. In the early 1980s, India took certain measures for nuclear disarmament. Rajiv Gandhi's Action Plan for a nuclear weapons-free world was introduced in 1988 (Dubey, 2013, p.41). Although most of these initiatives failed, the goal of nuclear disarmament had a rich legacy in India's nuclear thinking.

Different PMs of India continued to support the policy of global nuclear disarmament. Even after the tests, Vajpayee repeatedly reiterated India's commitment to nuclear disarmament. So, it can be argued that the NFU position of India is, to a large extent, an extension of India's commitment toward global nuclear disarmament.

Discussion on the role of political leadership in the NFU policy of India will be incomplete without some reference to former PM Rajiv Gandhi. One of the significant contributions of Rajiv Gandhi toward the initiatives for global nuclear disarmament is his 'Action Plan for A Nuclear Weapons Free and Non-Violent World Order'⁵⁶ submitted to the UN in 1988. Unfortunately, no major study has been conducted on his role in global nuclear

⁵⁶ For full text, refer to the appendices.

disarmament. Though the grand vision of his plan failed, it indicated an initiative toward global nuclear disarmament. He proposed a plan to eliminate types of nuclear weapons within a time-bound manner. Rajiv Gandhi pointed out the inherent discriminatory designs of the existing global nuclear regimes and how the nuclear have-nots are at the receiving end of security and survival vis-à-vis the nuclear haves.

Rajiv Gandhi vehemently supported the idea of global nuclear disarmament. In a speech delivered in 1986, he said:

The key in fighting nuclear weapons must be with public opinion, and it is the responsibility of each one of us to build this public opinion to force the nuclear-weapon countries to disarm and to remove this sword of Damocles that they hold not just over their own countries but over the whole world. (Gandhi, R. 1989a, p.223-224)

The content of his speeches reflect his apprehensiveness about the dangers that nuclear weapons might bring (See Gandhi, R., 1989a; 1989b; 1989c). A perusal of his speeches from January 1, 1986, to December 31, 1988, shows that he envisioned a nuclear-weapons-free world. He noted, “Nuclear weapons are a crime against humanity and must be so branded” (Gandhi, R, 1989a, p.281).

Rajiv Gandhi’s speech “Nuclear Deterrent-No Answer” at the National Defence College on November 17, 1987, reveals that he was pretty clear that nuclear weapons provide little leverage in a war, for such a war is not winnable (Gandhi, R. 1989b). He argued, “Deterrence needs an enemy, even if one has to be invented. Nuclear deterrence is the ultimate expression of the philosophy of terrorism, holding humanity hostage to the presumed security needs of the few” (Gandhi, R., 1989c, p.332).

He also stated that despite having the capability, India exhibited an exemplary commitment to not manufacturing nuclear weapons (Gandhi, R., 1989b, p.110). He said, “There is only one answer to the menace of nuclear war and that is to dismantle all nuclear weapons, terminating the nuclear arms race on earth and preventing a nuclear arms race in space” (Gandhi, R. 1989b, p.99). The countries on the nuclear threshold also have a great responsibility to transform this vision of global nuclear disarmament into a reality. Rajiv Gandhi was concerned about Pakistan’s initiatives for nuclearising its arsenals. At a press conference with the US Press, Washington on October 20, 1987, Rajiv Gandhi was asked whether he could sense Pakistan working towards building nuclear weapons; he replied, “We do not want to go nuclear.... We feel that costs of going nuclear, not just money cost, but all the other costs, are much too heavy and we would like to do anything to prevent ourselves going nuclear” (Gandhi, R., 1989b, p.461). He reiterated this in a statement he made at the White House, Washington on October 20, 1987, that India has no intention of manufacturing of nuclear weapons “unless constrained to do so” (Gandhi, R., 1989b, p.403). Rajiv Gandhi, however, warned, “If Pakistan were to go nuclear, we would be forced to review our policies” (Gandhi, R., 1989c, p.454). He also added, “We do not have nuclear weapons. We do not want nuclear weapons. And we certainly do not want nuclear weapons in our neighbourhood” (Gandhi, R., 1989b, p.403).

On the use of nuclear weapons, he argued:

The original sin was the belief that the power of nuclear explosives qualified them for use as weapons of war. We insistently pointed out that any use of nuclear weapons would constitute a crime against humanity. There could be no role whatsoever, in any circumstances, for any resort to nuclear arms (Gandhi, R., 1989b, p.99).

Thus, his statements reflect the Indian government's position on nuclear weapons and arms race. India's nuclear weapons programme before 1998 has been dubbed as ambiguous by various analysts. However, Rajiv Gandhi tried to depict a different picture. He mentioned that there is nothing ambiguous about India's position on nuclear weapons. It will develop such weapons only if compelled (Gandhi, R., 1989b, p.403; 1989c, p.493). It was during his regime India took the final call to build nuclear weapons (Joshi, 2022).

Former PM V. P. Singh's government was short-lived (1989-90). Singh's speeches also reflect opposition to nuclear weapons. Delivering the fourth Indira Gandhi Memorial Lecture on May 1, 1990, in New Delhi, he mentioned:

The greatest threat to world peace is posed by nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. As long as such weapons exist, the world must live with the threat of extinction through a holocaust triggered by accident or design. (Singh, V.P., 1993, p.247)

Ex-PM P. V. Narasimha Rao also talked about the necessity of the NFU policy. He mentioned:

A nuclear 'no-first use' agreement, indeed an agreement to outlaw the use of nuclear weapons is necessary in the short-term by way of precaution, while serious multilateral negotiations are launched for nuclear disarmament, the objective being a nuclear free world. (Rao,1995c, p.484)

Rao thus conceived the NFU policy as a short term measure for nuclear disarmament.

Shrikant Paranjpe (2000) made a subtle observation that the draft nuclear doctrine of India that contains the NFU policy took a trajectory that was gradually emerging since the days

of the Narasimha Rao government (p.53). It was a slow but sure movement from ambiguity to clarity in nuclear decision-making.

Apart from the Prime Ministers, the views of several other Indian Ministers also corroborate India's NFU stand. For instance, former External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha said:

We have started developing (nuclear weapons) only when we learnt that nuclear weapons are possessed not only by China but also by Pakistan. Our nuclear doctrine clearly states India's No First Use policy. Besides, the doctrine prohibits use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states.⁵⁷

In another interview, Yashwant Sinha said:

The exercise of the nuclear weapon option by India unmasked potentially dangerous ambiguities in our security environment aggravated by clandestine nuclear and missile proliferation. Our nuclear doctrine rests on a credible minimum deterrent, a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons and a unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosive tests.⁵⁸

Sinha's statements above echoes Indian government's position on nuclear strategy. He also added that nuclear weapons are not war-fighting weapons, and as such, India's nuclear weapons are only defensive in nature.⁵⁹ When asked about the reason behind the dilution of the NFU

⁵⁷ Retrieved October 26, 2020, from https://www.mea.gov.in/interviews.htm?dtl/4728/Interview_of_External_Affairs_Minister_Shri_Yashwant_Sinha_with_Izvestia

⁵⁸ Retrieved October 26, 2020, from https://www.mea.gov.in/interviews.htm?dtl/4698/Interview_of_External_Affairs_Minister_Shri_Yashwant_Sinha_with_RediffCom

⁵⁹ Retrieved October 26, 2020, from https://www.mea.gov.in/interviews.htm?dtl/4698/Interview_of_External_Affairs_Minister_Shri_Yashwant_Sinha_with_RediffCom

policy in the official nuclear doctrine concerning biological and chemical weapons, he said that changes had been made to protect India and Indian soldiers from the potential attack of weapons of mass destruction.⁶⁰

Despite the claims of adherence and support to the policy of global nuclear disarmament, India slowly and steadily trod on the path of nuclearisation. Under the veil of ambiguity, various Prime Ministers continued India's nuclearisation process since Indira Gandhi. The Prime Ministers are also said to have used nuclear strategy to achieve domestic and external political goals (MacDonald, 2020). Some sources have indicated that India went nuclear in the late 1980s (Rajagopalan & Mishra, 2014), but the formal declaration of the possession of these weapons came in 1998.

Apart from Vajpayee, other PMs also played some role in the historical development of the NFU policy of India's nuclear doctrine in varying degrees. The NFU policy gained validity in India's nuclear discourse under different Prime Ministers since the late 1980s. A trend was evolving that if India ever attained nuclear weapons for its security, India's nuclear doctrine and strategy would be governed by the NFU policy, among other guidelines.

4.3 Role of Strategic Experts and the NFU Policy of India

Unlike strategic experts, political leaders are not trained on strategic issues. Advisers aid them on strategic issues. Therefore, determining the role of strategic experts in shaping India's NFU policy is crucial. India's NFU policy is said to be an outcome of the experiences and knowledge garnered by the strategic experts (Rajagopalan, 2019). Shivshankar Menon (2018) noted in his book *Choices: Inside the Making of India's Foreign Policy* that in the mid-1980s, the former Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) chairperson Raja Ramanna and the

⁶⁰ Retrieved October 26, 2020, from https://www.mea.gov.in/interviews.htm?dtl/4698/Interview_of_External_Affairs_Minister_Shri_Yashwant_Sinha_with_RediffCom

former Chief of Army Staff Krishnaswami Sundarji discussed the future of a nuclear India. For Sundarji, Indian nuclear weapons would keep the dangers arising out of the conventional superiority of China at bay.

On the other hand, Ramanna saw the future nuclear weapons of India more in terms of political weapons than military ones. Menon (2018) further mentioned the gradual loss of appeal of Sundarji's considerations and the increase in the popularity of views of the supporters of the NFU policy like Subrahmanyam (pp. 160-161). However, Sundaram and Ramana (2018) provided a slightly different account of Sundarji and portrayed him as an ardent advocate of the NFU policy. Sundarji said, "For a sober, mature status quo power like India, a unilateral declaration of no first use should be axiomatic" (cited in Sundaram & Ramana, 2018, p.154).

This section will highlight the role of two Indian strategic thinkers in shaping the NFU policy of India, K. Subrahmanyam⁶¹ and General K. Sundarji. Experts noted the contribution made by Subrahmanyam to India's strategic decisions. V. Arunachalam (2011) described him as "an indefatigable champion of nuclear power for the nation's security and economic growth" (p.936). According to some, George Tanham's much-quoted argument that India lacks a grand strategy was also influenced by Subrahmanyam's insights (cited in Mukherjee, 2011).

K. Subrahmanyam joined as a bureaucrat in 1958. He was appointed as the Director of the think tank of the Defence Ministry of India, Institute for Defence Studies, and Strategic Analyses (IDSA) in 1968. He also played a crucial role in preparing the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) Report in 1979 (Rajagopalan & Mishra, 2014). Since 1962, he had worked with most of the PMs of India and advised them on various issues related to national security

⁶¹ A comprehensive account of K. Subrahmanyam's contribution to Indian strategic thought and practice can be found in Kumaraswamy (Ed.) (2004) and Jaishankar (2020).

(Mukherjee, 2011). He also convinced the then-Indian political leaders, including the PM and the Foreign Minister, not to sign the discriminatory NPT (Arunachalam, 2011). He played an instrumental role in educating the military brass, political leaders, bureaucrats, and journalists on various strategic issues. The most important contribution of Subrahmanyam was probably in nuclear strategy (Mukherjee, 2011). He wrote many thought-provoking columns on nuclear and strategic issues in leading Indian dailies. He was a prolific writer, but his writings are scattered.⁶² His writings are spread across journals like *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, *Bulletin of Peace Proposals*, *Review of International Affairs*, *Strategic Analysis*, *Strategic Studies*, *World Focus*, *Mainstream*, and *IDSJ Journal*, among others. He also contributed many columns and articles to newspapers like *The Times of India*, *The Economic Times*, and *The Tribune*. His writings provide a glimpse of insider information about an otherwise inaccessible nuclear domain for the public. Subrahmanyam also worked relentlessly toward convincing the top decision-making political leaders about the need to establish the National Security Council (see Subrahmanyam, 1997).

As K. Subrahmanyam headed the committee that drafted the DND, it is apparent that he played a crucial role in adopting principles enshrined in the doctrine. Major General Dipankar Banerjee (Retd) (2010) rightly argued that “the document clearly bears his stamp” (p.353). The NSAB under his leadership brought India’s draft nuclear doctrine to the domain of ‘informed public discussion’ (Kux, 2011). One can also find many similarities between the statements made by Vajpayee and the views endorsed by Subrahmanyam relating to India’s nuclear doctrine. He was a staunch advocate of the NFU policy. In an article written just a few days after the adoption of the official nuclear doctrine of India in 2003, Subrahmanyam (2003)

⁶² Soundarya Chidambaram has painstakingly compiled a select bibliography of K. Subrahmanyam’s writings till 2004 in Kumaraswamy (Ed.) (2004).

stated that the genesis of the NFU policy could be found in the Indian strategic thinking of the decades of the 1980s and 1990s.

In the 1980s, K. Subrahmanyam wrote a series of articles stating the benefits of declaring an NFU policy (Sundaram & Ramana, 2018). His writings reflect that he was not an idealist by any stretch of the imagination. His outlook has also been identified as ‘realist’ by various other writers (For instance, see Kumaraswamy (Ed.), 2004; Subrahmanyam, S. 2004; Rajagopalan & Mishra, 2014). R. G. C. Thomas called him the ‘primary advocate of realism in India’s security policy’ for a period spanning over four decades (Thomas, 2004).

Subrahmanyam strongly believed that India should acquire nuclear weapons to ensure its security. Nuclear weapons could provide security to India’s territorial integrity and sovereignty, averting today’s dangers of outside humanitarian intervention and nuclear threats arising from the deployment of nuclear weapons by nuclear states (Subrahmanyam, 2002, p.65).

According to him, the NFU policy flows out of two factors: the first relates to the commitment not to use it first, and the second is that the aggressor would face inevitable but unacceptable consequences of initiating an attack. He is categorical in stating that “[n]either of these two factors (sic) are unethical. Every state has an ethical obligation to protect its citizens from the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons” (Subrahmanyam, 2002, p.77).

He also believed that security is vital for any country to assert itself on a global stage and that lack of autonomy in the security sphere also harms the economic sphere. To evince his point, he gave the example of economically prosperous Japan and Germany, which are yet to present themselves as influential military powers because of their insufficient military capacity (Subrahmanyam, 2002, p.65). He believed India would not get its due status on the

world platform without nuclear weapons. At the same time, he was convinced that a nuclear war was not fightable and should not be fought (Subrahmanyam, 2009d).

K. Subrahmanyam's (2002) article "India and the International Nuclear Order" should be read along with the DND to make a clear sense of the latter. This write-up dispels many myths and doubts surrounding India's nuclear doctrine, particularly the NFU policy. He explained the international context that led India to go for the Pokhran-II nuclear tests in 1998. According to Subrahmanyam (2002), China's active support of Pakistan's nuclear programme and the US disregarding all these developments led India to go nuclear (Subrahmanyam, 2002, p.82). More to the point, he added that "India was compelled to go nuclear because of the obduracy of nuclear-weapons powers, the legitimization of nuclear weapons by the international community, and the rising trend in interventionism by the industrialized nations in the affairs of the developing world" (Subrahmanyam, 2002, p.84). The NPT regime, according to Subrahmanyam, merely paid lip service to nuclear disarmament, but in practice, it just maintained the status quo in favour of nuclear weapon states (Subrahmanyam, 2009d). Making a scathing critique of the so-called new world order where arms control mechanisms follow double standards, Subrahmanyam said ingeniously that 'some nations (are) more equal than others' (Steinbruner et al., 1991).

Furthermore, nuclear weapons have not been made explicitly illegal so far. Thus, he argued that a weapon that is deemed as legitimate is hard to remove and stop from proliferation (2009d). At the time of the Shakti series test, when K. Subrahmanyam offered to write an editorial piece for the *Times of India*, the editorial team refused to oblige. So, he clarified his position in a write-up later on the nuclear weapons issue, saying that he was against the use of nuclear weapons, just like the people associated with that newspaper. However, they had a

different understanding of the nature of the global security scenario, India's security imperatives, and nuclear weapons' role (Subrahmanyam, 2008).

He also added that using nuclear weapons may be wrong from a moral point of view, but a country has to be always prepared to avert nuclear weapons attacks and threats (Subrahmanyam, 2008). He was convinced Western nuclear and military doctrines would not suit Indian conditions and strategic requirements. He observed that “[g]enocidal bombing was part of the Western conventional military doctrine, including the destruction of cities through thousand-bomber raids, a doctrine that led logically to Nagasaki and Hiroshima” (Subrahmanyam, 1984, p. 17).

Subrahmanyam (2004a; 2004b) stated that he, as the director of IDSA and Raja Ramanna, the chairperson of the Atomic Energy Commission, had submitted two proposals to Rajiv Gandhi regarding a mutual agreement with Pakistan in 1985. The first proposal was related to a commitment not to attack each other's nuclear facility. The second one was related to the NFU policy. While Rajiv Gandhi accepted the first proposal, the second proposal could not be adopted at that time due to objection by P. V. Narasimha Rao, who was then the Defence Minister of India. Rao thought that such a posture by India at that time could give a wrong impression to Pakistan that India had done all this out of fear. In another article by Subrahmanyam in 2005, he urged PM Narasimha Rao that India should declare an NFU policy and make the world aware of its nuclear weapons (Subrahmanyam, 2005).

Subrahmanyam calculated well the potential dangers of an FU policy. An FU policy is costly and must always be on the hair in trigger alert mode. Such a policy may lead to an inadvertent nuclear arms race, and the Cold War bears ample testimony. Furthermore, he stated that a nuclear aggressor cannot guarantee that it can damage all of the enemy's weaponry in just one strike and that the opponent will not retaliate (Subrahmanyam, 2002, p.80)

How does he see the NFU policy? He stated what we called the Indian way of looking into the NFU policy in a forum in these words:

The policy of 'no first use' embodies the doctrine of deterrence in full measure. It is meant to deter a nuclear adversary from initiating a nuclear strike through the maintenance of a credible and survivable nuclear retaliatory force which can inflict unacceptable damage on the aggressor. (Halperin et al., 2009, p.32)

The NFU policy revolves around the logic of deterrence. For Subrahmanyam, nuclear deterrence and the NFU policy go hand in hand. How does he look at the concept of deterrence? He stated, "Nuclear deterrence, in essence, means persuading the adversary to believe that any use of a nuclear weapon by him will result in a retaliation that would be unacceptable in terms of damage" (Subrahmanyam, 2003)⁶³.

He was hopeful that the NFU policy would contribute significantly to global nuclear disarmament. So, he argued, "India's no-first use policy is a step towards delegitimizing its first use ... If only the Indian example of no-first use is followed by all other nuclear weapon powers the world will be on its way to disarmament" (Subrahmanyam, 2002, p.81). In addition, he also viewed it as the first step toward nuclear threat reduction (Halperin et al., 2009, p.35). He explained why India adopted the NFU policy and opined that it was because of India's long-time commitment to global nuclear disarmament and the imperatives of the new security environment in which India found itself (Halperin et al., 2009, p. 35). Regarding the changes made in the NFU policy in the official doctrine of India about biological and chemical weapons, he agreed with Sagan that this might be influenced by the US nuclear policies (Halperin et al., 2009, p.35).

⁶³ Retrieved August 18, 2020, from <https://mea.gov.in/articles-in-indian-media.htm?dtl/14633/triple+deterrent>

K. Subrahmanyam's (1998b) article "Indian Nuclear Policy-1964-98 (A personal recollection)" is a first-hand description of the Indian nuclear policy and weapons program. This is an account of the events and circumstances that led India to build nuclear weapons and finally declare itself as an overt nuclear weapons state. The article details how Subrahmanyam, in his capacity as a strategic analyst and director of the Indian think tank Institute of Defence and Strategic Analysis (IDSA)⁶⁴, was privy to several vital decisions relating to India's nuclear policy. He mentioned that in the mid-1980s, he and Dr. Ramanna had proposed before PM Rajiv Gandhi that an NFU agreement should be made from India to Pakistan. Rajiv Gandhi was reluctant to heed this suggestion because it was too premature. In 1985, the PM convened a special meeting to discuss nuclear issues. Subrahmanyam stated in these words: "I suggested offer of agreements to Pakistan on both non-attack on nuclear facilities and mutual no-first use agreement. The Prime Minister was interested in both proposals and heard me patiently" (Subrahmanyam, 1998b, p. 40).

Thus, the analysis above has made it clear that Subrahmanyam had a significant role in initiating an interest among the political leaders and the strategic community in the NFU policy by highlighting its benefits. He succeeded in instilling this perception that an NFU posture best suits Indian nuclear doctrine and posture. But how did he come to endorse the NFU policy? Indian scientist V. S. Arunachalam (2011), who knew him personally, narrated that:

He (Subrahmanyam) tried to develop a quantitative game theoretic model for exercising strategic options, but in the end chose an intuitive one that was as persuasive as the more mathematical models of the West based on mutually assured destruction and

⁶⁴ Presently known as Manohar Parikkar Institute of Defence and Strategic Analysis (MP-IDSA).

‘unacceptable damage’. These studies led him to the doctrine of No First Use that India has adopted (p.937).

Subrahmanyam doubted that the Western deterrence model would suit India and asserted that the NFU policy would be a better option.

He was poignant in his criticisms as well. He was well aware of the suggestions from some quarters that India needs to consider the NFU clause’s abrogation. Subrahmanyam (2009a) said to such critics:

Giving up NFU will only increase nuclear tension without solving the problem of the risk of a possible decapitating strike by the potential enemy. There must be a better understanding of the national no-first-use policy among our armed forces and other decision- and policy-makers, as well as a deeper grasp of the concept of deterrence.⁶⁵

It also becomes clear from his writings that India’s NFU policy was not based on the size of the nuclear arsenal of Pakistan. To quote his words in verbatim:

When NFU was formulated (I was the convenor of the National Security Board that drafted it) there were no assumptions on the size of the Pakistani arsenal. The doctrine stands by itself irrespective of the size of the potential enemy’s arsenal. (Subrahmanyam, 2009a)⁶⁶

So, any increase in the size of Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal should not have any bearing on India’s NFU policy. If anything requires adjustments in India’s nuclear doctrine, it is the ‘credible minimum deterrent’ but not India’s NFU policy (Subrahmanyam, 2009a).

⁶⁵ Retrieved September 24, 2020, from <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/no-second-thoughts/>

⁶⁶ Retrieved September 24, 2020, from <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/no-second-thoughts/>

Subrahmanyam (1998a) maintained that the international community's indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995 was tantamount to the legitimisation of nuclear weapons. While he strongly supported the idea that India should build nuclear weapons for its security, he was not against nuclear disarmament. He clarified that there are two ways to avoid nuclear threats' dangers. Either there should be a complete prohibition of nuclear weapons, or a state has to build deterrent nuclear capability. India went for the second option after the attempts at nuclear disarmament failed miserably (Subrahmanyam, 1998a, p.13).

The accuracy of his strategic judgements and arguments is enviable to any other strategic expert. For instance, in an article written in 1998, he argued that if further nuclear proliferation takes place, that will happen only after the violation of the NPT Treaty because barring four states (India, Pakistan, Israel, and Cuba), all other states have signed the NPT (Subrahmanyam, 1998a). Moreover, that happened precisely when North Korea declared itself a nuclear weapon state in 2006 and withdrew its membership from the NPT in 2003.

As a tribute to Subrahmanyam, C. Uday Bhaskar (2011) wrote among the members responsible for shaping India's nuclear posture till the Pokhran nuclear tests of 1998 (the elite group includes Homi Sethna, S Gopal, and BG Verghese et al.), K. Subrahmanyam was the most influential and he was justifiably made the convenor of the first National Security Advisory Board (NSAB). Subrahmanyam also accommodated diverse views on the board and played his role with finesse (Bhaskar, 2011).

An analysis of Subrahmanyam's writings reflects that he was a realist, and his writings reflect a realist orientation. The moral overtures that one may find in Vajpayee's speeches and deliberations have not influenced his writings. His concern was the strategic viability of India's nuclear weapons programme, not its moral overtures. His ardent advocacy for the NFU policy bears ample testimony to this point. Thus, it can be argued that K. Subrahmanyam's views on

the NFU policy were grounded in strategic logic and not driven by normative or moral considerations. He weighed the implications of every possible strategic option on a given issue and accordingly suggested the best course of action.

Subrahmanyam appears to be a hardcore supporter of nuclear weapons. However, a closer look at his writings reveals that he believed in global nuclear disarmament deep within. He raised concerns about the discriminatory nuclear disarmament and arms control regimes and supported India's nuclear weapons on those grounds only. For instance, he argued:

The strategy of a non-violent and nuclear free world has no alternative, if the future generations are to survive in conditions of sustainable development. We of this generation have a stark choice before us. Either we become saviours of our posterity or its executioners. Either we opt for life or shatter the future of mankind. Let us opt for life. (Subrahmanyam, 1990, p.85)

It also emerges that Subrahmanyam studied in detail the nuclear doctrine of other countries and tried to find out the best course that would suit the conditions of India. He was equally thoughtful that the nuclearised Indian subcontinent differs from the Cold War situation. In an article published in *The Times of India*, K. Subrahmanyam (2003) highlighted the logic behind the NFU policy of India and suggested that India should stick to this policy. First of all, India's position, or for that matter Pakistan's or China's position, is not similar to the nuclear environment of the Cold War era. Under such circumstances, India can afford an NFU posture in its nuclear doctrine.

Secondly, "(a) first strike, including a decapitation strike, on a national capital cannot be prevented at the present stage of technology till effective missile defence is available.

Therefore, that contingency is independent of whether we adopt no-first-use or not.”⁶⁷ Thirdly, as India is already building its nuclear triad, India’s NFU policy is a rational choice to enhance its deterrence capability. Fourthly, he argued, “The theory of deterrence and no-first-use go together. The first aggressive use of a nuclear weapon will be a confession that deterrence has failed and nuclear war fighting had become inevitable”⁶⁸. Finally, “it is recognised all over the world that nuclear warfighting between two nuclear weapon states would not lead to any meaningful military decision beyond appalling losses to both sides. In these circumstances, no-first-use appears to be the appropriate policy for India”⁶⁹. He also warned that abandoning the NFU policy would only increase nuclear tensions (Subrahmanyam, 2009a).

He said, “No first use strategy is the optimal compromise between India’s commitment to nuclear disarmament and its nuclear security imperatives” (Subrahmanyam, 2009c).⁷⁰ The NFU policy is a message to a likely enemy that India can retaliate after sustaining a nuclear attack (Subrahmanyam, 2009d). He pointed out the pitfalls of a pre-emptive strike. A pre-emptive strike will not stop counter-value retaliatory strikes (Subrahmanyam, 2009d).

He was pretty critical of the hypocritical approach of the five states of the nuclear club. He claimed, “Those who support the legitimacy of nuclear weapons in the hands of a few nations by supporting the Non-Proliferation Treaty cannot logically and credibly preach that other nations cannot have them” (Subrahmanyam, 1984, p.18). He also wrote, “Nuclear weapons are unjustifiable in anyone’s hands” (Subrahmanyam, 1984, p.18). He was quite clear about the role that nuclear weapons have. He made another observation, “Today, the role of

⁶⁷ Retrieved August 18, 2020, from <https://mea.gov.in/articles-in-indian-media.htm?dtl/14633/triple+deterrent>

⁶⁸ Retrieved August 18, 2020, from <https://mea.gov.in/articles-in-indian-media.htm?dtl/14633/triple+deterrent>

⁶⁹ Retrieved August 18, 2020, from <https://mea.gov.in/articles-in-indian-media.htm?dtl/14633/triple+deterrent>

⁷⁰ Retrieved August 19, 2020, from <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/because-the-bluff-might-just-be-called/>

the nuclear weapons is not military but essentially political. No country which has developed the nuclear weapons contemplates with equanimity its offensive use in a war” (Subrahmanyam, 2010, p.328).

Another strategic expert contributed towards the adoption of the NFU policy by India. General Krishnaswamy Sundararajan (popularly known as General K. Sundarji) (1928-1999) served as the Chief of the Army Staff from 1986 to 1988. Operation Brasstacks (1986-87), known as the largest military exercise by the Indian army to date, was conducted under his guidance. He also wrote a novel called *Blind Men of Hindoostan*. Rajagopalan and Mishra (2014) noted that Combat Papers I and II, written by Sundarji, throw a vista on the military’s take on nuclear issues (Rajagopalan & Mishra, 2014; Joshi, 1999a).

General K. Sundarji’s name is also frequently pronounced along with K. Subrahmanyam in designing the nuclear strategy for India, particularly in India’s adoption of the NFU policy (Sundaram & Ramana, 2018; Ahmed, 2014/2018) and nuclear deterrence (Ahmed, 2008b). K. Subrahmanyam (1998b) himself extolled and acknowledged the role of Sundarji in India’s nuclear decision-making. Frey (2006) noted that Sundarji was the most prominent military strategist of his time. According to Ali Ahmed (2014/2018), “The most prominent contribution to nuclear thinking was of General Sundarji” (p.12). Sundarji occupied a tall place among the early nuclear strategists and stalwarts of India and did formidable service to the field of national security (Ahmed, 2008b). Thus, his primary contribution is in raising the foundation of early nuclear doctrinal thought of India along with the likes of K. Subrahmanyam.

Sundarji (1995b) presented a blueprint of what he called an ‘assumed Indian nuclear doctrine’⁷¹ much before the draft nuclear doctrine (1999) and the official nuclear doctrine of India (2003). The essence of the key features he stated in this doctrine are the recognition of the deterrent value of nuclear weapons, emphasis on minimum nuclear deterrence and second-strike capability, redundancy of tactical weapons for India, and the NFU policy of nuclear weapons (Sundarji, 1995b, pp. 162-163). Thus, one can find the resonance of the ‘assumed Indian nuclear doctrine’ on the later nuclear doctrines of India on many fronts.

Sundarji’s articles on nuclear issues reflect his support for the NFU policy. For instance, he was categorical in stating that “the Indian policy would be one of declared ‘No First Use’ of nuclear weapons” (Sundarji, 1995b, p. 163). By exploring different possibilities, he affirmed that India would have never had to exercise a nuclear first-use option against an adversary (Sundaram & Ramanna, 2018). In one of his articles, he argued that if India and Pakistan refrain from declaring their nuclear doctrines and status, it will make it difficult for them to adopt the NFU policy (Sundarji, 1991b). Terms like ‘retaliatory’, ‘second strike’, ‘unacceptable damage’, and ‘minimum deterrence’ are found in his write-ups even before India adopted them in its nuclear doctrines. For instance, in an article in *The Hindu* dated January 11, 1991, Sundarji wrote:

(T)o deter the Chinese nuclear capability, we need not have superiority or equivalence, but only *a retaliatory capability in the second strike mode* [emphasis added]; that this should be capable of inflicting *unacceptable damage* [emphasis added], with unacceptable damage defined sensibly. I had also suggested that for *minimum*

⁷¹ Sundarji also presented the outlines of these ‘assumed Indian nuclear doctrine’ in two parts in an article entitled ‘Nuclear Deterrence: Doctrine for India’ published in the journal *Trishul* in 1992 and 1993 [cited in foot note number 40 of Sundarji (1995b)].

deterrence [emphasis added], the ability to hit a few cities would constitute unacceptable damage. (cited in Frey, 2006, p.90)

In another article written in 1995, he suggested a futuristic strategic blueprint for India. He opined that India should have an unambiguous doctrine focusing on a minimum deterrence level with a second-strike capability (Sundarji, 1995a, p. 575). Sundarji also argued, “(a)ny country which believes that nuclear weapons are only useful for deterrence, implicitly thinks only in terms of retaliatory use in the second strike mode, and is foreswearing a first strike option” (cited in Frey, 2006, p. 146). He claimed, “For a sober, mature status quo power like India, a unilateral declaration of no first use should be axiomatic” (cited in Sundaram & Ramana, 2018, p. 154). He suggested that India should stay away from an arms race with Pakistan and instead build a modest nuclear deterrent (Gupta, 2018).

Sundarji wrote several articles on possible nuclear scenarios for India. His thoughts were ahead of time. Many a scenario he depicted unfolded surprisingly. He wrote in 1990 that despite the negation by the US, it is pragmatic to infer about Pakistan’s possession of nuclear weapons or the capability to produce them anytime soon. He also warned that no government in India would be able to tolerate the nuclear blackmailing of Pakistan (Sundarji, 1990b). Even before India and Pakistan became nuclear weapon states, he asserted mutual talks with China and Pakistan for the maintenance of credible minimum deterrence (Sundarji, 2023)⁷². Sundarji also narrated a possibility in an interview in 1990 that the attainment of nuclear weapons capability would act as a deterrent between India and Pakistan and prevent conventional wars between the two nations (Bobb & Chengappa, 1990). In another classic article, he argued, “In South Asia, minimum deterrent will be a stabilizing factor” (Sundarji, 1995b, p.162). Sundarji

⁷² This article was first published in *India Today* edition dated December 31, 1991.

(1990a; 1991a) lamented that India has never had an informed debate or planning on national security strategy. So, he stressed on the formulation of a robust national strategy. He suggested that India openly endorse a nuclear deterrent policy to reduce defence expenditure and bring about regional stability in South Asia (Sundarji, 1991a).

4.4 Are the Political Leadership and Strategic Experts the Only Determinants of the NFU Policy of India?

Figure 4.1

Probable Factors Responsible for the NFU Decision

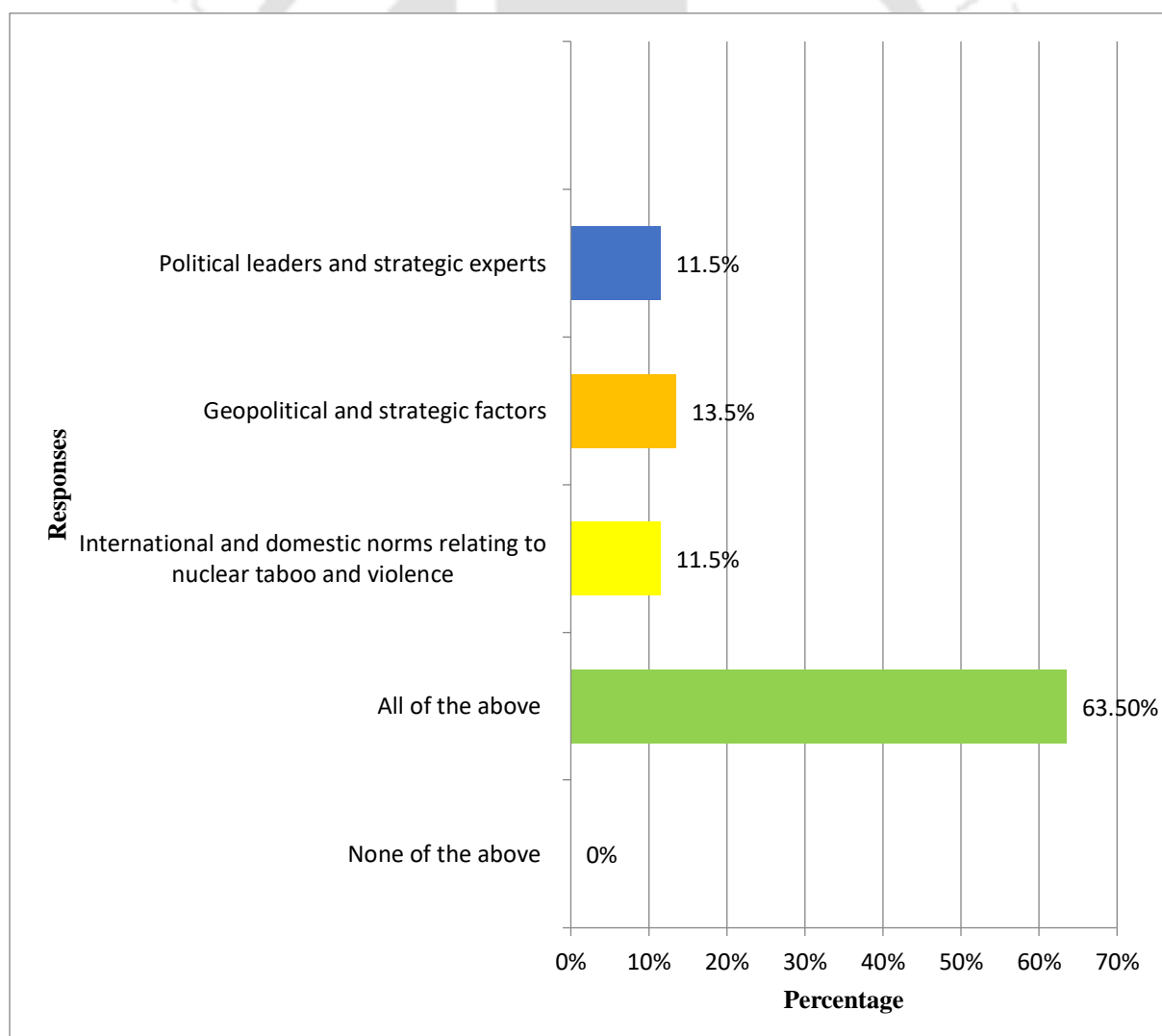
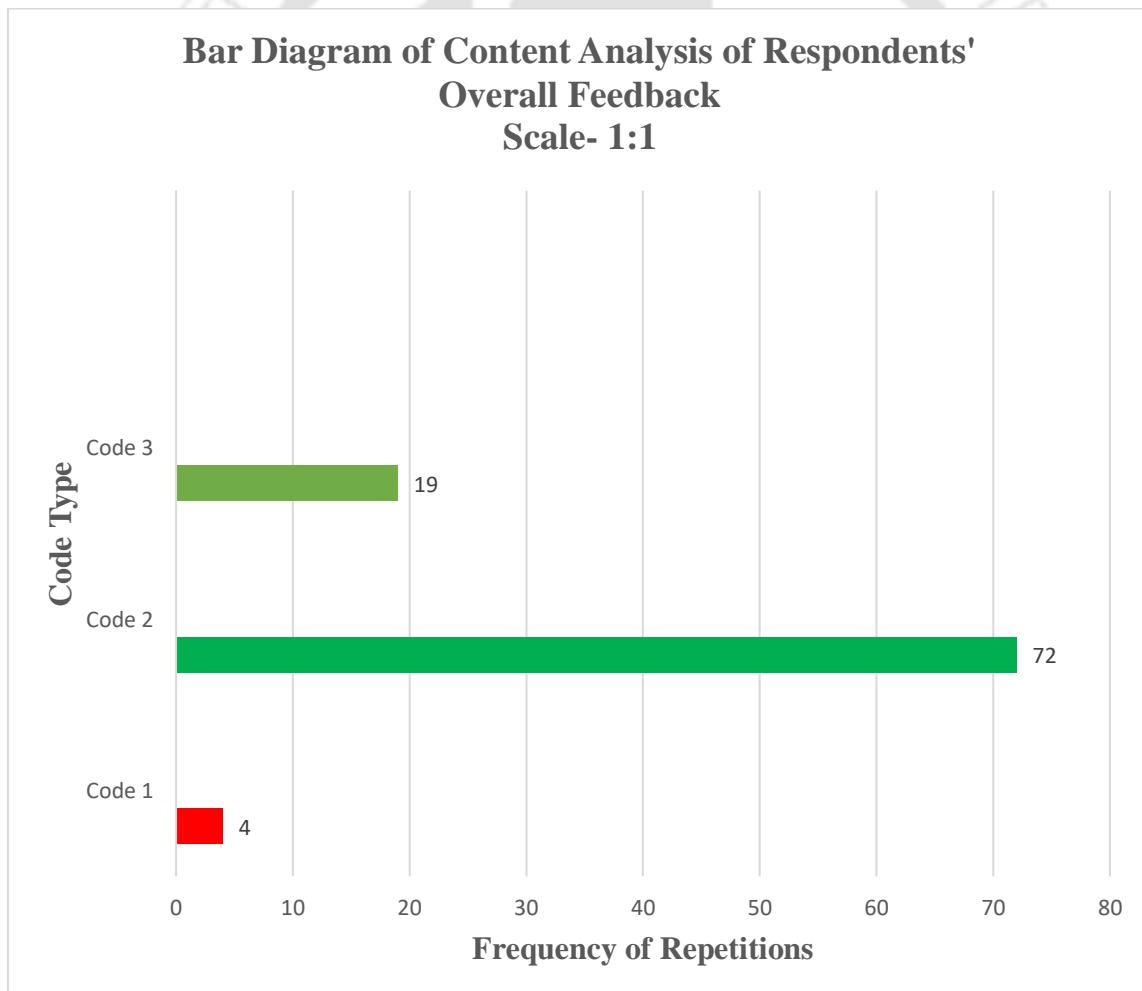


Figure 4.1 shows that 11.5 percent of the respondents believe that political leaders and strategic experts played an important role in India's decision to adopt an NFU policy. Thus, the questionnaire response reveals that while political leadership and strategic experts may not have played the predominant role, they definitely have a role in India's adoption of the NFU policy.

Figure 4.2

Bar Diagram of Content Analysis of Respondents' Overall Feedback



Code 1= Role of political leadership and strategic experts

Code 2= Role of strategic and geopolitical factors

Code 3= Role of normative factors

The bar diagram, as shown in Figure 4.2, represents that the content analysis of the people interviewed for this study shows that the role of political leadership and strategic experts (Code 1) appeared in 3 instances only in comparison to 52 repetitions of strategic factors (Code 2) and 12 repetitions of the role of normative factors behind the NFU policy of India (Code 3).

Furthermore, a content analysis of three important documents relating to the NFU policy of India revealed the following results: -

Table 4.1

Content Analysis of Selected Nuclear Documents

Sl No	Document	Frequency of repetitions Code 1	Frequency of repetitions Code 2	Frequency of repetitions Code 3
1.	Opening Remarks by Brajesh Mishra ⁷³	-	1 time	1 time

⁷³ See Appendix

2.	Draft Nuclear Doctrine 1999 ⁷⁴	1 time	27 times	9 times
3.	Official Nuclear Doctrine 2003 ⁷⁵	5 times	6 times	4 times

Code 1= Role of political leadership and strategic experts

Code 2= Role geopolitical and strategic factors

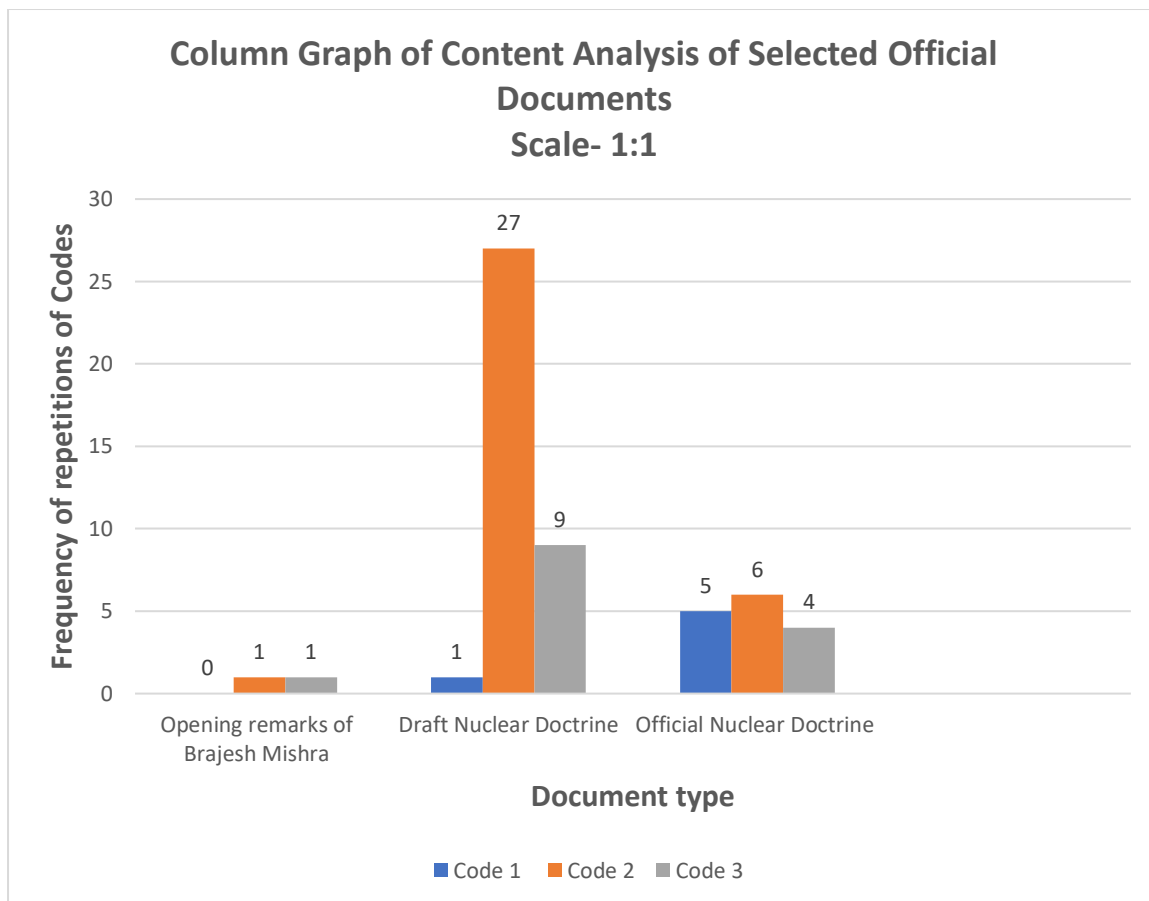
Code 3= Role of normative factors

Figure 4.3

Column Graph of Content Analysis of Selected Official Documents

⁷⁴ See Appendix

⁷⁵ See Appendix



Code 1= Role of political leadership and strategic experts

Code 2= Role geopolitical and strategic factors

Code 3= Role of normative factors

In the Figure 4.3 above, the column graph shows that all three variables matter in explaining the NFU policy of India. It also depicts the relative importance of Code 2 (role of strategic and geopolitical factors) and Code 3 (role of normative factors) apart from Code 1 (the role of political leadership and strategic experts). The analysis made in the Chapter makes it clear that our first assumption that *‘India’s NFU policy may be influenced by political leadership and strategic experts’*, though valid, is only partially true.

4.5 Summary

The Chapter highlighted the influences at the decision-making level behind the NFU policy of India. Several key personalities shaped the NFU policy of India as it stands today. Atal Bihari Vajpayee was a key political figure who influenced India's post-Pokhran II nuclear strategy. Vajpayee converted India's NFU policy into a well-documented policy and reality in India's nuclear posture. The statements he made after the tests shaped the structure of the DND. In his various interviews with foreign media and platforms, Vajpayee gave reassurance about the NFU policy of India and tried to win the confidence of the world community. He tried to give the impression that India is clear about how and when to use nuclear weapons and against whom. Most importantly, he prioritised comprehensive global nuclear disarmament and pledged to follow this path with other nuclear powers for a more peaceful world.

Various other political leaders and diplomats on different platforms repeated his statements. Furthermore, the official nuclear doctrine of 2003 also retained the spirit of the DND, including the NFU policy, with certain changes here and there.

In most interviews of the top decision-makers and bureaucrats taken before and after the adoption of nuclear doctrines, the issue of India's nuclear strategy emerged. These key decision-makers and top bureaucrats reiterated India's firm commitment to the NFU policy.

It also became clear from the Chapter that strategic experts had a vital role in framing or shaping the NFU policy of India. A section of strategic experts' writings on the NFU policy created a narrative that the NFU policy is best suited for India. For instance, K. Subrahmanyam, a strategic thinker, the head of IDSA, and the chief of the committee that formulated the DND played a crucial role in shaping the NFU policy of India. The Chapter brought to light how Subrahmanyam fiercely advocated the need for the NFU policy. Even after the formal inclusion of this policy in the DND and the official nuclear doctrine, he tried to dispel various concerns

about the NFU policy through his writings till his death. While he was not the only one who supported the NFU policy, he was the most influential among them. General K. Sundarji also shaped the early debates on the NFU policy of India. The features he highlighted in the ‘assumed nuclear doctrine’ of India acted as a precursor to the later nuclear doctrines of India.

The Chapter showed that political leaders and strategic experts played a crucial role in shaping India’s decision to adopt the NFU policy. However, the analysis made in the Chapter revealed that they are not the only actors that led India to adopt an NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. Another caveat is that the NFU policy of India should not be reduced to the ideological preferences and idiosyncrasies of individual political leaders and strategic experts. An analysis of the speech content, interviews, or write-ups reflects that some more prominent strategic reasons and normative factors also influenced them to go for the NFU policy. The following two Chapters will examine the other factors that might have led India to embrace the NFU policy.

CHAPTER 5

No First Use Policy of India: The Role of Strategic Factors

5.1. Introduction

This Chapter will examine how the strategic factors, geostrategic elements, and regional imperatives may have driven India's decision to adopt the NFU policy. The previous Chapter analysed how domestic factors like the role of political leaders and strategic experts were influential in shaping the NFU policy of India. It also becomes clear that these were not the only factors that led India to adopt the NFU policy. This Chapter, therefore, tries to look into the role of strategic factors in shaping the NFU policy of India. The strategic arguments about the NFU policy of India have come to the fore because of the scholarly works of the realist school of thought. This Chapter is not about the strategic factors influencing overall India's nuclear posture. Rather, it will limit its analysis to study the role of strategic factors on the NFU policy of India. Realism maintains that nuclear weapons are made to enhance security and deter nuclear attacks in a self-help world without a central authority. This theory asserts that nuclear weapons are not made for moral considerations but for strategic reasons for enhancing security. Put differently, a nation does not maintain a nuclear arsenal for some high moral goals and normative gains. From a realist point of view, the policy governing the use of nuclear weapons, as reflected in the nuclear doctrines, also flows from strategic considerations. For instance, during the Cold War, the nuclear posture and the doctrinal elements regarding the use of nuclear weapons by the two superpowers were governed by strategic factors. This logic applies in the post-Cold War period as well. For obvious reasons, Indian nuclear weapons are also not an exception. From this perspective, India made nuclear weapons to enhance its security and

preserve its territorial integrity and sovereignty. There must also be some strategic or practical reasons behind the NFU policy of India as well. If India's decision to go nuclear is strategic, then the corollary is that India's position on the use of nuclear weapons (viz NFU policy), as reflected in its nuclear doctrine, has also come from strategic considerations. This Chapter tries to explore and critically examine the relevance of these arguments.

5.2. The Strategic Logic of the NFU Policy in India's Nuclear Doctrine

The realist school maintains that states make nuclear weapons because, in an anarchical world, they provide security to a state and enhance its power. Nuclear weapons also deter nuclear attacks from other nuclear powers. In the realist theory, there is an inbuilt assumption that states are self-interested rational actors perennially concerned about their security. States tend to employ nuclear weapons as a medium to safeguard and promote their interests (Bell, 2015, p.92). Realist theory asserts that nuclear weapons are not made for moral considerations but for strategic reasons for enhancing security. Put differently, a nation does not maintain a nuclear arsenal for normative concerns. From a realist point of view, the policy governing the use of nuclear weapons, as reflected in the nuclear doctrines, also flows from strategic considerations. Thus, the realists see the NFU policy mainly as a strategic policy.

Before embarking on the strategic logic of the NFU policy enshrined in India's nuclear doctrine, it is pertinent to enquire whether India has a grand strategy of its own. A grand strategy means "a country's deployment of military, diplomatic, economic, technological, and cultural instruments in the service of security" (Bajpai, 2010, p.521). Several strategic thinkers argued that India does not have a grand strategy of its own. Some said that India does not have a tradition of thinking in strategic terms (Tanham, 1996) or that it cannot engage in strategic thinking (Karnad, 2000) or, at best, takes strategic decisions on an ad-hoc basis depending on the situation (Subrahmanyam 1997; Mehta, 2009). K. Subrahmanyam (1997) argued that India

as a state lacks a tradition of strategic thinking, and as corroborated by events of 1947, 1962, 1965, and 1971, its handling of threats can be seen as a post-facto reaction rather than a pre-emptive initiative (p.41). He argued that one of the fundamental flaws of India's national security management is "the absence of any structured decisionmaking" (Subrahmanyam, 1997, p.41). In contrast to China, parochial and personal interests gain more importance in India than national interests. (Subrahmanyam, 2009/2010, p. 109) However, some other scholarship [Basrur, 2001; Bajpai et al. (Eds.), 2014/2020; Bajpai, 2010; Miller & Sullivan de Estrada, 2018] contended that India does have a strategic culture. This study also assumes that India has an incipient strategic culture.

The realist perspective maintains that the answer to why India adopted the NFU policy lies in why India went nuclear. This is because the process of nuclearisation and its operationalisation are interlinked. The statements made by Atal Bihari Vajpayee after the Pokhran-II nuclear tests pointed to security as the main reason behind the tests (Vajpayee 1998a, 1998b, 2000a, 2000b). Vajpayee's letter to Bill Clinton also reflected security concerns as the cause of the tests⁷⁶. On the eve of the release of the draft doctrine, Brajesh Mishra, India's first national security adviser (NSA), also made some formal opening remarks. Mishra's remarks expound that the security environment and the bleak future of global disarmament heralded by the indefinite extension of the NPT compelled India to go nuclear. He categorically stated that India adopted:

a policy of minimum deterrence as the basic building block of our nuclear thinking.

Minimum but credible deterrence is the watchword of our nuclear doctrine. From this, flows the decision to adopt a no-first-use posture. We have therefore given

⁷⁶ For the full draft of the letter, see *The New York Times*, dated May 13, 1998. Retrieved October 2, 2020, from <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/13/world/nuclear-anxiety-indian-s-letter-to-clinton-on-the-nuclear-testing.html>

unconditional guarantees to States that do not have nuclear weapons, or are not aligned with nuclear weapon powers [emphasis added]. (MEA, 1999)⁷⁷

So, what appears from his statement is that India's decision to go for the NFU policy is a strategic choice, and it has emerged out of the policy of minimum credible deterrence. In a questionnaire response, a prominent academic and strategic expert commented that India's decision to adopt the NFU policy emerged from its 'strategic culture.'⁷⁸

Views of several strategic experts and policymakers reflect the strategic logic of the NFU policy of India. K. Subrahmanyam was not only an ardent advocate of the demand that India should make nuclear weapons, but he was also a key person behind the NFU policy adopted by India in its nuclear doctrine. He mostly gave pragmatic statements as the reasons behind this policy. However, that is understandable given his theoretical inclination toward realism, as highlighted in Chapter 4. Thus, it is axiomatic that his advocacy of the NFU policy was also influenced by his realist thinking and strategic calculations instead of normative concerns.

While some analysts said India went nuclear to enhance its international prestige, others denied this. For example, Jasjit Singh (2013a) was the convenor of the task force that set up the National Security Council (NSC) and a member of the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) during the period 1999-2001 that drew up the draft nuclear doctrine of India. He said categorically that despite the notion that nuclear weapons are symbols of power since Hiroshima, India does not want nuclear weapons to enhance prestige or as status symbols (Singh, Jasjit, 2013a, p.75). According to Jasjit Singh (2013a), the nuclear non-proliferation

⁷⁷ Retrieved January 31, 2020, from <https://www.mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?18915/opening+remarks+by+national+security+adviser+mr+brajesh+mishra+at+the+release+of+draft+indian+nuclear+doctrine->

⁷⁸ Questionnaire response on August 28, 2021.

regime sans disarmament, global strategic ambience, the burgeoning influence of nuclear China, and the nuclearization of Pakistan are some of the factors that explain the rationale of India's nuclear policy the way it is (p.86).

Menon (2018) wrote that India acquired nuclear weapons to avert nuclear threats and dangers, considering the role nuclear weapons play in an anarchic international system (p.159). However, the purpose that India's nuclear weapons served is different from what nuclear weapons meant for the US and the USSR during the cold war period or, for that matter, the purpose of Pakistani nuclear weapons in that Indian nuclear weapons are not intended to fix the military imbalance and conventional weakness or utilise battleground tactical benefits of nuclear weapons (Menon, 2018, p.159).

The Annual Report of the Ministry of Defence (2002-2003) also delineated the strategic rationale of the NFU policy of India in these words:

India's nuclear weapons capability is meant only for self-defence and seeks only to ensure that India's security, independence and integrity are not threatened in the future. India is not interested in a nuclear arms race. This is the rationale behind the two pillars of India's nuclear policy –minimum deterrence and no-first use. (p.10)

The two finest articulations of the strategic logic behind the NFU policy of India can be found in Menon (2018) and Rajagopalan (2019). Both believe it is in India's interest to continue adhering to the NFU policy. Former National Security Adviser of India, Menon (2018), explained some of the reasons behind the NFU policy of India. He pointed out that the answer to why India adopted an NFU policy lies in India's nuclear doctrine itself. India found itself in a unique set of circumstances. It is surrounded by two nuclear-armed hostile neighbours that fought wars against India. NPT regime also failed to address India's nuclear concerns. So, India decided to establish its nuclear status overtly. Realism maintains that a state must take

care of its security in an anarchic world. India's decision to go nuclear is guided by this realist logic (Menon, 2018, p.159). He noted that though the language used to define the rationale behind India's acquiring nuclear weapons sounds moralistic, India's choices are indeed based on some hardcore calculations of security imperatives and threat perceptions (Menon, 2018, p.183).

For Menon (2018), nuclear decision-making in India is a process that is 'strategically bold' and 'tactically cautious' (p.184). By the time India had tested its nuclear weapons, there was almost a global consensus that nuclear weapons are not war-fighting but political weapons. So, according to Menon, it is because of this that India decided to adopt an NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine (Menon, 2018, p.159). India aimed not to project its nuclear weapons to resolve conventional defence problems but to thwart nuclear threats, use, and blackmail from Pakistan and other states (Menon, 2018, p.164). The NFU policy of India has served its purpose. Since the time India went nuclear, it has not received credible nuclear threats nor faced blackmail from any state. Menon also analysed the prospects of alternatives to the NFU policy that India might have adopted and pointed out why they might not work. Thus, for Menon, the NFU policy of India is a strategic game plan. Elsewhere, Menon (2022) stressed the need for a global NFU policy. Here also, the reasons he provided for the necessity of a global NFU policy are informed by strategic logic.

Rajagopalan (2019) proffered realist explanations behind India's decision to embrace the NFU policy. He stated, "The central reason behind India's NFU was the recognition that nuclear weapons served only a very limited purpose, that of ensuring national survival."⁷⁹ Thus,

⁷⁹ Retrieved October 2, 2020, from <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/strategic-logic-no-first-use-nuclear-doctrine-54911/>

the only effectiveness of nuclear weapons as weapons of deterrent lies in the credible threat of retaliation (Rajagopalan, 2019).

Rajagopalan (2019) said the FU policy makes sense for countries like Pakistan and Israel because of their existential threat perceptions. Thus, only for countries facing existential crises from nuclear or conventional threats adopting the FU option would be a logical choice. For India, abandoning the NFU policy would be counter-productive because “the NFU policy is uniquely suited to India’s circumstances — a preponderant power in its neighbourhood that faces no existential threats” (Rajagopalan, 2019).⁸⁰ Rajagopalan (2022) wrote that all countries’ criteria and compulsions for adopting nuclear postures differ. An NFU posture is helpful for countries that primarily want to deter nuclear attacks from potential adversaries. However, if a state has to deal with conventionally superior military power or encounters an existential crisis, the first use posture suits it better.

Jasjit Singh (2013a) highlighted the strategic rationale behind the NFU policy of India. He claimed that India did not have much opportunity to use nuclear weapons against an enemy, given that there is no guarantee of destroying the enemy’s capability. India can meet ‘non-nuclear contingencies’ with its ‘credible’ conventional military forces. India acquired nuclear weapons just to avert nuclear threats and attacks (p. 88)

Gurmeet Kanwal (2000) also precisely stated that the FU policy is not a strategically good choice for India (p.203). In a questionnaire response, a prominent strategic expert highlighted the strategic logic of India’s NFU policy as follows:

⁸⁰ Retrieved October 2, 2020, from <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/strategic-logic-no-first-use-nuclear-doctrine-54911/>

*NFU was adopted for a simple reason: the calculation of the nature of nuclear weapons and the belief that a nuclear war was not winnable. There were two additional considerations. One, India needed to show that it was a responsible steward of nuclear weapons to reenter the nuclear mainstream and receive access to civilian technologies. Two, an arms race would be extremely costly. For these reasons, NFU was a necessity.*⁸¹

This response reflects the strategic dimension of India's NFU policy.

5.2.1. Geostrategic Conditions and Geopolitical Considerations of India's NFU Policy

The realist perspective also includes geostrategic and geopolitical considerations to account for the NFU policy of India. This part is an extension of the strategic logic of the NFU policy of India. K. Subrahmanyam (1997) argued that as India shares its boundary with nuclear-armed China and Pakistan, it is in a geographically vulnerable position (p.42). Jasjit Singh (2013b) commented that India adopted the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine to maintain strategic stability in Asia.

In a questionnaire response, a senior fellow of the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) said, *"The decision to follow NFU reflected India's unique experience in nuclear weaponisation and its national security compulsions."*⁸² A retired bureaucrat of the Government of India commented, *"It is consistent with India's tradition of geo-political engagements and its advocacy of peaceful coexistence."*⁸³

⁸¹ Questionnaire response on July 20, 2022.

⁸² Questionnaire response on July 19, 2022.

⁸³ Questionnaire response on August 09, 2022.

India faced an ignominious defeat in 1962 in the battle against China. Two years later, in 1962, China attained nuclear weapons. These circumstances caused great concerns among the Indian leaders. Some political parties like the Bharatiya Jana Sangh openly demanded that India start making nuclear weapons. Indian political leadership also started taking the nuclear issue seriously after this new development of nuclear weaponry procurement in neighbouring China. Initially, India sought nuclear protection from the superpowers but did not achieve the desired assurances. So, the nation came to realise that self-help is probably the best help in the world of international politics. Though on various international platforms, India flouted its non-alignment goals, commitment to global peace and non-violence, and abhorrence towards procurement of nuclear weapons, it also started exploring all possibilities towards attaining nuclear weapons.

India fought wars with China and Pakistan, and its border disputes with these countries are still lingering. A permanent solution to the border problem still looks like a distant dream. China already has an NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. India did not want to offend a country that already has an NFU clause regarding the use of nuclear weapons. The FU posture reflects the security strategy of the Cold War era between the two superpowers (Krepon, 2016). The Indian policymakers and the strategic experts had this observation in mind that the inclusion of the FU policy in its nuclear doctrine would have caused more animosity between India and China and recreated the ghosts of a Cold War-like situation. So, the NFU policy seemed to be a better choice for Indian policymakers and strategic experts to maintain the balance of power and deterrence in the South Asian region. As far as Pakistan is concerned, India's conventional military power is superior to the former. So, there was no necessity to declare an offensive FU nuclear weapons policy against Pakistan. A lieutenant General of the Indian army commented in this context that "*India's conventional capability at that time against Pakistan was far*

superior. China was never considered much of a threat given that she was more concerned about becoming an economic power.”⁸⁴

Thus, the civilian authorities in India preferred the NFU policy over the FU policy in its nuclear doctrine (Sagan, 2011). Explaining the reasons behind India’s NFU policy, a distinguished fellow of the ORF stated, “*Because it best served India’s national interest at the time.*”⁸⁵

The NFU policy perfectly serves the purpose of deterring the use of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons against India. Like any other nation, India, as a sovereign nation, also believes in its right to enhance its security. However, while doing so, it did not want to offset the balance and stability of the South Asian region. The NFU stance adopted by India aligns with this principle. India’s NFU policy has ensured stability in South Asia and lessened the chances of a massive arms race in the region (Rej, 2018). Ali Ahmed (2016) pointed out the utility of the NFU policy that it has projected India as a responsible nuclear weapon state, prevented a comprehensive nuclear arms race in South Asia, and somewhat balanced India’s position vis-à-vis China which is the first country to adopt the NFU norm.

India started taking its nuclear weapons programme seriously after the emerging threat perception from the Chinese nuclear tests. But as stated, China already has an NFU policy in place. So, at least in terms of declaratory policy, India did not seem to fear a pre-emptive nuclear attack from China. Gurmeet Kanwal (2000) also made a subtle observation that due to its present sound defensive capability, India does not need an FU policy against any Chinese

⁸⁴ Questionnaire response on July 06, 2022.

⁸⁵ Questionnaire response on July 19, 2022.

conventional military attack (p.202). Some of the responses to the questionnaire conducted for this study revealed that the NFU policy of China might also influence India's nuclear policy.

To some extent, the nuclear policies of a country match the rules of chess, which are influenced by the opponent's moves. So, it is not out of context to presume that the strategic postures of China and Pakistan also influence the NFU policy of India. If India does away with the NFU policy, it would also have implications for Pakistan's nuclear doctrines and posture. Narang (2018) noted that China might repeat India's stance, and Pakistan might vigorously engage in vertical proliferation (p.164).

The views of several respondents echoed the strategic logic of the NFU policy of India. For instance, an ex-army officer and strategic expert observed that against Pakistan, India has second strike capability and better conventional military strength, so the question of FU does not arise, and against China, it would be costly for India if it changes its NFU policy.⁸⁶ So, he claimed "*The NFU is for strategic reasons of balance of power best understood in the realist perspective and is best acknowledged as such, rather than for sentimental reasons as traditional thought etc.*"⁸⁷

Thus, the above respondent views strategic decisions as the rationale behind the NFU policy of India, not normative factors.

A former Personal Secretary to the Indian PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee noted in his response to the questionnaire framed for this study three explaining the rationale of India's NFU policy: (a) to reduce international criticism against India; (b) to keep open the path of getting funds from multilateral financial institutions and bilateral donors like Japan; (c) to

⁸⁶ Questionnaire response on August 26, 2021.

⁸⁷ Questionnaire response on August 26, 2021.

project an image of a responsible nuclear weapon state.⁸⁸ He claimed, “*NFU was therefore necessary to smoothen the passage towards de facto acceptance of India’s imperative and blunt the harsh anti-nuclear rhetoric.*”⁸⁹

A researcher from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) also noted, “*much of India’s long-term strategic calculus and decision-making regarding NFU is dependent upon its surrounding environment.*”⁹⁰ An academic and strategic expert said that apart from India’s effort to project itself as a responsible nuclear state, “*the strategic environment (especially Pakistani and Chinese nuclear weapons) played an important role.*”⁹¹

All the above observations of the respondents corroborate the role of the strategic and geostrategic factors in the decision behind the NFU policy of India. It is noteworthy that 13.5 percent of the respondents of this study have attributed it to strategic and geopolitical factors. Strategic and geopolitical factors were, thus, relatively more important factors attributed to adopting the NFU policy.

5.2.2. *Whether the NFU Policy of India is Influenced by the NFU Policy of China?*

Figure 5.1

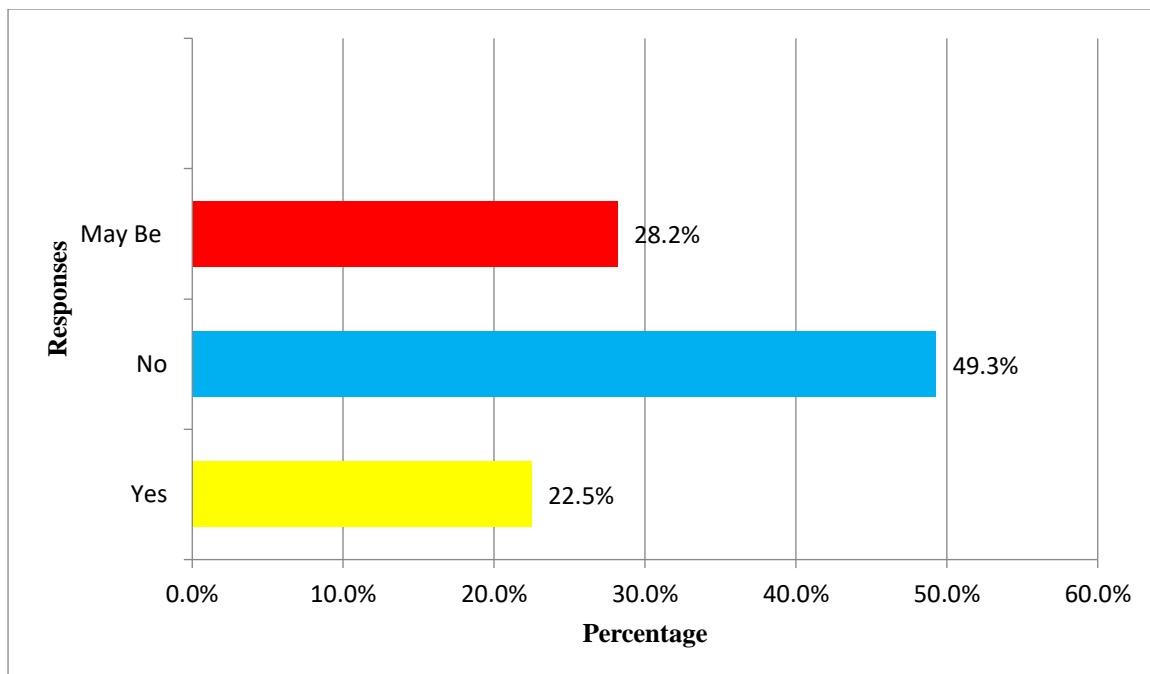
Whether the NFU Policy of India is Influenced by the NFU Policy of China?

⁸⁸ Questionnaire response on August 22, 2021.

⁸⁹ Questionnaire response on August 22, 2021.

⁹⁰ Questionnaire response on August 30, 2021.

⁹¹ Questionnaire response on February 27, 2022.



When the respondents were asked whether the NFU policy of India is also influenced by the NFU policy of China, 49.3 percent answered ‘no’. Only 22.5 percent think that the NFU policy of China influences it. Again, 28.2 percent answered with the uncertainty that it might be. Thus, it becomes clear from the respondents’ view that the China factor is not as important as it is believed to be in the NFU policy of India. Nevertheless, some respondents were vocal about the influence of the Chinese NFU policy on India’s decision to adopt the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. For example, a lieutenant General of the Indian army categorically stated that “India had no option given China’s policy.”⁹²

5.2.3. *NFU Policy as a Strategic and Diplomatic Means to Lessen the Concerns of the International Community*

⁹² Questionnaire response on July 05, 2022.

India faced criticism from various quarters after its nuclear test in 1974 that Indira Gandhi projected as 'peaceful nuclear tests'. Probably due to mounting criticism, Indira Gandhi did not order any further tests during her regime. After the nuclear tests of 1998, India tried to promote its identity as a country that is not interested in offensive war-mongering and nuclear adventurism. To that end, India issued an NFU policy to maintain the transparency of its nuclear ambitions. It was highlighted that India had built nuclear weapons for self-defence, not as weapons of war or threat and blackmail. Had India adopted the FU policy, it would not only have escalated tensions in South Asia and the South-East Asian region but also further deteriorated India's international image. The FU policy on India's part would have garnered more global criticism and led India's disarmament initiatives into vain, apart from being economically unsustainable (Kanwal, 2000, p.203).

Questionnaire responses corroborate India's attempt to use the NFU policy to shield international criticisms. A Scottish journalist and author argued, "*Given international opprobrium about the nuclear tests, India was keen to show that its acquisition of nuclear weapons was purely defensive.*"⁹³ An international nuclear disarmament activist also commented that the NFU policy was adopted to ward off international criticism.⁹⁴

A journalist and distinguished fellow at the ORF commented that the NFU policy was adopted by India "*To mute criticism of India's nuclear tests*".⁹⁵ A lieutenant general of the Indian Army also stated that the reason behind the adoption of the NFU policy by India was "*to avoid international censure and show that India is a responsible nuclear power.*"⁹⁶ A

⁹³ Questionnaire response on February 17, 2022

⁹⁴ Questionnaire response on June 16, 2022.

⁹⁵ Questionnaire response on July 17, 2022.

⁹⁶ Questionnaire response on July 17, 2022.

senior research associate of the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Strategic Analysis (MPIDSA) stated that the NFU policy of India was “*a policy to send an impression that Nuclear India does not favour aggression or coercion. It was a great global public opinion making exercise.*”⁹⁷ A strategic expert argued, “*India also adopted the NFU to mainstream itself into the global nuclear order and (sic) to acceptance for its nuclear weapons program.*”⁹⁸ A Vice President of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) critically stated in a questionnaire response:

*We are not living in the 1980s, and NFU can no longer be regarded as a normatively or legally useful step towards disarmament and any form of national or global security. NFU is essentially a PR (public relations) policy that encourages, allows and for some governments to legitimise nuclear weapons manufacture, deployment and use.*⁹⁹

There has always been pressure on India to sign NPT and, after that, CTBT. Furthermore, until the 1998 nuclear tests, the countries like the US and Canada tried to coerce India to give up its nuclearisation for defence purposes. So, by adhering to the NFU policy, India showed its goodwill to the cause of global nuclear disarmament even though it is not a signatory of NPT and CTBT. The NFU policy as a nuclear policy reflects nuclear restraint. Theoretically speaking, this element of restraint is somewhat missing in the case of the FU policy. Because of this inherent element of restraint, Malygina et al. (2017) suggested that the US and Russia should also go for a global NFU policy to reduce nuclear instability. In a similar vein, Major General Dipankar Banerjee (Retd) (2010) argued that doctrinal transparency and

⁹⁷ Questionnaire response on May 15, 2022.

⁹⁸ Questionnaire response on April 01, 2022.

⁹⁹ Questionnaire response on July 21, 2022.

the NFU policy could be a measure for nuclear confidence-building in Asia among India, Pakistan, and China.

5.2.4. *NFU Policy as a Strategic Means to Avoid Sanctions*

India's decision to adopt the NFU policy can also be influenced by its attempt to avoid international sanctions. India adopted a new economic policy in the early 1990s. So, any international sanctions against India¹⁰⁰ would have adversely affected its economic take-off. Probably, Indian leadership was aware of the ripples that nuclear tests of India would create in world politics. They hoped that if it adopted an NFU policy, the international community would change its critical stance toward India and remove sanctions against it. India did not want to transform itself into a 'pariah' state. So, the realist perspective tends to view the NFU policy as a rational choice adopted by India. A retired Brigadier of the Indian army and visiting fellow of ORF made an astute observation in this context, "*We were facing strong sanctions at the time of declaring ourselves a nuclear weapon armed state and declaration of NFU made us look good internationally and also helped mitigate the adverse opinions we confronted.*"¹⁰¹

5.2.5. *NFU and Deterrence*

The realists would say that the NFU policy flows out of the concept of deterrence. K. Subrahmanyam noted that the NFU policy subscribes to the doctrine of deterrence (Halperin et al., 2009, p.32). In an interview with *India Today*, Vajpayee was asked about the possibility of a nuclear war with Pakistan against the backdrop of the mounting cross-border terrorism and whether he would press the nuclear button. Vajpayee wittily answered, "The only button I will

¹⁰⁰ Sanctions imposed on India did not have much adverse impact on the Indian economy as various studies and commentaries have shown.

¹⁰¹ Questionnaire response on July 22, 2022.

press is of an electronic voting machine! It is madness even to contemplate nuclear war. Our nuclear weapons are meant to be a deterrent” (Purie & Chawla, 2004)¹⁰². A retired Lieutenant General of the Indian army and Professor Emeritus of Rashtriya Raksha University commented, “*NFU policy for that matter any policy related to nuclear weapons is rooted in deterrence, if that be so than NFU is likely to be interpreted by each nation as per its geopolitical vulnerabilities and national interests.*”¹⁰³ For successful nuclear deterrence, a country has to be confident enough in its nuclear arsenals that it is not necessary to attack first. If that fails, a counterattack would be launched to retaliate and prevent further damages. The nuclear deterrence strategy can be offensive and defensive (Singh, Jasjit, 2001). India’s official nuclear doctrine reveals that India adheres to a minimalistic conception of nuclear deterrence or defensive nuclear deterrence. Various strategic experts have echoed this. For instance, a directing staff of the Indian army commented:

*Nuclear deterrence is achieved by convincing the adversary that an unacceptable cost will be paid for nuclear adventurism. The race is therefore controllable by both parties. Lesson from the Cold war demonstrated the futility and prohibitive cost of nuclear arms race.*¹⁰⁴

The strategic logic of the NFU policy of India can also be explained with the help of the concept of ‘nuclear minimalism’ developed by Rajesh Basrur (2001). Nuclear minimalism believes that nuclear weapons have limited utility, nuclear weapons need to be perceived from

¹⁰² Retrieved September 20, 2020, from <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/cover-story/story/20040112-pm-ab-vajpayee-speaks-with-editor-prabhu-chawla-aroon-purie-790743-2004-01-12>

¹⁰³ Questionnaire response on August 03, 2022.

¹⁰⁴ Questionnaire response on July 07, 2022.

the point of political utility, and restraint behaviour should be exhibited in enhancing and reducing nuclear arsenals (Basrur, 2001, p.184).

Rajesh Basrur observed that the Indian concept of minimum nuclear deterrence adheres to these features: the belief that India does not need large quantities of nuclear weapons, rejection of nuclear balances, and the futility of keeping nuclear weapons on a high alert mode (cited in Kirk, 2020, p. 288). It can be extrapolated that nuclear minimalism led India to go for the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine.

Thus, there seems to be conviction among a section of Indian strategic experts, foreign policy analysts, and nuclear scientists that India has already attained the minimum requirements for deterrence. For instance, Sikri (2009) said that this belief in attaining nuclear sufficiency might explain India's commitment to the NFU policy and maintenance of self-imposed moratorium on future nuclear tests (p.280). Mahesh Shankar and T. V. Paul (2016) pointed out that India's nuclear doctrine contains a mixture of normative and instrumental logic. Normative logic defines India's policy of nuclear restraint and its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and global nuclear disarmament. However, it seems from their argument that the NFU policy flows more out of an instrumental logic of minimum deterrence posture.

The NFU policy was an option India could strategically resort to. Shakti Sinha (2020) observed that the NFU policy was adopted to “demonstrate that India's interest was *deterrence* [emphasis added], not using nuclear weapons as instruments of offence or coercion” (p.107). However, the concept of minimum deterrence is a relative one. As Ajit Kumar Panja, the former Minister of State for External Affairs, rightly said in response to a query asked by Sushil Kumar Shinde on India's Nuclear Doctrine, “India's minimum deterrent is not a fixed quantification,

it is a policy approach dictated and determined in the context of our security environment.”¹⁰⁵ Some nuclear states or security blocs believe that the FU policy increases deterrence (NATO, US, Pakistan, and others), while other nuclear powers like China and India adhere to this belief that the NFU is a more effective policy of nuclear deterrence. Hence, the latter have proclaimed an NFU policy. The inclusion of the NFU policy provides a sense of assurance or confidence in the opponent that unless it attacks first, the concerned state will not launch a nuclear attack first. Thus, the NFU policy deters nuclear attacks, and it acts as a deterrent principle. Menon (2018) rightly observed that while the first strike is tantamount to aggression, the NFU policy can be equated with deterrence (p.161).

The strategic effects of nuclear deterrence make it imperative for leaders to behave cautiously (Forsyth Jr. et al., 2016). The NFU policy could be an offshoot of this cautious behaviour of a nuclear-armed India.

5.2.6. NFU in the Light of Nuclear Weapons as Political Weapons

The Indian political leadership and strategic experts stressed that nuclear weapons are political weapons, not weapons of war. Existing literature reveals that there seems to be almost a consensus on this. Gurmeet Kanwal (2000) claimed that nuclear weapons are globally perceived as political weapons, not as useable weapons of war (p.201). Nuclear weapons are unusable in a war with another nuclear weapon state in that it would result in mutually assured destruction (MAD). Jasjit Singh (2001) also noted that no political reasons could be found that would necessitate India to go for the FU policy or issue nuclear threats to any country (p.147).

¹⁰⁵ Retrieved July 20, 2019, from https://www.mea.gov.in/lok-sabha.htm?dtl/11894/Q_4987__Indias_Stand_on_Nuclear_Doctrine

This claim that nuclear weapons are political weapons is also consistent in India's nuclear doctrine (Tellis, 2001, p.261).

So, it seems to be a rational decision on the part of the Indian 'strategic enclave' that there is no point in increasing tension in the region by declaring a first use policy of unusable nuclear weapons. A former Deputy Secretary of the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) argued, "*Nuclear weapons are for deterrence. Not for war-fighting. They serve a political purpose. NFU also encourages nuclear disarmament. NFU serves India's purpose. That is why India adopted NFU*"¹⁰⁶. An emerging nuclear security expert commented:

*I think much of the intellectual origins of India's NFU policy can be located in its understanding of nuclear strategy during the Cold War. The Indian state had imbibed deep lessons from the Cold War nuclear politics, fundamental to which was the dismal failure of nuclear weapons as instruments of war. In fact, this idea was so deep seated both at the level of key decision-makers and the institutions (MERA and the armed forces) that no other strategic options were even debated. Of course, NFU also helped India's image as a responsible nuclear power. But it was an effect not the cause of the NFU policy.*¹⁰⁷

By now, it has become clear that a nuclear first use can never guarantee that there would not be a retaliatory attack from the opponent. So Krepon (2017) posed a valid question "What use is first use if it cannot prevent subsequent use?"¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Questionnaire response on September 04, 2021.

¹⁰⁷ Questionnaire response on March 28, 2022.

¹⁰⁸ Retrieved August 02, 2021, from <https://www.armscontrolwonk.com/archive/1204482/no-first-use/>

5.2.7. *To Avoid Confrontations, Rivalry, and Arms Race in the South Asian Region and to Ward Off the Extra Economic Burden*

The realist school also views the NFU policy as a strategy to avoid an arms race. With the help of insights from this perspective, it has been argued that India also adopted an NFU policy to ward off an arms race with its nuclear neighbours (Sethi, 1999). The FU policy has more potential to trigger an arms race than the NFU policy. So, Sethi dismissed those criticisms, claiming that India's draft nuclear doctrine and the NFU policy may create an ambience for an arms race in the South Asian region (Sethi, 1999). If India throws away the NFU policy, the nuclear danger will rise in South Asia because it will increase the possibility of first strikes (Ai, 2018).

Scholars also tend to see the NFU policy of India as a realistic or pragmatic decision with an economic advantage. For example, Kirk (2020) observed that considering India's finite economic resources, the NFU policy was a pragmatic step taken by India to avoid the recreation of Cold War era nuclearization pursued by the US and the USSR (p.289).

What flows out from the above statement is that India took this 'pragmatic policy' for two reasons: to avoid extra burden on its defence budget and, second, to stay away from the mad arms race of the Cold War period between the two superpowers. An analysis of the questionnaire survey conducted for this study also conveys a similar message that it is a pragmatic stance and a rational calculation by India.

A former Air Chief Marshall of India claimed:

Nuclear weapons are for deterring a full-fledged conflict with another such power. Use of nuclear weapons by any national leadership would perhaps be for its own survival if deterrence fails. Only an irrational leadership would use nuclear weapons, a conflict

*that truly cannot be won. Hence NFU is the relevant choice for all nuclear-weapon states.*¹⁰⁹

5.2.8. *FU is a Potentially Riskier Choice than NFU*

Scholars argued that the FU policy of nuclear weapons is potentially riskier than the NFU norm. For an effective FU policy, a nuclear weapon state has to maintain its armoury in hair-trigger alerts. It calls for better surveillance and early warning systems. The accuracy of the early warning systems is also not above question. In addition, it also “requires quick political decision-making and decentralisation of control of nuclear weapons” (Kanwal, 2000, p.203). These increase the risk factor of the FU policy. All these strategic factors must have guided the policymakers and strategic thinkers to go for the NFU policy.

Douglas and Doyle (2014) stated that conventional superiority had given India a relative advantage in thwarting conventional attacks launched by Pakistan, whereas a more powerful China does not seem to launch any conventional attack against India. The NFU is thus a conscious policy for India against these two situations. Furthermore, as Krepon (2016) noted, “[t]here’s no compelling evidence that the threat of first use has helped to deter war.”¹¹⁰ Furthermore, the FU postures could not check the occurrence of wars between the Soviet Union and the US and India and Pakistan (Krepon, 2016).

Thus, the FU posture posits an element of direct threat, which an NFU policy has carefully omitted. Even countries with a clear FU policy in their nuclear doctrines and posture are not likely to implement the FU policy in practice. Thus, the FU seems to be a mere

¹⁰⁹ Questionnaire response on February 09, 2022.

¹¹⁰ Retrieved August 10, 2021, from <https://www.armscontrolwonk.com/archive/1201722/not-just-yet-for-no-first-use/>

declaratory policy meant to induce an element of threat. An NFU policy also has a higher nuclear threshold than a FU policy (Ghosal, 2016, p.165).

The popular belief about Pakistan's nuclear policy of the FU is that it is perilous for the South Asian region. But it has already been indicated in Chapter 3 that some thinkers like Rajesh Rajagopalan (2005) believe that the danger of Pakistan's FU policy is somewhat exaggerated. Hypothetically speaking, even though Pakistan has the FU policy, it would be used only as a last resort (Rajagopalan, 2005; Rajagopalan & Mishra, 2014). Pakistan is not likely to exercise the FU policy of nuclear weapons in practice, given the fact that there is 100 percent certainty that India would retaliate in a massive way that may be disastrous towards Pakistan.

5.3. Examining the Robustness of the Strategic Logic of the NFU Policy of India

As stated in Chapter 1, a questionnaire¹¹¹ was framed adopting selective purposive and random snowball sampling to analyse experts' views on India's NFU policy. The respondent list includes strategic experts, International Relations and foreign policy analysts, academics, bureaucrats, ambassadors, military veterans, and journalists. As many as 52 respondents answered the semi-structured questionnaire.

The last question of the questionnaire was about the respondent's overall viewpoint on why India adopted the NFU policy of India. An overview of the responses is depicted hereunder: -

5.3.1. Content Analysis of the Respondent's Overall Feedback

¹¹¹ The detailed list of the questionnaire is included in the appendix.

That said, it must be admitted that among the determinants of the NFU policy of India, the respondent's overall feedback stressed them to be the most important ones, as shown in the table below: -

Table 5.1

Content Analysis of the Respondent's Overall Feedback

Sl No.	Respondents	Frequency of repetitions of Code 1	Frequency of repetitions of Code 2	Frequency of repetitions of Code 3
1.	Respondent 1	-	3	-
2.	Respondent 2	-	1	1
3.	Respondent 3	-	5	-
4.	Respondent 4	-	3	-
5.	Respondent 5	-	8	-
6.	Respondent 6	-	1	-
7.	Respondent 7	-	-	-
8.	Respondent 8	-	1	-
9.	Respondent 9	-	-	-
10.	Respondent 10	-	1	-

11.	Respondent 11	-	3	-
12.	Respondent 12	-	-	1
13.	Respondent 13	-	1	-
14.	Respondent 14	-	-	-
15.	Respondent 15	-	1	1
16.	Respondent 16	-	1	-
17.	Respondent 17	-	1	-
18.	Respondent 18	-	3	-
19.	Respondent 19	-	1	1
20.	Respondent 20	-	2	1
21.	Respondent 21	-	-	-
22.	Respondent 22	-	-	-
23.	Respondent 23	1	1	1
24.	Respondent 24	-	3	-
25.	Respondent 25	-	1	1
26.	Respondent 26	-	-	-
27.	Respondent 27		1	1

28.	Respondent 28	-	-	-
29.	Respondent 29	-	-	-
30.	Respondent 30	-	2	2
31.	Respondent 31	2	1	1
32.	Respondent 32	-	1	-
33.	Respondent 33	-	-	-
34.	Respondent 34	-	2	-
35.	Respondent 35	-	2	-
36.	Respondent 36	-	-	-
37.	Respondent 37	-	-	-
38.	Respondent 38	-	1	2
39.	Respondent 39	-	1	-
40.	Respondent 40	-	1	1
41.	Respondent 41	-	-	-
42.	Respondent 42	-	1	-
43.	Respondent 43	-	1	-
44.	Respondent 44	-	3	1
45.	Respondent 45	-	-	-

46.	Respondent 46	-	3	-
47.	Respondent 47	-	1	1
48.	Respondent 48	-	2	1
49.	Respondent 49	-	2	-
50.	Respondent 50		3	2
51.	Respondent 51	1	2	
52.	Respondent 52	-	1	1
Total		4 times	72 times	19 times

Code 1= Role of political leadership and strategic experts

Code 2= Role of strategic and geopolitical factors

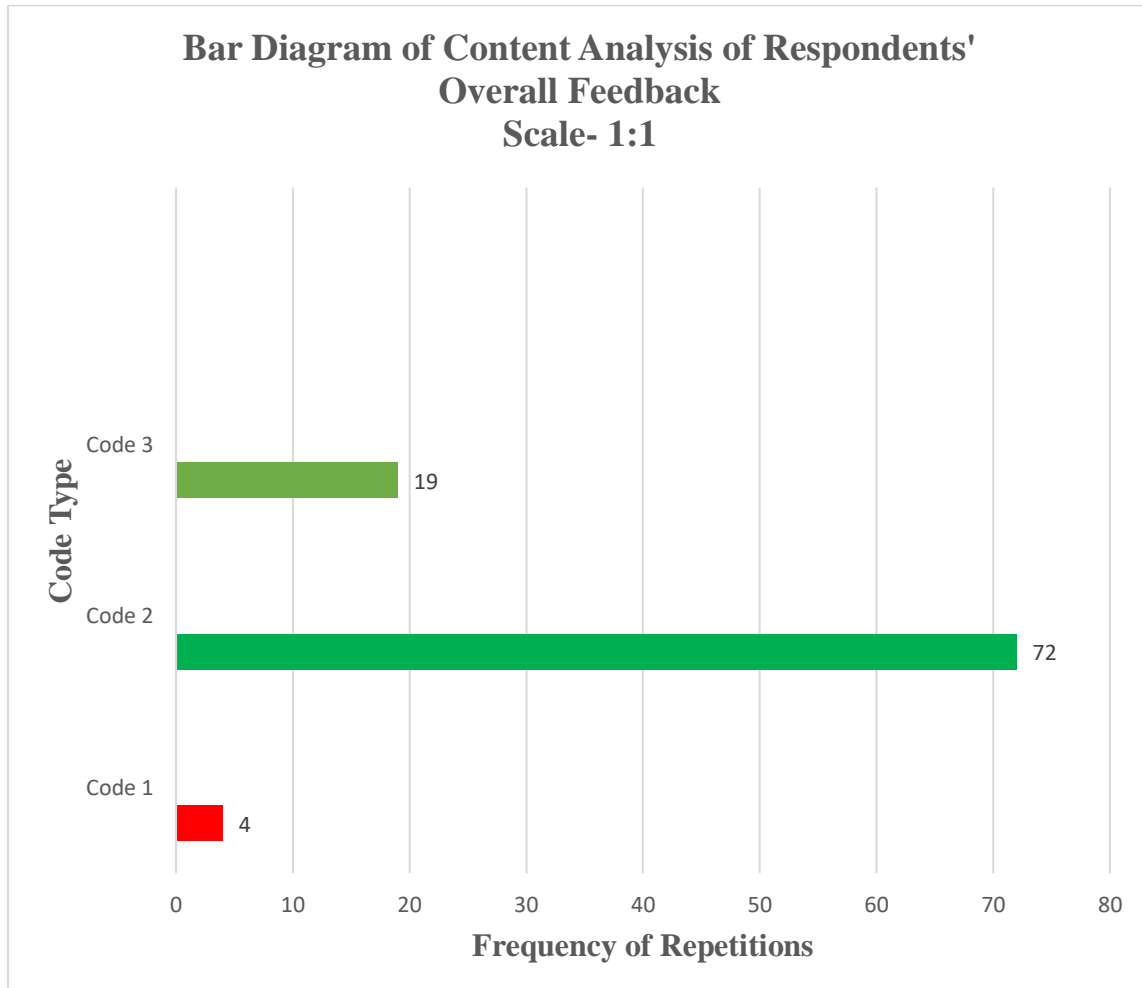
Code 3= Role of normative factors

In this section, content analysis has been adopted to study the impact of the factors on India's decision to adopt an NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. The codes have been designed based on the three central assumptions of the dissertation. The above conceptual content analysis of the overall feedback of the respondents reveals that they have signified Code 2, viz. *strategic factors*, as the most crucial factors behind the NFU policy of India. Code 2 has as many as 52 repetitions. The respondents also listed Code 3, i.e., *the role of normative factors*,

as another factor behind the NFU policy of India. Code 3 appeared in 12 instances. On the other hand, Code 1, i.e., *the role of political leadership and strategic experts* in 3 instances.

Figure 5.2

Bar Diagram of Content Analysis of Respondents' Overall Feedback



Code 1= Role of political leadership and strategic experts

Code 2= Role of strategic and geopolitical factors

Code 3= Role of normative factors

5.3.2. Content Analysis of Selected Nuclear Documents

A content analysis of three important official nuclear documents showed the following results.

Table 5.2

Content Analysis of Selected Nuclear Documents

SI No	Document	Frequency of repetitions Code 1	Frequency of repetitions Code 2	Frequency of repetitions Code 3
1.	Opening Remarks by Brajesh Mishra ¹¹²	-	1 time	1 time
2.	Draft Nuclear Doctrine 1999 ¹¹³	1 time	27 times	9 times
3.	Official Nuclear	5 times	6 times	4 times

¹¹² See Appendix

¹¹³ See Appendix

	Doctrine 2003 ¹¹⁴			
	Total	6 times	35 times	14 times

Code 1= Role of political leadership and strategic experts

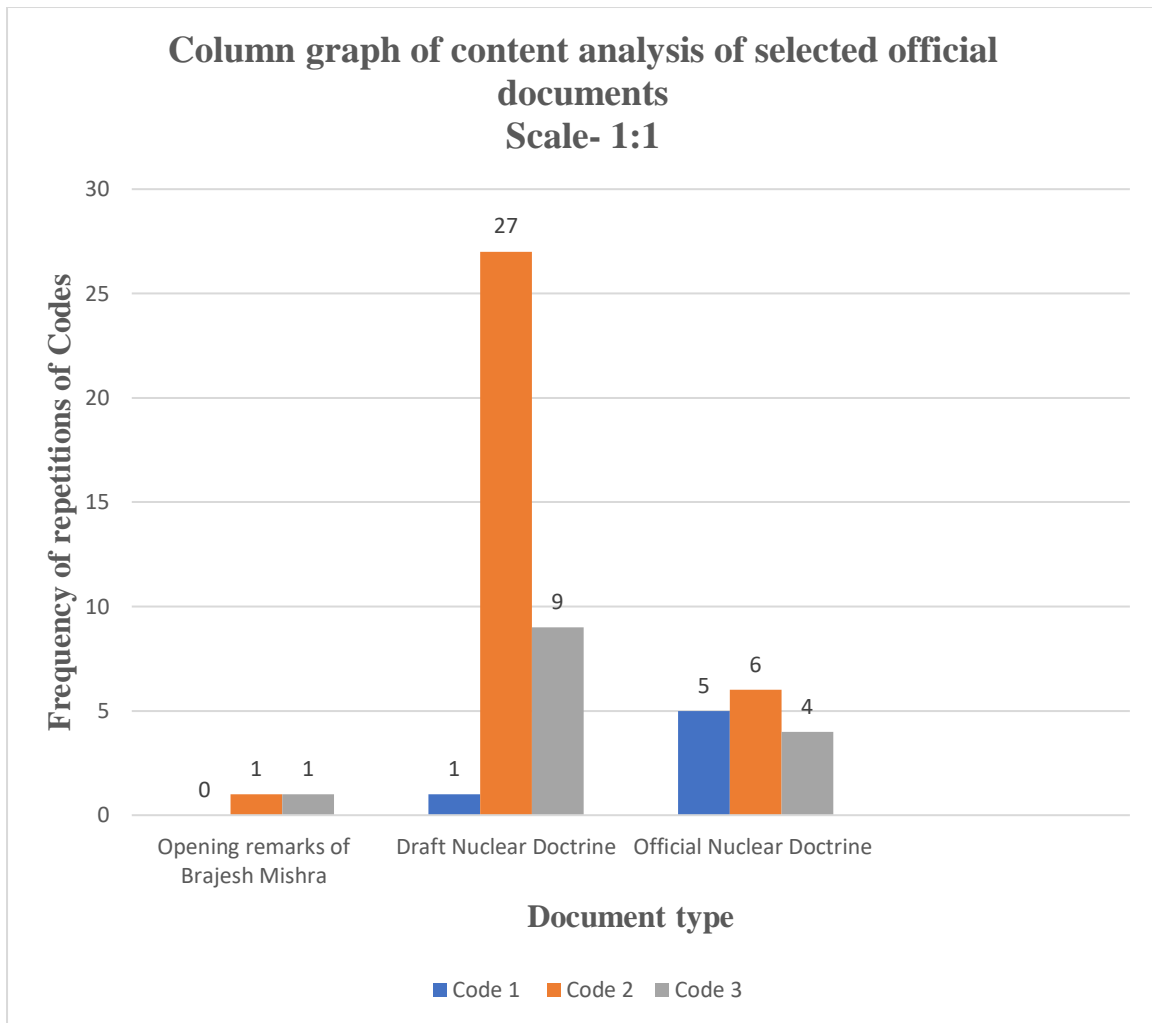
Code 2= Role geopolitical and strategic factors

Code 3= Role of normative factors

Figure 5.3

Column Graph of Content Analysis of Selected Official Documents

¹¹⁴ See Appendix



Code 1= Role of political leadership and strategic experts

Code 2= Role geopolitical and strategic factors

Code 3= Role of normative factors

The above column graph shows that the opening remarks made by Brajesh Mishra on the eve of the release of the draft nuclear doctrine of India mention Code 1 and Code 3 once each. At the same time, the draft nuclear doctrine mentions Code 1 once, Code 2 for 27 times, and Code 3 for nine times. The official Nuclear Doctrine of India pointed out Code 1 for five times, Code 2 for six times, and Code 3 for four times. A comparison of these three documents

reflects that Code 2 has been given more cumulative importance, followed by Code 2 and Code 1. It also throws light that the decision to adopt the NFU policy in India's nuclear doctrine can be viewed as a result cumulative effect of all the factors stated in Codes 1, 2, and 3. Thus, the results of the content analysis reflect the relative importance of the second assumption of the thesis that *India's NFU policy may be influenced by strategic factors*.

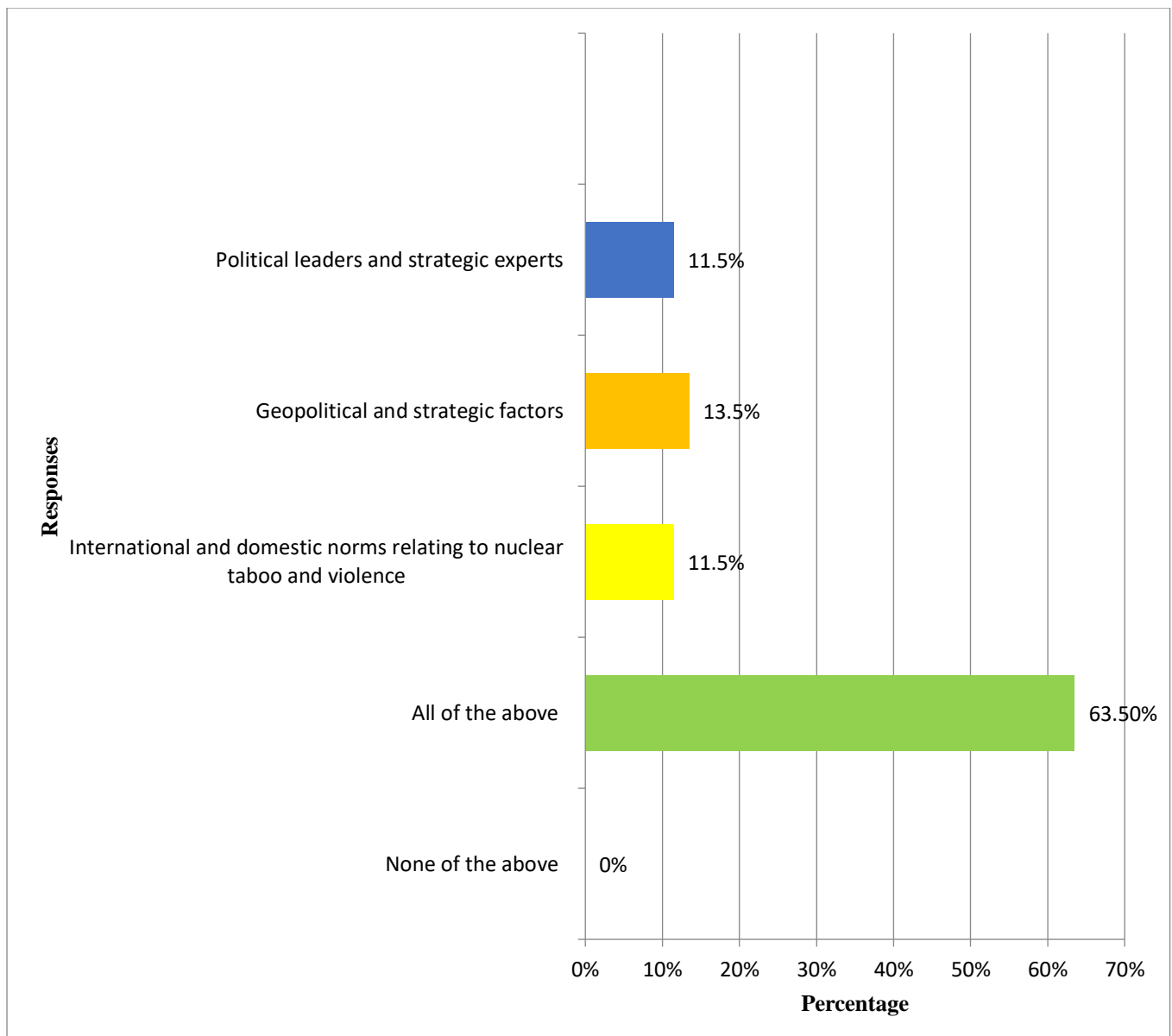
5.4. Why is Strategic Logic not Enough to Explain the NFU Policy of India?

The following questionnaire responses reveal that strategic logic, despite being a predominant factor behind India's NFU policy, is not enough to explain India's decision to adopt this policy. Let us look at the responses to the question given below: -

- i. *India adopted a No First Use (NFU) Policy in its draft nuclear doctrine of 1999 and the official nuclear doctrine of 2003. Which of the following factor/factors is/are responsible for this decision?*

Figure 5.4

Probable Factors Responsible for the NFU Policy of India



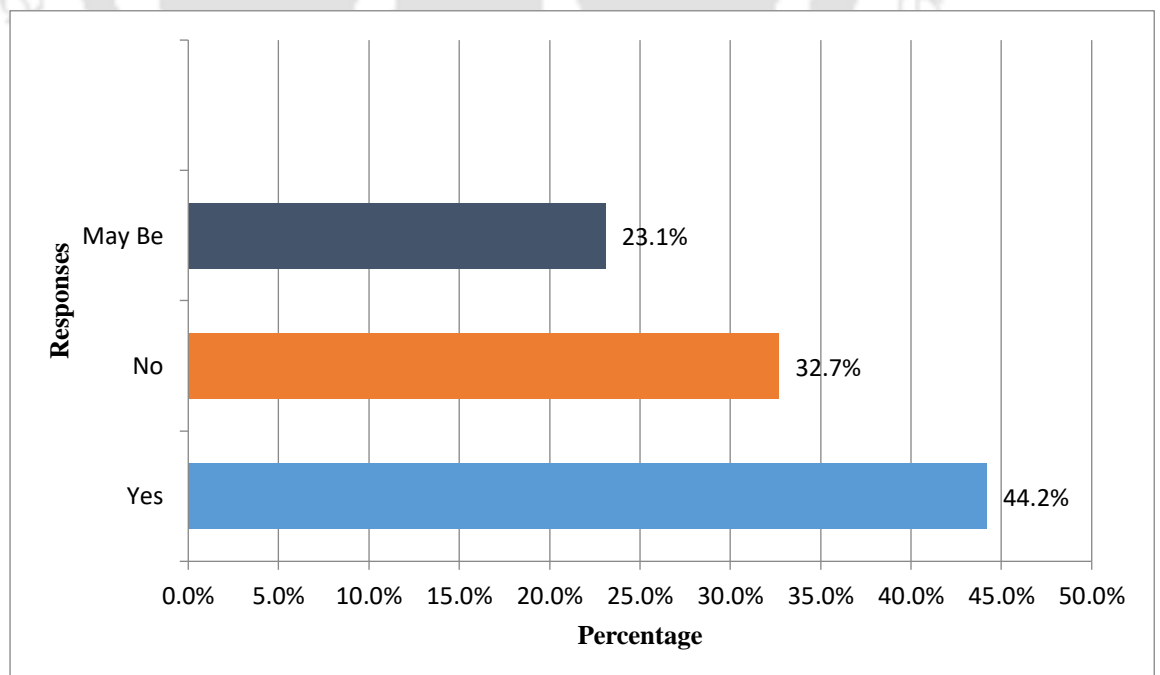
This is the central question of the questionnaire. The above figure shows that 11.5 percent of the respondents said that political leadership and strategic experts were responsible for the NFU policy of India. 13.5 percent of respondents mentioned that the geopolitical and strategic factors were mainly responsible for the NFU policy of India. Another 11.5 percent of the respondents pointed to international and domestic norms relating to nuclear taboos and violence as the sole factor behind the NFU policy of India. However, 63.5 percent of

respondents opined that all of the above factors were responsible for the NFU policy adopted by India in its nuclear doctrine. This response establishes the fact that the NFU policy of India is predominantly the result of the influence of a number of factors. It means that along with the other factors, international and domestic norms relating to nuclear taboos and violence also have a role in the inclusion of the NFU norm. The results also reveal another astute fact that the strategic factors, though important, are not the only factors behind the NFU policy of India. The views of critics of the NFU policy also make it imperative to look at the other determinants of the NFU policy apart from its strategic considerations.

- ii. *Whether the NFU policy could be seen as a norm against violence of first use of nuclear weapons?*

Figure 5.5

NFU as a Norm Against Violence of First Use of Nuclear Weapons

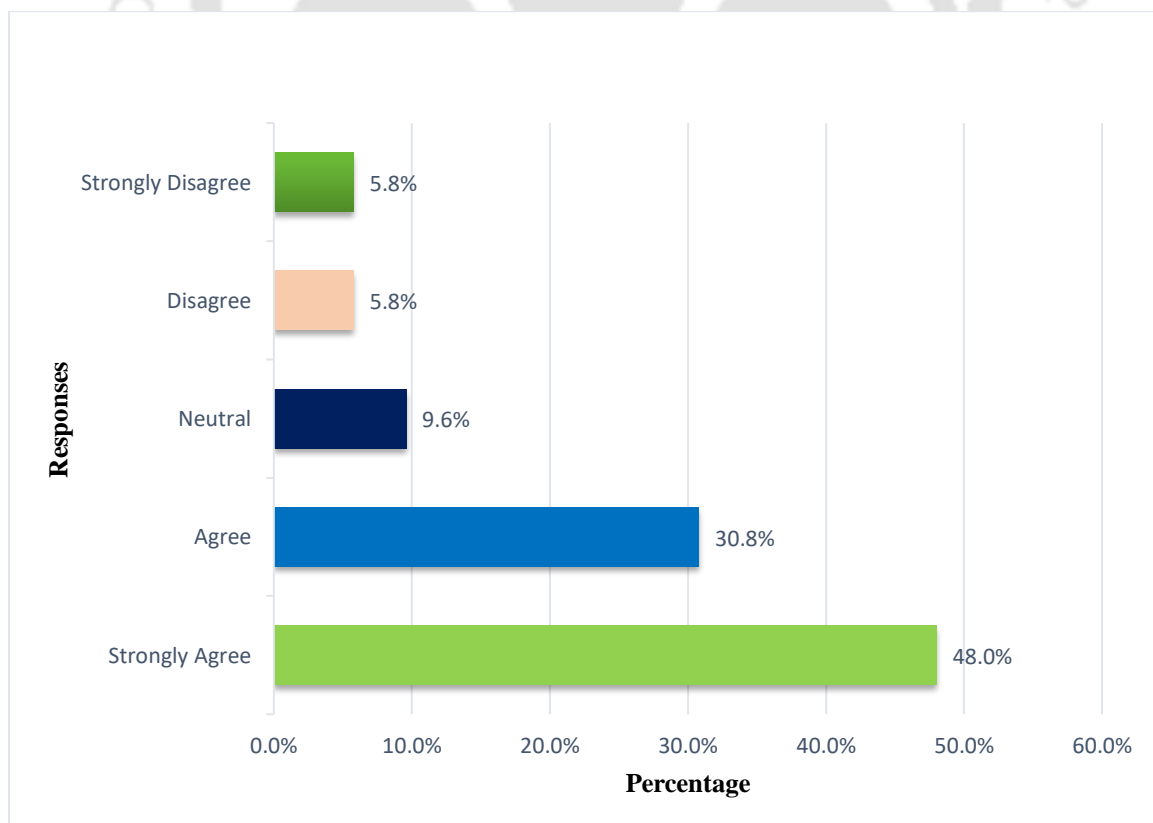


The above figure shows that 44.2 percent of respondents claimed that they see the NFU policy of India as a norm against violence. On the other hand, 32.7 percent of them refuted this claim. 23.1 percent of the respondents answered with an uncertainty that it might be a norm against violence. The responses reveal that strategic argument alone cannot explain the NFU policy of India. This strengthens our third hypothesis that *India's NFU policy may be influenced by normative factors and norms against the violence of the first use of nuclear weapons.*

iii. *Should all nuclear weapon states adopt the NFU Policy to maintain nuclear stability and restraint?*

Figure 5.6

Should all Nuclear Weapon States Adopt the NFU Policy to Maintain Nuclear Stability and Restraint?



As shown in the above figure, 48 percent of the respondents strongly agree that all nuclear-weapon states adopt the NFU policy to maintain nuclear stability and restraint. 30.8 percent agree with this statement. 9.6 percent maintained neutrality. 5.8 percent disagree with this, and another 5.8 percent mentioned that they strongly disagree with this statement.

iv. *Whether the NFU policy could be the first step toward global nuclear disarmament?*

Figure 5.7

NFU as the First Step toward Global Nuclear Disarmament

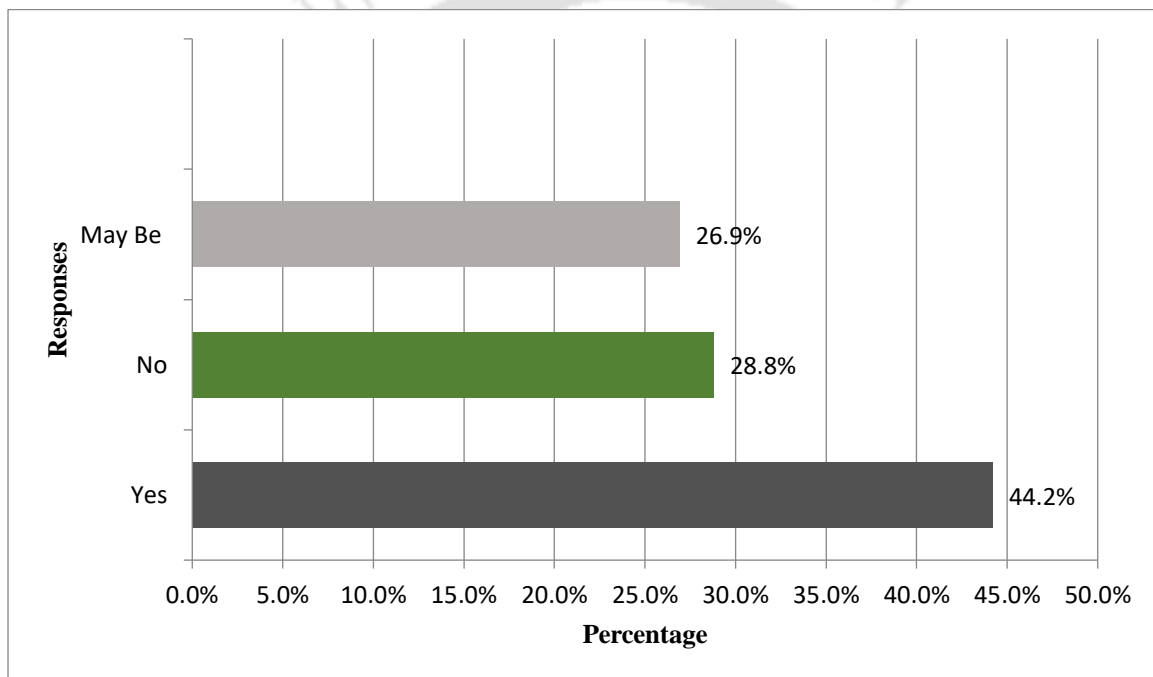


Figure 5.7 shows that 44.2 percent of the respondents believe that the NFU policy could be the first step toward global nuclear disarmament. 28.8 percent denied this. 26.9 percent stated ambiguously that it might be. Nevertheless, it reflects a good possibility that the NFU policy could usher the path toward global nuclear disarmament.

v. *Should India Retain its NFU Policy in its Nuclear Doctrine?*

Some experts have argued that abandoning the NFU policy may adversely affect India's strategic interest. For instance, Vipin Narang (2018) pointed out that abandoning the NFU policy may be counterproductive because such a move may spiral into an ambience of insecurity in India's neighbourhood. That said, it is not that everyone praised the NFU policy of India. Chapter 2 already demonstrated the criticisms mounted against the NFU policy of India. Karnad (2008), one of the fiercest critics of the NFU policy, pointed out the apprehensions of several of the top brass of the military about the practicality of the NFU policy. He even said in a questionnaire response that the Indian strategic conclave that supported the NFU policy is clueless about how deterrence works.¹¹⁵ Elsewhere, he compared the NFU policy to a 'hoax' (Karnad, 1999, p.120) and called it 'unenforceable' (Karnad, 2005, p.435). Sumit Ganguly also commented in an interview that "*NFU is mostly meaningless and bereft of strategic significance.*"¹¹⁶ Tkacik (2017) also questioned India's NFU doctrine's credibility. Some analysts have viewed the NFU policy of India as a mere declaratory policy that might change in an actual war scenario.

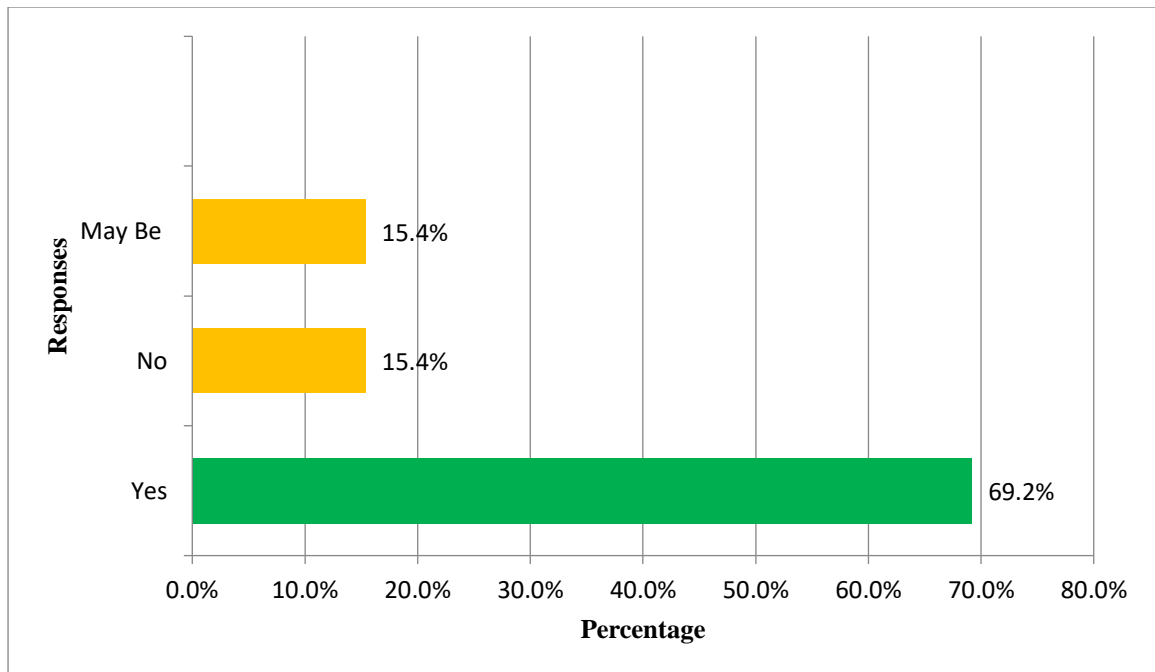
Despite these criticisms, most interviewees believe India should stick to its NFU policy. The following figures testify to this point.

Figure 5.8

Should India Retain its NFU Policy in its Nuclear Doctrine?

¹¹⁵ Questionnaire response on August 28, 2021.

¹¹⁶ Questionnaire response on June 05, 2022.

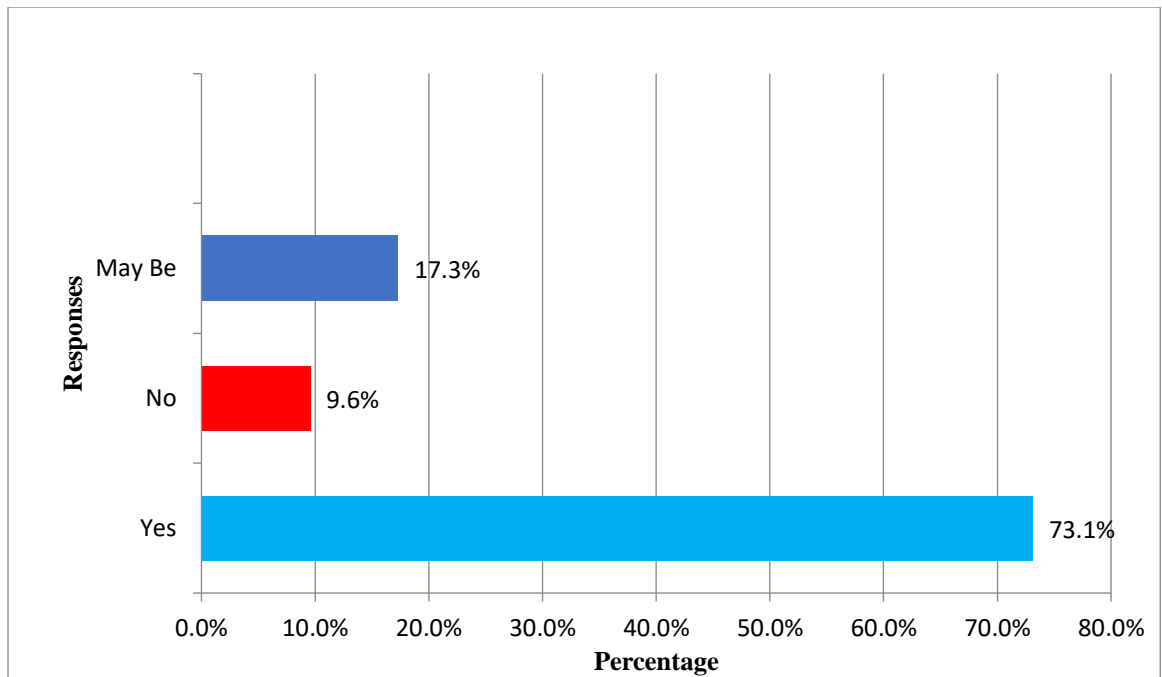


The above figure reveals that 69.2 percent of the respondents opined that India should retain its NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. 15.4 percent negated this, and another 15.4 percent stated a possibility that it ‘may be’. Thus, most of the respondents see merit in India’s NFU policy of India, and so they maintain that India should adhere to this policy.

vi. *Has the NFU Policy of India Paid its Dividends?*

Figure 5.9

Has the NFU Policy of India Paid its Dividends?



As indicated in the figure above, 73.1 percent of respondents believe that India's NFU policy has paid dividends. 17.3 percent stated that it might have, while 9.6 percent negated this. Thus, most respondents view India's NFU policy effectively fulfilling its objectives.

5.5. Summary

This Chapter examined the role of strategic factors in India's decision to adopt the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. The analysis in the Chapter reveals that strategic factors played a predominant role in the NFU policy of India. Compared to the other factors, strategic factors have been singled out as the more influential ones. Furthermore, the content analysis of three important documents relating to the NFU policy of India corroborates the influence and importance of the strategic factors, among others.

However, the analysis also validates this argument that strategic factors alone could not be assigned as the sole reason behind the NFU policy of India. The statistical figures collected

from the respondents' feedback reveal the role of other factors like the influence of political leadership and strategic experts and the normative factors and norms against the violence of the first use of nuclear weapons. Most respondents (63.5 %) commented that the NFU policy of India is the result of the influence of a number of factors.



CHAPTER 6

No First Use Policy of India: The Role of Normative Factors

6.1. Introduction

This Chapter looks at the influence of normative factors¹¹⁷ on India's decision to adopt the NFU policy of nuclear weapons in its nuclear doctrine. The realist writings about the NFU policy and India's nuclear doctrine have singled out strategic factors as the most important source of influence on the NFU policy of India. Though the strategic issues are relatively more significant factors behind the NFU policy of India, as revealed in Chapter 5, they are not sufficient alone to explain the rationale for adopting this policy. A range of other normative factors like the 'nuclear taboo' against the use of nuclear weapons, India's strategic culture, its adherence to non-violent Gandhian principles, and its commitment to global nuclear disarmament and a nuclear-weapons-free world may have influenced the NFU policy of India. Thus, examining how the NFU policy is influenced by other factors besides the ones provided through realist explanations is pertinent. It will analyse if norms and normative factors influence India's policies on the NFU of nuclear weapons as encoded in its nuclear doctrine. Existing literature has not addressed whether the NFU policy, like the nuclear taboo, is a norm against the violence of the first use of nuclear weapons. This study attempts to bridge this gap. It will throw light on whether the NFU policy can be seen as a socially constructed norm against the violence of the first use of nuclear weapons. That said, the Chapter does not seek to supplant

¹¹⁷ This includes both domestic and international normative factors.

the strategic logic of the NFU policy of India but seeks to examine if the normative factors can supplement it.

6.2. Constructivism and Nuclear Norms

Constructivism or social constructivism subscribes to the belief that the meanings of a given social phenomenon, event, or act are the results of social construction.¹¹⁸ Constructivists maintain that “people act towards objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them” (Wendt, 1992, pp. 396-97). Kauppi and Viotti (2019) noted that constructivists perceive the world order as a social framework of ideational factors like norms, rules, and law. This structure impacts the interests and identities of actors and issues like humanitarian intervention and the taboo on WMD’s use (p.145). Constructivism as a social theory or theoretical approach has many variants. Some conform to the positivist tradition, while some others have a postpositivist orientation.

Constructivist IR literature has taken nuclear politics and nuclear norms seriously. Several studies have been conducted on the norms of nuclear politics. Some of these include Tannenwald (2006a; 2006b; 2007; 2021), Carranza (2018), Rublee (2009), Rublee and Cohen (2018), Hanson (2018), Kütt and Steffek (2015), Frey (2006a; 2006b; 2007) and Mallavarapu (1999; 2007) among others. These studies have also shown that norms influence states’ behaviour and decisions regarding nuclear issues.

Constructivists, in general, stress the importance of norms in world politics. Tannenwald (2007) subtly noted, “Norms often do not determine outcomes, they shape realms of possibility (p.4)”. Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) came into effect in 1970. It has played a significant role in the emergence of the norm of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

¹¹⁸ Chapter 2 has highlighted the theoretical underpinnings of constructivism.

Even nuclear powers like China and France that hesitated to join NPT ratified it later. Except for North Korea, no other member states left the NPT regime. Many signatories of the NPT have the capability to manufacture nuclear weapons, but they have refrained from doing so by choice. The NPT remains the only nuclear regime the nuclear weapons states have committed (Malygina et al., 2017). Herein lies the significance of the NPT regime despite its inherent flaws and discriminatory nature.

One of the most significant contributions of the constructivist literature to the field of nuclear politics is the propagation of the concept of 'nuclear taboo'. The concept gradually gained popularity post-1945 nuclear attacks on Japan. According to Nina Tannenwald (2021), the de facto ban on the first use of nuclear weapons in combat is known as the nuclear taboo. The ban prohibits using strategic, tactical, calculated, or accidental first strikes of nuclear weapons. She viewed nuclear taboo as a "normative inhibition against the first use of nuclear weapons" (Tannenwald, 2018, p.89; Tannenwald, 2021).

Tracing the genesis of the taboo, Tannenwald (2006a) observed that it was a gradual process, and several factors contributed to the practice of nuclear taboo. These include anti-nuclear movements all around the world, efforts of the UN, the clamour of states that do not possess nuclear weapons, the threat of mutually assured destruction (MAD) resulting from the use of nuclear weapons, and efforts of the US to institutionalise the process of arms control (Tannenwald, 2006a, p.64). The lethal destructive power of nuclear weapons also led to the birth of the nuclear taboo (Paul, 1995). Paul (1995) also argued that the NFU policy and nuclear non-proliferation regimes have a role in the emergence of the nuclear taboo (p.705).

Unlike other weapons, nuclear weapons attained an identity of the 'abhorrent weapons of mass destruction' (Tannenwald, 2006a). The argument also goes that this taboo "stems from a powerful sense of revulsion associated with such destructive weapons" (Tannenwald, 2018,

p. 89). A similar line of argument is also found in Paul (1995), who talked about the role of “moral revulsion against the use of nuclear weapons” in the emergence of the nuclear taboo. Nuclear taboo is a norm against the violence of the use of nuclear weapons.

However, it is wrong to presume that those who support the nuclear taboo are dismissive of the role of nuclear deterrence. Tannenwald (2018) herself admitted that nuclear deterrence certainly has a role in the non-use of nuclear weapons, but at the same time, she was also convinced that had there been no nuclear taboo, nuclear weapons may have been used again after 1945. Norms against the use of nuclear weapons have become increasingly more robust. These norms get stronger every day when they are not used on the battlefield (Sauer, 2016). Most people shun the idea of using nuclear weapons in the name of national security as incongruent with laws and human values (Doyle, 2013, p.26). Paul (1995) claimed that the taboo is indicative of the role of ethical and normative concerns in a state’s decision regarding WMD use. Both instrumental logic and normative factors shape the overall strategic and political goals of nuclear weapon states and their adversaries (p.713).

As indicated in Chapter 2, ‘non-use’ and ‘no first use’ of nuclear weapons are not identical. ‘Non-Use’ refers to the act of not using nuclear weapons against an adversary- a nuclear or non-nuclear state. The NFU policy refers to the commitment not to use nuclear weapons for pre-emptive strikes against an adversary. The NFU policy means not using nuclear weapons for aggression. It paves the way for using nuclear weapons in self-defence after sustaining a pre-emptive nuclear attack. ‘Non-use’ means “possessing nuclear weapons, but not making use of it” (Khanna, 2000, p.110). In a similar vein, Vijayakumar noted, “No First Use is not a guarantee of the non-use of nuclear weapons but only a pledge and that too with the exception of the self-defence clause” (p.93). Another distinction must be made between the

nuclear taboo and the non-use of nuclear weapons. Pretorius (2017) subtly argued, “The nuclear taboo prevents nuclear weapons from being used; nonuse in turn reinforces the taboo” (p.201).

There is an emergent norm against the FU policy of nuclear weapons, although some states still adhere to the policy of the FU in their nuclear doctrines and strategic postures. The literature on nuclear taboo and nuclear non-use bears ample testimony to this point. It has been stated that nuclear weapons have not been used since 1945 because a powerful nuclear taboo is at work. Thus, from a constructivist perspective, the decision not to use nuclear weapons in wars in the aftermath of 1945 is driven by normative issues in addition to strategic factors like nuclear deterrence.

Empirical studies have been done to study the role of norms on nuclear decision-making. Frey (2006b) noted that “nuclear decision making appears to be mainly guided by the normative values attached to nuclear devices” (p.341). Carranza (2018) found that the nuclear taboo better explains the non-use of nuclear weapons in the India-Pakistan crisis after the 1998 nuclear tests compared to deterrence theory. However, he claimed that the nuclear taboo is somewhat fragile in the South Asian region. Constructivists like Tannenwald and others who studied the norm of nuclear taboo rightly pointed out that nuclear taboo as an international norm has come of age in that no nation has used nuclear weapons in war after 1945, even as tactical weapons on the battlefield or anywhere.

However, existing literature has not sufficiently addressed the normative influences on India’s decision to adopt the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. Furthermore, the extant literature is also silent on whether the NFU policy, like the nuclear taboo, is a ‘norm’ against the violence of the first use of nuclear weapons. This study attempts to bridge this gap.

6.3. NFU Policy of India: Role of Normative Factors

This section will investigate the normative influences on the NFU policy of India. Chapter 5 demonstrated that the realist explanations alone cannot explicate a country's NFU policy or posture. Certain normative concerns are involved in the process. As far as India is concerned, these concerns have come from the established 'nuclear taboo' against the use of nuclear weapons as discussed above, the country's strategic culture, its adherence to non-violent Gandhian principles, and its commitment to global nuclear disarmament and a nuclear-weapons-free world. Put differently, one can trace the origin of normative influence on India's NFU policy in two areas: domestic normative influence and the impact of global norms. On the domestic front, India's adherence to non-violent principles and its history of anti-colonialism and anti-aggression – all created a normative setting for supporting the NFU policy. George Perkovich (1999) also observed that “domestic factors, including moral and political norms, have been more significant in determining India's nuclear policy” (p.6). Global norms relating to nuclear taboos, the principles outlined in the UN Charter, and the violence created by the use of nuclear weapons are the other normative influences.

Though India has not signed the NPT, it has always adhered to the norm of horizontal non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Unlike its nuclear-armed neighbour Pakistan, India has not helped any other country in the procurement of nuclear weapons, nor has it given away nuclear secrets to anyone. India voluntarily declared a moratorium on further testing its nuclear weapons in the aftermath of the Pokhran II nuclear tests in 1998. India is also a founding member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), abiding by its rules and regulations. This indicates that India tries to project itself as a norm-abiding nation. One can trace some elements of this norm-abiding behaviour of India through the country's foreign policy discourse and practice and, to some extent, from India's nuclear thinking.

Extant literature reveals the presence of an idealist tradition in Indian foreign policy thinking. Dubey (2013) observed that India's foreign policy "was deeply anchored in the ideals of truth, non-violence, tolerance, the notion of global governance and the world as a single family of humankind" (p.3). The legacy of this tradition is still found in present-day Indian foreign policy. An academic and researcher commented in a questionnaire response, "*I think India has a strong moral imperative driving its foreign policy—or at least this was true in the past and among certain elements of the bureaucracy still.*"¹¹⁹ India has always advocated world peace and pointed out the dangers that nuclear wars and weapons may bring about. Dubey is correct in pointing out that peace is both a 'moral imperative' and a 'prerequisite' for achieving development (Dubey, 2013, p.3). It must be noted that India's foreign and defence policies are linked (Sikri, 2009, p.257). Colonial servitude that India was subjected to also had a bearing on Indian foreign policy (Malone et al., 2015; Dalmia & Malone, 2012). That is why post-independent India stands by anti-colonialism, non-aggression, anti-apartheid policies, and a general predilection toward maintaining peace.

Existing scholarship also suggests that there is an idealist tradition of Indian nuclear thinking. Indian political leadership has been vocal about the dangers of nuclear weapons (Saran, 2005). India has always advocated global nuclear disarmament (Cortright & Mattoo, 1996). This assertion is also validated by the speeches of several Indian Prime Ministers, as analysed in Chapter 4. The origin of the idealist tradition can be traced to the Indian independence and Gandhian non-violent movements (See Cortright & Mattoo, 1996, p.6). Mahatma Gandhi was a votary of non-violence (*Ahimsa*) throughout his life, and he also infused a dose of non-violent principles into the methods and means for waging the Indian freedom struggle. Gandhian thinking had a bearing on Indian foreign policy (Sikri, 2009,

¹¹⁹ Questionnaire response on August 19, 2021.

p.259) and defence policy (Ganguly, 2010). In *Non-Violence in Peace and War*, Gandhi argued, “I regard the employment of the atom bomb for the wholesale destruction of men, women, and children as the most diabolical use of science” (cited in Dombrowski, 1983, p.404). Inter-Asian Relations Conference in 1947, Gandhi said, “...atom bombs mean utter destruction, not merely of the West, but of the whole world...” (cited in Weiss, 2010, p.256). Gandhi’s position on nuclear weapons and their use is evident here.

Jawaharlal Nehru continued this Gandhian tradition during his political tenure as India’s first Prime Minister. Nehru’s profound influence on India’s foreign policy has been well-documented in various studies. He put India’s foreign policy within the broad framework of pacifism and non-alignment. As a grand strategy, Nehruvianism asserts morality in international relations and a firm conviction that India can play a moral leadership role (Miller & Estrada, 2018, p. 35). Nehru also believed that war as a form of violence is not a natural phenomenon but something that manifests in the cognitive perception of humans so that it can be avoided (cited in Bajpai, 2010, p.523).

On April 2, 1954, Jawaharlal Nehru said in the Parliament, “Nuclear, chemical and biological energy and power should not be used to forge weapons of mass destruction” (cited in Vajpayee, 2000a, p.14). Nehru perceived nuclear weapons as ‘an evil thing’ (cited in Dubey, 2013, p.41). Nehru vehemently opposed using nuclear energy for military purposes (Ai, 2018). He gave an unconditional assurance that his government and all future Indian governments would not use nuclear energy for destructive purposes (Singh & Singh, 2014, pp.64-65).

Even the idea of developing nuclear weapons was considered a national taboo during Nehru’s regime (Moshaver, 1991, p.29). Nehru mentioned in a statement on foreign affairs dated March 20, 1956, “We have stated repeatedly that nuclear weapons must be banned and that atomic energy must be used for the benefit of humanity and not be controlled by the Great

Powers.”¹²⁰ Nehru also admitted, “We believe in the unconditional prohibition of the production, use and experimentation of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons and, as a step to that end, the suspension of experimental explosions and an armaments truce.”¹²¹ Concerning hydrogen bombs, Nehru said in a statement, “We know that its use threatens the existence of man and civilisation as we know it.”¹²² Even after the death of Nehru, the impact of Nehruvian thoughts on India’s nuclear policy continued (Cortright & Mattoo, 1996, p.7). The support for global nuclear disarmament is seen in the nuclear policies of various Indian Prime Ministers since the time of Nehru.

Explaining the normative factors behind the NFU policy of India, Carranza (2018) stated that India’s support of global nuclear disarmament policies (he called this Nehruvian tradition) and its advocacy against nuclear weapons were mainly responsible for it. There was a departure from ‘nuclear *moralpolitik*’ to ‘hesitant nuclear *realpolitik*’ in the subsequent period after Nehru (Karnad, 2005). However, that does not mean the obituary of the Gandhian and the Nehruvian legacy. In tune with the vicissitudes of time, the succeeding Indian PMs after Nehru brought specific changes to the practice of Indian foreign and security policy, but they did not abandon the Nehruvian tradition completely. Those who believe in the Nehruvian tradition maintain that even though nuclear weapons are evil, India has no option but to retain them as long as the global nuclear order is utterly discriminatory and its neighbours remain nuclear-armed (Bajpai, 2010, p.525). Nehruvians also strongly believe in the feasibility of global nuclear disarmament and are committed to the idea (Bajpai, 2010, p.525). Former Indian

¹²⁰ Retrieved November 29, 2022, from https://eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/809121/1/pms_01_12_20-03-1956.pdf

¹²¹ Retrieved December 03, 2022, from https://eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/809121/1/pms_01_12_20-03-1956.pdf#search=nuclear

¹²² Retrieved December 03, 2022, from https://eparlib.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/809167/1/pms_01_06_02-04-1954.pdf

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi forwarded an Action Plan for Global Nuclear Disarmament. Though the nuclear powers did not accept this plan, India still adheres to its spirit, as reflected in the questions answered in Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha debates from 2000 to 2022. On November 28, 2011, in response to unstarred question number 1627 in Lok Sabha, the then External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh replied that India has been a votary of global nuclear disarmament and to achieve this mission, India has urged for the creation of global arrangements, for removing all nuclear weapons in a phased manner.¹²³

Explaining the rationale behind the NFU policy of India, a former Brigadier of the Indian army stated that “*India is peace loving country. It understands ramification of a nuclear war.*”¹²⁴ As the rationale behind the NFU policy, another former Lieutenant General of the Indian army noted, “*India needed to project as a land of Buddha and Mahatma, as a messenger of peace.*”¹²⁵

Some studies argued that India has never been an aggressor state. Sikri (2009), for instance, asserted that the geographical location and the configuration of this natural resource-rich country were such that there was no need on its part to mount aggression on any other neighbouring state (p.245). Former Indian PM Vajpayee also asserted that despite facing numerous attacks, India has never been an aggressor state (Vajpayee, 2000a, p.17).

India’s NFU policy is thus indicative of the inherent non-aggressive nature of the Indian civilisation. It reflects a side of India’s strategic culture. Gurmeet Kanwal (2001a) made a precise observation that India’s commitment to the NFU policy and the non-use against non-

¹²³ Retrieved July 25, 2022, from https://www.mea.gov.in/lok-sabha.htm?dtl/12074/Q_1627__INDIAS_STAND_ON_PILE_OF_NUCLEAR_WEAPONS

¹²⁴ Questionnaire response on July 10, 2022.

¹²⁵ Questionnaire response on September 30, 2021.

nuclear states is “rooted in a deeply ingrained cultural belief that the use of force to resolve inter-state disputes is a repugnant concept” (p.1951). A retired Lieutenant General of the Indian Army argued that the “*NFU as a policy after the tests in 1998 was anchored on our civilisational ethics and values of non-violence etc.*”¹²⁶

Chapter 4 discussed that the former Prime Minister of India, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, was a key political figure behind the NFU policy adopted by India in its nuclear doctrine. Among the political leaders, arguably, his role is even more influential when it comes to India’s adoption of the NFU policy. The draft and official nuclear doctrine were adopted during his tenure as the PM of India. Now, the question is whether Vajpayee was also motivated by certain normative concerns in supporting this norm of the NFU. In his poem ‘Hiroshima ki Peeda’ (Pain of Hiroshima), Atal Bihari Vajpayee expressed his humanistic concerns against using atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. He wondered how the scientists who invented the atomic weapons could sleep well without remorse after getting the news of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings.¹²⁷ The poem portrays Vajpayee’s moral concerns about how weapons of mass destruction are being used to kill thousands of people. He would have never endorsed any pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons for whatsoever reason. He said, “We do not intend to use these weapons for aggression or for mounting threats against any country; these are weapons of self-defence to ensure that India is not subjected to nuclear threats or coercion” (Vajpayee, 2000a, p.15). Vajpayee gave his clarification on his poem *Hiroshima ki Peeda*. He said the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki were not used for defensive

¹²⁶ Questionnaire response on March 06, 2022.

¹²⁷ The full version of the poem can be found in: <https://www.amarujala.com/kavya/irshaad/hiroshima-day-poem-by-atal-bihari-vajpai> (Retrieved August 02, 2021).

purposes. Because of this unnecessary step, people faced adverse consequences (Vajpayee, 2000a, p. 416).

In an interview with *Dawn*, Vajpayee was asked if he thought a winnable nuclear war could happen. He categorically answered, “India has always held that nuclear weapons are not weapons of war. Their use in war will be a crime against humanity. Nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.”¹²⁸ Vajpayee’s speeches reflect that India’s desire for peace and a sense of responsibility led it to adopt an NFU policy. So, he said, “*India has always been an ardent advocate of peace and will always remain so. We know and want to use weapons for self-defence only [emphasis added]*” (Vajpayee, 2000a, p. 28).

Thus, India’s adoption of the FU policy would have negated India’s apathy towards aggression. Vajpayee further mentioned that India has no plans of engaging in any nuclear arms race or using nuclear weapons as weapons of aggression or threats except as a means of self-defence for averting nuclear blackmailing (Vajpayee, 2000a, p. 15).

One can have an idea about the non-violent tradition that India adheres to from the statements made by Vajpayee. For instance, in the aftermath of the test-firing of the Agni 2 missile, he said unequivocally, “India wants peace in her neighbourhood and peace in the world. And we shall continue to strive for this noble goal” (Vajpayee, 2000b, p.140). The justification behind the adoption of the NFU policy, as stated by Vajpayee in his Independence Day address on August 15, 1998, is “We ourselves proclaimed to the world that we shall never be the first user of atomic weapons... *Our dream is to see the world free from nuclear weapons*

¹²⁸ Retrieved July 20, 2020, from https://www.mea.gov.in/interviews.htm?dtl/4191/Interview_of_Prime_Minister_of_India_Shri_Atali_Bihari_Vajpayee_by_Dawn

[emphasis added] and we want to see this dream come true” (Vajpayee, 1998b¹²⁹; Vajpayee, 2000a, p.28). He indicated that India’s nuclear tests were part of the force and weapons modernisation programme to deal with the challenges of the twenty-first century. In this deliberation also, he reasserted that India has always been a peace-loving country and will be so (Vajpayee, 1998c, August 15).

Chapter 4 also discussed the role of strategic thinkers like K. Subrahmanyam and General K. Sundarji in the NFU policy of India. While both are realists, reflecting on their take on the use of nuclear weapons is also necessary. Strategic analyst and grandson of K. Subrahmanyam, Dhruv Jaishankar (2020), pointed out a new aspect of realist K. Subrahmanyam’s opinion on nuclear weapons. Jaishankar (2020) said that K. Subrahmanyam “consistently believed that nuclear weapons were immoral, citing the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.”¹³⁰ Another strategic thinker, Jasjit Singh (1998), advocated global nuclear disarmament and said, “Nuclear weapons are the worst form of weapons of mass destruction. We must not fall into the cynical attitudes of many states that morality and fundamental human values must be necessarily sacrificed at the altar of national interests” (p.287).

The FU policy is incompatible with a country like India, which has traditionally and consistently advocated global nuclear disarmament. India has been a vocal advocate of nuclear disarmament since the time of Nehru. India’s disarmament efforts later influenced the environment for the NFU policy. Even after India declared itself a nuclear-weaponed state, it is unequivocally committed to its long-term goal of nuclear disarmament. Had India declared an FU policy, it would have been fundamentally at odds with all the lofty talks India has given about nuclear disarmament on different global platforms.

¹²⁹ Retrieved September 26, 2020, from <https://archivepmo.nic.in/abv/speech-details.php?nodeid=9238>

¹³⁰ Retrieved July 21, 2020, from <https://dhruvjaishankar.blogspot.com/2020/09/k-subrahmanyam-his-contributions-to.html>

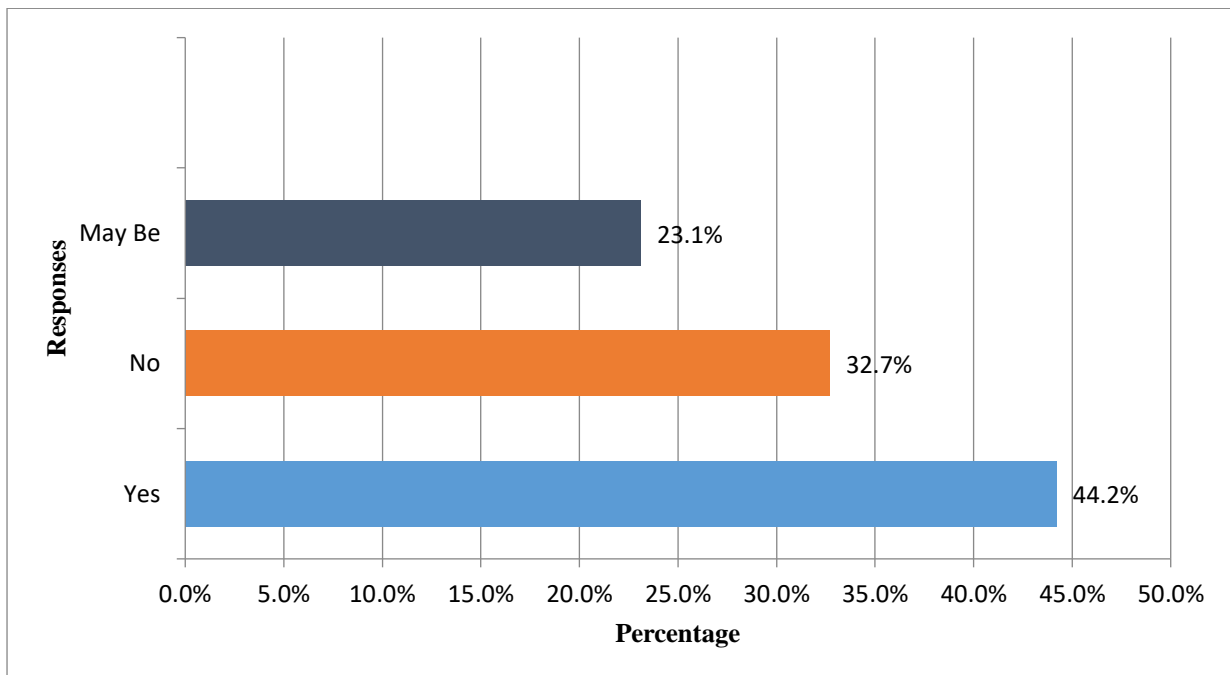
On the one hand, a country that supports nuclear disarmament and proclaims the FU policy of nuclear disarmament would have been sheer moral and political hypocrisy. The vocal support for a nuclear-weapons-free world and the endorsement of the FU policy cannot go hand in hand. A FU policy would have made India's clamour for nuclear disarmament an empty talk. Hence, the inclusion of an NFU policy by India in its nuclear doctrines (draft doctrine and official nuclear doctrine) should not come as a surprise. Sohail H. Hashmi and Steven P. Lee (2004), while discussing weapons of mass destruction, raised a valid question: "Is one justified in threatening to do something that one considers evil to do?" (p.6). This logic of Hashmi and Lee can also be applied to India's decision to adopt the NFU policy. India could not have legitimated its stance if it adopted the FU posture of such weapons because it wants nuclear disarmament in the long term.

The NFU policy is consistent with India's policy of peaceful co-existence. It has some affinity with the overall philosophy of *Panchsheel*. Former General Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee (AICC), Digvijay Singh said, "First use of our nuclear arsenal is contrary to the stated policy of the government. We are a land which believes in the Gandhian principles of non-violence and we have always believed in the disarmament policy by Rajiv Gandhi" (cited in Peri, 2016). Those who criticize the NFU policy merely as a declaratory policy neither understand the logic of deterrence nor the purpose the nuclear weapons serve or the performative role of speech acts of the Prime Ministers play concerning the NFU policy, for that matter. If the NFU policy did not have merits, the successive governments would not have adhered to it after Atal Bihari Vajpayee's regime. Thus, it must have some advantages. The NFU policy should not be underestimated as a declaratory norm with a rhetorical effect.

6.4. NFU as a Norm Against the Violence of First Use of Nuclear Weapons

Figure 6.1

NFU as a Norm Against the Violence of First Use of Nuclear Weapons



The questionnaire respondents were asked whether the NFU policy can be seen as a norm against the violence of the first use of nuclear weapons. The above diagram in Figure 6.1 indicates that 44.2 percent of the respondents consider the NFU policy a norm against violence. This further strengthens the claim of the Chapter that the NFU policy is more than a strategy. It also constitutes a norm against the violence of the first use of nuclear weapons. In a slightly different tone, a former Vice Admiral of the Indian Navy stated in a questionnaire response that “*NFU is a norm against states contemplating nuclear violence.*”¹³¹

Vajpayee also pointed out how the Indian leaders always viewed nuclear weapons as weapons of mass destruction. He highlighted that the essence of India’s nuclear policy is the assumption among its leadership that nuclear weapons are weapons of mass destruction and,

¹³¹ Questionnaire response on September 09, 2021.

thus, the world would be a more secure place to live without these weapons (Vajpayee, 1998a, May 27).

The NFU policy is also in consonance with the constitutional ethos of Indian democracy. Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer (1986) made a subtle observation that “nuclear justice is one dimension of social justice which is basic to our Constitution” (p.130). Article 51 of the directive principles of the Indian constitution directs the state to “promote international peace and security” and “foster respect for international law and treaty obligations” (Iyer, 1986, p.122). Furthermore, he noted that as per provisions of 48A and 51A, both the Indian state and its citizens are supposed to “protect and improve the environment’ and “to have compassion for living creatures, to develop scientific temper, humanism, the spirit of enquiry (sic)...” (Iyer, 1986, p.122). The NFU policy does not violate the responsibility for international peace and stability enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

Thus, the above discussion clarifies that nuclear weapons were seen in Indian nuclear thinking (including those who supported that India should make nuclear weapons) as weapons of deterrence and security, not warfighting weapons. The NFU posture is a defensive nuclear posture. So, the NFU policy was adopted in the Indian nuclear doctrine to complete this vision.

K. Subrahmanyam (1984) wrote that if it was legal for a select group of countries to keep nuclear weapons, others should also be allowed to possess them for self-defence (p.18). Furthermore, Subrahmanyam (2008) also noted that while the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons may be wrong, deterring such use and threats is a moral duty of a state, and thus failure to do so, even after having capabilities would be tantamount to failure in fulfilment of duties.¹³²

¹³² Retrieved October 12, 2020, from, <https://www.tribuneindia.com/2008/20080511/edit.htm#1>

Thus, Subrahmanyam advocated making nuclear weapons by India only for the nation's self-defense, not for launching a pre-emptive attack or threat of first use against an adversary. Field Marshall Sam Manekshaw noted an incident in an interview about the nuclear weapons-enabled aircraft carrier USS Enterprise brought to the Bay of Bengal by the US during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war. When the panicked ministers asked Manekshaw about this, he remarked with a calm composure that he could not do anything if nuclear weapons were used, but he also affirmed that the US would never use it against India because the US citizens would not have even approved of such a horrendous act (Indian Army, 2020). A closer look reveals that Manekshaw here talked about the growing popular support towards nuclear taboo or the norm against the violence of use of nuclear weapons.

The use of nuclear weapons against an enemy that does not possess nuclear weapons is universally considered violent. After 1945, no nuclear-weaponed state has ever used a nuclear weapon against a non-nuclear-weaponed state. There is a shared belief that it is unfair to create violence of colossal magnitude against an enemy that lacks nuclear weapons. This is where the role of nuclear restraint comes up. India has shown restraint throughout its nuclear history through its policies, doctrines, and postures. India is committed not to using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states or states that have not joined hands with other nuclear powers. Prasad (2018) noted that India's prolonged demand for creating an international treaty banning the use or threat of nuclear weapons influenced this considerably (p.264).

We will now investigate some other sources for the influence of normative thinking in the NFU policy of India. A reading of the draft nuclear doctrine of India prepared in 1999 reveals that using nuclear weapons is recognized as an act that not only goes against humanity but also may put its very survival at stake. The preamble of the doctrine thus reads, "The use

of nuclear weapons in particular, as well as other weapons of mass destruction, constitutes the gravest threat to humanity and to peace and stability in the international system.”¹³³ There is an indication that its very use is considered *an act of violence* of indescribable order. It can be assumed that India takes a risk and subscribes to the belief that, if necessary, it will bear the first nuclear strike from an adversary but would not launch a pre-emptive strike. It means an inherent nuclear threat is there to the Indian citizens. However, India will start a retaliatory nuclear attack for self-defence once it is subjected to a nuclear attack.

It also unequivocally regards those doctrines that either endorse the FU policy or deem it fit to use nuclear weapons against nuclear have-nots as offensive nuclear doctrines. The draft nuclear doctrine of India also stipulates two criteria regarding the NFU policy. First, India views nuclear weapons as weapons for deterrence only to avert the use of or threat of nuclear weapons.¹³⁴ Secondly, India would not use nor threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states or states not in a party with other nuclear weapon states.¹³⁵

Regarding the second point stated above, Prasad (2018) made an important observation that the assurance of not using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states is not something peculiar to India but a policy followed by most nuclear-armed states (p.265). It has become a kind of de facto norm. An interesting aspect of India’s draft nuclear doctrine is that while it considered the first use wrong, it deems it an absolute right and justifies the use of nuclear

¹³³ Retrieved February 13, 2022, from <https://www.mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?18915/opening+remarks+by+national+security+adviser+mr+brajesh+mishra+at+the+release+of+draft+indian+nuclear+doctrine>

¹³⁴ Retrieved February 13, 2022, from <https://www.mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?18915/opening+remarks+by+national+security+adviser+mr+brajesh+mishra+at+the+release+of+draft+indian+nuclear+doctrine>

¹³⁵ Retrieved February 13, 2022, from <https://www.mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?18915/opening+remarks+by+national+security+adviser+mr+brajesh+mishra+at+the+release+of+draft+indian+nuclear+doctrine>

weapons in retaliation to a nuclear attack. For instance, concerning credibility, the doctrine says, “Any adversary must know that India can and will retaliate with sufficient nuclear weapons to inflict destruction and punishment that the aggressor will find unacceptable if nuclear weapons are used against India and its forces.”¹³⁶

The belief that the FU policy is not right but that using nuclear weapons in retaliation is justified unveils that the norms against violence created by the use of nuclear weapons are social constructions. The argument can be extended further with the help of India’s concise Official Nuclear Doctrine of 2003. As already stated in the earlier Chapters, it retained the NFU policy and the spirit of the draft nuclear doctrine in addition to certain changed features. Concerning the NFU policy, the doctrine clarified that India would retain the NFU policy and nuclear weapons would be used only in response to a nuclear attack on India, Indian forces anywhere. Secondly, the nuclear retaliation that India would launch would be massive and result in inexplicable damage. Thirdly, non-nuclear states would be spared from nuclear attacks. Fourthly, if India is attacked with other WMDs like chemical and biological weapons, India would consider using nuclear retaliation attacks against that adversary.¹³⁷

One can infer from the above points that though India is unwilling to use nuclear weapons, it has set specific benchmarks under what conditions India would be constrained to use nuclear weapons against an adversary. Put differently, this is an exercise of social construction on how and when to use nuclear weapons by India. Attacks on Indian territory or Indian forces anywhere with nuclear weapons would not be tolerated under any circumstances

¹³⁶ Retrieved February 13, 2022, from <https://www.mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?18915/opening+remarks+by+national+security+adviser+mr+brajesh+mishra+at+the+release+of+draft+indian+nuclear+doctrine>

¹³⁷ Retrieved February 13, 2022, from <https://www.mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?18915/opening+remarks+by+national+security+adviser+mr+brajesh+mishra+at+the+release+of+draft+indian+nuclear+doctrine>

and invite confirmed retaliatory nuclear attacks from India. While India is fully aware of the catastrophic effects of nuclear weapons and the resulting violence, it ensures that its retaliatory nuclear attacks will cause 'unacceptable damage' to the nuclear aggressor. India tweaked its NFU policy by keeping the option open to launch nuclear strikes if India or Indian forces face any chemical and biological weapons attacks. All these prove that the violence of the use of nuclear weapons in certain circumstances is regarded as revulsive, and in certain other circumstances, it is justified and earns legitimacy. It further proves that the social construction of the norms against the violence of using nuclear weapons played a role in India's decision to adopt the NFU policy and the regulation of nuclear politics at large.

The Advisory Opinion of the World Court¹³⁸ also indirectly suggests that norms concerning violence and the use of violence are social constructions. The Court ruled by seven votes to seven and by the casting vote of the President of the World Court:

the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law;

However, in view of the current state of international law, and of the elements of fact at its disposal, the Court cannot conclude definitively whether the threat or use of nuclear weapons would be lawful or unlawful in an extreme circumstance of self defense, in which the very survival of a state would be at stake;¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Siddharth Mallavarapu (1999; 2007) made an excellent study on the politics of norm creation in the light of the ICJ's Advisory Opinion on the legality of the use of nuclear weapons.

¹³⁹ Retrieved February 27, 2022, from <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/95/095-19960708-ADV-01-00-EN.pdf>

While it may be challenging to establish a direct correlation and causation between the advisory opinion of the World Court on the legality of the use of nuclear weapons and the decision to adopt the NFU policy by India, the Indian policymakers probably had in their minds the existing state of international law regarding the permissibility of the use nuclear weapons. India's decision, technically speaking, has not violated any norms or rules that have emerged out of the advisory opinion passed by the World Court, even though such a judgement is not binding on the member states. The World Court Opinion can also be read in other ways. Using nuclear weapons would constitute violence against humanity regardless of whether the weapon is used for offensive or defensive purposes. There is no doubt about the indiscriminate violence generated by the use of nuclear weapons. The confusion is only about the legitimacy of its use in an extreme case of self-defence, and the World Court could not deliver a definitive judgment on that.

The existence of a nuclear taboo against the use of nuclear weapons and the advisory opinion of the World Court on the legality of the use of nuclear weapons indirectly prove that the norm of no first use can be considered as the norm against the violence of the first use of nuclear weapons.

The former US President Obama's Prague Speech on the prospect of global nuclear disarmament can also be interpreted as a text reflecting the social construction of norms against the violence of use of nuclear weapons. On the one hand, Obama expressed his optimism toward a world without nuclear weapons. He mentioned in this regard, "And as nuclear power(sic) — as a nuclear power, as the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon, the United States has a moral responsibility to act."¹⁴⁰ He added, "I state clearly and with

¹⁴⁰ Retrieved July 15, 2022, from <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-barack-obama-prague-delivered>

conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons."¹⁴¹ On the other hand, he also stated the US commitment to maintaining nuclear security and providing the same to the allies in the interim period. This duality can be seen as a social construction of norms against the violence of the use of nuclear weapons.

Even the suggestions and clamour for the change of the NFU policy further strengthen the argument that norms against violence of the use of nuclear weapons are also social constructions. They also point out the dynamic nature of norms. Norms change over time. Thus, even if India changes its NFU policy or abandons it altogether, that will not negate the claim of the thesis but reinforce it.

Article 2(4) of the UN Charter declares that "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force¹⁴² against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."¹⁴³ Thus, the act or threat of the FU of nuclear weapons does not conform to the UN's principle. That being said, the Charter further declares in Article 51 that the right of 'individual' or 'collective' self-defence is an inherent right of the nations if they face an attack from the enemy.¹⁴⁴ Thus, the NFU policy does not violate any of the above principles in the UN Charter.

Chapter 5 shows that strategic factors driven by national security are among the crucial reasons that explain India's adoption of the NFU policy. However, national security or strategic

¹⁴¹ Retrieved July 15, 2022, from <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-barack-obama-prague-delivered>

¹⁴² Though the term 'force' is not same with 'violence', but the use of force often results in violence.

¹⁴³ Retrieved March 03, 2022, from <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

¹⁴⁴ Retrieved March 03, 2022, from <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

factors should not be taken at face value. Itty Abraham (2010) made a candid observation in this context that national security is an incomplete process by itself in that ensuring security against possibilities of insecurity is a perennial exercise of the national security institutions (p.7). Furthermore, national security itself constitutes “a discourse of social power with its institutional bases and intellectual exclusions” (Abraham, 2010, p.3). Ogden (2017) noted, “What constitutes national security, and the threats towards it, thus reflects the wider world in which we live but depends upon the meanings given to it, is open to interpretation, and evolves over time.” (p. xx). Ogden (2017) also quoted Arnold Wolfers, who viewed national security as a vague term that conveys many meanings to different people (p. xx).

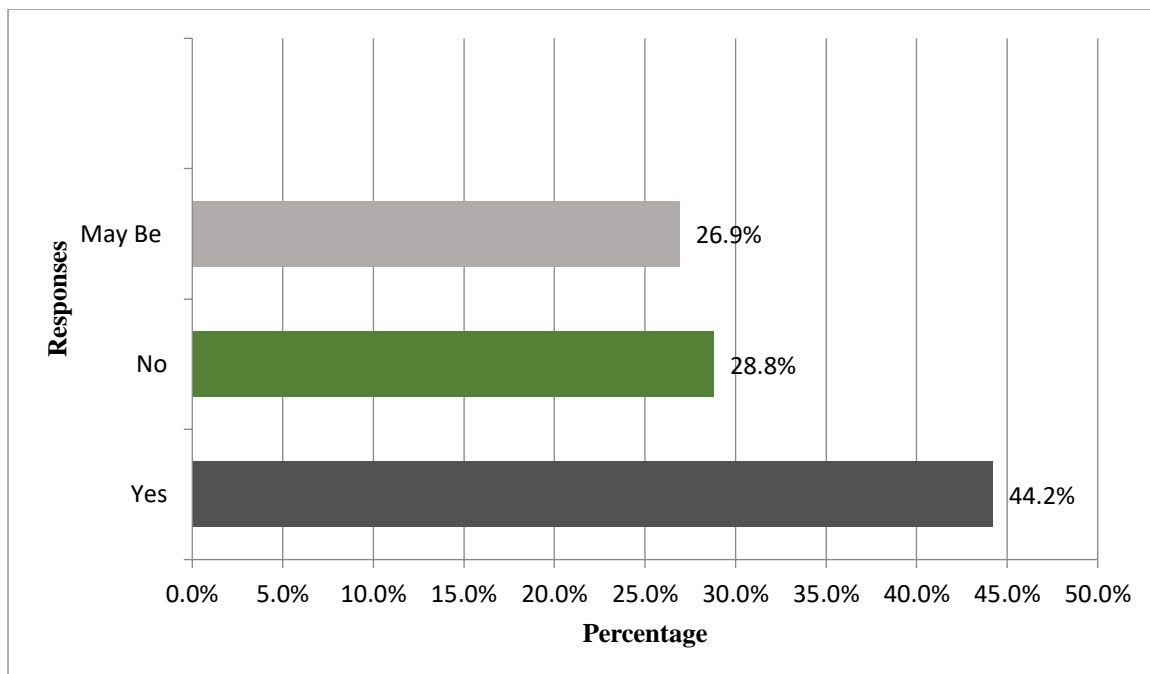
It is no longer a question of debate whether the FU policy or retaliatory use of nuclear weapons is violent because the use of nuclear weapons will invariably result in violence in the form of the mass killing of civilians and non-combatants. So, the debate today concerns only which is more justified--- the FU policy to prevent an attack or retaliatory strikes as an exercise of the right of self-defence. Some nuclear-weaponed countries have adopted the first stance, while others have gone for the NFU policy and are determined to use nuclear weapons only as retaliatory strikes.

Can the NFU policy be the last answer for diminishing nuclear dangers? Rajagopalan (2005) noted, “The NFU and the non-use policies are not perfect solutions to the dangers posed by nuclear weapons. But they provide substantial benefits in terms of safety and stability, without necessarily diluting the capacity to deter” (p.87).

6.4.1. Could the NFU Policy be the First Step Toward Global Nuclear Disarmament?

Figure 6.2

NFU as the First Step Toward Global Nuclear Disarmament



The above figure indicates that 44.2 percent of respondents believe the NFU policy can be the first step toward global nuclear disarmament. 28.8 percent denied this. 26.9 percent stated ambiguously that it might be the first step towards global nuclear disarmament. Thus, it was a mixed response. Nevertheless, it is possible that the NFU policy can usher the path toward global nuclear disarmament. K. Subrahmanyam also argued, “If the world ever is to become free of nuclear weapons the first essential step nuclear-armed nations must take is to adopt the no-first-use policy” (Halperin et al., 2009, p.32). A rendition of a similar line of argument is also found in Dowty (2001), who said, “The universalization of ‘no first use’ can then serve as a platform for further progress toward the ultimate goal: the reduction and elimination of all WMD” (p.84).

Notably, Dr. Manmohan Singh, the former Indian PM, even flagged the idea of a global NFU convention, speaking at a seminar organized by the Indian strategic think tank Manohar

Parrikar Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (MPIDSA)¹⁴⁵. Dr. Singh, however, could not see the fruition of this idea during his tenure as the PM of India. The former Minister of State for External Affairs, General Dr. V.K. Singh (Retd), also commented in response to a query in the Lok Sabha, “We support negotiations on global no-first use. India has called for a meaningful dialogue among all states possessing nuclear weapons to build trust and confidence and reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines.”¹⁴⁶ Another former Minister of State for External Affairs, Omar Abdullah, mentioned in response to a query in Rajya Sabha on March 14, 2002, about India’s efforts towards convincing the international community to take specific interim measures for the reduction dangers created by the FU policy of nuclear weapons.¹⁴⁷ He said that India maintains that “a good beginning would be to formalize a no-first use agreement internationally as a step towards de-legitimising nuclear weapons.”¹⁴⁸

India still believes in the goal of global nuclear disarmament. It is noteworthy that former Minister of State for External Affairs, Rao Inderjit Singh, highlighted India’s viewpoint in reply to the unstarred question number 988 on March 10, 2005, in Rajya Sabha that “the threat to international peace and security posed by the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons cannot be eliminated as long as such weapons are not eradicated completely through universal and non-discriminatory instruments.”¹⁴⁹ In 2021, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) stated

¹⁴⁵ Retrieved March 13, 2022, from <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/prime-minister-proposes-no-first-use-of-nuclear-weapons/>

¹⁴⁶ Retrieved August 10, 2022, from https://www.mea.gov.in/lok-sabha.htm?dtl/26683/QUESTION_NO620_US_SEEKS_REDUCTION_IN_INDIA'S_NUCLEAR_WEAPONS

¹⁴⁷ Retrieved August 10, 2022, from https://www.mea.gov.in/rajya-sabha.htm?dtl/10506/Q_1228__Nuclear_Disarmament

¹⁴⁸ Retrieved August 10, 2022, from https://www.mea.gov.in/rajya-sabha.htm?dtl/10506/Q_1228__Nuclear_Disarmament

¹⁴⁹ Retrieved August 11, 2022, from https://www.mea.gov.in/rajya-sabha.htm?dtl/11197/Q_988_Stabilisation_of_Nuclear_Interface_between_India_and_Pakistan

through a press release reiterated India's commitment to global nuclear disarmament, though it refused to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)¹⁵⁰.

In tune with the spirit of the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan of 1988, India maintains that the disarmament process must be non-discriminatory and time-bound. India's Minister of State for External Affairs, V. Muraleedharan, answered in response to unstarred question number 5049 on July 24, 2019, in Lok Sabha that "India has attached a high priority and is committed to universal, non-discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament. India believes this goal can be achieved through a step-by-step process underwritten by a global and non-discriminatory multilateral framework."¹⁵¹ It may be noted that India even submitted a working paper on nuclear disarmament to the UN General Assembly in 1996.¹⁵²

So far, there has been no global treaty on the NFU policy. Treaties make norms strong. A global treaty will have transformed the NFU policy into a global norm. China and India, the only nuclear-weapon states with the NFU policy, can take the initiative for a global NFU treaty or convention and thereby play the role of norm entrepreneurs. Scholars also suggested that the five nuclear powers of the Security Council should consider making it a global norm (See Korb & Rothman, 2012; Graham Jr., 1998). Dowty (2001) argued, "The universalization of 'no first use' could then serve as a platform for further progress toward the ultimate goal: the reduction and elimination of all WMD" (p.84). Some, like Gerson (2010), claimed that a country like the US could endorse the NFU policy to enhance its deterrence capability and national security.

¹⁵⁰ Retrieved May 7, 2024, from <https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/33409/Indias+view+on+the+Treaty+on+the+Prohibition+of+Nuclear+Weapons>

¹⁵¹ Retrieved August 12, 2022, from https://www.mea.gov.in/lok-sabha.htm?dtl/31651/QUESTION_NO5049_TREATY_ON_PROHIBITION_OF_NUCLEAR_WEAPONS

¹⁵² Retrieved August 11, 2022, from https://www.mea.gov.in/rajya-sabha.htm?dtl/13272/Q1238_Nuclear_Weapon_Policy

Ulman (1972) commented that adopting the NFU policy by the US within the broad framework of a multilateral treaty would help the country. Sethi (2013) also suggested, “If NFU were to be accepted by all NWS, then the world might find itself on its way to a diminishing salience of nuclear weapons, their delegitimisation, redundancy and eventually their abolition” (p.41). Kamath (1999) also commented that the adoption of the NFU policy by all nuclear weapon states would result in global nuclear disarmament eventually (p.1267).

Advocating the need for adopting a universal NFU policy, Global Zero, an international movement for eliminating nuclear weapons, noted that such a commitment would make ‘the world safer’.¹⁵³ It also pointed out that the NFU policy serves as a confidence-building measure. The NFU policy can be an essential step toward the direction of global nuclear disarmament.¹⁵⁴

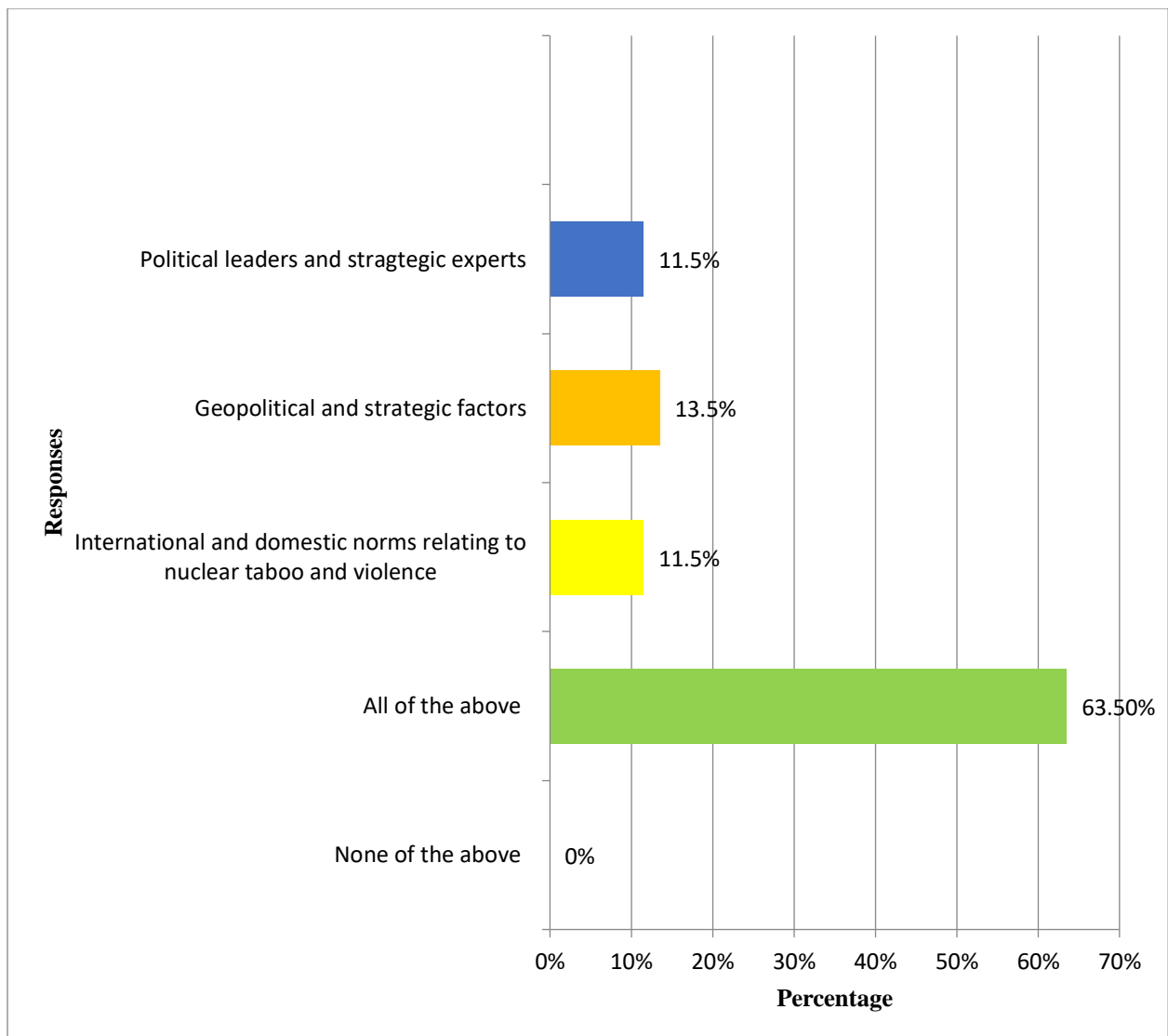
The questionnaire responses on the causes behind the adoption of the NFU policy by India are as follows:

Figure 6.3

Probable Reasons for India’s NFU Policy

¹⁵³ Retrieved February 26, 2022, from <https://www.globalzero.org/no-first-use-faqs>

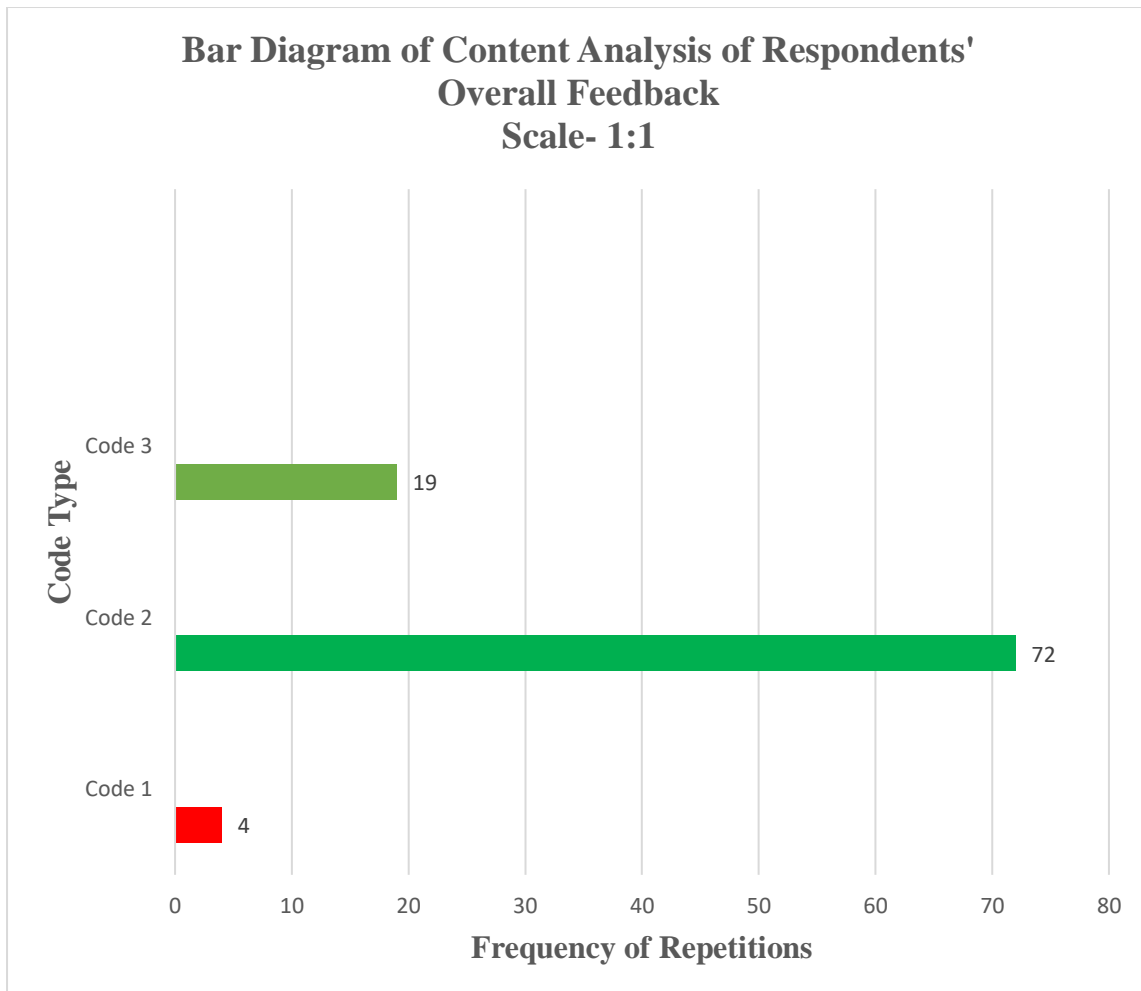
¹⁵⁴ Retrieved February 26, 2022, from <https://www.globalzero.org/no-first-use-faqs>



The above bar diagram in Figure 6.3 shows that 11.5 percent of respondents believe that international and domestic norms relating to nuclear taboos and violence exclusively influenced India's decision to go for the NFU policy. Furthermore, 63.5 percent believe it is the result of the influence of a number of factors. Thus, whichever way one looks at the NFU policy of India, there is an influence of normative factors on this decision.

Figure 6.4

Bar Diagram of Content Analysis of Respondent's Overall Feedback



Code 1= Role of political leadership and strategic experts

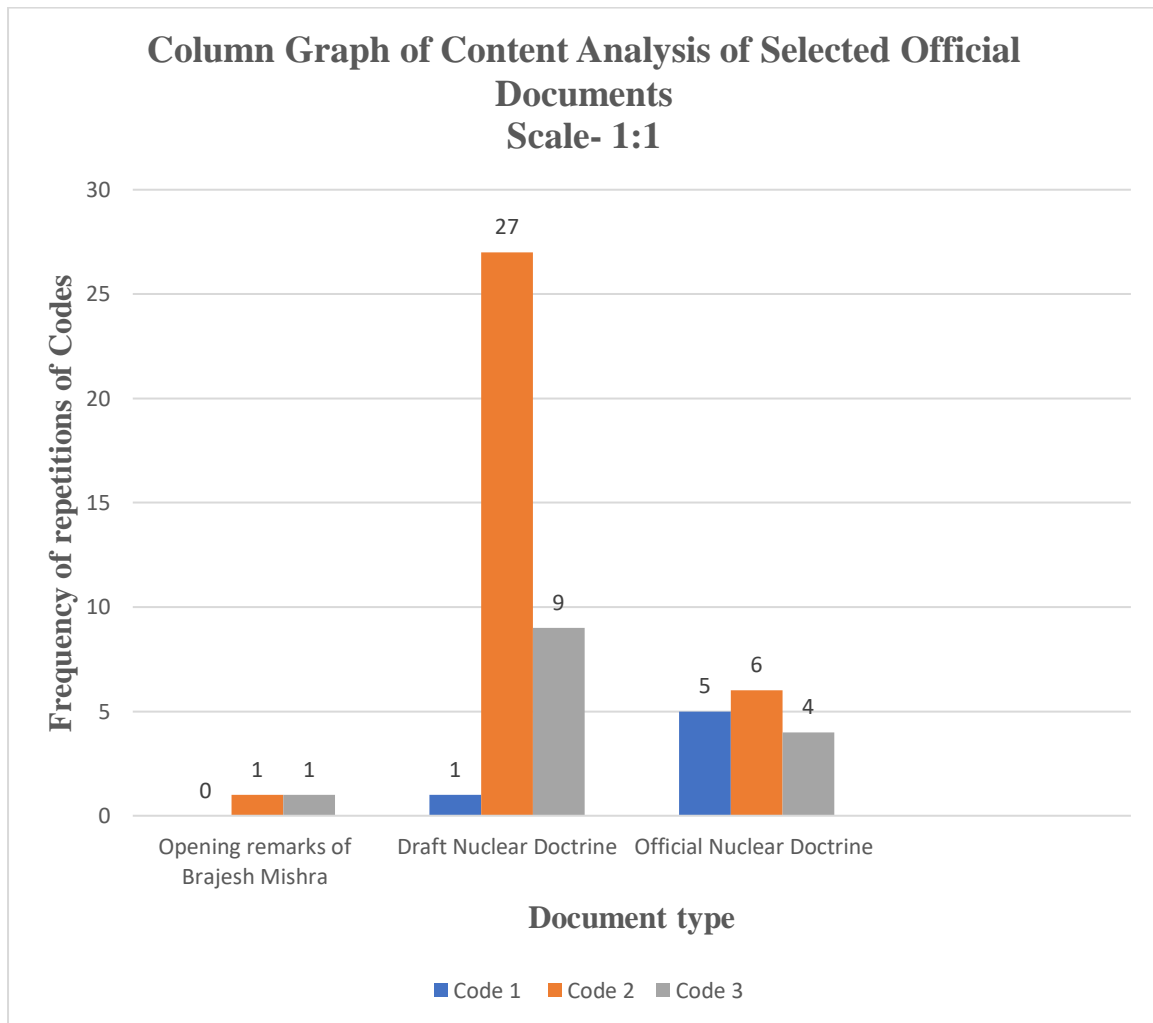
Code 2= Role geopolitical and strategic factors

Code 3= Role of normative factors

A content analysis of the respondents' overall feedback, as shown in Figure 6.4, also reveals that while strategic factors turned out to be the most important individual factor behind the NFU policy of India, normative factors had a role in India's decision to adopt the NFU policy.

Figure 6.5

Column Graph of Content Analysis of Selected Official Documents



Code 1= Role of political leadership and strategic experts

Code 2= Role geopolitical and strategic factors

Code 3= Role of normative factors

The above column graph of content analysis (Figure 6.5) of selected documents relating to the NFU policy of India also suggests the influence of normative factors behind the NFU policy of India apart from depicting strategic issues as the predominant factor that led India to go for the NFU policy.

6.4.2. Content Analysis of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha Questions on Nuclear Issues Posed to the Ministry of External Affairs

Through an analysis of the data of the repository of the Ministry of External Affairs, India, it was found that from July 15, 2004, to July 21, 2022, a total of 148 questions on nuclear issues were made to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Of these, 7 questions were related to the NFU policy, the nuclear doctrine of India or Pakistan. The analysis showed that Code 2 (strategic and geopolitical factors) has 1 repetition and Code 3 (normative factors) has 3 repetitions.

During the same period, 124 questions on nuclear issues were made to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in the Lok Sabha. Of these, 7 questions were related to the NFU policy, the nuclear doctrine of India or Pakistan. However, the content analysis revealed that the answers were not explicitly related to the reasons behind India's adoption of the NFU policy. The analysis showed that Code 2 (strategic and geopolitical factors) has 11 repetitions, and Code 3 (normative factors) has 12 repetitions.

Table 6.1

Content Analysis of Rajya Sabha Questions on Nuclear Issues Posed to the Ministry of External Affairs

Year	No. of Rajya Sabha Questions to MEA on nuclear issues	No. of Questions and Answers on NFU/ Nuclear Doctrine of India or Pakistan/ Nuclear Policy	Nuclear Disarmament	Code C1	Code C2	Code C3
Till July 21, 2022	01	01		-	-	-
2021	-					
2020	-					
2019	-					
2018	03					
2017	02		01			
2016	05	01		-	-	-
2015	10					
2014	09		02			

2013	05		02			
2012	03	01		-	-	-
2011	10					
2010	06		01			
2009	02					
2008	09					
2007	11					
2006	19					
2005	12		01			
2004	02					
2003	10	01		-	01	01
2002	07	02	01			01
2001	10					
2000	15	01	01	-	-	01
Total	148	07	09		01	03

(Source: Compilation from the Reports of the Database of the Media Center, Ministry of External Affairs, India.)

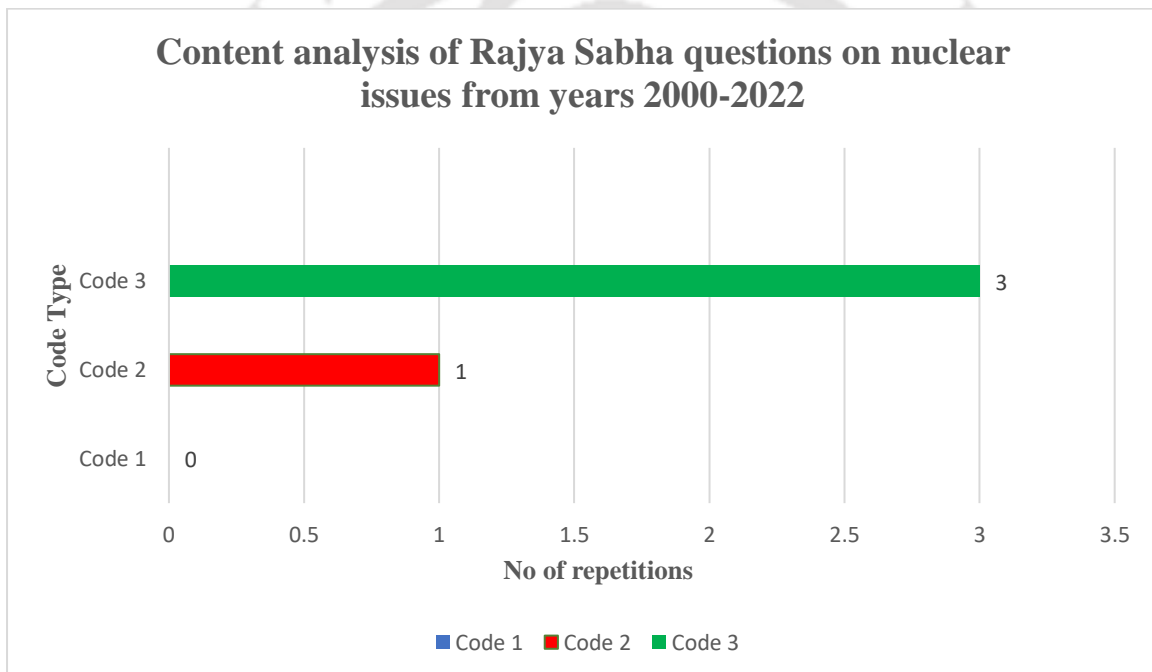
Code 1= Role of political leadership and strategic experts

Code 2= Role geopolitical and strategic factors

Code 3= Role of normative factors

Figure 6.6

Content Analysis of Rajya Sabha Questions on Nuclear Issues from Years 2000-2022



Code 1= Role of political leadership and strategic experts

Code 2= Role geopolitical and strategic factors

Code 3= Role of normative factors

Table 6.2

Content Analysis of Lok Sabha Questions on Nuclear Issues Posed to the Ministry of External Affairs

Year	No. of Lok Sabha Questions to MEA on nuclear issues	No of Questions and answers on NFU/ Nuclear Doctrine of India or Pakistan/ Nuclear disarmament	Nuclear Disarmament	Code C1	Code C2	Code C3
2022	-					
2021	-					
2020	01	01		-	-	-
2019	01		01	-	-	-
2018	02			-	-	-
2017	05					01
2016	07	01				01
2015	07					

2014	07		-	-	-	-
2013	07	-	-	-	-	-
2012	05	01	-	-	-	-
2011	08	-	-	-	-	-
2010	13		02			02
2009	01	-			-	-
2008	07		01 *			
2007	06			-	-	-
2006	11	-	-	-	-	-
2005	12	-	-	-	-	-
2004	01	01	-	-	-	-
2003	04	-	-	-	-	-
2002	05	02	01			02
2001	07	02	02		01	01
2000	14	09	04		10	05
Total	124	17	11		11	12

(Source: Compilation from the Reports of the Database of the Media Center, Ministry of External Affairs, India.)

Code 1= Role of political leadership and strategic experts

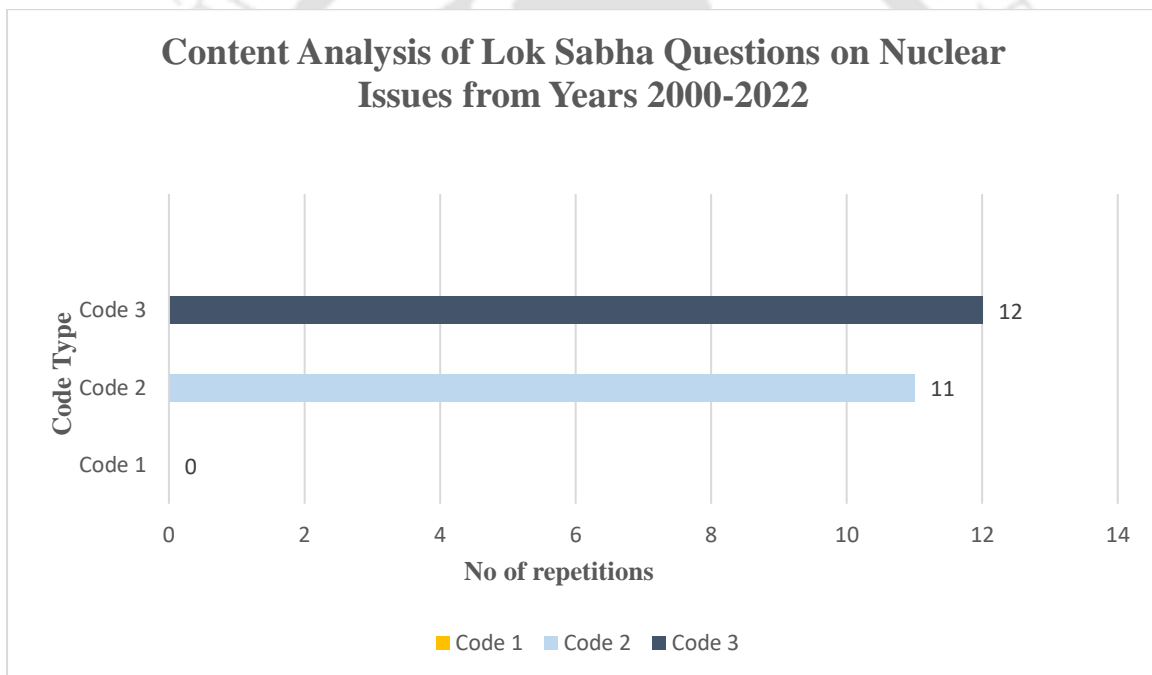
Code 2= Role geopolitical and strategic factors

Code 3= Role of normative factors

*= related to non-proliferation

Figure 6.7

Content Analysis of Lok Sabha Questions on Nuclear Issues from Years 2000-2022



Code 1= Role of political leadership and strategic experts

Code 2= Role geopolitical and strategic factors

Code 3= Role of normative factors

6.4.3. Content Analysis of Selected Books and Articles¹⁵⁵

Table 6.3

Content Analysis of Selected Books and Articles

	CODE 1	CODE 2	CODE 3
Total	63	87	48

Code 1= Role of political leadership and strategic experts

Code 2= Role geopolitical and strategic factors

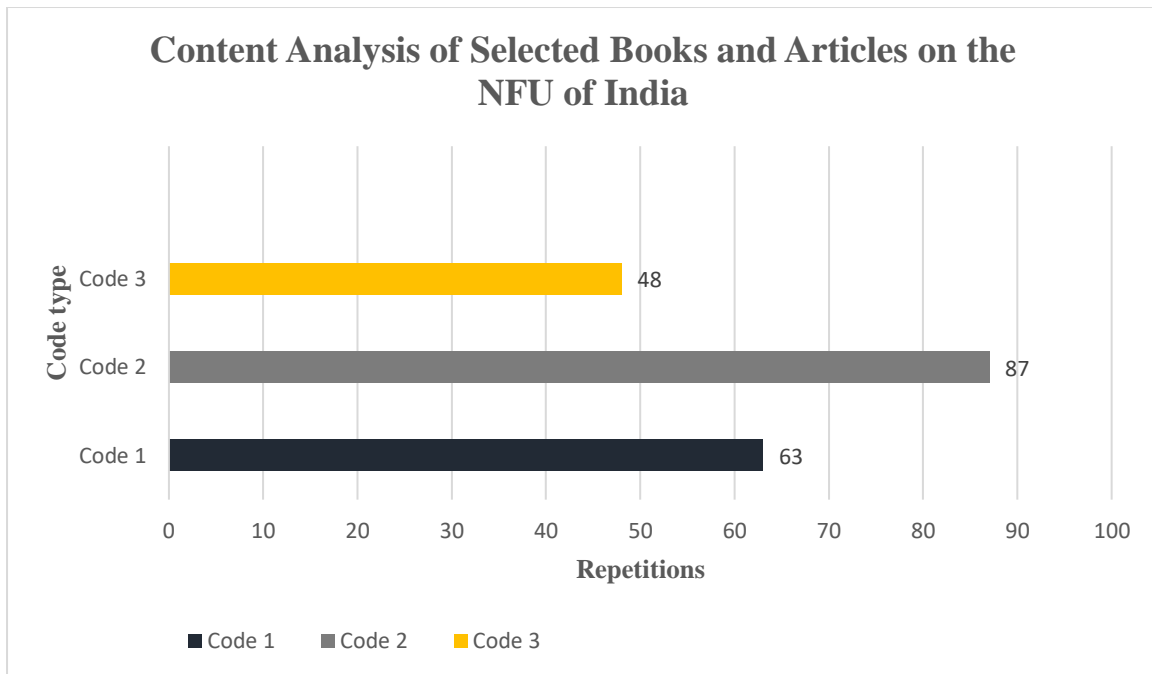
Code 3= Role of normative factors

A content analysis of selected books and articles shows that Code 1 has 63 repetitions, Code 2 has 87 repetitions, and Code 3 has 48 repetitions. It can be represented through bar diagrams as follows:

Figure 6.8

Bar Diagram of Content Analysis of Selected Books and Articles

¹⁵⁵ A table of content analysis of selected books and articles and a reference list of sources used for content analysis is given in the Appendix.



Code 1= Role of political leadership and strategic experts

Code 2= Role geopolitical and strategic factors

Code 3= Role of normative factors

Thus, the analysis showed a mixed result indicating the interplay of multiple factors behind the NFU policy of India.

6.4.4. *NFU Policy and India's Image of a Responsible Nuclear Weapon State*

India's decision to go for the NFU policy may also be driven by its efforts to project itself as a responsible nuclear weapon state that respects global nuclear norms. A researcher commented, "*It was a policy to send an impression that Nuclear India does not favour*

*aggression or coercion. It was a great global public opinion making exercise.”*¹⁵⁶ A senior consultant of a global NGO working for nuclear disarmament also lent a similar opinion with a caveat in this way:

*In my view, declaring a “No First Use” policy was, in large part, an attempt to regain the lost moral high ground by portraying India as a “responsible” nuclear-armed state. Of course, there is no such thing. Nonetheless, having a “No First Use” policy is better than not having one, although it’s always an open question as to whether that policy would be enforced under all circumstances.*¹⁵⁷

The definition of a ‘responsible’ nuclear state may vary. Nevertheless, it has been used here to mean a state committed to the goals of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, non-use, and no first use of nuclear weapons. This assertion is verified by statements of various scholars, political leaders, and strategic experts. Nina Tannenwald (2021) noted that India’s NFU policy can be partially explained by its efforts to reduce rivalry with Pakistan. She added, “India has also successfully wielded its NFU policy as a diplomatic tool to signal that it is a responsible nuclear power, a notion that Indian leaders leveraged to achieve the U.S.-India nuclear deal signed in 2008.”¹⁵⁸

India has codified the nuclear taboo by including the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine (Tannenwald, 2021). Strategic logic alone cannot account for the NFU policy of India. Tannenwald (2021) observed that one could trace normative concerns in India’s nuclear policy

¹⁵⁶ Questionnaire response on May 15, 2022.

¹⁵⁷ Questionnaire response on June 16, 2022.

¹⁵⁸ Retrieved August 14, 2021, from <https://www.stimson.org/2021/23-years-of-nonuse/>

during the regime of several Indian Prime Ministers from the Congress Party like Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Morarji Desai, and Manmohan Singh.¹⁵⁹

She also pointed out, “India has generally held the taboo — it continues to maintain an NFU policy, it has typically maintained restraint in conflicts, and has a long-standing domestic discourse about nuclear policy that includes moral and normative aspects” (Tannenwald, 2021).¹⁶⁰ She added, “It is clear that the taboo matters to some Indian leaders (some of whom internalized it, such as Nehru and perhaps Singh) and others for reasons of reputational concerns” (Tannenwald, 2021).¹⁶¹

The nuclear decision-makers believed that adopting the FU policy would have set a bad precedent for future times. Kamath (2009) noted that the NFU policy of India is “logically and philosophically indicative of policy of restraint in the use of WMD” (p.145). This effort of India has gradually started paying off dividends. The countries that were initially harsh on India for going nuclear and imposed sanctions against it softened their stance. Several countries have already started civilian nuclear deals with India. The Indo-US nuclear deal is one such coveted deal. For a country like India that has refused to sign NPT, this deal is nothing less than a success to be reckoned with for times to come.

6.5. Pitfalls of the Normative Logic

Normative logic (including the social construction of violence of the use of nuclear weapons) is by itself not enough to explain the NFU policy of India. The role of strategic factors must be considered because it is hard to imagine that normative factors solely influence the

¹⁵⁹ Retrieved August 14, 2021, from <https://www.stimson.org/2021/23-years-of-nonuse/>

¹⁶⁰ Retrieved August 14, 2021, from <https://www.stimson.org/2021/23-years-of-nonuse/>

¹⁶¹ Retrieved August 14, 2021, from <https://www.stimson.org/2021/23-years-of-nonuse/>

NFU policy of India. Respondent's views discussed above reveal that among all the factors, the strategic factors have been assigned higher importance (13.5 percent), followed by normative factors and the norms against the violence of use of nuclear weapons (11.5 percent) and the role of political leaders and strategic experts (11.5 percent). Furthermore, a content analysis of the selected books and articles revealed the role of all three factors in varying degrees in the inclusion of the NFU policy of India.

Thus, a combination of strategic, normative factors, political leadership, and strategic experts can best explain the reasons behind India's adoption of the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. Basrur (2001) put it elegantly that while Indian strategic culture recognises the importance of power in this world order regulated by anarchy, parallelly, it also deemed nuclear weapons as "morally unacceptable and detrimental to security" of their inherent risks (p. 184).

Existing literature and the analysis made in the Chapter also reflect that while the nuclear taboo has emerged purely out of moralistic and humanistic concerns, the same cannot be said about the NFU policy. Only two nations have adhered to the NFU policy itself, which testifies that the NFU policy has not become a global norm like the nuclear taboo. The NFU as a norm probably has a long way to go to become a global norm. The nuclear taboo and non-use of nuclear weapons are more powerful and successful norms than the NFU policy. The NFU policy is thus can be considered a loose or incipient norm. Secondly, the evidence from India suggests that the NFU policy is also influenced by strategic factors, political leadership, and strategic experts. Thirdly, the NFU policy remains a nuclear taboo at the level of application of nuclear policy, whereas it is still not seen as a taboo if adopted as a declaratory nuclear policy or the posture of a country in its nuclear doctrine.

One can find counternarratives of the normative Gandhian legacy that is believed to have influenced India's nuclear policy. To give an example, Bharat Karnad (2005) stated, "The

traditional Indian statecraft, built around the concepts of ready use of force, expediency and amorality are, in fact, in sharp contrast to Gandhi's teachings" (p.3). Karnad acknowledged the influence of Gandhi on India's national security policy, but he is highly sarcastic about that legacy. He called Gandhi's legacy 'confused and confusing' (Karnad, 2005, p.2) because Gandhi tweaked his moral positions in tune with the political exigencies. Karnad observed that this ambiguity had an impact on Nehru's policy as well. Karnad also invoked the concept of *moralpolitik* to describe how India handles its national security. *Moralpolitik*, he stated, means "the aggressive use of morality to advance national interests" (Karnad, 2005, p.2).

6.6. Summary

This Chapter shows that one can find certain normative assertions and influences in India's nuclear policy and doctrine. As far as India's decision to adopt an NFU policy is concerned, normative dimensions are also important. India's foreign policy since Nehru's days has emphasised ideals like non-violence, non-aggression, and non-interference. This emphasis had an impact on India's nuclear policymaking, its nuclear doctrine, and the NFU policy. India's has always been advocating global nuclear disarmament. After acquiring nuclear weapons, India tried to project itself as a responsible nuclear weapons state. All these has an influential role in shaping India's decision to adopt the NFU policy.

The NFU policy might have flowed from the nuclear taboo against nuclear weapons and the non-use norm. In this light, it can be argued that the NFU policy is not just a strategy, it can also be interpreted as a loose or incipient norm against the violence of the first use of nuclear weapons. The Chapter also shows that the strategic logic of deterrence, though important, is not enough to explain India's choice of the NFU policy. Furthermore, the normative logic, despite its pitfalls, can supplement the strategic explanations of the NFU policy of India.

That different nuclear nations have adopted different stances against nuclear weapons reflects that the norms against violence of first use of nuclear weapons are social constructions dictated by their national interests, respect for norms, and a sense of being a responsible nuclear power, among others. Furthermore, the fact that only India and China have adopted the NFU policy in their nuclear doctrine and Russia and China have an NFU arrangement among themselves proves that the NFU policy as a norm against first use of nuclear weapons is a social construction and depends on the individual preferences of the states. Probably, all norms face contestation at the beginning. Some states resist change and want to maintain the status quo. Contestation going around the NFU policy is the need of the hour because that is how a norm tries to entrench itself by proving its efficacy.

Any attempt to explain India's NFU policy with the help of a single factor will not be a complete picture. While strategic logic is relatively a more important factor than others, it is incomplete. The normative dimension, the social construction of norms against violence perspective, and the role of political leaders and strategic experts supplement the strategic logic.

CHAPTER 7

Summary

The NFU policy of nuclear weapons has been a central element of India's nuclear doctrine. It has generated a great deal of debate about India's nuclear doctrine and posture in policymaking and academic circles. The NFU policy has supporters and critics both within and outside India. However, the existing literature has not sufficiently explored the factors or influences behind the underlying rationale for adopting the NFU policy in India's nuclear doctrine. To bridge the gap, the present study explored what determined India's decision to go for an NFU policy of nuclear weapons. To that end, it examined the probable factors, actors, strategies, and norms that may have influenced India's decision to adopt the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. This concluding Chapter will attempt to summarise the key arguments and the findings of the thesis. The Chapter will also highlight the limitations and further implications of this study.

Chapter 1 of the thesis discussed the brief background, rationale, objective, research questions, concepts, methodology, and study plan. Chapter 2 pointed out what existing literature says about the NFU policy of India and the gaps therein. Though the NFU policy of India has been widely discussed and debated, there has not been much in-depth discussion on the causes behind its adoption in the extant literature. It was also found that the existing literature mostly points to strategic factors as the prime driver of the NFU policy of India. Very few sources (sometimes indirectly) stress the influence of political leaders and strategic factors and the role of normative factors behind India's decision to adopt the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. These two factors appear in cursory form in most discussions. Furthermore, there have also not been sufficient discussions on whether the NFU policy could be seen as a socially

constructed 'norm' against the violence of the first use of nuclear weapons. From the literature review, three assumptions were formulated, and the subsequent chapters attempted to examine the veracity of each of these assumptions. First, the NFU policy of India may be influenced by the role of political leaders and strategic experts; second, the NFU policy of India may be influenced by strategic and geopolitical factors; third, the NFU policy of India may be influenced by normative factors. These assumptions are examined in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Chapter 3 of the thesis delineated a historical overview of the NFU policy of India. It also delved into the evolution of India's nuclear doctrine, the journey from the draft nuclear doctrine to India's official nuclear doctrine. It analysed the key features of the Draft Nuclear Doctrine (DND) and the Official Nuclear Doctrine. The Chapter revealed that much planning and thought went into implementing the NFU policy in India's nuclear doctrine. Chapter 4 of the thesis highlighted and examined how several key political personalities and strategic experts shaped the NFU policy of India. Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the central political figure who shaped India's post-Pokhran II nuclear strategy. Vajpayee converted the NFU policy of India into a well-documented policy and posture in the country's nuclear doctrine. The statements he made after the tests were crucial in shaping the structure of the DND. The official nuclear doctrine was also adopted during his tenure as the Prime Minister of India. Vajpayee sought to lessen the concerns of the internal community about the new nuclear India through his assurance of the NFU policy in his various interviews with foreign media and platforms. He tried to give the impression that India knows how and when to use nuclear weapons. It must be borne in mind that the predecessors and successors of Vajpayee also contributed in various ways towards the nuclear India of today and its policies. India's nuclear policy reflects both continuity and change. This Chapter also showed that strategic experts like K. Subrahmanyam and General K. Sundarji were also instrumental in creating an ambience for discussing nuclear doctrine and the NFU policy for India in policymaking and academic circles. Their various

writings laid the foundation of early doctrinal thought and debate concerning the NFU policy in India.

Chapter 5 examined the role of strategic factors in influencing India's decision to adopt the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. The analysis in the Chapter revealed that strategic factors played a predominant role in the NFU policy of India. Compared to the other individual factors (like the role of political leadership, strategic community, and norms), strategic factors have been singled out as the more influential ones by the respondents. Furthermore, the content analysis of three crucial documents relating to the NFU policy of India corroborates the influence and importance of the strategic factors, among others. However, the analysis also validates this argument that strategic factors alone could not be assigned as the sole reason behind the NFU policy of India.

Chapter 6 explored the normative factors that might have a bearing on India's decision to adopt the NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine. The traditional thrust of India's foreign policy since Nehru's days on ideals like non-violence, non-aggression, and non-interference had an impact on India's nuclear doctrine and the NFU policy. India's long-standing support for global nuclear disarmament and to project itself as a responsible nuclear weapons state also shaped its decision to adopt the NFU policy. The Chapter also showed that the NFU policy might have flowed from the nuclear taboo against nuclear weapons, the non-use norm, and the general abhorrence towards the violence of the use of nuclear weapons. In this light, the NFU policy can also be interpreted as a loose or incipient 'norm' against the violence of the first use of nuclear weapons. It is a loose norm in the sense that only two states have formally declared NFU policies in their nuclear doctrines.

While the analysis of the questionnaire feedback discussed in Chapter 5 shows that the strategic factors stand out as the most crucial factor behind this decision, Chapters 4 and 6

reveal that the decision to adopt the NFU policy was the result of a combination of factors. Secondly, strategic factors alone are insufficient to explain India's NFU policy and the role of political leaders, and strategic experts and normative factors must also be taken into account.

Thus, five central observations can be drawn from this study: —

First, the NFU policy of India is the result of the mixed influence of a number of factors. The analysis shows that 11.5 percent of the questionnaire respondents attribute the decision to adopt the NFU policy to international and domestic norms, nuclear taboo and violence, 13.5 percent to geopolitical and strategic factors, 11.5 percent to political leaders and strategic experts, and 63.5 percent to all of these factors. Thus, the NFU policy of India can be seen as a manifestation of the interplay of these three factors.

Second, among the individual factors, the strategic factors (Code 2) turned out to be a relatively more important factor that led India to adopt this policy (13.5 percent), followed by normative factors (Code 3=11.5 percent) and the role of political leaders and strategic experts (Code 1=11.5 percent). This roughly translates into Code 2 > Code 3 ≥ Code 1. A content analysis of the overall feedback of the respondents reveals that the role of strategic factors (Code 2) has 72 repetitions, followed by the role of normative factors (Code 3) with 19 repetitions and the role of political leadership and strategic experts (Code 1) with 4 repetitions). Thus, Code 2 > Code 3 > Code 1.

Third, a content analysis of 3 selected documents relating to the NFU policy of India revealed that Code 1 (the role of political leaders and strategic experts) has six repetitions, Code 2 (the strategic factors) has 35 repetitions, and Code 3 (normative factors) has 14 repetitions¹⁶². Furthermore, a content analysis of selected books and articles on the NFU policy of India

¹⁶² Each repetition has been counted.

indicated that Code 1 (the role of political leaders and strategic experts) has 63 appearances¹⁶³, Code 2 (the strategic factors) has 87 appearances, and Code 3 (normative factors) has 48 appearances. The results revealed the dominance of Code 2 (the strategic factors) but indicated that Code 1 (the role of political leaders and strategic experts) and Code 3 (normative factors) also have a role in shaping the NFU policy of India.

Fourth, despite its importance, the strategic factors alone cannot explain the NFU policy of India. Any effort to explain this policy must bring on board the role of political leaders and strategic experts and the norm against the violence of nuclear weapons.

Fifth, the NFU policy of nuclear weapons is a social construction. It is a socially constructed 'loose' or incipient norm against the violence of the use of nuclear weapons. It is not a full-fledged norm because only two nuclear states have adhered to this in their respective nuclear doctrines and postures. Rather than supplanting, the social construction of norms against the violence of the use of nuclear weapons seeks to supplement the strategic logic of the NFU policy. It also shows how realism and constructivism may come together to explain real-world problems of national security and decision-making.

Thus, the thesis argues that any attempt at explaining the NFU policy of India with the help of a single factor will not be a complete picture. While strategic logic is the relatively more important factor, it is incomplete in itself. The normative dimension, the social construction of norms against violence perspective, and the role of political leaders and strategic experts supplement the strategic logic.

Despite some limitations, such as the lack of substantive archival materials on the NFU policy of India due to the prevailing declassification policy of India, the nuclear issue being a

¹⁶³ It has been analysed whether the Code appeared at least in one instance in the source.

national security issue, the reluctance shown by government officials to divulge information about the NFU policy of India, the content analysis could not be done substantively due to the unavailability of some data during the research period of the study, small sample size, a comprehensive comparative study could not be conducted, this study nevertheless throws new insights to look at the NFU policy of India in terms of policy implications. First of all, it helps to fill an important gap in the existing literature that has largely tended to provide only strategic arguments and explanations behind the rationale of the NFU policy of India. It attempts to show that the NFU policy of India can also be seen from the angles of the influence of political leadership and strategic experts and the norm against the violence of the first use of nuclear weapons. It shows that any holistic attempt at explaining the NFU policy of India must look into all the factors, namely leadership, strategy, and norms, rather than stressing a single point.

Secondly, the study also opens avenues for further research on the social construction of norms against the violence of the use of nuclear weapons. Along with the realist elements, this perspective can help explain several real-world problems and phenomena of international relations.

Thirdly, this study on the NFU policy of India also throws light on how India exercises and implements its nuclear policymaking. It throws a vista to understanding the modus operandi of nuclear policymaking by highlighting the key actors and institutions that shape nuclear policymaking in India. The study shows that strategy and strategic factors alone do not determine and define a nation's nuclear decisions and policymaking. Leadership, institutions, and norms also have a crucial role in this.

The NFU policy was included in the draft nuclear doctrine in 1999 and the official nuclear doctrine in 2003. Thus, around two decades have elapsed since the implementation of the official nuclear doctrine of India that contains an NFU policy of nuclear weapons. It was

former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, under whose regime the NFU policy was formally implemented in India's nuclear doctrine. Successive Prime Ministers Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi continued this policy. While reviewing the nuclear doctrine would be fruitful, abandoning this policy is not in India's interest. The NFU policy has acted as an effective instrument of nuclear deterrence. It brings about nuclear stability and peace. In the long run, the NFU policy can usher gradually toward global nuclear disarmament. In this context, countries like India and China act as the norm entrepreneurs of the NFU policy. Furthermore, an in-depth comparative study of the NFU policy of India and China would be a good potential future research study. This policy can be a rallying point or a common denominator for the nuclear abolitionists and nuclear supporters, realists, and constructivists.



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APPENDICES

Appendix I

Opening Remarks by National Security Adviser Mr. Brajesh Mishra at the Release of Draft Indian Nuclear Doctrine

August 17, 1999

Ladies & Gentlemen,

I am happy to present to you the draft of the Nuclear Doctrine prepared by the National Security Board. A copy has been placed in each of the seats in the hall. We have decided to make this document public in keeping with our position in favour of greater transparency in decision-making. Please note that this is a draft proposed by the NSAB and has not yet been approved by the Government. That will have to wait until after the general elections.

As our thinking on the nuclear tests has been fairly well publicised, I do not intend to go over the ground again. Suffice it to say that this was a step necessitated by the security environment and our need to ensure for ourselves the element of strategic autonomy in decision making which we will need in the coming years. Our position has all along been that global security would be enhanced by the universal elimination of all nuclear weapons, and this remains our conviction today. Unfortunately, the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1995 was in the reverse direction.

Our nuclear weapons are not country-specific but, as I mentioned earlier, are aimed at providing us the autonomy of exercising strategic choices in the best interest of our country, without fear or coercion in a nuclearised environment. That being so, we have adopted a policy of minimum deterrence as the basic building block of our nuclear thinking. Minimum but credible deterrence is the watchword of our nuclear doctrine. From this, flows the decision to adopt a no-first-use posture. We have therefore given unconditional guarantees to States that do not have nuclear weapons, or are not aligned with nuclear weapon powers.

A cardinal principle regarding the use of nuclear weapons is that of civilian control. Only the elected civilian leader of the country is empowered to authorise the use of nuclear weapons. As the recent operations in Kargil have demonstrated, our system and the political leadership, believe with great responsibility and restraint, as you would expect from the largest democracy in the world. This sense of responsibility will also guide our actions with regard to nuclear weapons.

With these words, I have great pleasure in releasing the document for public discussion and debate.

[**Source:** MEA. Retrieved January 31, 2020, from <https://www.mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?18915/opening+remarks+by+national+security+adviser+mr+brajesh+mishra+at+the+release+of+draft+indian+nuclear+doctrine->]

Appendix II

Draft Report of National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine

August 17, 1999

1. Preamble

1. The use of nuclear weapons in particular as well as other weapons of mass destruction constitutes the gravest threat to humanity and to peace and stability in the international system. Unlike the other two categories of weapons of mass destruction, biological and chemical weapons which have been outlawed by international treaties, nuclear weapons remain instruments for national and collective security, the possession of which on a selective basis has been sought to be legitimised through permanent extension of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) in May 1995. Nuclear weapon states have asserted that they will continue to rely on nuclear weapons with some of them adopting policies to use them even in a non-nuclear context. These developments amount to virtual abandonment of nuclear disarmament. This is a serious setback to the struggle of the international community to abolish weapons of mass destruction.
2. India's primary objective is to achieve economic, political, social, scientific and technological development within a peaceful and democratic framework. This requires an environment of durable peace and insurance against potential risks to peace and stability. It will be India's endeavour to proceed towards this overall objective in cooperation with the global democratic trends and to play a constructive role in advancing the international system toward a just, peaceful and equitable order.

3. Autonomy of decision making in the developmental process and in strategic matters is an inalienable democratic right of the Indian people. India will strenuously guard this right in a world where nuclear weapons for a select few are sought to be legitimised for an indefinite future, and where there is growing complexity and frequency in the use of force for political purposes.
4. India's security is an integral component of its development process. India continuously aims at promoting an ever-expanding area of peace and stability around it so that developmental priorities can be pursued without disruption.
5. However, the very existence of offensive doctrine pertaining to the first use of nuclear weapons and the insistence of some nuclear weapons states on the legitimacy of their use even against non-nuclear weapon countries constitute a threat to peace, stability and sovereignty of states.
6. This document outlines the broad principles for the development, deployment and employment of India's nuclear forces. Details of policy and strategy concerning force structures, deployment and employment of nuclear forces will flow from this framework and will be laid down separately and kept under constant review.

2. Objectives

1. In the absence of global nuclear disarmament India's strategic interests require effective, credible nuclear deterrence and adequate retaliatory capability should deterrence fail. This is consistent with the UN Charter, which sanctions the right of self-defence.
2. The requirements of deterrence should be carefully weighed in the design of Indian nuclear forces and in the strategy to provide for a level of capability

consistent with maximum credibility, survivability, effectiveness, safety and security.

3. India shall pursue a doctrine of credible minimum nuclear deterrence. In this policy of "retaliation only", the survivability of our arsenal is critical. This is a dynamic concept related to the strategic environment, technological imperatives and the needs of national security. The actual size components, deployment and employment of nuclear forces will be decided in the light of these factors. India's peacetime posture aims at convincing any potential aggressor that:

(a) any threat of use of nuclear weapons against India shall invoke measures to counter the threat: and (b) any nuclear attack on India and its forces shall result in punitive retaliation with nuclear weapons to inflict damage unacceptable to the aggressor.

4. The fundamental purpose of Indian nuclear weapons is to deter the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons by any State or entity against India and its forces. India will not be the first to initiate a nuclear strike, but will respond with punitive retaliation should deterrence fail.

5. India will not resort to the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against States which do not possess nuclear weapons, or are not aligned with nuclear weapon powers.

6. Deterrence requires that India maintain

(a) Sufficient, survivable and operationally prepared nuclear forces,

(b) a robust command and control system,

(c) effective intelligence and early warning capabilities, and

(d) comprehensive planning and training for operations in line with the

strategy, and

(e) the will to employ nuclear forces and weapons

7. Highly effective conventional military capabilities shall be maintained to raise the threshold of outbreak both of conventional military conflict as well as that of threat or use of nuclear weapons.

3. Nuclear Forces

1. India's nuclear forces will be effective, enduring, diverse, flexible, and responsive to the requirements in accordance with the concept of credible minimum deterrence. These forces will be based on a triad of aircraft, mobile land-based missiles and sea-based assets in keeping with the objectives outlined above. Survivability of the forces will be enhanced by a combination of multiple redundant systems, mobility, dispersion and deception.
2. The doctrine envisages assured capability to shift from peacetime deployment to fully employable forces in the shortest possible time, and the ability to retaliate effectively even in a case of significant degradation by hostile strikes.

4. Credibility and Survivability

The following principles are central to India's nuclear deterrent:

1. **Credibility:** Any adversary must know that India can and will retaliate with sufficient nuclear weapons to inflict destruction and punishment that the aggressor will find unacceptable if nuclear weapons are used against India and its forces.
2. **Effectiveness:** The efficacy of India's nuclear deterrent be maximised through synergy among all elements involving reliability, timeliness, accuracy and weight of the attack.
3. **Survivability**

- I. India's nuclear forces and their command and control shall be organised for very high survivability against surprise attacks and for rapid punitive response. They shall be designed and deployed to ensure survival against a first strike and to endure repetitive attrition attempts with adequate retaliatory capabilities for a punishing strike which would be unacceptable to the aggressor.
- II. Procedures for the continuity of nuclear command and control shall ensure a continuing capability to effectively employ nuclear weapons.

5. **Command and Control**

1. Nuclear weapons shall be tightly controlled and released for use at the highest political level. The authority to release nuclear weapons for use resides in the person of the Prime Minister of India, or the designated successor(s).
2. An effective and survivable command and control system with requisite flexibility and responsiveness shall be in place. An integrated operational plan, or a series of sequential plans, predicated on strategic objectives and a targetting policy shall form part of the system.
3. For effective employment the unity of command and control of nuclear forces including dual capable delivery systems shall be ensured.
4. The survivability of the nuclear arsenal and effective command, control, communications, computing, intelligence and information (C412) systems shall be assured.

5. The Indian defence forces shall be in a position to, execute operations in an NBC environment with minimal degradation.
5. Space based and other assets shall be created to provide early warning, communications, damage/detonation assessment.
6. Security and Safety
 1. Security: Extraordinary precautions shall be taken to ensure that nuclear weapons, their manufacture, transportation and storage are fully guarded against possible theft, loss, sabotage, damage or unauthorised access or use.
 2. Safety is an absolute requirement and tamper proof procedures and systems shall be instituted to ensure that unauthorised or inadvertent activation/use of nuclear weapons does not take place and risks of accident are avoided.
 3. Disaster control: India shall develop an appropriate disaster control system capable of handling the unique requirements of potential incidents involving nuclear weapons and materials.
7. Research and Development
 1. India should step up efforts in research and development to keep up with technological advances in this field.
 2. While India is committed to maintain the deployment of a deterrent which is both minimum and credible, it will not accept any restraints on building its R&D capability.
8. Disarmament and Arms Control
 1. Global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament is a national security objective. India shall continue its efforts to achieve the goal of a nuclear weapon-free world at an early date.

2. Since no-first use of nuclear weapons is India's basic commitment, every effort shall be made to persuade other States possessing nuclear weapons to join an international treaty banning first use.
3. Having provided unqualified negative security assurances, India shall work for internationally binding unconditional negative security assurances by nuclear weapon states to non-nuclear weapon states.
4. Nuclear arms control measures shall be sought as part of national security policy to reduce potential threats and to protect our own capability and its effectiveness.
5. In view of the very high destructive potential of nuclear weapons, appropriate nuclear risk reduction and confidence building measures shall be sought, negotiated and instituted.

[Source: MEA. Retrieved January 31, 2020, from <https://www.mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?18916/draft+report+of+national+security+advisory+board+on+indian+nuclear+doctrine>]

Appendix III

The Cabinet Committee on Security Reviews operationalization of India's Nuclear Doctrine

January 04, 2003

1. The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) met today to review the progress in operationalizing of India's nuclear doctrine. The Committee decided that the following information, regarding the nuclear doctrine and operational arrangements governing India's nuclear assets, should be shared with the public.
2. India's nuclear doctrine can be summarized as follows:
 - I. Building and maintaining a credible minimum deterrent;
 - II. A posture of "No First Use": nuclear weapons will only be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian territory or on Indian forces anywhere;
 - III. Nuclear retaliation to a first strike will be massive and designed to inflict unacceptable damage.
 - IV. Nuclear retaliatory attacks can only be authorised by the civilian political leadership through the Nuclear Command Authority.
 - V. Non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states;
 - VI. However, in the event of a major attack against India, or Indian forces anywhere, by biological or chemical weapons, India will retain the option of retaliating with nuclear weapons;
 - VII. A continuance of strict controls on export of nuclear and missile related materials and technologies, participation in the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty negotiations, and continued observance of the moratorium on nuclear tests.

VIII. Continued commitment to the goal of a nuclear weapon free world, through global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.

3. The Nuclear Command Authority comprises a Political Council and an Executive Council. The Political Council is chaired by the Prime Minister. It is the sole body which can authorize the use of nuclear weapons.
4. The Executive Council is chaired by the National Security Advisor. It provides inputs for decision making by the Nuclear Command Authority and executes the directives given to it by the Political Council.
5. The CCS reviewed the existing command and control structures, the state of readiness, the targeting strategy for a retaliatory attack, and operating procedures for various stages of alert and launch. The Committee expressed satisfaction with the overall preparedness. The CCS approved the appointment of a Commander-in-Chief, Strategic Forces Command, to manage and administer all Strategic Forces.
6. The CCS also reviewed and approved the arrangements for alternate chains of command for retaliatory nuclear strikes in all eventualities.

New Delhi, January 4, 2003

[Source: MEA.

Retrieved February 8, 2020, from https://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/20131/The_Cabinet_Committee_on_Security_Reviews_perationalizati_on_of_Indias_Nuclear_Doctrine+Report+of+National+Security+Advisory+Board+on+I ndian+Nuclear+Doctrine]

Appendix IV

XII LOK SABHA DEBATES, Session II, (Budget)

Wednesday, May 27, 1998 / Jyaistha 6, 1920 (Saka)

Type of Debate: PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

Title: Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee laid a paper entitled “Evolution of India’s Nuclear Policy”.

TEXT:

1. On 11 May, a statement was issued by Government announcing that India had successfully carried out three underground nuclear tests at the Pokhran range. Two days later, after carrying out two more underground sub-kiloton tests, the Government announced the completion of the planned series of tests. The three underground nuclear tests carried out at 1545 hours on 11 May were with three different devices - a fission device, a low-yield sub-kiloton device and a thermonuclear device. The two tests carried out at 1221 hours on 13 May were also low-yield devices in the sub-kiloton range. The results from these tests have been in accordance with the expectations of our scientists.
2. In 1947, when India emerged as a free country to take its rightful place in the comity of nations, the nuclear age had already dawned. Our leaders then took the crucial decision to opt for self-reliance, and freedom of thought and action. We rejected the Cold War paradigm whose shadows were already appearing on the horizon and instead

of aligning ourselves with either bloc, chose the more difficult path of non-alignment. This has required the building up of national strength through our own resources, our skills and creativity and the dedication of the people. Among the earliest initiatives taken by our first Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, was the development of science and inculcation of the scientific spirit. It is this initiative that laid the foundation for the achievement of 11 and 13 May, made possible by exemplary cooperation among the scientists from Department of Atomic energy and Defence Research & Development Organisation. Disarmament was then and continues to be a major plank in our foreign policy now. It was, in essence, and remains still, the natural course for a country that had waged a unique struggle for independence on the basis of 'ahimsa' and 'Satyagraha'.

3. Development of nuclear technology transformed the nature of global security. Our leaders reasoned that nuclear weapons were not weapons of war, these were weapons of mass destruction. A nuclear-weapon-free-world would, therefore, enhance not only India's security but also the security of all nations. This is the principal plank of our nuclear policy. In the absence of universal and non-discriminatory disarmament, we cannot accept a regime that creates an arbitrary division between nuclear haves and have-nots. India believes that it is the sovereign right of every nation to make a judgement regarding its supreme national interests and exercise its sovereign choice. We subscribe to the principle of equal and legitimate security interests of nations and consider it a sovereign right. At the same time, our leaders recognised early that nuclear technology offers tremendous potential for economic development, especially for developing countries who are endeavouring to leap across the technology gaps created by long years of colonial exploitation. This thinking was reflected in the enactment of

the Atomic Energy Act of 1948, within a year of our independence. All the numerous initiatives taken by us since, in the field of nuclear disarmament have been in harmony and in continuation of those early enunciation.

4. In the 50's, nuclear weapons testing took place above ground and the characteristic mushroom cloud became the visible symbol of the nuclear age. India then took the lead in calling for an end to all nuclear weapon testing as the first step for ending the nuclear arms race. Addressing the Lok Sabha on 2 April, 1954, shortly after a major hydrogen bomb test had been conducted, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru stated that "nuclear, chemical and biological energy and power should not be used to forge weapons of mass destruction". He called for negotiations for prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons and in the interim, a standstill agreement to halt nuclear testing. The world had by then witnessed less than 65 tests. Our call was not heeded. In 1963, an agreement was concluded to ban atmospheric testing but by this time, countries had developed the technologies for conducting underground nuclear tests and the nuclear arms race continued unabated. More than three decades passed and after over 2000 tests had been conducted, a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was opened for signature in 1996, following two and a half years of negotiations in which India had participated actively. In its final shape, this Treaty left much to be desired. It was neither comprehensive nor was it related to disarmament.

5. In 1965, along with a small group of non-aligned countries, India had put forward the idea of an international non-proliferation agreement under which the nuclear weapon states would agree to give up their arsenals provided other countries refrained from

developing or acquiring such weapons. This balance of rights and obligations was absent when the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) emerged in 1968, almost 30 years ago. In the 60's our security concerns deepened. But such was our abhorrence of nuclear weapons and such our desire to avoid acquiring them that we sought instead security guarantees from major nuclear powers of the world. The countries we turned to for support and understanding felt unable to extend to us the assurances that we then sought. That is when and why India made clear its inability to sign the NPT.

6. The Lok Sabha debated the NPT on 5 April, 1968. The then Prime Minister, late Smt. Indira Gandhi assured the House that “we shall be guided entirely by our self-enlightenment and the considerations of national security”. She highlighted the shortcomings of the NPT whilst reemphasizing the country's commitment to nuclear disarmament. She warned the House and the country “that not signing the Treaty may bring the nation many difficulties. It may mean the stoppage of aid and stoppage of help. Since we are taking this decision together, we must all be together in facing its consequences”. That was a turning point. This House then strengthened the decision of the Government by reflecting a national consensus.
7. Our decision not to sign the NPT was in keeping with the basic objective of maintaining freedom of thought and action. In 1974, we demonstrated our nuclear capability. Successive Governments thereafter have continued to take all necessary steps in keeping with that resolve and national will, to safeguard India's nuclear option. This was also the primary reason underlying the 1996 decision in the country not subscribing to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); a decision that met the unanimous

approval of the House yet again. Our perception then was that subscribing to the CTBT would severely limit India's nuclear potential at an unacceptably low level. Our reservations deepened as the CTBT did not also carry forward the nuclear disarmament process. On both counts, therefore, yet again our security concerns remained unaddressed. The then Minister for External Affairs, Shri I.K Gujral had made clear the Government's reasoning to this House during the discussions on this subject in 1996.

8. The decades of the 80's and 90's meanwhile witnessed the gradual deterioration of our security environment as a result of nuclear and missile proliferation. In our neighbourhood, nuclear weapons increased and more sophisticated delivery systems were inducted. Further, in our region there has come into existence a pattern about clandestine acquisition of nuclear materials, missiles and related technologies. India, in this period, became the victim of externally aided and abetted terrorism, militancy and clandestine war through hired mercenaries.
9. The end of the Cold War marks a watershed in the history of the 20th century. While it has transformed the political landscape of Europe, it has done little to address India's security concerns. The relative order that was arrived at the Europe was not replicated in other parts of the globe.
10. At the global level, there is no evidence yet on the part of the nuclear weapon states to take decisive and irreversible steps in moving towards a nuclear-weapon-free-world. Instead, the NPT has been extended indefinitely and unconditionally, perpetuating the

existence of nuclear weapons in the hands of the five countries who are also permanent members of the UN Security Council. Some of these countries have doctrines that permit the first use of nuclear weapons; these countries are also engaged in programmes for modernisation of their nuclear arsenals.

11. Under such circumstances, India was left with little choice. It had to take necessary steps to ensure that the country's nuclear option, developed and safeguarded over decades not be permitted to erode by a voluntary self-imposed restraint. Indeed, such an erosion would have had an irretrievably adverse impact on our security. The Government was thus faced with a difficult decision. The only touchstone that guided it was national security. Tests conducted on 11 and 13 May are a continuation of the policies set into motion that put this country on the path of self-reliance and independence of thought and action. Nevertheless, there are certain moments when the chosen path reaches a fork and a decision has to be made. 1968 was one such moment in our nuclear chapter as were 1974 and 1996. At each of these moments, we took the right decision guided by national interest and supported by national consensus. 1998 was borne in the crucible of earlier decisions and made possible only because those decisions had been taken correctly in the past and in time.

12. At a time when developments in the area of advanced technologies are taking place at a breathtaking pace, new parameters need to be identified, tested and validated in order to ensure that skills remain contemporary and succeeding generations of scientists and engineers are able to build on the work done by their predecessors. The limited series of five tests undertaken by Indian was precisely such an exercise. It has achieved its

stated objective. The data provided by these tests is critical to validate our capabilities in the design of nuclear weapons of different yields for different applications and different delivery systems. Further, these tests have significantly enhanced the capabilities of our scientists and engineers in computer simulation of new designs and enabled them to undertake sub-critical experiments in future, if considered necessary. In terms of technical capability, our scientists and engineers have the requisite resources to ensure a credible deterrent.

13. Our policies towards our neighbours and other countries too have not changed; India remains fully committed to the promotion of peace with stability, and resolution of all outstanding issues through bilateral dialogue and negotiations. These tests were not directed against any country; these were intended to reassure the people of India about their security and convey determination that this Government, like previous Governments, has the capability and resolve to safeguard their national security interests. The Government will continue to remain engaged in substantive dialogue with our neighbours to improve relations and to expand the scope of our interactions in a mutually advantageous manner. Confidence building is a continuous process; we remain committed to it. Consequent upon the tests and arising from an insufficient appreciation of our security concerns, some countries have been persuaded to take steps that sadden us. We value our bilateral relations. We remain committed to dialogue and reaffirm that preservation of India's security create no conflict of interest with these countries.

14. India is a nuclear weapon state. This is a reality that cannot be denied. It is not a conferment that we seek; nor is it a status for others to grant. It is an endowment to the nation by our scientists and engineers. It is India's due, the right of one-sixth of human-kind. Our strengthened capability adds to our sense of responsibility; the responsibility and obligation of power. India, mindful of its international obligation, shall not use these weapons to commit aggression or to mount threats against any country; these are weapons of self-defence and to ensure that in turn, India is also not subjected to nuclear threats or coercion. In 1994, we had proposed that India and Pakistan jointly undertake not to be the first to use their nuclear capability against each other. The Government on this occasion, reiterates its readiness to discuss a "no-first-use" agreement with that country. As also with other countries bilaterally, or in a collective forum. India shall not engage in an arms race. India shall also not subscribe or reinvent the doctrines of the Cold War. India remains committed to the basic tenet of our foreign policy- a conviction that global elimination of nuclear weapons will enhance its security as well as that of the rest of the world. It will continue to urge countries, particularly other nuclear weapon states to adopt measures that would contribute meaningfully to such an objective.

15. A number of initiatives have been taken in the past. In 1978, India proposed negotiations for an international convention that would prohibit the use or threat of use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. This was followed by another initiative in 1982 calling for 'nuclear freeze' - a prohibition on production of fissile materials for weapons, on production of nuclear weapons and related delivery systems. In 1988, we put forward an Action Plan for phased elimination of all nuclear weapons within a specified time

frame. It is our regret that these proposals did not receive a positive response from other weapon states. Had their response been positive, India need not have gone for the current tests. This is where our approach to nuclear weapons is doctrine. It is marked by restraint and striving for the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

16. We will continue to support such initiatives, taken individually or collectively by the Non-Aligned Movement which has continued to attach the highest priority to nuclear disarmament. This was reaffirmed most recently, last week, at the NAM Ministerial meeting held at Cartagena which has "reiterated their call on the Conference on Disarmament to establish, as the highest priority, an ad hoc committee to start in 1998 negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons with a specified framework of time, including a Nuclear Weapons Convention. The collective voice of 113 NAM countries reflects an approach to global nuclear disarmament to which India has remained committed. One of the NAM member initiatives to which we attach great importance was the reference to the International Court of Justice resulting in the unanimous declaration from the ICJ, as part of the Advisory Opinion handed down on 8 July 1996, that "there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control". India was one of the countries that appealed to the ICJ on this issue. No other nuclear weapon state has supported this judgement; in fact, they have sought to decry its value. We have been and will continue to be in the forefront of the calls for opening negotiations for a Nuclear Weapons Convention, so that this challenge can be dealt with in the same manner that we have dealt with the scourge of two other weapons of mass destruction-

through the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. In keeping with our commitment to comprehensive, universal and non-discriminatory approaches to disarmament, India is an original State Party to both these Conventions. Accordingly, India will shortly submit the plan of destruction of its chemical weapons to the international authority-Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We fulfil our obligations whenever we undertake them.

17. Traditionally, India has been an outward looking country. Our strong commitment to multilateralism is reflected in our active participation in organisations like the United Nations. In recent years, in keeping with the Indian Ocean Rim-Association for Regional Cooperation and as a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum. This engagement will also continue. The policies of economic liberalisation introduced in recent years have increased our regional and global linkages and the Government shall deepen and strengthen these ties.
18. Our nuclear policy has been marked by restraint and openness. It has not violated any international agreements either in 1974 or now, in 1998. Our concerns have been made known to our interlocutors in recent years. The restraint exercised for 24 years, after having demonstrated our capability in 1974, is in itself a unique example. Restraint, however, has to arise from strength. It cannot be based upon indecision or doubt. Restraint is valid only when doubts are removed. The series of tests undertaken by India have led to the removal of doubts. The action involved was balanced in that it was the minimum necessary to maintain what is an irreducible component of our national

security calculus. This Government's decision has, therefore, to be seen as part of a tradition of restraint that has characterised our policy in the past 50 years.

19. Subsequent to the tests Government has already stated that India will now observe a voluntary moratorium and refrain from conducting underground nuclear test explosions. It has also indicated willingness to move towards a de-jure formalisation of this declaration. The basic obligation of the CTBT is thus met; to refrain from undertaking nuclear test explosions. This voluntary declaration is intended to convey to the international community the seriousness of our intent for meaningful engagement. Subsequent decisions will be taken after assuring ourselves of the security needs of the country.

20. India has also indicated readiness to participate in negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. The basic objective of this treaty is to prohibit future production of fissile materials for use in nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices. India's approach in these negotiations will be to ensure that this treaty emerges as a universal and non-discriminatory treaty, backed by an effective verification mechanism. When we embark on these negotiations, it shall be in the full confidence of the adequacy and credibility of the nation's weaponised nuclear deterrent.

21. India has maintained effective export controls on nuclear materials as well as related technologies even though we are neither a party to the NPT nor a member of the Nuclear

Suppliers' Group. Nonetheless, India is committed to non-proliferation and the maintaining of stringent export controls to ensure that there is no leakage of our indigenously developed know-how and technologies. In fact, India's conduct in this regard has been better than some countries party to the NPT.

22. India has in the past conveyed our concerns on the inadequacies of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. It has explained that the country was not in a position to join because the regime did not address our country's security concerns. These could have been addressed by moving towards global nuclear disarmament, our preferred approach. As this did not take place, India was obliged to stand aside from the emerging regime so that its freedom of action was not constrained. This is the precise path that has continued to be followed unwaveringly for the last three decades. That same constructive approach will underlie India's dialogue with countries that need to be persuaded of our serious intent and willingness to engage so that mutual concerns are satisfactorily addressed. The challenge to Indian statecraft is balancing and reconciling India's security imperatives with valid international concerns in this regard.

23. The House is aware of the different reactions that have emanated from the people of India and from different parts of the world. The overwhelming support of the citizens of India is a source of strength for the Government. It not only tells that this decision was right but also that the country wants a focussed leadership, which attends to national security needs. This the Government pledges to do as a sacred duty. The Government have also been greatly heartened by the outpouring of support from Indians abroad. They have, with one voice, spoken in favour of the Government's

action. The Government conveys its profound gratitude to the citizens of India and to Indians abroad, and looks to them for support in the difficult period ahead.

24. In this, the fiftieth year of our independence, India stands at a defining moment in our history. The rationale for the Government's decision is based on the same policy tenets that have guided the country for five decades. These policies were sustained successfully because of the underlying national consensus. The present decision and future actions will continue to reflect a commitment to sensibilities and obligations of an ancient civilisation, a sense of responsibility and restraint, but a restraint born of the assurance of action, not of doubts or apprehension. The Gita explains (Chap VI-3) as none other can:

आरुरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते।

योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते॥

(This passage interprets as: Action is a process to reach a goal; action may reflect tumult but when measured and focussed, will yield its objective of stability and peace.)

[Source: Retrieved September 13, 2020 from https://parliamentofindia.nic.in/ls/lsdeb/ls12/ses2/0527059801.htm__]

Appendix V

Statement by H.E. Mr. Salman Khurshid, Minister of External Affairs of India, at the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament 68th United Nations General Assembly

New York September 26, 2013

His Excellency, President of the General Assembly,

His Excellency the Secretary General of the United Nations

Distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen

It is an honour to address this high level gathering, on Nuclear Disarmament'. We associate ourselves with the statement made by the NAM.

Mr. President, from the days of our freedom struggle, we have been consistent in our support for the global elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our nation, was moved by the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki but remained unshaken in his belief in non-violence. He wrote that he regarded the employment of the atom bomb for the wholesale destruction of men, women, and children as the most diabolical use of science. More than six decades later, it remains our collective challenge to craft a nuclear weapon free and nonviolent world order.

India remains convinced that its security would be strengthened in a nuclear weapon free and non-violent world order. This conviction is based both on principle as well as pragmatism. We believe that the goal of nuclear disarmament can be achieved through a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework that is global and non-discriminatory. There is need for a meaningful dialogue among all states possessing nuclear weapons to build trust and confidence and for reducing the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines. Progressive steps are needed for the de-legitimization of nuclear weapons paving the way for their complete elimination.

In 1988, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi presented to the UN General comprehensive Action Plan for a nuclear weapon free and non-violent world order, which if implemented would have rid the world of nuclear weapons by 2008, India's subsequent proposals in the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament are testimony to: our consistent support for nuclear disarmament based on the key principles of the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan for achieving nuclear disarmament in a time bound manner.

As a responsible nuclear power, we have a credible minimum deterrence policy and a posture of no-first use. We refuse to participate in an arms race, including a nuclear arms race. We are prepared, to negotiate, a global No-First-Use treaty and our proposal for a Convention banning the use of nuclear weapons remains on the table. As we see no contradiction between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, we are also committed to working with the international community to advance our common objectives of non-proliferation, including through strong export controls and membership of the multilateral export regimes.

Mr. President, the Non-Aligned Movement, of which India is a proud-founding member, has proposed today the early commencement of negotiations in the CD on nuclear disarmament. We support this call.

Without prejudice to the priority we attach to nuclear disarmament, we also support the negotiation in the CD of, a non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable treaty banning the future production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices that meets; India's national security interests. It should be our collective endeavor to return the CD, which remains the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, to substantive work as early as possible.

Mr. President, this meeting' is' proof that the international community remains concerned about the catastrophic consequences of nuclear war and the lack of progress in moving toward global nuclear disarmament. In recent years, many initiatives both official and' non-governmental have been launched in order to, make the vision of a nuclear weapon free world a reality. Simultaneously, there has been a welcome and well deserved focus on preventing access by non-state actors, in particular terrorists, to weapons of mass destruction and related materials. The recent use of chemical weapons in Syria point to an urgent need for the international community to strengthen restraints on, use of weapons of mass destruction and in particular preventing their access to non state, actors and terrorists. We hope that our discussions today would galvanize political will and help channel our collective efforts towards the noble goal of ridding the world of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. To that end, Mr. President, we pledge to you our full support and cooperation.

I thank you.

[Source: Retrieved November 7, 2023, from https://unrcpd.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/26Sep_India_nuclear-disarmamentSS.pdf]

Appendix VI

Delhi Declaration

[The Declaration for a Nuclear-Weapon Free and Non-Violent World signed by the Prime Minister and the General Secretary of CPSU, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev, New Delhi, November 27, 1986.]

Today humanity stands at a crucial turning point in history. Nuclear weapons threaten to annihilate not only all that man has created through the ages, but man himself and even life on earth. In the nuclear age, humanity must evolve new political thinking, a new concept of the world that would provide credible guarantees for humanity's survival. People want to live in a safer and a more just world. Humanity deserves a better fate than being a hostage to nuclear terror and despair. It is necessary to change the existing world situation and to build a nuclear-weapon free world, free of violence and hatred, fear and suspicion.

The world we have inherited belongs to present and future generations and this demands that primacy be given to universally accepted human values. The rights of every nation and every person to life, freedom, peace and the pursuit of happiness must be recognised. The use or threat of use of force must be abandoned. The right of every people to make their own social, political and ideological choices must be respected. Policies that seek to establish the domination by some others must be renounced. The expansion of nuclear arsenals and the development of space weapons undermine the universally accepted conviction that a nuclear war should never be fought and can never be won.

On behalf of more than one billion men, women and children of our two friendly countries, who account for one-fifth of mankind, we call upon the peoples and leaders of all

countries to take urgent action that would lead to a world free of weapons of mass destruction, a world without war.

Conscious of our common responsibility for the destinies of our two nations and of mankind, we hereby set forth the following principles for building a nuclear-weapons free and non-violent world:

1. *Peaceful coexistence must become the universal norm of international relations:*

In the nuclear age it is necessary that international relations are restructured so that confrontation is replaced by co-operation, and conflict situations resolved through peaceful political means, not through military means.

2. *Human life must be recognised as supreme:*

It is only man's creative genius that makes progress and development of civilisation possible in a peaceful environment.

3. *Non-violence should be the basis of community life:*

Philosophies and policies based on non-violence and intimidation, inequality and oppression, and discrimination on the basis of race, religion or colour, are immoral and impermissible. They spread intolerance, destroy man's noble aspirations and negate all human values.

4. *Understanding and trust must replace fear and suspicion:*

Mistrust, fear and suspicion between nations and peoples distort perceptions of the real world. They endanger tensions and in the final analysis, harm the entire international community.

5. *The right of every state to political and economic independence must be recognised and respected:*

A new world order must be built to ensure economic justice and equal political security for all nations. An end to arms race is an essential prerequisite for the establishment of such an order.

6. *Resources being spent on armaments must be channelled towards social and economic development:*

Only disarmament can release the enormous additional resources needed for combating economic backwardness and poverty.

7. *Conditions must be guaranteed for the individual's harmonious development:*

All nations must work together to solve urgent humanitarian problems and co-operate in the areas of culture, arts, science, education and medicine for the all-round development of the individual. A world without nuclear weapons and violence would open up vast opportunities for this.

8. *Mankind's material and intellectual potential must be used to solve global problems:*

Solutions must be found to global problems such as shortage of food, the growth of populations, illiteracy and environmental degradation through the efficient and appropriate uses of the resources of the earth. The world's oceans, the ocean floor as well as outer space are the common heritage of mankind. A termination of the arms race would create better conditions for this purpose.

9. *The "balance of terror" must give way to comprehensive international security:*

The world is one and its security is indivisible. East and West, North and South regardless of social systems, ideologies, religion or race must join together in a common commitment to disarmament and development.

International security can be guaranteed through the adoption of all integrated measures in the field of nuclear disarmament using all available and agreed measures of

verification, and confidence building; just political settlement of regional conflicts, through peaceful negotiations; and co-operation in the political, economic and humanitarian spheres.

10. *A nuclear-weapon free and non-violent world requires specific and immediate action for disarmament:*

It can be achieved through agreements on:

- complete destruction of nuclear arsenals before the end of this century;
- barring of all weapons from outer space, which is the common heritage of mankind;
- banning of all nuclear weapons tests;
- prohibition of the development of new types of weapons of mass destruction;
- banning of chemical weapons and destruction of their stockpiles;
- reducing the levels of conventional arms and armed forces.

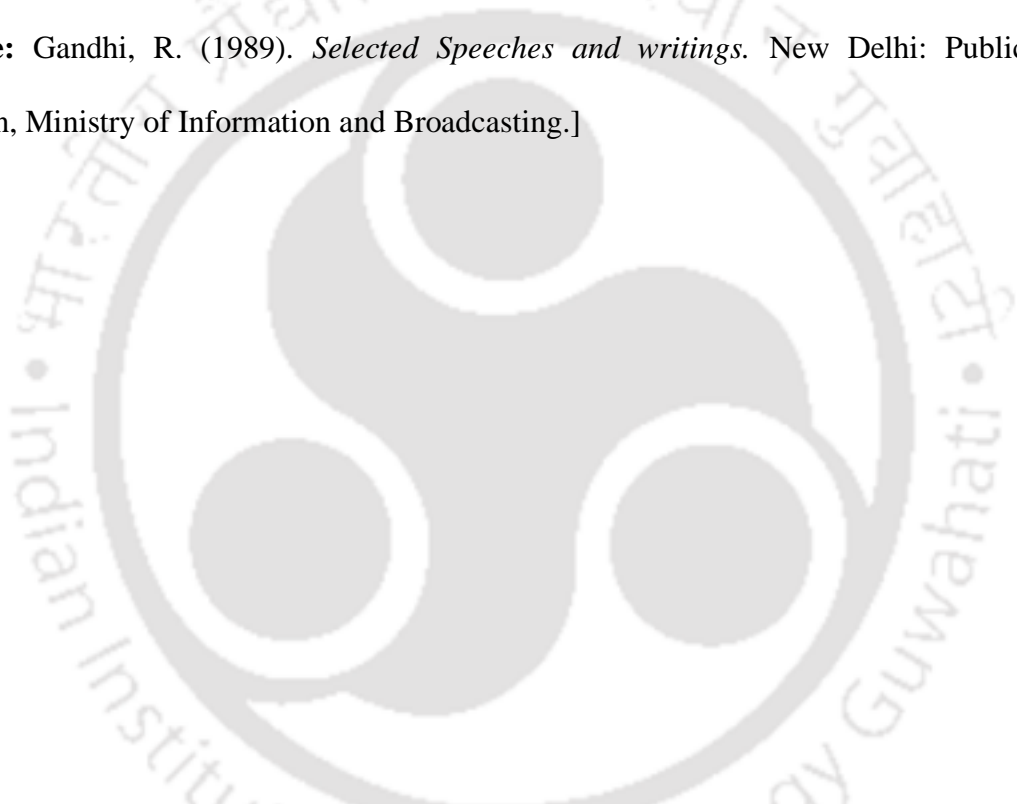
Pending the elimination of nuclear weapons, India and the Soviet Union propose that an *International Convention Banning the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons* should be concluded immediately. This would constitute a major concrete step towards complete nuclear disarmament.

Building a nuclear-weapon free and non-violent world requires a revolutionary transformation of outlook and the education of people and nations for peace, mutual respect and tolerance. The propaganda of war, hatred and violence should be forbidden and hostile perceptions with regard to other nations and peoples abandoned.

Wisdom lies in preventing the accumulation and aggravation of global problems which, if not solved today, would require even greater sacrifices tomorrow.

The danger that threatens mankind is grave. But mankind has the power to prevent a catastrophe, and pave the way to a nuclear-weapon free civilisation. The gathering strength of the Coalition for Peace embracing the efforts of the Non-aligned Movement, the Six-Nation Five-Continent Initiative for Peace and Disarmament, all peace-loving countries, political parties and public organisations give us reason for hope and optimism. The time for decisive and urgent action is now.

[**Source:** Gandhi, R. (1989). *Selected Speeches and writings*. New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.]



Appendix VII

अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी की कविता- हिरोशिमा की पीड़ा

(Atal Bihari Vajpayee's poem-Hiroshima Ki Peeda)

किसी रात को
मेरी नींद चानक उचट जाती है
आँख खुल जाती है
मैं सोचने लगता हूँ कि
जिन वैज्ञानिकों ने अणु अस्त्रों का
आविष्कार किया था
वे हिरोशिमा-नागासाकी के भीषण
नरसंहार के समाचार सुनकर
रात को कैसे सोए होंगे?
क्या उन्हें एक क्षण के लिए सही
ये अनुभूति नहीं हुई कि
उनके हाथों जो कुछ हुआ
अच्छा नहीं हुआ!

यदि हुई, तो वक्रत उन्हें कटघरे में खड़ा नहीं करेगा

किन्तु यदि नहीं हुई तो इतिहास उन्हें

कभी माफ़ नहीं करेगा !

[Source: Retrieved on August 2, 2021, from
<https://www.amarujala.com/kavya/irshaad/hiroshima-day-poem-by-atal-bihari-vajpai>]



Appendix VII

Questionnaire:

Date:

NAME:

Designation:

Institution/ Organisation (if any):

Please choose your preferred option:

1. Do you want to maintain anonymity while answering the questions?

a. Yes

b. No

Ans:

2. India adopted a No First Use Policy in its draft nuclear doctrine of 1999 and the official nuclear doctrine of 2003. According to you, which of the following factor/ factors are responsible for this decision?

a. Role of political leadership and strategic experts

b. Geopolitical and strategic factors

c. International and domestic norms relating to nuclear taboo and violence

d. All of the above

e. None of the above

Ans:

3. Do you think that NFU could be seen as a norm against violence?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. May Be

Ans:

4. Do you think that the NFU policy of India is also influenced by the NFU Policy of China?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. May Be

Ans:

5. Should India retain its NFU policy in its nuclear doctrine?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. May Be

Ans:

6. Do you think NFU policy of India has paid its dividends?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. May Be

Ans:

7. Should all nuclear weapons states adopt the NFU policy to maintain nuclear stability and restraint?

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Ans:

8. Do you think that NFU could be the first step towards global nuclear disarmament?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. May Be

Ans:

9. Your overall view about why the NFU Policy was adopted by India. Please elaborate.

Ans:

Appendix -VIII

Content analysis of selected books and articles

Sl no	Source	CODE 1	CODE 2	CODE 3
1.	Subrahmanyam (1998)	1	1	1
2.	Vohra (1998)	1	1	
3.	Bidwai & Vanaik (1998)	1		
4.	Chopra (1998)			1
5.	Chawla (1998)	1	1	1
6.	Bhaskar (1999)		1	1
7.	Synnott (1999)	1	1	
8.	Balachandran (1999)	1		
9.	Kamath (1999)	1	1	1
10.	Joshi (1999)	1	1	
11.	Sethi (1999)	1	1	
12.	Vajpayee (2000)	1	1	1
13.	Kanwal (2000a)		1	

14.	Anand (2000)		1	1
15.	Kanwal (2000b)		1	
16.	Gupta (2000)	1	1	1
17.	Kanwal (2001)		1	1
18.	Basrur (2001)		1	1
19.	Singh (2001)	1	1	
20.	Tellis (2001)	1	1	1
21.	Pattanaik (2001)		1	
22.	Vanaik (2001)		1	
23.	Perkovich (2002)	1	1	1
24.	Bajpai (2002)	1	1	1
25.	Tellis (2003)	1	1	
26.	Subrahmanyam (2004)	1	1	
27.	Chiriyankandath (2004)	1	1	1
28.	Vajpayee (2004)	1	1	1
29.	Mishra (2005)	1	1	
30.	Saran (2005)			1
31.	Basrur (2005)		1	

32.	Rajagopalan (2005a)	1	1	
33.	Rajagopalan (2005b)		1	
34.	Karnad (2005)	1	1	1
35.	Kamath (2007)	1	1	1
36.	Pant (2008)	1	1	
37.	Karnad (2008)	1	1	1
38.	Ahmed (2008)		1	
39.	Subrahmanyam (2008)	1	1	1
40.	Subrahmanyam (2009a)	1	1	
41.	Subrahmanyam (2009b)			1
42.	Subrahmanyam (2009c)		1	
43.	Subrahmanyam (2009d)		1	
44.	Halperin, Tertrais, Payne, Subrahmanyam &. Sagan (2009)	1	1	1
45.	Basrur (2009)	1		
46.	Sikri (2009)		1	
47.	Kazi (2009)		1	

48.	Kamath (2009)	1	1	1
49.	Kirk (2010)		1	1
50.	Banerjee (2010)	1		1
51.	Singh (2011)	1	1	
52.	Sagan (2011)	1	1	1
53.	Bhaskar (2011)	1		
54.	Chandran (2012)		1	1
55.	Ahmed (2012)	1	1	
56.	Saran (2013)		1	
57.	Singh (2013a)		1	1
58.	Singh, Jasjit (2013b)	1	1	
59.	Douglas & Doyle (2014)	1	1	
60.	Rajaraman (2014)		1	1
61.	Prasad (2014)	1	1	
62.	Swami (2014)	1	1	1
63.	Latif (2014)	1	1	
64.	Rajagopalan & Mishra (2014)	1	1	

65.	Singh & Singh (2014)	1	1	1
66.	Chandra (2014)	1	1	
67.	Joshi (2015)	1		
68.	Kanwal (2015)		1	
69.	Akhtar & Das (2015)		1	1
70.	Yadav (2015)		1	
71.	Mishra (2015)	1		
72.	Kanwal (2016)		1	
73.	Ghoshal (2016)		1	1
74.	Tomar (2016)	1	1	
75.	Ahmed (2016)		1	
76.	Tkacik (2017)		1	
77.	Malik (2017)		1	
78.	O'Donnell (2017)	1	1	
79.	Prasad (2018)		1	
80.	Sundaram & Ramana (2018)	1	1	
81.	Sharma (2018)	1	1	1

82.	Carranza (2018)	1	1	1
83.	O'Donnell & Ghosal (2018)	1	1	
84.	Khanijo (2018)		1	
85.	Joshi & O'Donnell (2018)	1	1	1
86.	Ai (2018)		1	1
87.	Pant & Joshi (2018)	1	1	1
88.	Narang (2018)		1	1
89.	Nayan (2018)		1	1
90.	Menon (2018)	1	1	
91.	Miller & Estrada (2018)	1	1	1
92.	Sasikumar (2019)	1	1	1
93.	MacDonald (2020)	1		
94.	Jaishankar (2020)	1		
95.	Khan (2020)	1	1	1
96.	Sinha (2020)		1	1

97.	Pant (2016/2020)	1	1	1
98.	Malik (2010/2020)	1		1
99.	Desai & Desai (2021)	1	1	1
100.	Tannenwald (2021)	1	1	1
Total		63	87	48

Code 1= Role of political leadership and strategic experts

Code 2= Role geopolitical and strategic factors

Code 3= Role of normative factors

Appendix -IX

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