

Is America targeting our bomb?

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The short-range, single-stage, solid propellant Haft has a range of less than 100 kilometres and a maximum payload capacity of 500 kilograms. The Shaheen series of solid-propellant missiles have a range of between 300 kilometres to 2,000 kilometres. Ghauri III may have a range of up to 3,000 kilometres (Abdali and Ghaznavi may have a longer range but Pakistan has no known submarine suitable for firing missiles with nuclear payloads). If the credibility of our nuclear deterrent really depends on air-dropped atomic weapons then we have 60 A-5s and 32 F-16s. The A-5s have a combat radius of 600 kilometres and a maximum payload capacity of 1,000 kilograms. The F-16s practicing 'toss bombing' techniques have a combat radius of 850 kilometres and a payload capacity of 2,000 kilograms. Washington D.C. is 12,006 nautical kilometres from Chagai. New York is 11,697 nautical kilometres from PAF Samungli. Los Angeles is 8,355 nautical kilometres from Dabbandin Air Force base.

Conclusion: Our entire arsenal is India-specific. Why is America then targeting our Bomb? Deep into Pakistan through American eyes. On 5 July 1997 (General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq toppled Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in a bloodless coup. Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was hanged on 4 April 1979. A military general sacked Prime Minister Mo-

hammad Khan Junejo, General Mo-hammad Zia-ul-Haq died a violent death. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif are both in exile. General Pervez Musharraf has been coming out a survivor through a series of assassination attempts.

Khalid Sheikh Mohammed was in Rawalpindi. Ramzi bin al-Shibh, the organizer of the Hamburg Cell, was caught in Karachi. Abu Zubaydah was grabbed in Peshawar. Waleed bin At-tash, the man accused of masterminding the bombing of the USS Cole, was captured from a Karachi suburb. Then came the mother of all terror threats. Dr A.Q. Khan supplied weapons of mass destruction to Bush's axis of evil.

We have been playing with snakes for too long. How does the US Department of State now defines Pakistan? An ally in the 'war on terrorism'. A politically instable ally with a landmass of 778,720 kilometres, socially explosive with a 'rare mix of terror, fundamentalism and nuclear weapons-the scariest place on earth.'

There once was a snake charmer named "God-saved". According to some estimates God-saved caught some 10,000 snakes in his lifetime by using no more than a forked stick to pin the snake down which was then picked up by bare hand (in the late 19th century, at the London Zoo, live snakes were fed to larger more exotic ones housed in the Zoo). A regular zoo-goer asked him his name, "God-



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saved" he replied. "And profession." "I charm snakes" replied God-saved. "God won't save you for very long" came the response from the zoo-goer. India has enough weapons-grade plutonium for a hundred bombs and six unsafe guarded heavy-water nuclear power plants. According to other

tor has been the source of plutonium for nuclear weapons. Israel's inventory includes warheads for mobile Jericho-1 and Jericho-2 missiles. Some published estimates put Israel's stockpile at 400 nuclear weapons. Christians have the Bomb. So do Hindus and Jews. Why is our Bomb such a threat?

Republic of India is a stable federal republic with an effective bicameral parliament. Medhat Yisrael is a stable parliamentary democracy where a unicameral Knesset is in full control. Islamic Republic of Pakistan is politi-

Our Bomb is not being targeted. It is our instability that is under scrutiny. It is the way we run our politics that is making us ineligible from becoming part of the nuclear club. It is the way our leaders run the affairs of our state that, in America's eyes, disqualifies us from membership to the nuclear club

was not working alone. Dr Khan was part of a process. "That process indeed was our governing ideology behind proliferation.

We don't see ourselves the way the world sees us. We have a hero. The world considers our hero to be the "criminal of the century". We have convinced 140 million that the Bomb is the best thing that has happened to us. Some 5 billion people outside Pakistan feel that the Bomb is the worst thing that happened to Pakistan. We see ourselves as the architect of a nuclearised Ummah. The world sees us as the most dangerous proliferator in history. We think that our Bomb has brought us prestige and influence. The world sees our nuclear technology as "the greatest threat before humanity today."

The real question for the world outside Pakistan is if a country that cannot safeguard its nuclear arsenal were allowed to possess such dangerous technology. Our Bomb, in effect, is not being targeted. It is our ideology of proliferation that is being challenged by the world. Our Bomb is not being targeted. It is our instability that is under scrutiny. It is the way we run our politics that is making us ineligible from becoming part of the nuclear club. It is the way our leaders run the affairs of our state that, in America's eyes, disqualifies us from membership to the nuclear club.