

Peace or war, strength matters most: NIAS report

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Bangalore: With India and Pakistan sending feelers across the border for yet another round of talks to resolve disputes, Bangalore-based National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) has put together thoughts by top strategic thinkers from India, Russia, the US, China and Bangladesh.

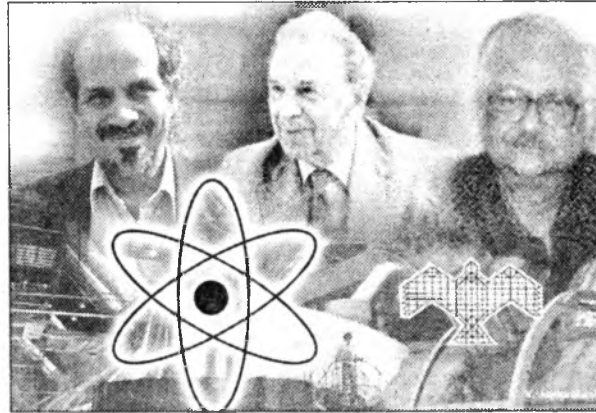
A key lesson for India emerging from the report is that "strength matters in both peace and war".

The project, 'Prospects for Stability in a Nuclear Sub-continent', brings together 10 papers along with intense and productive discussions that can aid policy decision

makers at the helm of international affairs.

On 'Non-proliferation Regime and Nuclear Threat Reduction', Victor N. Mikhailov touches upon Russia's experience in dealing with nuclear issues and its long-time strategic relationship with India. Appreciating India's no-first-use stand against N-countries and no-use against others, Mikhailov, who is the director of Institute of Strategic Stability, Moscow, feels civilian nuclear energy must contribute to humanity's welfare.

NIAS director Roddam Narasimha, scanning 'Evolution of India's Nuclear Policies', finds India's central policy that "of seeking, pre-



serving and protecting the country's strategic space and autonomy at the lowest possible cost. India would be seen as a country outside the NPT but not presenting a dis-

ruptive threat to the world order."

Ronald Lehman, director, Centre for Global Security Research, USA, analyses stability and the question of

common ground not only between Indian and Pakistan but also between India and rest of the world. He also indicts India for not presenting any approach that provides sufficient incentives for a change in the terms of the NPT, as most believe that to make an exception for India would undermine the treaty.

In his paper on 'Nuclear Weapons, Deterrence and Stability in the International System and South Asian Dynamics', Sridhar K. Chari, a research-associate at NIAS, argues that level-of-attack defence against external incursions must be raised to the level of a strategic doctrine augmenting everything from defence procurement and preparedness, intelligence,

diplomatic and political initiatives, economic strength and a robust nuclear deterrent.

S. Gopal, another NIAS associate, negates the idea of an Indian threat to Pakistan, stating the only issue which could be considered as a security threat for Pakistan is a belligerent India losing patience and deciding to cross the border to end cross-border terrorism. Terming the attack on Parliament as a defining moment for India, he argues that the next response should be a much stronger one.

The NIAS project highlights many misperceptions that prove an obstacle to increasing stability in the region.

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