

**Towards a South Asian Peace Movement
and a South Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone**

A trip report on the visit of a delegation of Pakistani and Indian peace activists to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal, January-February 2001

Introduction

In May 1998, first India and then Pakistan tested nuclear weapons. Subsequently, both governments declared their reliance on nuclear weapons as part of their military and political policies. The coming of nuclear weapons, the development of ballistic missiles with ranges of several thousand kilometres, and an accelerating conventional arms build-up has created new, profound problems for the future of the two countries and the South Asian region as a whole.

The nuclear weapons tests came after a more than fifty year long conflict between Pakistan and India, which has plagued efforts to build prosperous, democratic and just societies in these countries. The three major wars (in 1948, 1965, and 1971) punctuated an enduring arms race that drains away scarce resources. The nuclearization of this conflict has made things worse. The 1999 war between Pakistan and India in the Kargil region of Kashmir, the first war between two nuclear weapons states, raises the prospect that the next war may be a catastrophe beyond reckoning. Meanwhile, the political hostility that has marked official Pakistan-India relations has prevented all but the most limited efforts at regional co-operation; the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has achieved little.

The Kashmir dispute is a major source of the tension between India and Pakistan. While South Asian countries should try to engage India and Pakistan on the Kashmir dispute, the nature of the dispute and of SAARC limits the scope and form of possible engagement. At present, it seems there is little the countries of the region can do except to urge the two states to find a peaceful settlement that respects the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

Even if India and Pakistan were to resolve the Kashmir issue, they would not necessarily either give up their nuclear weapon status or end their mutual hostility. The experience of the superpower cold war makes this clear. Even though the obvious sources of conflict between the United States and Soviet Union ended a decade ago with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the logic of nuclear weapons has had an enduring effect in preventing the establishment of peace in any meaningful sense. The US and Russia retain nuclear arsenals of about 10,000 warheads each, with several thousand weapons on hair-trigger alert, ready to launch. This suggests that India and Pakistan's nuclear weapons may ensure the future of the region shall remain in jeopardy until these weapons are eliminated.

The nuclearization of the sub-continent has not been without contest. Against the backdrop of the nuclear weapons tests, peace groups sprang up spontaneously in towns and cities across India and Pakistan. Building on years of work by a handful of anti-nuclear activists in both countries, these groups articulated deep public concern about the grave dangers posed by nuclear weapons, sought for ways to educate and mobilise local communities, and reached out to make common

cause with other civil society groups working on issues of sustainable development and social justice.

The past two years have witnessed the transition from small, scattered groups to a larger, more organised peace movement in Pakistan and India. In Pakistan, the need to co-ordinate the demands and activities of the diverse groups that became engaged in campaigning against nuclear weapons led a major convention in Karachi, in January 1999. This meeting, attended by about 500 activists and representatives of groups, launched the Pakistan Peace Coalition (PPC), a national network of groups organised around a common agenda of nuclear disarmament, peace and justice. A similar national convention was held in Delhi, in November 2000, involving several hundred Indian groups, who came together to form the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace (CNDP). The speed and success of these efforts was, in part, due to the larger flourishing of civil society and social movements in the two countries over the past decade and, more particularly, the organisational work that in 1994 created and subsequently has sustained the Pakistan-India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy, a major civil society dialogue bringing together Pakistani and Indian activists and groups working for peace, democracy, social justice, and human rights.

An important part of the politics of the peace movements in Pakistan and India has been a recognition of the history, geography, culture, problems, hopes and dreams, that the peoples of these countries share with their South Asian neighbours. The search for a just and democratic alternative to the misgovernance, the grinding poverty, the often violent ethnic and religious conflicts, and growing religious fundamentalism, that afflicts South Asia and ties its people together in misery, must include a South Asia wide effort by civil society and governments. Together, the region may be able to solve its problems. The search for collective, regional solutions is made all the more important as the India and Pakistan press on with their nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes, and as the pressures of globalisation and the need to negotiate with international capital and international financial institutions pose ever greater challenges to the people and policy makers of the region.

The need for a South Asia wide effort at public education and mobilisation for nuclear disarmament in India and Pakistan was recognised by many groups in these two countries. This idea was taken up at an international conference on nuclear disarmament in South Asia and South-East Asia, held in Dhaka in February 2000, and organized by Focus on the Global South (Bangkok and Mumbai) and the Community Development Library (Dhaka). The meeting brought together 150 peace activists from 14 countries spanning South Asia, Southeast and Esat Asia, and North America. Among other decisions taken there, it was determined that a delegation of peace activists from the Pakistan Peace Coalition and delegates from India should travel to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal, to meet with civil society groups there and engage them on the implications and challenges of the nuclearisation of the region [For the Declaration and Plan of Action agreed at the Dhaka Conference see Appendix I].

In late 2000, at a workshop held in Delhi immediately following the founding of CNDP, the representatives of PPC and CNDP decided to put together a small delegation of peace activists from India and Pakistan to undertake such a tour.

In addition to the need for engagement between peace activists from India and Pakistan with civil society in the other South Asia countries and for a South Asia-wide peace movement, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of concrete ideas that can help focus campaigning for nuclear disarmament in the region. Following sustained discussions between Indian and Pakistani peace activists, the idea of a South Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone has grown increasingly appealing. In particular it offers a way to create a process and a mechanism to initiate nuclear disarmament in South Asia. (See Appendix III for a concept paper on the need for and outline of a South Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty). Briefly, it envisages the establishment in each country of a formal national network of civil society groups working for peace, and a South Asia wide coalition bringing these networks together. These networks, and the larger coalition, could then campaign in each country for a South Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty.

Some possible basic commitments of a South Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty are given in the draft outline treaty in Appendix III, which is adapted from the Pelindaba Treaty which established the African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone. The draft treaty forbids each signatory state from possessing or seeking to acquire nuclear weapons, and includes a ban on research and development on such weapons, as well as outlawing production of the fissile materials used in nuclear weapons. The draft treaty also forbids the transit of ships and aircraft carrying nuclear weapons and the dumping of radioactive waste. The draft treaty goes further than other NWFZ treaties by seeking to ban the development and acquisition of nuclear weapons compatible delivery systems. The draft envisages a South Asian Commission on Nuclear Disarmament to oversee compliance with the Treaty's provisions.

The political process proposed for the SANWFZ Treaty relies on civil society in the non-nuclear weapons states in South Asia (i.e. Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives and Bhutan) campaigning for their respective governments to negotiate among themselves and bringing into force a SANWFZ Treaty. The governments which sign the Treaty would then invite India and Pakistan to become parties and use all diplomatic opportunities and means to bring this about. The combined South Asian civil society and governmental effort would strengthen demands by the national networks of peace groups in Pakistan and India for their states to give up their nuclear weapons and join the Treaty. Taken together, these efforts would make clear that nuclear disarmament is a basic feature of the region's identity and constitute a fundamental challenge to Pakistan and India's claims to lead South Asia.

The alternatives for the people of South Asia are stark. On the one hand, the future may mean living in the shadow of nuclear war while being forced into cut-throat competition with each other in the globalised economy, where the poor will lose what little security of livelihood they have. On the other hand, South Asians can work together for a nuclear weapons free, peaceful and co-operative neighbourhood, where resources are concentrated on meeting the needs of people.

Civil society dialogues

At the invitation of civil society groups in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal a number of dialogues with peace activists from India and Pakistan were arranged in January and February 2001. Admiral L. Ramdas and Praful Bidwai from India and Dr. Zia Mian and Dr. A. H. Nayyar from Pakistan were asked to serve as delegates from CNDP and the Pakistan Peace Coalition respectively. At the very last moment, due to an unfortunate accident Praful Bidwai was unable to participate and Dr. Sandeep Pandey took his place as one of the delegates from India (see Appendix II for brief biographical statements of the members of the delegation). Dr. Pandey was however only able to join the group once it had reached Bangladesh. A brief summary of the meetings in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal follows.

Sri Lanka

Admiral L. Ramdas, Dr. Zia Mian and Dr. A.H. Nayyar visited Sri Lanka from 25-28 January 2001. The National Peace Council of Sri Lanka in collaboration with the National Council on Religion and Peace organised the meetings there. The National Peace Council of Sri Lanka is a peace organisation founded in February 1995 that seeks to further the role of civil society in public education, mobilisation, and in initiating dialogues that can lead to a negotiated settlement of the armed conflict in that country. Founded in 1978, the Sri Lanka National Conference on Religion and Peace is a national, non-governmental, inter-faith organisation that aims to work with religious communities and leaders to promote peace.

The first engagement in Sri Lanka was a *Seminar on Disarmament and Peace* at the Marga Institute, Colombo, on Friday, 26 January. It was attended by over 30 people, representing about 20 leading NGOs and community groups, as well as print media and television correspondents. The meeting was introduced by Kingsley Rodrigo, Director of the National Conference on Religion and Peace. Following presentations by Admiral Ramdas, Dr. Zia Mian and Dr. A.H. Nayyar (see summaries below), Mr. Shiraz Sally of the National Council on Religion and Peace and Dr. T. Jayasingam, Senior Lecturer in Ecology at Eastern University spoke as discussants.



Picture: Dr. A. H. Nayyar speaking at the *Seminar on Disarmament and Peace*, Marga Institute, Colombo

In the morning of 27th January, the delegation visited the Colombo studios of Young Asia Television. They met with the young producers of Sathi (in Sinhala) and Vilippu (in Tamil), two weekly youth programs aimed specifically at explaining the nature and causes of conflicts in Sri Lanka and elsewhere, and highlighting independent initiatives taken towards peace and reconciliation [for more details see http://www.yatv.net/4_0_sathi_vilippu.html]. The discussions focused on the use of electronic media to encourage public debate on the source of conflicts in the region and the positive role that can be played by the young people. Young Asia TV filmed interviews with the three delegates.

The same afternoon, the delegation travelled to Kandy to participate on 28th January in a day-long *National Workshop on Disarmament and Peace* organised by the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka and the National Council on Religion and Peace. The meeting, attended by over 150 participants, was introduced by S. Balakrishnan and conducted in English, Sinhala and Tamil with translations. In the opening plenary, Admiral Ramdas spoke on “Problems of Small arms and Light Weapons and Disarmament”, Zia Mian discussed “Nuclearization and Nuclear Disarmament” and A. H. Nayyar made a presentation on “The Role of Civil Society in Disarmament”. The plenary was followed by four working groups addressing the issues of disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, war and women/ children, war and environment and religion and violence.



Picture: The participants at the *National Workshop on Disarmament and Peace*, Kandy

At the concluding plenary, the national workshop supported a call for a national convention of Sri Lankan peace groups to be held later in the year, and called for the eventual formation of a South Asian Peace Coalition which would bring together national level coalitions/networks from each of the member countries to address the different conflicts in the region. Important goals of such a regional peace coalition was identified as facilitation and monitoring of the end to hostilities and disengagement of forces in armed conflicts, and the initiation of dialogues and negotiations. The workshop urged South Asian states to refrain from encouragement and support

to armed insurrections in neighbouring states. It also agreed to the demand for a South Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone.

Bangladesh

Admiral Ramdas, Dr. Mian and Dr. Nayyar next visited Dhaka, Bangladesh, from 29-30 January, for a series of events organised by the Institute for Development Policy Analysis and Advocacy (IDPAA), which forms part of PROSHIKA, one of the largest development NGOs in Bangladesh. PROSHIKA, an acronym of three Bangla words for training, education, and action, was founded in 1976 and describes its goals as empowering the poor and achieving an economically productive and equitable, socially just, environmentally sound, and genuinely democratic society. With a staff of almost 6,000, it works with almost 2 million people in over 15,000 villages and over a thousand urban slums; it has set up about 30,000 adult literacy centres and 13,000 non-formal primary schools (for details see PROSHIKA's website at <http://www.proshika.org>).

On January 29th, Admiral Ramdas, Dr. Mian and Dr. Nayyar met with Dr. Qazi Faruque Ahmed, the President of PROSHIKA, who later hosted a press conference at the PROSHIKA offices in Dhaka. The three delegates as well as Dr. Qazi Faruque Ahmed addressed about 35 correspondents from a wide range of English and Bangla newspapers as well as from television. The press conference was widely covered in the newspapers the next day.

The following day, the delegation participated in a *Panel Discussion on Nuclear Disarmament and Peace in South Asia*, with teachers and students of the departments of Law, International Relations, Political Science, and Peace and Conflict Studies at Dhaka University. Professor C. R. Abrar, Professor of International Relations and co-ordinator of Dhaka University's multi-disciplinary Refugee and Migratory Research Unit chaired the meeting, which was attended by about 150 people.



Picture: Dr. Zia Mian speaking at Dhaka University

Dr. Sandeep Pandey, the fourth member of the delegation, arrived in time to join the group for its second meeting that day. Bringing together civil society leaders, prominent public figures, members of parliament, and government officials, the *Round Table Discussion on Nuclear Disarmament and Peace for Sustainable Development in South Asia* was held at the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) and organised by PROSHIKA's Institute of Development Policy Analysis and Advocacy. Mr. Mahbubul Karim, Senior Vice-president of PROSHIKA chaired the meeting, and the chief guest was the Bangladesh State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Abul Hasan Chowdhury. Other invited speakers included Mr. Farooq Sobhan, former ambassador and foreign secretary of Bangladesh, and Barrister Amir-ul-Islam, Vice-Chairman of the Bangladesh Bar Council.

During the discussions which followed the presentations by Admiral Ramdas, Dr. Mian, Dr. Nayyar, and Dr. Pandey, The Minister for Foreign Affairs laid out his government's unequivocal commitment to efforts to foster peace in the region. Mr. Farooq Sobhan forcefully supported the arguments of the visiting delegation and the idea of Bangladesh taking a lead in forming a South Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. The meeting generated very significant further press coverage, including an editorial in the *Bangladesh Observer* (31 January 2001) under the headline "For A Nuclear Free South Asia". Admiral Ramdas and Dr. Mian were also interviewed on television.

The third meeting on 30 January was a dinner and discussion with a group of newspaper editors and columnists, where the delegates had a chance to present their views in close conversation. The dinner was largely informal, with about ten editors and columnists along with the senior staff of PROSHIKA in attendance. This may have contributed to the several newspaper editorials the next morning in favour of a South Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone.

Nepal

The delegation arrived in Kathmandu in the afternoon of 31st January. Their meetings in Nepal were arranged by Himal Association, an NGO based in the Kathmandu Valley which has as its goal to inform Nepali people about local, national and international issues and so help them become aware and responsible national and global citizens. Founded in 1987, the Association has been working in the fields of journalism, communications, publishing, education and training. It launched and then spun-off Himal, a bi-monthly current affairs magazine (in English and Nepali editions) - Himal South Asian, the english language magazine has a South Asia wide network of contributing editors and circulation. The Association's other activities include the setting up of a Centre for Investigative Journalism, managing the Film South Asia documentary film festival, publishing books and developing an independent radio station (for details see the Association's website at <http://www.himalassociation.org>).

The delegation's first engagement, on 31 January, was a meeting and dinner with Mr. Kanak Mani Dixit, the Secretary of the Himal Association and editor of Himal magazine. The following day, the delegation participated in three separate discussions, starting with a meeting with the staff of the South Asia Forum on Human Rights (SAFHR) in Kathmandu, Tapan Bose, Rita Manchanda and Ranabir Samaddar. Established in 1993, SAFHR seeks to bring together activists, academics and journalists of the South Asian countries for dialogues on key issues that

make up the human rights agenda in the region, such as the condition and struggles of women, refugees, migrants, minorities, political conflicts within and between states, militarisation, and the threat of war (for details see <http://fnf-southasia.com/nep-safhr.htm>).

At the second meeting of the day, Admiral Ramdas, Dr. Zia Mian, Dr. Sandeep Pandey and Dr. A.H. Nayyar addressed about 150 high school students drawn from four schools in the Kathmandu area. The meeting was held at Baggikhana, a well-know cultural and political venue in Kathmandu. Later that afternoon, the delegation engaged with a small gathering of intellectuals associated with the Centre for Social Research and Development, at Martin Chautari, Thapathali. This was followed by a dinner hosted by South Asian Partnership - Nepal.

The final engagement of the tour came on 2 February, when the four delegates spoke at a major public meeting on *A Dangerous Place - India, Pakistan and the Bomb*, organised by Himal Association and chaired by Mr. C. K. Lal, a noted Nepali columnist. Academics, former diplomats, members of parliament, former military officers and journalists were among the audience at Baggikhana. The proceedings of the meeting were recorded for publication in the Nepal Times.



Picture: From left to right, Dr. Sandeep Pandey, Admiral Ramdas, Dr Zia Mian, and Dr. A.H. Nayyar at Baggikhana, Kathmandu.

Following the presentations in Kathmandu, the delegates returned respectively to India and Pakistan on February 3.

A brief summary of the main themes of the various presentations, an analysis of the impact of dialogues, conclusions and three recommendations follow.

A Brief Summary of Presentations

Admiral L. Ramdas

Admiral Ramdas sketched out the historical and political background to the nuclearisation of South Asia. He explained the persistent hostilities between India and Pakistan, and noted that they had fought what he termed as three and a half wars (with the 1999 Kargil conflict being the half-war). He stressed that nuclear weapons are weapons of genocide, and that they are politically counterproductive, economically destructive, militarily ineffective and ethically and morally indefensible. He pointed out that this had been India's position before it tested nuclear weapons.

Admiral Ramdas highlighted the enormous social impact of the May 1998 tests and the associated arms racing on the more than one billion people of South Asia. He indicated how the spiralling demands of purchasing and developing conventional and nuclear weapons contributed to South Asia now being the poorest, most illiterate, and most malnourished region in the world. Pointing the way forward, he emphasised the need for changing mindsets among policy makers and the public, and for engaging in negotiations, and accommodating the aspirations of all in the region.

Zia Mian

Zia Mian described the risks and consequences of nuclear weapons in South Asia, and explained the terrible death and destruction that would be caused by the use of the nuclear weapons that India and Pakistan currently possess. He gave the results of a recently conducted study which showed that if India and Pakistan dropped only one bomb each on five large cities in the other's country, there could be about 3 million deaths and an additional 1.5 million people severely injured, many of whom could die within a few weeks. He also gave the result of another study of the effects of an accidental detonation of a nuclear weapon in which there was no nuclear explosion. He showed that thousands of people are likely to die of cancer as a result simply of inhalation of radioactive material. The study, he said, was important because accidents with nuclear weapons carrying aeroplanes and missiles are not unlikely, and that the risk increases with each nuclear weapons that is built.

Dr Mian emphasised that the idea nuclear weapons would prevent war had been shown to be false by the 1999 Kargil war between Pakistan and India. He suggested that this war could even be said to have been caused by nuclear weapons, with Pakistan now feeling it had a nuclear shield against India and so could do whatever it wanted in Kashmir. He used the example of the US and Russia retaining thousands of nuclear weapons ten years after the end of the cold war to propose that an end to the Kashmir dispute would not necessarily mean an end to nuclear arms in South Asia. The nuclear danger would remain until there was a successful campaign to eliminate nuclear arms.

A. H. Nayyar

Dr. A.H. Nayyar explained the development of peace movements in India and Pakistan preceding and following the May 1998 nuclear tests, and the political impact they have had to date. He emphasised that the peace movements have to broaden their scope both geographically and conceptually by bringing on their agenda all the conflicts ravaging the South Asian region. He underscored the need for establishing country-wide peace coalitions in the remaining countries so that the national coalitions could then be networked into a South Asian peace coalition.

Dr. Nayyar explained the salient points of the draft Treaty for South Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone which has been prepared for discussion among the peace coalitions of India and Pakistan. He argued that a nuclear weapons free South Asia was possible, and urged the five non-nuclear countries of the region - Sri-Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives - to consider forming a South Asian NWFZ, leaving out India and Pakistan if they are not willing to join in. Such a step would put diplomatic and moral pressure on India and Pakistan and strengthen the peace movements in India and Pakistan. He recalled that there was a precedent for such an approach; the Treaty of Tlatelco establishing a Latin American Nuclear Weapons Free Zone came into being in 1968, even though the two largest nations in the region, Argentine and Brazil, were pursuing nuclear weapons programmes. The Treaty was therefore initially signed by the smaller, non-nuclear nations of the region and Argentine and Brazil were slowly persuaded to give up their ambitions and sign the treaty, which they did two decades later.

Sandeep Pandey

Dr. Pandey described the participation of civil society in the peace and antinuclear movement in India. He explained the spontaneous, sporadic peace protests after the May 1998 nuclear tests in India, and the 1999 March for World Peace. The 1500 kilometre march started on May 11 (the first anniversary of the Indian nuclear tests) at Khetolai village, the closest settlement to the nuclear test site and ended on 6 August (the anniversary of the destruction of Hiroshima) at Sarnath, the place where Buddha preached his first sermon. Dr. Pandey reflected on the many incidents during the march, including efforts to stop it, at times by violent means. He emphasised that throughout their march, local people gathered in large numbers to watch slide shows and films organised by the marchers. The enthusiasm with which ordinary people sought to discuss the nuclear issue showed the urge among ordinary people to better understand what nuclearisation involved and what it meant for them.

The immediate task for civil society across South Asia, he argued, was to educate itself and to directly engage with the public on nuclear disarmament. To illustrate the possibilities for creative engagement, especially with school children, he told the story of Sadako Sasaki, a young Japanese girl from Hiroshima who developed leukemia in 1955 from the effects of radiation released in the atomic bombing of her city. Inspired by a Japanese legend which said a wish could come true if a person folded a thousand paper cranes, she began to make paper cranes in the hope of being cured. She died before all the cranes were folded. Sadako has since become an international symbol of courage and determination in the struggles against nuclear weapons, and

there is a statue of her at the Hiroshima Peace Park, with the inscription "This is our cry, This is our prayer, Peace in the world".

Impact assessment

The many dialogues with civil society groups in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal showed an intense and increasingly organised struggle for peace, justice and development in each country and a growing awareness that local and national goals are tied to the larger regional situation. There was widespread recognition that without peace between Pakistan and India, the South Asian region would remain unstable and would fail to develop the structures of economic and political co-operation it needs for meeting people's needs. The public responses and the media coverage in all three countries reflected a serious concern about India-Pakistan relations and the effects of nuclearisation of the sub-continent.

In some places, people seemed to find the nuclear dangers now facing the region somewhat remote. The clearest expression of this was in Sri Lanka. Many people there seemed to be hearing about the devastating effects of nuclear weapons for the first time. This could be due simply to geography; Sri Lanka is far removed from any plausible conflict between Pakistan and India. But, there can be no doubt that there are also more pressing concerns for Sri Lankan civil society and policy makers, with the now almost twenty year-long bloody civil war showing few signs of ending. Nonetheless, there was enthusiasm for a South Asia wide civil society initiative for peace and disarmament, a recognition that nuclear weapons posed a risk to the whole region and support for a South Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty.

While there were no discussions with government officials in Sri Lanka, there are indications that Sri Lanka has sought to encourage talks between India and Pakistan. This is a positive sign and suggests that a more formal set of dialogues with government officials on the possibilities of a South Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty may be worth pursuing.

There was very strong support in Bangladesh from civil society for the idea of a South Asia Nuclear Weapons Zone Treaty, and for the strategy of the smaller non-nuclear countries in the region leading the way. The contacts with government officials suggested that Bangladesh could be encouraged to consider working towards such a Treaty. This willingness reflects the historical role Bangladesh played in launching the idea of a South Asian regional organisation in the late 1970s and in hosting the first SAARC Summit in 1985.

In Nepal, there was concern about the impact of a possible nuclear war on the northern parts of the sub-continent. The possibility of being affected by radioactive fallout was taken seriously. An important issue raised most directly in Nepal, but also elsewhere, was that of overcoming the constraints imposed by the much larger and more powerful neighbours on political initiatives by smaller South Asian countries.

Conclusions and recommendations

The trip by anti-nuclear activists from Pakistan and India to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal was by most measures very successful. It showed the feasibility and utility of systematic interaction between peace activists in India and Pakistan with a large number of civil society organisations, activists, scholars and government officials in the other South Asia countries. The interest generated by the visit, evident from the large meetings and extensive media coverage indicated a widespread concern in the region about the implications and challenges created by the nuclearisation of India and Pakistan. There is clearly scope for more extensive public education about nuclear issues in these countries.

While immediate domestic problems took priority in each country, i.e. the civil war in Sri Lanka, poverty and rising Islamic militancy in Bangladesh, and Nepal's concerns about being locked between China and India, it was clear that there was a recognition in each country of the importance of the nuclear armed confrontation between India and Pakistan. As a way to address this concern, the proposal of a nuclear weapon free zone in the region attracted considerable interest and support..

Rather than wait for governments to take up the nuclear issue, key groups in the increasingly assertive and organised civil society in these Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal seemed willing to engage directly with the demand for nuclear disarmament in South Asia. These groups agreed to begin consultations and work towards a national convention in their respective countries to create a peace coalition that would include disarmament as a key platform. Some of these groups were willing to participate in a regional meeting later in the year that would take up the idea of a South Asian peace coalition.

There are three recommendations:

1. Planning begin for a South Asia wide meeting of peace groups with a view to establishing a South Asian Peace Coalition that would have as one of its key goals a South Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone.
2. A series of follow-up discussions be organised in India and Pakistan for critical review and further development of ideas on the scope, implementation, verification, and entry into force of a South Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty, focussing on political and technical challenges and possible solutions.
3. Organise a South Asia wide campaign of public education on the implications of the nuclearisation of the sub-continent, which would rely on print and audio-visual materials prepared by groups in India and Pakistan and work through civil society groups in all countries.

Appendix I

The Dhaka Declaration

Adopted at the Dhaka Conference, February 20, 2000

By conducting nuclear tests in 1998, embracing the doctrine of deterrence, and undertaking the development of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, India and Pakistan have gravely endangered their own and the region's security and set back the global nuclear disarmament agenda. This nuclearisation imitates hegemonic states whose nuclear weapons represent the gravest danger to global security.

It is imperative that India and Pakistan cease all activity pertaining to the development, manufacture, induction or deployment of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. They must immediately dismantle these programmes and sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and other restraint measures as steps towards nuclear disarmament, and as part of their return to the global disarmament agenda.

India's and Pakistan's nuclearisation has made the entire South Asian region hostage to their mutual rivalry and compromised its security. Nuclear weapons will impose unaffordable social and economic costs upon India and Pakistan, considerably worsen the hardships of their poorest people, and lead to repercussions in the neighbouring countries.

The Conference deplores the hardening of nuclear postures in the region as expressed in India's Draft Nuclear Doctrine and Pakistan's announcement of a Command and Control structure.

Nuclearisation has escalated mutual suspicion and hostility between India and Pakistan, as witnessed in the Kargil conflict. It has strengthened communal, militarist, authoritarian and centralizing political tendencies within the two countries. The rapidly worsening security environment cannot be redressed by standard confidence-building and crisis-defusing measures. This is why the Conference calls for an immediate freezing and dismantling of the Indian and Pakistani nuclear and missile programmes.

India's and Pakistan's nuclearisation has undermined regional cooperation and sabotaged SAARC. This must be immediately reversed. Meanwhile, the Conference calls upon the other members of SAARC to pressure India and Pakistan to enter into an effective dialogue for peace and security in the region.

As the strategic, social and economic repercussions of the nuclearisation of India and Pakistan extend beyond their borders, the neighbouring states of Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka must use both their individual and collective influence to bring about the declaration of South Asia as a nuclear weapons-free zone. They should also explore innovative affiliations, such as the possibility of joining the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone (the Bangkok Treaty).

The Conference calls on the U.S., Russia, U.K., France and China to honour their disarmament obligations under Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as re-emphasized by the

1996 World Court Judgement, and to ratify, and live up to the spirit of the CTBT by closing down their test sites and halting development of new weapons designs. They must also immediately undertake further steps towards disarmament such as the fissile materials treaty, taking nuclear weapons off alert and work towards a convention to abolish nuclear weapons. We oppose all proposals for ballistic missile systems, including research. The U.S. and Russia must further the START process. Japan should cease cooperation with the U.S. on Theatre Missile Defence systems. The Conference calls on the people of U.S., Russia, U.K., France and China to pressure their respective governments into adopting these measures and strengthening the call for global nuclear disarmament.

The Conference also appeals to civil society organizations in all South Asian countries to place nuclear disarmament on their agenda and build an effective coalition around this goal.

Nuclear weapons programmes have gravely damaged people's health and environment. Immediate steps must be taken to remedy this. The Conference is also aware that the abolition of nuclear weapons cannot be sustained without ending reliance on nuclear power generation which has damaging social and ecological impacts. It therefore calls for pursuing alternative, sustainable, energy paths in the region.

Nuclear Weapons are immoral, illegal and strategically irrational. It is imperative to adopt a wholly non-militaristic approach to security which is based on the fundamental and inviolable right of all South Asians to peace, sustainable development and justice.

Dhaka Conference Plan of Action

National Action

1. Civil society organizations and activists in the countries of South Asia, Southeast Asia and beyond will work towards complete and total nuclear disarmament. In this context, they will work towards a South Asian NWFZ and convince their governments to be committed to this goal. They should also explore innovative and effective affiliations, such as the possibility of joining the Southeast Asian NWFZ (Bangkok Treaty).
2. Concrete steps should be taken for setting up groups to review and suggest changes in the curricula of all South Asian states, particularly in overcoming communal and nationalistic tendencies.
3. Provide educational and informational material on nuclear and disarmament issues across the social spectrum. Pamphlets, audio-capsules, videos, newsletters, educational comics, educational films and posters and slide shows must be made widely available. Wherever possible such material must be translated and distributed.
4. Network with existing struggles, sensitize and train activists on nuclear issues.

5. To dialogue with the pro-nuclear and other mainstream lobbies.

Regional Action

1. Immediate and total freeze on India and Pakistan's nuclear weapons system:
 - a) No assembly of weapons
 - b) No mating of weapons with delivery systems
 - c) No deployment, no induction of nuclear weapons
 - d) No further testing of nuclear weapons
 - e) No further missile tests or acquisition of delivery aircraft
 - f) Freeze on further production (military or civilian) of weapons useable fissile materials
 - (g) Public accountability regarding veracity and efficacy of the freeze
2. India and Pakistan must sign and ratify the CTBT at the earliest.
3. Launch South Asian Peace Coalition as a broad base alliance.
4. To work with existing processes and structures such as Focus on the Global South (Mumbai and Bangkok), the Center for Alternatives (Dhaka), the Pakistan India Forum for Peace and Democracy, the National Peace Coalition (Colombo), the Council for Alternative Security in Asia Pacific, Pakistan Peace Coalition, and others. Initiate processes of training, research, advocacy and other related activities.
5. A Council with the present delegates should be set up to review work done and plan future activities every two years. This Council must elect/select a smaller group consisting of 10-15 steering members who would be accountable to the larger body. Focus on the Global South will be the interim secretariat till the Council congregates again.

Global Action

1. Dissemination of past experiences of nuclear disasters and the use of data for social awareness.
2. Linking the movement with anti-nuclear and peace movements and other like-minded civil groups of nuclear states.
3. Linking up with the peace movements such as Hague Appeal for Peace, New Agenda Coalition countries and other pro-active civil bodies for nuclear disarmament.

Appendix II

Brief biographies of the delegation members

Admiral L. Ramdas (Retd.), PVSM, AVSM, VRC, VSM

Admiral Ramdas had a long and distinguished career as a naval officer and was Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) of the Indian Navy from 1990 to 1993. He was instrumental in resurrecting naval exercises with other navies as part of his vision of creating a zone of peace amongst the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region. His writings on India-Pakistan relations, nuclear issues, peace and disarmament have been featured in many newspapers and journals. He is currently the chairperson of the Indian chapter of the Pakistan India Peoples Forum for Peace and Democracy, and an active campaigner for total abolition of nuclear weapons. He is a member of the National Co-ordination Committee of the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace. He is a member of the Advisory Committee of the Hague Appeal for Peace, the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, and Ploughshares USA.

Dr. Sandeep Pandey

Dr. Sandeep Pandey received his Bachelor's degree in engineering from Banaras Hindu University and Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from University of California, Berkeley, USA. He is a full-time activist in the area of primary education and coordinates the activities of a group called *Asha*, created in Berkeley in 1991 and with over 35 chapters in the US and India, which supports education programmes, mostly for underprivileged children. Along with his wife Arundhati Dhuru, who has been an activist with the Narmada Bachao Andolan and a number of other friends, in 1999 he organised the 88-day World Peace March from Khetolai to Sarnath. *Asha* is now seeking ways to serve as a platform for building bridges between the children of India and Pakistan and to encourage them to work together for nuclear disarmament, social justice and peace. He is a member of the National Co-ordination Committee of the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace.

Dr. Zia Mian

Dr. Zia Mian is a physicist working at the Center for Energy and Environmental Studies, Princeton University, USA, and the Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad. He has also taught at Yale University (USA) and at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. He has been involved since 1985 in research, writing and organising on nuclear weapons and nuclear energy issues in South Asia. He is the editor of "Pakistan's Atomic Bomb and the Search for Security" (1995), "Pakistan's crises of State and Society" (with Iftikhar Ahmad (1998)) and the forthcoming "Out of the Nuclear Shadows" (with Smitu Kothari). His articles and essays have been published in journals, magazines and newspapers around the world. He is a member of the Global Council of Abolition 2000, a global network of over 2000 peace groups in more than 90 countries working for the elimination of nuclear weapons, and a member of the Board of the

United Nations NGO Committee on Disarmament. He is active with the Pakistan Peace Coalition.

Dr. A. H. Nayyar

Dr. A. H. Nayyar has a Ph.D. in Physics from Imperial College London. He teaches physics at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. He is a regular summer-time visiting research scientist at the Center for Energy and Environmental Studies, Princeton University, USA and has been associated with the International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Trieste, Italy, for a number of years. He has been active in the anti-nuclear movement in Pakistan since 1985. A founding member of the Pakistan Peace Coalition, Dr. Nayyar has been active in the Pakistan-India Peoples' Forum for Peace and Democracy since its inception in 1994. He has written and lectured on issues related to nuclear weapons, nuclear power generation, education and education policy. He has participated in the production of television programs on education and popular science.

Appendix III

Concept paper on creating a process and mechanism to initiate nuclear disarmament in South Asia*

Zia Mian¹ and A. H. Nayyar²

1. The nuclearisation of India and Pakistan has created grave peril and a sustained crisis for both countries and the people of South Asia.
2. India sees its nuclear weapons with relationship to the region, China, and its own larger global presence, Pakistan sees its nuclear weapons as more than just a counter to India and seeks to use these weapons as a way to internationalise its conflict with India.
3. India has a draft nuclear doctrine that calls for a triad. It is working on a nuclear submarine, talks of sea based assets which means there will be nuclear weapons in the Indian ocean as well as within India and Pakistan, imperilling other countries of the region. Both India and Pakistan are developing short and long range missiles and acquiring aircraft that can deliver nuclear weapons.
4. India has recently signed a 4 billion dollar conventional arms deal with Russia and is likely to continue defence spending. Pakistan continues to seek and receive military support from China. It is likely that the nuclear and conventional arms race between India and Pakistan will continue at whatever level they can afford.
5. One obvious source of conflict is the Kashmir dispute. India and Pakistan have prevented intervention on the issue of Kashmir in their own respective ways with India refusing any outside role, and Pakistan seeking to counterbalance its relative weakness with India by involving the US in particular.
6. While South Asian countries should try to engage India and Pakistan on the Kashmir dispute, the nature of the dispute limits the scope and form of possible engagement. There is little the countries of the region can do except to urge the two states to find a peaceful settlement that respects the wishes of the Kashmiri people.
7. Even if India and Pakistan were to resolve the Kashmir issue, they would not necessarily either give up their nuclear weapon status or end their mutual hostility. The experience of the cold war shows that even when the obvious source of conflict between two nuclear

* This concept paper was circulated as part of the presentations by Zia Mian and A.H. Nayyar. It is meant to focus attention on the need for and feasibility of a South Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty, and includes a draft outline of such a treaty.

¹ Center for Energy and Environmental Studies, Princeton University, Princeton NJ, and Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad

² Department of Physics, Quaid-iAzam University, Islamabad

weapon states ends, the logic of the weapons has an enduring effect in preventing the establishment of peace in any meaningful sense.

8. Efforts to develop South Asian institutions have been limited by the failure to settle disputes and now the nuclearisation of the subcontinent. This has prevented the emergence of strong economic and political arrangements that can benefit the individual South Asian states and strengthen their capability to negotiate with international capital or financial institutions. Individual states in South Asia are left to fend for themselves in the international arena on the basis of their limited capacities. It is the poor who suffer the consequences.
9. Civil society and peoples movements in all the South Asian countries need to make collective efforts to find the political and organisational form for a possible South Asian regional intervention to end the nuclearisation of the subcontinent.
10. Some possibilities are:
 - a) Create a South Asian Peace Coalition to educate the peoples of South Asia about the risks and consequences of nuclear war in South Asia
 - b) Use existing regional official and civil society institutions and organisations to demand that India and Pakistan disarm
 - c) Campaign for the establishment of a South Asian nuclear weapons free zone
 - d) Mobilise the countries other than India and Pakistan to negotiate a treaty establishing a South Asian nuclear weapons free zone among themselves, and demand India and Pakistan become parties to it.

Draft Outline of the South Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty

The Parties to this Treaty

Convinced of the need to take all steps in achieving the ultimate goal of a world entirely free of nuclear weapons, as well as of the obligations of all States to contribute to this end,

Aware that regional disarmament measures contribute to global disarmament efforts,

Believing that the South Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone will protect South Asian States and peoples from nuclear war,

Determined to promote regional co-operation for sustainable social and economic development of the South Asian subcontinent,

Determined to keep South Asia free of environmental pollution by radioactive wastes and other radioactive matter,

Welcoming the co-operation of all States and governmental and non-governmental Organization for the attainment of these objectives,

Have decided by this Treaty to establish the South Asian NWFZ and hereby agree as follows:

Article 1

Renunciation of nuclear explosive devices

Each Party undertakes:

- (a) Not to conduct research on, develop, manufacture, stockpile or otherwise acquire, possess or have control over any nuclear explosive device by any means anywhere;
- (b) Not to seek or receive any assistance in the research on, development, manufacture, stockpiling or acquisition, or possession of any nuclear explosive device;
- (c) Not to take any action to assist or encourage the research on, development, manufacture, stockpiling or acquisition, or possession of any nuclear explosive device;
- (d) Not to produce or otherwise acquire, possess or have control over weapon usable fissile material.

Article 2

Prevention of stationing and transit of nuclear explosive devices

1. Each Party undertakes to prohibit, in its territory, the stationing of any nuclear explosive device.
2. Each Party undertakes to prohibit any visits by foreign ships and aircraft carrying nuclear explosive devices to its ports and airfields.
3. Each Party undertakes to prohibit any transit of its airspace by foreign aircraft, and navigation by foreign ships in its territorial sea or archipelagic waters carrying nuclear explosive devices.

Article 3

Prohibition of testing of nuclear explosive devices

Each Party undertakes:

- (a) Not to test any nuclear explosive device;
- (b) To prohibit in its territory the testing of any nuclear explosive device;
- (c) Not to assist or encourage the testing of any nuclear explosive device by any State anywhere.

Article 4

Declaration, dismantling, destruction or conversion of nuclear explosive devices, fissile materials and the facilities for their manufacture

Each Party undertakes:

- (a) To declare any capability for the manufacture of nuclear explosive devices and fissile materials;
- (b) To dismantle and destroy any nuclear device that it has manufactured prior to the coming into force of this Treaty;
- (c) To declare and put under multinational safeguards any stocks of fissile materials in its possession;
- (d) To destroy facilities for the manufacture of nuclear explosive devices and fissile materials;
- (e) To permit the International Atomic Energy Agency (hereinafter referred to as IAEA) and the Commission established in article 9 to verify the processes of dismantling and destruction of the nuclear explosive devices, as well as the destruction or conversion of the facilities for their production.

Article 5

Prohibition of nuclear weapons-capable delivery systems

Each party undertakes

- (a) Not to conduct research on, develop, manufacture or otherwise acquire, possess or have control over any nuclear weapons-capable delivery systems by any means anywhere;
- (b) Not to seek or receive any assistance in the research on, development, manufacture, stockpiling or acquisition, or possession of any nuclear weapons-capable delivery systems;

Article 6

Prohibition of dumping of radioactive wastes

Each Party undertakes:

Not to take any action to assist or encourage the dumping of radioactive wastes and other radioactive matter anywhere within the South Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Article 7

Verification of Peaceful Uses

Each Party undertakes:

- (a) To conduct all activities for the peaceful use of nuclear energy under strict multinational safeguards and control to provide assurance of exclusively peaceful uses;
- (b) To conclude a comprehensive safeguards agreement with IAEA for the purpose of verifying compliance with the undertakings in subparagraph (a) of this article;
- (c) Not to provide source or special fissionable material, or equipment or material especially designed or prepared for the processing, use or production of special fissionable material for peaceful purposes to any non-nuclear-weapon State unless subject to a comprehensive safeguards agreement concluded with IAEA.

Article 8

Prohibition of armed attack on nuclear installations

Each Party undertakes not to take, or assist, or encourage any action aimed at an armed attack by conventional or other means against nuclear installations in the South Asian nuclear- weapon-free zone.

Article 9

Mechanism for compliance

For the purpose of ensuring compliance with their undertakings under this Treaty, the Parties agree to establish the South Asian Commission on Nuclear Disarmament (hereinafter referred to as the Commission).

Article 10

Reservations

This Treaty shall not be subject to reservations.

Article 11

Duration

This Treaty shall be of unlimited duration and shall remain in force indefinitely.

Article 12

Signature, ratification and entry into force

1. This Treaty shall be open for signature by any State in the South Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone. It shall be subject to ratification.
2. It shall enter into force on the date of deposit of the third instrument of ratification.
3. For a signatory that ratifies this Treaty after the date of the deposit of the third instrument of ratification, it shall enter into force for that signatory on the date of deposit of its instrument of ratification.

Article 13

Depositary functions

1. This Treaty shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of SAARC, who is hereby designated as Depositary of the Treaty.