# NUCLEARIZATION OF PAKISTAN: MOTIVATIONS & INTENTIONS

APPLICATION OF GRAHAM ALLISON'S NATIONAL DECISION MAKING MODELS By Rabia Akhtar

#### Contents

- Purpose of my research
- Methodology
- □ Findings
  - 1. RAM
  - 2. OPM
  - 3. BPM
- Limitations of my research

#### WHY did Pakistan go nuclear?

On 28 May 1998, Pakistan responded in kind to India's early May nuclear tests. Pakistan carried out five nuclear explosions, the same number as carried out by New Delhi over a two-day period on 11 and 13 May.

The main question this thesis sets out to ask is "why Pakistan chose to respond to Indian nuclear tests?".

# Methodology

- In order to answer this question, I chose to test the national decisionmaking model presented by Graham Allison in which he explained the US decision-making during the Cuban Missile Crisis. It is a single case study. Unlike Allison's study (analyzing both the Soviet and the US side) I have only looked at as to what motivated Pakistan to follow Indian suit.
- □ There have been many books published on the nuclear proliferation in South Asia but they all discuss the scenario in South Asia after the tests and none talks about South Asia prior to or during the time period when both India and Pakistan went nuclear. Therefore, I had to rely solely on journalistic accounts that came out at the time India conducted its tests in May 1998 till the time Pakistan decided to respond. That was my only source of gauging the mood that prevailed so to find answers as to what could have been the Pakistani intentions and motivations.

#### **Structure of my research:**

- □ Allison's national decision-making model has three basic components.
- □ The Rational Actor Model,
- □ The Organization Process Model and
- □ The Bureaucratic Politics Model
- □ Therefore, my thesis is divided into five chapters.
- □ First Chapter deals with the literature review.
- □ The next three chapters that follow present a detailed analysis of the three models and the application of these models to test the national decision making of Pakistan going nuclear in 1998.
- □ The final chapter serves to conclude the thesis.

#### Literature Review

- There are authors who have looked at the models from both the foreign policy perspective as well as from the public administration point of view. They have analyzed both the strengths and the weaknesses of the three models.
- □ The most widely criticized model remained the Bureaucratic Politics Model (Model III). There were both the positive as well as negative criticisms to this model because of the politics administrations dichotomy. So it was interesting to read how different authors perceived the governmental machinery and the role it played in shaping the governmental decisions.
- □ I could not find much literature that analyzed the Rational Actor Model or the Organizational Process Model however I do believe that these two are as important as the Bureaucratic Politics Model. I found it strange that much emphasis has been laid on Model III which I believe is over emphasized in its importance and applicability.

#### Allison's three models 1971

Rational Actor:	Bureaucratic Politics:
-maximize gains	-pulling and hauling of
-lower costs	actors
Organizational Process:	National Decision making:
-SOP's in place	A combo of RA, OP & BP
	-Pakistan's detonation

#### Rational Actor Model

- Following are the basic concepts that make up RAM
- (i) Goals and Objectives
- (ii) Alternatives
- (iii) Consequences and
- (iv) Final Choice

## RAM

#### □ Allison maintains:

"The rational action maintains that a rational choice consists of value-maximizing adaptation within the context of a given payoff function, fixed alternatives and consequences that are known."

#### Alternatives

- Pakistan had been under pressure from across the political spectrum to explode a nuclear device of its own since India carried out its five tests on May 11 and May 13. Therefore there were only three options available to Pakistan
- (a) Do nothing
- (b) Turn to international community and condemn the testing or
- (c) Respond in kind to maintain the nuclear balance of power in the region without which the most affected state would have been Pakistan.

# Rapid Pakistani Response

- □ The time frame within which Pakistan responded to Indian attacks is not more than 20 days. It is interesting to note that in those 20 days:
  - all the options were analyzed (perhaps),
  - delivery vehicles were mobilized (definitely)
  - and the test site was prepared (absolutely).
- The question as to why Pakistan responded so rapidly (with the third option of responding in kind) is a very significant one at this stage because it refutes the claim of the Rational Actor Model which states that the action chosen is a rational action which maximizes the benefits and reduces the costs for the actor.

# Scenario when applied in case of Pakistan:

- 1. Basic Unit of Analysis: Governmental action as a choice: Pakistan selected an action that maximized her strategic goals and objectives.
- 2. Organizing Concepts:
  - National Actor: Pakistani nation, Pakistani government conceived as a rational unitary decision maker is the agent.
  - *The Problem:* The threats that appeared after the Indian nuclear testing drove the actor (Pakistan) to act in the manner it did.
  - Static Selection: Among various alternatives available to Pakistan, the action taken to detonate was conceived as the solution.

# Components of a rational choice

- *3. Action as a rational choice:* Now according to Allison there are four components that constitute a rational choice:
  - *Goals and Objectives:* Pakistan decided to detonate keeping in mind the national security and national interests as her primary goal and objective.
  - *Options*: After carefully weighing all the options available, Pakistan chose the best suitable one.
  - *Consequences*: Pakistan was very well aware of the consequences that would follow if the decision to detonate was taken and acted keeping in mind the costs and benefits of those consequences.
  - *Choice*: According to Allison, rational choice is value-maximizing. Pakistan's decision to test its nuclear bombs was the most suitable choice and its consequences ranked highest in terms of her goals and objectives.

### Components of a rational choice

- Dominant Inference Pattern: If Pakistan chose to detonate then according to inference pattern, it must have ends towards which this action must have constituted a maximizing means.
- 4. *General Propositions:* According to Allison, a rational action is the one which is less consequential and possesses great value but in this case Allison's predictions fall short.

## Propositions of RAM

- Allison's RAM provides us with two propositions.
  - "An increase in the costs of an alternative reduces the likelihood of that action being chosen.
  - A decrease in the costs of an alternative increases the likelihood of that action being chosen."

#### Conclusion for RAM

- Because according to RAM, the rational decision is the one which decreases the costs and increases the benefits thus making the decision rational.
- I found that Pakistan taking the option of choosing to respond in kind did not maximize the benefits rather it increased the costs (at the time). Thus, the decision could not have been rational one if we apply RAM.

# Organizational Process Model

- According to Allison there are five characteristic deviations from comprehensive rationality which are
- 1) Factored problems (problems are factored into different parts which are dealt with non-simultaneously)
- 2) Satisficing (decision makers satisfice rather than optimize
- 3) Search (organizations search using standard processes which limit choices)

### OPM contd...

- 4) Uncertainty Avoidance (organizations deal with uncertainty by making decisions, then making small corrections, like a thermostat, rather than considering alternatives and making a single binding decision)
- 5) Repertoires (of programs are developed that limit effective choice).

# OPM Applied

For Allison, governmental behavior is not a deliberate choice of an individual rather it is output if large organizations that function according to their SOPs.

#### Pakistan's nuclear weapons capability

- Pakistan's ability to deploy nuclear weapons had been clear since Nawaz Sharif openly stated in August 1994:
  "I confirm that Pakistan possesses the atomic bomb."
- □ Later on a more official statement came from Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto stating in April 1995:

"We have enough knowledge and capability to make and assemble a nuclear weapon. But we have voluntarily chosen not to either assemble a nuclear weapon, to detonate a nuclear weapon or to export technology."

#### Arms Race....

□ There is a history of continuing arms race between India and Pakistan, but the real threat came from the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) which during the election campaign in India made a statement to the effect that BJP's "national agenda" would include adding nuclear weapons in India's arsenal.

On April 02, 1998 after the statement by Bhartia Janta Party, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif sent a letter to heads of State/Government of USA, UK, France, Russia, China, Japan, Italy, Belgium, Spain and Germany blaming India for her nuclear ambitions which were destabilizing for South Asia. The Prime Minister urged the international community to help curb the hostile Indian tendencies and promote nuclear nonproliferation in the region.

- Followed by this statement on April 06, 1998 Pakistan successfully conducted an intermediate range missile test, Ghauri with a maximum range of 1,500 kilometers.
- This missile was a potential (not direct) threat to Indian national security because it had a range of 930 miles, capable of hitting major Indian cities.

- Following India's abortive bid in 1995 to test its nuclear devices, Pakistan had prepared a nuclear test site in the Chagai district of Southwestern Baluchistan, bordering Iran and Afghanistan.
- According to Pakistani Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan's "aim was to tell the Indians that their move will be matched" and to send the West "a clear signal that they had better done something to stop the Indians.

- □ Therefore, in May 1998, all that Pakistani nuclear scientific state required was the necessary political approval which was withheld until Pakistani decision makers were sure that retaliatory tests would not incur unacceptable diplomatic and economic costs. On 18 May 1998, the Chairman of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) was summoned to the Prime Minister House where he was relayed the decision of the Defense Committee of the Cabinet. "Dhamaka kar dein" (Conduct the explosion") were the exact words used by the Prime Minister to inform him of the Government's decision to conduct the nuclear tests.
- The PAEC Chairman went back to his office and gave orders to his staff to prepare for the tests. Simultaneously, General Head Quarters (GHQ) and Air Headquarters issued orders to the relevant quarters in 12 Corps, Quetta, the National Logistics Cell (NLC), the Army Aviation Corps and No. 6 (Air Transport Support) Squadron respectively to extend the necessary support to the PAEC in this regard. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) also directed the national airline, Pakistan International Airline (PIA), to make available a Boeing 737 passenger aircraft at short notice for the ferrying of PAEC officials, scientists, engineers and technicians to Baluchistan.

If one wants to explain the specific characteristics of governmental action then I believe that Model II is sufficient for that explanation. As proposed by Allison, the existing organizational routine limits the options, which is held true in this case because as analyzed earlier by Model I, Pakistan had three options before making the decision to detonate i.e. to exercise restraint, turn to international community for help or to respond in kind. These options boiled down to simply a question of whether the capability to conduct the tests existed or not. If yes, then how soon and if not, then what? Answer to this question came by applying OPM.

Pakistan detonated because Pakistan possessed the capability to detonate. Period.

#### Bureaucratic Politics Model

- The governmental politics model conceives of governmental policy-making not as a rational actor choice or organizational output but resultant of bargaining along regular circuits among players positioned hierarchically within the government.
- According to Allison, the government's decisions are resultants because
  - "what happens is not chosen as a solution to a problem but rather results from compromise, conflict and confusion of officials with diverse influence and unequal influence.

- In this model, the political actors and their intentions, positions and interests, their relative power, the action channels through which the political actors input and exert their influence, decision rules and similar matters stand to the fore in analysis.
- Allison has arranged the organizing concepts of this model by explaining the players in position with their parochial priorities and perceptions.

He states that

"The governmental actor is neither a unitary actor nor a conglomerate of organizations, but rather is a number of individual players.

□ The dramas lengthy cast of characters were players in the national security policy game by virtue of their position. They were the civilians in the Parliamentary administration of Nawaz Sharif and the military players in the General Head Quarters (GHQ). In order to identify the players whose interests and actions effect the governmental decision, I will break them down into players in position as explained earlier i.e. Chiefs, staffers, Indians and ad hoc players.

□ The *Chiefs* would include the president, prime minister, parliamentarians, foreign minister, cabinet members, Chiefs of the Armed Forces, COAS as head of the General Head Quarters (GHQ), Head of Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), Head of Kahuta Research Laboratories (KRL), Chief of Civil Aviation Authority (CIA), Governors and Chief of Inter Services Intelligence (ISI).

#### **Compromise, Coalition, Competition and Confusion**

- Each player brought assorted parochial baggage to the table. Individual priorities, perceptions and problems contributed to the pulling and hauling between various government officials from which the whole scenario of responding to Indian nuclear tests in kind evolved. Accordingly, the decision taken by Pakistan to detonate was not a conscious policy decision by a unitary rational actor and as explained by Allison:
  - "It was an outcome resulting from compromise, coalition, competition and confusion among government officials who see different faces of an issue.

# Pulling and Hauling

Regarding the competition between the players, it was a difficult decision to reach as to whether the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) should carry out the nuclear testing or the Kahuta Research Laboratories (KRL) and finally on May 18, 1998 the task was assigned to PAEC. When news reached Dr. A.Q. Khan at KRL that PAEC will carry out the nuclear testing, he lodged a strong protest with the Chief of Army Staff, General Jehangir Karamat. The Army Chief, in turn, called the Prime Minister. Amongst the two, it was decided that KRL personnel would also be involved in the nuclear test preparations and present at the time of testing alongside those of the PAEC.

- What determines each player's impact on results is what Allison terms as "power". This power stems from the position held by the player, their expertise and control over information, power to identify options and estimate feasibilities which enables chiefs to implement decisions.
- This aspect can be determined by the ability and assurances given by PAEC to the Prime Minister that the operation can be carried out as all the technological capabilities were in order. This gave confidence to the Chiefs (the Prime Minister and COAS) to go ahead and finalize the decision.

- □ As far as the players are concerned, Model III provides a useful explanation about the *actions emanating from the position held by the actors*. In the case of Pakistan's detonation, there was a very strong position possessed by different players.
- The Foreign Minister was executing his power by issuing strong statements that came out right after India conducted its nuclear tests accusing it of always having possessed a covert developing and testing of her nuclear program. This shows that the Foreign Ministry of Pakistan held a very strong hawkish position on the Indian nuclear tests.

□ The bureaucratic machinery of Nawaz's government took a very firm stand in blaming the international community for not taking the warnings by the Pakistani government about Indian nuclear tests into serious consideration. Sharif and later the Foreign Minister assured the public that all measures would be taken to safeguard national security and that any response from Pakistan was backed by the military's capability to match it.

The role that Pakistan's Army has played in Pakistan's politics has always remained distinguished and Indocentric. All the defensive strategies are based on a threat from India which out-powers Pakistan by her conventional military strength. This was further aggravated when India tested her nuclear tests and called Pakistan's bluff of having nuclear weapons capability. Pakistan's defense policy is inseparable from its foreign policy to a larger extent, taking into consideration its Indo-centric defense policy.

## According to Allison

- "Each player pulls and hauls with the power at his discretion for outcomes that will advance his conception of national, organizational, group and personal interests."
- □ In light of the above statement, one thing is clear; that both the military and the civilian establishments (leaving the Prime Minister aside in the beginning) were willing to go ahead with the nuclear response to India's nuclear explosion. The commanding structure of the military explained above clarifies the authority it possesses where the foreign and defense policy issues are concerned. But, the conflicting statements from the Prime Minister as discussed previously, as well as in this chapter, remain a confusing issue.

The Prime Minister heads the civilian establishment, heads the bureaucracy and also holds the title of Minister of Defense. I believe that the Foreign Ministry and the Military's hawkish tendencies played a game which only satisfied their own interests and there was no conflict among the civil-military at that point in time in 1998. The lessons drawn from this aspect lead to the conclusion that both the civilian and the military establishments possessed one voice regarding the nuclear issue and when they pursued the same agenda there was no pulling and hauling amongst them. Thus this environment defies the postulate that *bureaucratic politics* exists.

- BP model helped me understand the actors that were involved in the decision making. It also clarified that the political actors involved possessed relative power and through different action channels that exerted their influence and shaped the decisionmaking.
- □ The civil-military relationship became very clear when I analyzed it through the BP lens. There were different actors in powerful positions with their interests at stake.
- □ What the BP model fails to predict in this case is the pulling and hauling in the bureaucratic machinery which is the hallmark of this model.
- □ I found that there existed a unanimous decision at all levels of civil-military bureaucracy regarding Pakistan's response to Indian tests.

Therefore, my conclusion of BP model remains that it succeeds in explaining certain pressures that existed on the Prime Minister to take a definite course of action and it also held true in its claim that governmental action is a political resultant rather a single actor's intentional choice. But its failure to explain the "pulling and hauling effect" remains questionable where its application is concerned.

## Final Conclusion

- The usefulness of Rational Actor Model (Model I) in applying it to the Pakistani case comes from it predicting the governmental action as a "choice" that maximized Pakistan's strategic goals. Model I also helped in envisaging Pakistan as a national actor which identified the problem and searched for alternatives to solve that problem.
- But for Model I, a serious limitation that my research suffered from was analyzing Pakistan's decision to detonate as a "unitary actor". There is no way that the rationality of this decision could be explained through gauging the unitary actor model because of the complexity of the events that led to the decision. Also the involvement of various internal and external actors, clouds our assumptions which are conflicting with the basic concepts of Model I.

The Organizational Process Model (Model II) however proved quite useful in its application in this particular case. Firstly, the organizational process model is very technical in its applicability. Since Pakistan's going nuclear involved technicalities which could only have been revealed through the powerful explanation Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) provide therefore, most of my queries were answered through a deeper analysis of Model II.

- □ After applying the Organizational Process Model, I find it interesting to suggest that Pakistan's testing of the Ghauri Missile in April 1998 was likely the result of BJP coming in power in March 1998. BJP has always maintained a strong nuclear posture which I believe was used by Pakistan to flex her own nuclear muscle.
- □ After testing Ghauri in April 98, it provided Pakistan with a delivery vehicle which could carry nuclear warhead with a range that could make India vulnerable. This scenario did not leave Indian government comfortable and pushed them to resort to a response which was no less than nuclear. This also helped them call Pakistan's bluff about possessing nuclear capability which Pakistan always maintained it had.

- Applying Model II helped me divulge that probably the Standard Operating Procedures were set into motion in the first place so to achieve the very same response which India provided Pakistan by detonating her nuclear devices on May 11 & 13 in 1998. This in turn gave Pakistan an edge over India to play her "national security" card which has been used for so many instances in the past. Only this time it worked as a double edged sword which helped Pakistan show the rest of the world how insecure she was with India going nuclear.
- □ And now after analyzing the decision in retrospect I believe that there actually was no choice for Pakistan besides testing the nuclear weapons because yes, the national security always remains supreme and no matter how we analyze this decision, at the heart of it, safeguarding Pakistan's security remains at the heart of the decision.

- The Bureaucratic Politics Model (Model III) also provided some useful insights into the matter of Pakistan choosing to detonate. The basic concept of Model III successfully suggested that the governmental action was a political resultant rather than a choice (refuting the claims of Model I). It also helped clarify the players in position with their parochial priorities.
- But I believe that identification of the Chiefs of various different bureaus leaves us suspended where the pulling and hauling between the bureaus is concerned. Allison's Model III is beneficial in analysis only when there is a clear bureaucratic politics involved within the bureaus and outside the bureaus. Therefore, the BP was missing and thus failed to reveal how much influence it actually had (or could have had) in shaping the decision taken by the Prime Minister.

## Limitations during my research

There also exist some limitations to Allison's Models as well. During my research I found it very hard to resist taking into account roles that "external" agents play in shaping a policy issue. These external agents in Pakistan's case were the International actors which influenced Pakistan's decision to detonate. They include the United States with President Clinton being on the forefront, it includes the BJP government (and the whole geo-political environment that is inevitable for Pakistan not to take into account while making a foreign policy decision) and it also includes China as a country which aided Pakistan's nuclear weapons program (mainly missile capability).

- Clinton's position and influence is very important because had the Clinton administration provided Pakistan with more attractive economic deals than it did, <u>perhaps</u> the decision would have been different. BJP government after coming into power was responsible of coaxing the anti-Pakistani sentiments in their nation and kept a very strong nuclear moratorium. Pakistan's decision to detonate was definitely suffering from all these international factors influencing in one way or the other.
- All these factors helped shape Pakistan's decision. Allison's three Models do not allocate for these International or geopolitical concerns, which I believe are so important in analyzing any national or foreign policy decision making. I believe that all the three models tend to focus greatly on the internal actors or players that play a role in shaping any decision.

- One more limitation which I found with the applicability of Allison's Models is that perhaps it is a model to test decisions taken by only the Western styled democratic institutions. My reason for saying this is that in analyzing from a third world country's perspective, I maintain that it is very important to understand the psychology under which these nations operate in.
- Allison's three Models fall short in this argument because they are very rigid in their claim. They do not have any room for any psychological reasoning which sometimes drives nations to take up a certain course. And nations like Pakistan bring a huge psychological baggage with them before they make massive decisions like matching India's nuclear capability in kind.

- Overall, Pakistan decision's to detonate depending upon whether that decision would be in the national security's interest.
- Plus, the public opinion, pressure from within mounted to a point where taking any other decision would have been disastrous.
- □ After India's detonation, the International community placed sanctions but this was not a situation which would have collapsed India, so this also helped Pakistan go ahead and make a decision which Pakistan knew would provide long term benefits & security rather than short term gains which were not lucrative offers in case Pakistan showed restraint.