

**NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND ITS THREAT TO THE PEACE AND STABILITY
IN SOUTH ASIA**

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**THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
IN STRATEGY AND DIPLOMACY**

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UNIVERSITI KEBANGSAAN MALAYSIA
BANGI**

2008

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this thesis is my own except for quotations and summaries which have been duly acknowledged.

22 April 2008



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ABSTRACT

South Asia is among the most dangerous places in the world because of the unresolved conflicts of Kashmir. The rivalries between India and Pakistan, fueled by the historic animosity have triggered an arms race in South Asia, and now both countries have acquired nuclear capabilities raising concerns of a possible nuclear war in the Indian subcontinent. The focus of this study is to analyze the deep rooted rivalry between India and Pakistan. The conflict in the Indian subcontinent has remained unresolved, despite the engagement of the international community, regional organizations and the United States. As a result, there are concerns in the international community as the antagonism between India and Pakistan has put the entire South Asian region in the brink of nuclear war. Therefore, this study is significant because both India and Pakistan have shown their resolve to acquire and develop nuclear capabilities, while ignoring the international regimes on nuclear nonproliferation. This study was conducted to achieve the following objectives: firstly, to analyze the underlying factors that contributes to the development of the nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan; secondly, to identify the current contending issues that continue to constrain the relations between India and Pakistan; and finally, to study the threat posed to the region from nuclear weapons of the two country. The finding of this study suggests that the nuclear war between India and Pakistan is unlikely as both countries are committed to avoid a possible nuclear war in the subcontinent. However, a possible nuclear war cannot completely be ruled out as both the countries take pride in their nuclear programs. This study also revealed that any miscalculation from the policy makers in India or Pakistan could trigger a possible nuclear war between the two countries. Therefore, although Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) between India and Pakistan had failed in the past, this study suggests the establishment of an effective (CBMs) between the two countries to avoid an accidental nuclear war. The credibility of the Pakistan's government is critical to create a favorable environment between India and Pakistan.

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