

Indian Pugwash Society (IPS) Webinar on ‘China’s Nuclear Doctrine’
October 20, 2020

Chair: Amb. Sujan R. Chinoy, Director General, MP-IDSA; Convener, Indian Pugwash Society (IPS)

Panellists:

- **Dr Tong Zhao, Senior Fellow, Carnegie Tsinghua Center, - ‘China’s Nuclear Policy: Is there a change?’**
- **Dr M.S. Pratibha, Associate Fellow, MP-IDSA - ‘Role of PLA Rocket Force’**
- **Dr Manpreet Sethi, Senior Fellow, Centre for Air Power Studies - ‘China’s nuclear doctrine and its regional implications’**
- **Mr M.V. Rappai, Institute for Chinese Studies - ‘China’s changing nuclear posture and its impact on US-China relations’**

Amb. Sujan Chinoy, Convener, Indian Pugwash Society and Director General, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, welcomed the panellists for the webinar on ‘China’s Nuclear Doctrine’, conducted on October 20, 2020. Amb Chinoy gave the opening remarks and initiated the discussion.

Amb Chinoy noted that even as the world grapples with the impact of Covid-19, older debates on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament will continue to be relevant for global peace security and stability. China became a nuclear power in 1964 and was the last among the P5 to acquire nuclear capability. It maintains that it follows a No First Use (NFU) policy. When China tested, there was a fair bit of criticism from both the US and the then Soviet Union as both the superpowers had a difficult relationship with China at that point of time. China held that the nuclear regime was discriminatory; the superpowers had acquired nuclear capabilities but were objecting to large and populous countries like China acquiring similar capabilities. The *Beijing Review* published an article which sarcastically noted that the mandarins can burn down houses but the common folks cannot even light candles.

Amb Chinoy brought to the attention of the audience Chairman Mao’s statement in the context of the 1954 and 1958 Taiwan Straits Crisis that China was not afraid of the atomic bomb and that Chinese people cannot be bombed out of existence. He highlighted the evolution of China’s nuclear policies and postures, in the aftermath of its first nuclear test in October 1964, its enunciation of the NFU policy and initial opposition to the NPT (China signed it only in 1992) and China’s criticism of India’s 1998 nuclear tests.

Fast forward to 1998, when India acquired its nuclear weapon status in a publicly demonstrated manner, there was a fair bit of international criticism and China was no exception. This was despite the fact that just as China had tested as part of their sovereign right, so had India. In any case, India was not a signatory to NPT; so the question of abiding by NPT rules did not arise.

Amb. Chinoy stated that despite China maintaining that it continues to follow an NFU policy, it is important to highlight recent reports that call attention to the ambiguity enveloping China's nuclear posture. The 2020 US DoD report on 'Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China' for instance points out that the PRC is developing new ICBMs (apart from the approximately 100 it has in its current inventory), and is increasing the peacetime readiness of its nuclear forces. China will have up to eight SSBNs by 2030 (from the four in its current arsenal).

China in October 2019 also revealed the H6-N — its first nuclear-capable air-to-air refuelling bomber. China therefore is modernising and increasing the sophistication and lethality of all the three elements of its nuclear triad. The PRC's 2019 Defence White Paper affirmed that the PLA Rocket Force (PLARF) was "enhancing its credible and reliable capabilities of nuclear defence and counter-attack". It further states that the PLARF is strengthening long-range strike forces, and is engaged in building a strong and modernised rocket force.

Due to China's rapid military modernization, there is speculation amongst analysts about a possible deviation from its original nuclear policy postures. China's rapid modernisation of its nuclear forces, apart from the development of advanced early warning capabilities, could lead to the abandonment of its NFU policy in favour of a 'launch on warning' (LoW) posture in the future.

China's general lack of transparency regarding its military strategy and postures also extends to the nuclear domain, which accentuates existing uncertainties and could lead to miscalculations on its part as well as on the part of its antagonists. Another significant issue of contention is China's role in nuclear arms control. The only bilateral nuclear arms control mechanism between the US and Russia is the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New Start). This treaty will expire in February 2021. The US and Russia are engaged in negotiations for a possible extension of the treaty. Russia supports the New START extension. The Trump administration however is insisting that any future arms control agreement should include China, given its rapid nuclear modernisation and lack of transparency.

China, however, is not very keen on tri-lateral arms control arrangements. China maintains that the US and Russia still possess close to 90 per cent of the world's nuclear arsenals and China with its limited numbers should not be expected to be bound by restrictions that could equally apply to the US and Russia. China maintains that the US and Russia bear "special and primary responsibility on nuclear disarmament" and that it is "neither reasonable nor realistic" to insist on Chinese participation in tri-lateral arms control negotiations.

China also warns against the deployment of US ballistic missiles and anti-ballistic missile systems in the Asia-Pacific region as threatening regional strategic stability. China, along with the other NWS is also rapidly modernizing their nuclear forces, which is increasing global insecurity, despite the Article VI injunction of the NPT requiring NWS to "pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date."

In the context of a contracted global economy as a result of the COVID-19, multilateralism and globalization are in disarray. As we fight the pandemic and work towards economic recovery,

the need of the hour is to ensure global peace and cooperation. This webinar, being organised by the Indian Pugwash Society and MP-IDSA, seeks to better understand and comprehend a significant global security issue, namely China's evolving nuclear force posture, and its regional and global implications.

Dr Tong stated that in terms of China's nuclear policy, what has not changed is that China has always sought to acquire and maintain a second-strike capability so that China can deter use of nuclear weapons by other countries. However, for some time, China was willing to accept an uncertain second-strike capability. In the 1980s, China acquired the capability to target the US homeland with its DF-5 liquid-fuelled ICBMs. China was not concerned about the reliability of its nuclear deterrent and had an uncertain second-strike capability with limited numbers of ICBMs which were not MIRVed and liquid-fuelled.

Many decades later, China's nuclear capability has improved and it has as many as 320 Nuclear Warheads based on open-source research. China took great pains to develop an extensive underground system (the 'great underground Wall of China') to transport these missiles to protect their limited numbers. Now, China has more than 300 warheads and 116 ICBMs and SLBMs, some of them with multiple warheads. China's nuclear weapons technology has also improved; it is a much more advanced nuclear arsenal. Today, China pursues an assured second-strike capability whereas earlier China had an uncertain nuclear deterrence.

What are the reasons behind Chinese nuclear force modernisation?

China has redefined itself as a rising great power. President Xi has said that China's strategic missile prowess is a key parameter of China's great power status. It sees its modernising nuclear forces as an essential element of such a redefinition. China feels that it deserves a more assured nuclear deterrence and therefore it deserves a larger nuclear arsenal.

China's threat perceptions have changed; sees a greater hostility from the US and that requires China to have higher nuclear sufficiency. Analysts like the Editor of *The Global Times* have called for an increase in the Chinese arsenal to better take on the US and only a larger nuclear arsenal could deter a nuclear attack from the US. This does not make sense from a military perspective. Even if the US is more hostile against China, it does not mean that the US is willing to take more civilian casualties in a nuclear exchange with China. The mutual deterrence relationship between the two countries has always been based on the worst-case calculations.

The current nuclear arsenal is already capable in the worst-case scenario to deter a nuclear attack, it shouldn't require more nuclear weapons to deter the US, even if China faces greater political hostility from the United States. There are some real threats within the Chinese security community about the external threats from American technologies, especially since 1990.

China has been impressed by US's pursuit of missile defence and global conventional strike capabilities. The development of such capabilities by the US has complicated Chinese nuclear choices, specifically rapid US strides in non-nuclear military technology (space communications), unmanned weapons systems, AI, cyber, have added to China's anxieties.

There is also a growing influence of the military-industrial complex (MIC) on China's nuclear choices. It has become easy for the MIC to justify new weapons systems like newer generation ICBMs, MIRV warheads, air-launched cruise missiles, hyper-sonic weapons, SSBNs, among others.

China's nuclear scientists had influence earlier in the formulation of the country's nuclear policies. Now, they do not have such an influence. In a centralised system of governance, where the Chinese President has a lot of influence, there seems to be no internal checks and balances to moderate the development of advanced weapons systems.

There is a growing intent to acquire LoW capability. China is modernising its theatre nuclear weapons, like the DF-26 and F-21 — with a focus on Guam, US military bases in South Korea and Japan. Such a focus is obviously against its policy of using nuclear weapons only for deterrence.

There is no significant attention focussed on the escalatory potential of its nuclear pursuits. While nuclear-conventional entanglement exists for all NWS, it is particularly so for China, specifically as it pertains to dual-capable missiles like the DF-26.

Dr Tong stated that China will not delegate launch authority to SSBN commanders but instead develop a robust command and control system. He clarified that China was not adopting a Launch on Warning posture but could do so as and when technology and/or capabilities mature. He further added that Chinese leaders will ensure that they will not get into an arms race with the US as it will lead to bankruptcy.

DG's remarks: China is at the forefront of an arms race, and nuclear weapons are seen as prestige weapons, for some in China. When the UN Security Council was formed in 1945, only one country out of the five possessed nuclear weapons in a demonstrable manner; the other four got their nuclear weapons after they were inducted in the UNSC. In China's case, it was dichotomous as China was not in UNSC until it took the seat of Taiwan and that came much later. Amb Chinoy commented on targeting of US regional bases and assets in the Indo-Pacific theatre by China but he emphasized that the US will not make any distinction between a nuclear attack on any of their bases in South Korea or Japan and the mainland United States.

Dr Pratibha thanked the DG MP-IDSA; Convenor Indian Pugwash Society for the opportunity to present on the topic "Role of PLA Rocket Force". Dr Pratibha traced the up-gradation of Rocket Force from the second artillery to the current form of PLA-RF, at that time a lot of questions were asked concerning the main of the structure, whether it wants to be a purely nuclear or conventional organization which is in charge of the nuclear weapons. PLA-RF up-gradation got clarity and visibility in aid of their deterrence. One of the major strategies was to display the organization to get visibility in deterrence against the United States. The choice of the name of PLA RF is very specific as it distinguishes the organization from the US or Russia as the Russians have a very purely nuclear organization but by naming it PLA RF, it gives a clarity that all the missile forces are under this organization, whether its ballistic missile or cruise missile. Hence, they don't have a fully nuclear role when it comes to the organization, they have a much broader role in their relationship with military strategies. Role of Rocket Forces is limited by the political leadership, on one hand, President Xi had exhorted the PLARF

in 2016 to maintain the balance between conventional and nuclear forces according to strategic requirements. whereas on the other hand, China does not want to get into the trap of nuclear arms race with the United States, they understand the level of United States readiness is quite high. Dr Prathibha stated that it does not make much sense for China to go beyond the limited nuclear deployment narrative but within this limited deployment they are making some changes and this is where testing of many of their rocket forces come into play. Even if China's policy of limited nuclear deployment is changing, it is continuing to maintain the balance between conventional and nuclear as well as between silo-based and road-mobile missiles. She stated that it will take a long time for China to fully field a Launch on warning (LoW) nuclear posture, even if they are pursuing capabilities that will allow them to do so. She added that the nuclear role was only one part of the PLARF's role.

DG Remarks: Amb Chinoy thanked Dr Pratibha for her lucid remarks which added value to the webinar. The standout phrase that he took away from the webinar was how much can technology keep up with a strategy? It was a valid question, apart from budgetary aspects. Of course, China has increasingly deeper pockets today. Another point made by the speaker was about US MRBMs and that it has freed itself from the INF treaty and was no longer hobbled by the intermediate-range ballistic missile treaty. He pointed out that there will be regional implications not just in terms of just South Asia but Japan, theoretically and technologically a potential nuclear-capable power. This begs the questions at what threshold would Japan decide to go overtly nuclear, which may change the threat perception for China completely? It may alter the regional situation in North-East Asia completely? He then invited Dr Manpreet Sethi, Senior Fellow, Centre for Airpower Studies, to throw light on China's nuclear doctrine and its regional implications.

Dr Sethi started the presentation by thanking the IPS and DG MP-IDSA. She pointed out that October 20 marked 56 years and four days since the first nuclear test by China. Over the last 5 decades, China has continued to hold on to the doctrinal principles in a declaratory form that Premier Mao had laid out. The 2019 white paper on National Defence mentions both minimalism in terms of numbers and the nuclear weapons only for defensive purposes as indicated in its NFU posture. Even more recently, Fu Cong, DG of China's Dept of Arms Control, in an interview to a Russia news agency reiterated the country's minimum deterrence and NFU policy. He claimed that this policy would not change because China views nuclear weapons as weapons of ultimate deterrence, and not something that can be used on the battlefield.

Despite these consistent pronouncements, why is there a perception that China is not going to be loyal to its nuclear doctrine? Why is it that the US is convinced there is a change in US policy, as it seems to indicate through its DOD report of 2020? Recent statements by US officials like Mr Billingslea state that there is a shift in China's nuclear posture. Washington claims that China is involved in a crash nuclear build-up.

US assessments of China's nuclear build-up has not always turned out to be true. For the last two decades, US has been talking about China's numbers burgeoning to as high as 1000-1500 but that kind of escalation has not been seen in China's nuclear arsenals. She, on the contrary, pointed out that the arsenals had grown at a measured and an intelligent pace, with its focus

not on nuclear numbers but in ensuring the survivability of the delivery platforms to signal assured retaliation. While the Chinese were satisfied with a more uncertain retaliation in the past, they are looking for certainty of retaliation in the current times.

1. One should not take the US estimation of China's arsenals at face value because Washington has its considerations while making the threat assessments including a vested interest in ramping up the threat for garnering budgetary allocations. Therefore, India must make its assessments concerning China and not rely on the US's assessments.
2. The second reality, however, is that nuclear modernisation is underway in China and nobody has any doubt about that. While evading the question on numbers, Fu Cong admitted that his country is engaged in strategic modernization. Of course, he squarely placed this motivation on the US doorstep, by pointing to American actions such as the deployment of ballistic missile defence, development of hypersonic missiles and other intermediate missiles.

US nuclear developments are perceived to erode China's nuclear deterrence, which is based on a small nuclear arsenal. Therefore, China argues that it is having to focus on developing capabilities that can restore strategic stability that has been disturbed by the US, within the frame of minimalism and defensive capabilities. Hence, it is staying with (credible minimum deterrence) CMD and (No First-use Policy) NFU but it's changing its capabilities.

When one begins to identify China's capabilities trends, however, one finds a mismatch between the claims of minimum deterrence or NFU and what is appearing on the ground. She substantiated this by highlighting four capability trends.

1. While China doesn't officially declare any figures, one can see from the guesstimates made by several agencies that the numbers are on the move in the last couple of years. This growth may be for two reasons (i) For having to participate in arms control negotiations in the future; China wants to create some parity before it gets there. If this is the motivation, then one can expect a rapid build-up in the coming years. (ii) Deployment of MIRV missiles which imply that one missile will be carrying multiple warheads; the number of warheads goes up as a result of that. The DF 41 is claimed to carry as many as 3-10 warheads.
2. Deployment of MIRV and MARV (manoeuvrable re-entry vehicles): China considers these necessary for defeating the US missile defence by being able to saturate it with numbers as well as evading interception through the manoeuvrability of the incoming missile. This capability has traditionally been seen as useful for 1st strike and not as an NFU strategy.
3. Development of early warning systems: Again from the Cold War experience, it is known that countries that have 1st use strategies rely on early warning to enable launch on warning or launch under attack systems for their missiles. Recent reports that China was building such a capability with Russian help has put its NFU into doubt by hinting at the possibility that it is going to lower its alert postures to launch on warning. Last

year, Fu Cong in a conference in Moscow had indicated as much when he recommended that the US and Russia should either remove their missiles from hair-trigger readiness or that China would be compelled to follow the same strategy.

In terms of regional implications of these developments;

1. Chinese nuclear modernisation vis-à-vis the US will have a downstream impact on India. The imperative of the survivability of its retaliatory capability will force India to increase numbers as well take other countermeasures and could pull India into an offence-defence spiral. This would create arms race instability in the region by pulling India into an offence-defence spiral, something that the country has sought to avoid by having a stabilising and the same doctrine that eschews the concept of large arsenals. With credible minimum deterrence and a no first use much like what China was doing India has managed to keep at the path of minimalism.
2. Chinese use of dual-use missiles and dual-use command and control blurs the lines between conventional and nuclear and creates ample scope for miscalculations. Arms race instability and crisis instability could occur. Therefore, the risk of inadvertent escalation grows during the crisis periods. Up till now, for instance, she argued that there has been a sense of nuclear stability between India and China because of the similarities of approach that the two had as regards nuclear deterrence and their doctrine, but when China begins to change that posture, the chances for misperception and miscalculation would arise.
3. India would have to be mindful of the possibility of onward proliferation of advanced Chinese nuclear and missile technologies to Pakistan. Chinese analysts are ironically arguing that there is a conventional asymmetry between India and Pakistan and that China needs to help a militarily disadvantaged Pakistan. So essentially, the argument seems to be that China wants to proliferate to maintain regional strategic stability.

Dr Sethi ended by noting that while India does not figure in China's nuclear calculus currently, the consequences of its nuclear rivalry with the US will open up escalation pathways in its nuclear relationship with India and it will have to deal with this complication sooner than later.

DG's Remarks: He started by thanking Dr Sethi for her competent presentation views and helpful remarks. He pointed out that the whole purpose of the triad is to ensure that a country retains a certain credible minimum second-strike capability. The other great irony of geopolitics was that exactly around half a century ago, it was the USSR that was seen by China as potentially threatening to take out its nuclear weapons installations. The DG noted that there were a series of friction points between China and the USSR, like the Ussuri river conflict. He invited the 4th speaker, Mr MV Rappai.

MV Rappai: He thanked everyone. Interestingly, the changes in the context of the nuclear posture where he added that there isn't a larger change in the nuclear doctrine, but a change perhaps could be envisaged in the nuclear posture. China's actions are interesting at two levels

1. They were keeping to their age-old tradition that they don't want to spend a lot of money on their nuclear policies. However now they have a larger sum of money available for

their nuclear policies, he opined that China intended to try and keep parity with the US because they believed to a large extent that a nuclear war cannot be fought and won. So, basing an argument on that situation what they are doing? They are combining their cyber and space capabilities to the ability to deter.

He pointed to the argument made by the previous speakers on regional parity as important. He spoke about the significance of the South Korean and Japanese military bases and pointed out that they had a role to play. China knows that if it can balance the forces in the region, then it will not deter totally but it will constrain America from launching an all-out war. China's concern is how to conserve their resources and limit the chances of America launching an all-out war. Therefore, the capabilities they are gaining in cyber where there is some ambiguity on the developments. On the other hand, there is substantial clarity in the space with the launching of a series of Yankan 60 satellites. This is just to see what America is capable of doing about China. They can track the nuclear missiles; they can track their other activities. Once they can successfully connect their capabilities and AI. Of course, America too would continue with its research. He referred to a speech by Xi on quantum research how that was going to add to the AI capability of China. The whole thing would be to deter America from launching a debilitating attack on China. They know that they are not going to match the US in the numbers game. In the region what they are doing is they know that they have their limitations. But can China use the regional parity to counter the US because the Chinese were not looking at the mainland or an attack at the movement, so that is one set of issues. What India has to follow from an Indian point of view, is what capability China is gaining from space and cybersecurity and conflicting other military capabilities. These are the future possibilities, there is an ambiguity as to what will be the result of US elections but he does not think that will make any substantial difference in US strategy and long-term strategy in the weapons deployment patterns. In conclusion, he urged India to continue to champion risk reduction measures and continue the dialogue on disarmament and non-proliferation.

DG Remarks: He thanked the speaker and extrapolated from his presentation that China is seeking to establish some kind of parity, especially in the Indo-Pacific region against the USA. In his capacity as the chair, the DG invited Ambassador Rakesh Sood to also share his inputs as the 5th speaker at the webinar as a commentator

Amb Rakesh Sood: Amb. Sood noted that if perceptions are driving Chinese nuclear force modernisation, the US and China need to figure out how to deal with these perceptions. Technological differences can be bridged but differences in perception can only be bridged by talking and negotiations. He stated that given similarities in India and Chinese nuclear policy positions (stress on credible minimum deterrence; NFU), China will find it easier to engage in a nuclear conversation with India, rather than with countries like the US or even Pakistan, which have first use policies and practise full-spectrum deterrence.

Another interesting question which is worth pondering over is that for China, the most important concern is its neighbourhood, namely, South China Sea and Western Pacific region. The US sees itself as a global power and in a sense, the US has an intrinsic link to the pacific.

Q&A Session: After thanking Amb Sood for his insightful points, the DG opened the floor for the Q and A session. He read out the question by Cmde Mani Singh Mamik, who wanted to know how Chinese SSBNs are controlled, are they autonomous or is there a method to ensure strategic political control of their use when they are deployed operationally. Cmde Mamik also noted that mixing conventional and nuclear missiles leads to strategic instability as it is difficult to decipher for radar systems if an incoming missile is conventional or nuclear. DG requested Dr Tong to address the question

Kanika Rakha asked what China can learn from the US-Soviet relationship. This question too was addressed to Dr Tong Zhao.

Tong Zhao: The current number of Chinese SSBNs was relatively small. There is no public information on whether China maintains a constant deterrence and he expressed doubt if China deploys at least one nuclear strategic submarine at sea all the time. It is more likely that China is conducting occasional patrols and if a crisis emerges on the horizon, China will try to mobilize all of its SSBNs. It is hard to imagine that China would embrace a doctrine which nuclear launch authority will be delegated to the submarine officers. He claimed it's likely that China will try to build a robust, liable communication system so that the top leadership will be in constant touch with the submarines. He doesn't think that pre-delegation is a reasonable strategy for China. He agrees that mixing conventional and nuclear missiles would lead to instability, particularly at the theatre level. With China's dual-capable DF-26 missiles, there is a need to worry about the escalation implications. The concern is if the US adopts a launch on warning posture at the theatre level and US detects an incoming Chinese missile, will the US immediately resort to nuclear retaliation. He pointed out that even if the risk is not high, it cannot be completely ruled out. China does not have a launch on warning posture, but China is acquiring the capability and as the capability matures, China might consider adopting that posture when necessary.

There is no risk of China escalating a regional war into the nuclear level. There is not enough attention to the escalatory potential of dual-capable missiles. China sees a military value in those systems because they are more flexible on the battlefield.

China's political leaders want to avoid an arms race. They want to avoid repeating the mistakes of the Soviet Union trying to compete with the US and leading itself into bankruptcy. China thinks it is necessary to take countermeasures to secure the second strike capability. Chinese military may believe that to secure second-strike capability it has to acquire launch on warning posture.

DG's remarks: At no stage in the history of nuclear weapons, has anyone been assured of their security, no matter what the level of technology, strategy and evolving circumstances. All that nuclear weapons have ever achieved is to create insecurity, including in the hearts of those who possess them. Hence, we continue to grapple with the same age-old issues as the world did 50-60 years ago.

Dr Prathibha: In terms of the question on the modernization of one's own changing self-perception and technical changes and how it affects the NFU policy. In the mid-2000s there were a lot of discussions as to how China can utilise its nuclear forces in the region including

using nuclear forces against Taiwan. This kind of discussions has always been a part of their discourse and some of their conservative scholars have looked into all these issues including pre-emptive strikes of their nuclear forces, these issues have always been at the discussion level and it has not affected the NFU policy. Not because of a moral or an Asian value, but because NFU gives them a crucial military value which is crisis stability. They require crisis stability with the US as long as the US maintains this level of asymmetry with China. NFU satisfies certain military aspects of nuclear forces.

DG's remarks: Amb Chinoy thanked Dr Prathibha for highlighting the importance of NFU posture in maintaining stability, it is like an insurance against escalation intended or unintended.

Dr Manpreet Sethi: Dr Sethi commented on linkage made between nuclear weapons and prestige. China, in the beginning, largely emphasized on security motivation for its nuclear weapons rather than prestige. So it seems to have come a full circle.

Secondly, on the issue of nuclear risks as mentioned by Dr Tong that nuclear entanglement is happening in China not deliberately but because there is not much understanding of nuclear risks, Dr. Sethi noted that this is worrisome. There is an increased possibility of escalation happening inadvertently and stumbling into a nuclear war that nobody wanted. There is a need for getting political leaders to understand the kind of nuclear risks that strategies create, particularly in today's time, where emerging technologies are compressing timelines and adding to those risks.

Nuclear risks with India and China should be emphasized even more. China has an attitude problem with India as it does not see India as a legitimate nuclear weapon state and is therefore not willing to engage with India on any of the dialogues on nuclear strategy, doctrine, risk reduction etc. This is the gap which must be filled.

Lastly, Dr. Sethi ended by noting that while India does not figure in China's nuclear calculus currently, the consequences of its nuclear rivalry with the US will open up escalation pathways in its nuclear relationship with India and it will have to deal with this complication sooner than later.

DG remarks: Amb Chinoy thanked Dr Sethi for her insightful comments. Amb Chinoy gave the panellists and attendees food for thought as to how China might regard the possibility of the North Korean nuclear weapon arsenal and its delivery systems turning on China, hypothetically one day. He then invited Mr Rappai to deliver his last comments

Mr MV Rappai: Mr MV Rappai stated it is important for India to keep discussing regional risk reduction measures and continue the dialogue on disarmament and non-proliferation.

DG's remarks: Amb Sujana Chinoy thanked the panellists and the attendees and concluded the webinar.