

# NEW RISK OF NUCLEAR WAR

---

**The Independent**

London, 4<sup>th</sup> June 1998

PROF. KHURSHID AHMAD



## New risk of nuclear war

By: Senator Professor Khurshid Ahmad

A volatile and dangerous chapter has opened in world history. It is clear that once India conducted its nuclear tests, Pakistan seemed to have little choice but to respond. Unless matters are quickly controlled, South Asia - one of the poorest regions in the world - could be seeing the start of a nuclear arms race. Considering the high tension between the two countries and the religious zeal that has fed into the nuclear programme, the chances of the world's first nuclear exchange are high.

The strategy of sanctions will not work, as they hit the poor and will simply exacerbate the many problems facing South Asia. It reflects the neo-imperialist attitude of some Western countries.

We need to identify the urgent problems in the context of South Asia and resolve them. The first of these is Kashmir. It has an ongoing freedom movement, ignored by the world, and the people of Kashmir have suffered too long and lost too many lives. United Nations Resolutions have been ignored for too long.

We need to make sure that both countries ensure the security of smaller countries and that of the minorities in their midst.

All the members of the nuclear club must now commit themselves to a nuclear-free world. They must recognize that the old club rules no longer apply.

Pakistan's nuclear tests will be seen in many parts of the world with a great deal of discomfort. The general Islamophobia fuels fears of an 'Islamic bomb'. But for most Pakistanis they are seen as a major step towards national security and dignity.

We believe that South Asia is at a crossroads and if it moves towards self-destruction it will draw in the entire planet. However, the very seriousness of the crisis means that the world cannot ignore the problems of the Subcontinent any longer; this is the one silver lining that we must explore. We believe those of goodwill should support the movement to restore peace and sanity to South Asia and encourage India and Pakistan to divert their resources to tackling poverty. The strategy needs to be global, urgent and implemented on several fronts simultaneously. There is no time to lose.

---