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Register Number:

DATE:

**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BANGALORE**

**Fourth Semester**

**End Semester Examination– April 2019**

**General English (GE-414)**

**PSA Special Course**

**Time: 2 ½ hrs Max. Marks: 70**

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. There are **FOUR** printed sides to this paper.
2. This paper is meant for BSc students of PCM, PEM, PMC, MEC & EMS.
3. Please indicate **PSA SPL** course clearly on the front page of your answer booklet.
4. Answer all sections.
5. Stick to the suggested word limits.
6. You are allowed to use a dictionary.

**I Read the following passage excerpted from Amartya Sen’s *India and the bomb***

WEAPONS of mass destruction have a peculiar fascination. They can generate a warm glow of strength and power carefully divorced from the brutality and genocide on which the potency of the weapons depend. The great epics - from Iliad and Ramayana to Kalevala and Nibelungenlied - provide thrilling accounts of the might of special weapons, which not only are powerful in themselves, but also greatly empower their possessors. As India, along with Pakistan, goes down the route of cultivating nuclear weapons, the imagined radiance of perceived power is hard to miss.

Perceptions can deceive. It has to be asked whether powerful weapons in general and nuclear armament in particular can be expected - invariably or even typically - to strengthen and empower their possessor. An important prudential issue is involved here. There is, of course, also the question of ethics, and in particular the rightness or wrongness of a nuclear policy. That important issue can be distinguished from the question of practical benefit or loss of a nation from a particular policy. We have good grounds to be interested in both the questions - the prudential and the ethical - but also reason enough not to see the two issues as disparate and totally delinked from each other. Our behaviour towards each other cannot be divorced from what we make of the ethics of one another's pursuits, and the reasons of morality have, as a result, prudential importance as well. It is in this light that I want to examine the challenges of nuclear policy in the subcontinent in general and in India.

{APJ} Abdul Kalam recorded his proud reaction as he watched the Indian nuclear explosions in Pokhran, on the edge of the Thar desert in Rajasthan, in May 1998: "I heard the earth thundering below our feet and rising ahead of us in terror. It was a beautiful sight.” It is rather remarkable that the admiration for sheer power should be so strong in the reactions of even so kind-hearted a person, but perhaps the force of nationalism played a role here, along with the general fascination that powerful weapons seem to generate. The intensity of Kalam’s nationalism may be well concealed by the mildness of his manners, but it was evident enough in his statements after the blasts (“for 2,500 years India has never invaded anybody”), no less than his joy at India’s achievement (“a triumph of Indian science and technology”).It is rather remarkable that the admiration for sheer power should be so strong in the reactions of even so kind-hearted a person, but perhaps the force of nationalism played a role here, along with the general fascination that powerful weapons seem to generate in particular. Kalam's excitement at the power of nuclear explosions was not, of course, unusual as a reaction to the might of weapons. The excitement generated by destructive power, dissociated from any hint of potential genocide, has been a well-observed psychological state in the history of the world. Even the normally unruffled J.Robert Oppenheimer, the principal architect of the world's first nuclear explosion, was moved to quote the two-millennia-old *Bhagavad Gita* (Oppenheimer knew Sanskrit well enough to get his Gita right) as he watched the atmospheric explosion of the first atom bomb in a U.S. desert near the village of Oscuro on July 16, 1945: "the radiance of a thousand suns... burst into the sky."

Oppenheimer went on to quote further from the *Bhagavad Gita*: "I am become Death, the shatterer of worlds." That image of death would show its naked and ruthless face next month in Hiroshima and Nagasaki (what Kenzaburo Oe has called "the most terrifying monster lurking in the darkness of Hiroshima"). But in the experimental station in the U.S. desert, code-named "Jornala del Muerto" (translatable as "Death Tract"), there was only sanitised abstractness firmly detached from any actual killing.

There are, I think, two distinct issues, which need to be carefully separated. First, the world nuclear order is extremely unbalanced and there are excellent reasons to complain about the military policies of the major powers, particularly the five that have a monopoly over official nuclear status as well as over permanent membership in the Security Council of the United Nations. The second issue concerns the choices that other countries - *other* than the Big Five - face, and this has to be properly scrutinised, rather than being hijacked by resentment of the oligopoly of the power to terrorise. The fact that other countries, including India and Pakistan, have ground enough for grumbling about the nature of the world order, sponsored and supported by the established nuclear powers without any serious commitment to denuclearisation, does not give them any reason to pursue a nuclear policy that worsens their own security and adds to the possibility of a dreadful holocaust. Moral resentment cannot justify a prudential blunder.

I have so far not commented on the economic and social costs of nuclearization and the general problem of allocation of resources. That issue is, of course, important, even though it is hard to find out exactly what the costs of the nuclear programmes are. The expenses on this are carefully hidden in both the countries. Recently, C. Rammanohar Reddy, a distinguished journalist at the major daily *The Hindu*, has estimated that the cost of nuclearization is something around half a percentage of the gross domestic product per year.This might not sound like much, but it is large enough if we consider the alternative uses of these resources. For example, it has been estimated that the additional costs of providing elementary education for every child with neighbourhood schools at every location in the country would cost roughly the same amount of money. The proportion of illiteracy in the Indian adult population is still about 40 per cent, and it is about 55 per cent in Pakistan. Furthermore, there are other costs and losses as well, such a s the deflection of India's scientific talents to military-related research away from more productive lines of research, and also from actual economic production. The prevalence of secretive military activities also restrains open discussions in Parliament and tends to subvert traditions of democracy and free speech.

However, ultimately the argument against nuclearization is not primarily an economic one. It is rather the increased insecurity of human lives that constitutes the biggest penalty of the subcontinental nuclear adventures. That issue needs further scrutiny.

Finally, on a more specific point, no country has as much stake as India in having a prosperous and civilian democracy in Pakistan. Even though the Nawaz Sharif government was clearly corrupt in specific ways, India had no particular advantage in undermining civilian rule in Pakistan, to be replaced by activist military leaders. Also, the encouragement of cross-border terrorism, which India accuses Pakistan of, is likely to be dampened rather than encouraged by Pakistan's economic prosperity and civilian politics. It is particularly important in this context to point to the dangerousness of the argument, often heard in India, that the burden of public expenditure would be more unbearable for Pakistan, given its smaller size and relatively stagnant economy, than it is for India. This may well be the case, but the penalty that can visit India from an impoverished and desperate Pakistan in the present situation of increased insecurity is hard to contemplate. Enhancement of Pakistan's stability and well- being has prudential importance for India, in addition to its obvious ethical significance. That central connection - between the moral and the prudential - is important to seize.

**I A Answer the questions that follow in about 175-200 words each: [2x15=30]**

1. Explain Sen’s differentiation of moral and prudential questions to someone who may not be familiar with terse academic language. In this piece, which of these two viewpoints does Sen predominantly argue from?
2. “Moral resentment cannot justify a prudential blunder”. Are you convinced by the way this assertion leads to “Pakistan's stability and well- being has prudential importance for India”?

**I B Discuss in 120-150 words each: [2x10=20]**

1. Sen begins his piece by discussing the fascination that weapons and war produce in people. In the subsequent paragraphs, he makes a parallel between Oppenheimer and Kalam. Sen also draws attention to Kalam’s kind heartedness and mildness of manners. In addition, Sen enumerates the temperament that prevails at nuclear test sites: “unruffledness” and “abstractness”. What is the relevance of these observations to the prime argument in Sen’s piece?
2. “Kalam's excitement at the power of nuclear explosions was not, of course, unusual as a reaction to the might of weapons. The excitement generated by destructive power, dissociated from any hint of potential genocide, has been a well-observed psychological state in the history of the world.” Can one *do* evil without *being* evil? Read the note below for a further understanding. **Note:** Can one *do* evil without *being* evil? This was the puzzling question (that came to be known as the ‘’banality of evil’) that the philosopher Hannah Arendt grappled with when she reported for *The New Yorker* in 1961 on the war crimes trial of Adolph Eichmann, the Nazi operative responsible for organising the transportation of millions of Jews and others to various concentration camps in support of the Nazi’s Final Solution. Arendt found Eichmann an ordinary, rather bland, bureaucrat, who in her words, was ‘neither perverted nor sadistic’, but ‘terrifyingly normal’. He acted without any motive other than to diligently advance his career in the Nazi bureaucracy.

**II Read the following excerpts from Amitav Ghosh’s long form piece *Countdown***

(Note: The ‘I’ in the essay is Amitav Ghosh, the author)

I went to see an old acquaintance, *Chandan Mitra*, a historian with an Oxford doctorate. I had come across an editorial of his entitled “Explosion of Self-Esteem”, published on 12 May. “The bomb is a currency of self-esteem,” Chandan told me, with disarming bluntness. “Two hundred years of colonialism robbed us of our self-esteem. We do not have the national pride that the British have, or the French, the Germans, or the Americans. We have been told that we are not fit to rule ourselves – that was the justification of colonialism. Our achievements, our worth, our talent have always been negated and denied. Mahatma Gandhi´s endeavour all during the freedom movement was to rebuild our sense of self-esteem. Even if you don´t have guns, he said, you still have moral force. Now, 50 years on, we know that moral force isn´t enough to survive. It doesn´t count for very much. When you look at India today and ask how best you can overcome those feelings of inferiority, the bomb seems to be as good an answer as any.”

The leading advocate of India´s nuclear policies is *K. Subrahmanyam*, a large, forceful man, who is the retired director of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses in New Delhi. Subrahmanyam advocates an aggressive nuclear programme based on the currency of global power. Subrahmanyam told me a story about a film. It was called The Million-Pound Note and it featured Gregory Peck. In the film, Peck´s character uses an obviously valueless piece of paper printed to look like a million-pound note to con tradesmen into extending credit. “A nuclear weapon acts like a million-pound note,” Subrahmanyam said, his eyes gleaming. “It is of no apparent use. You can´t use it to stop small wars. But it buys you credit, and that gives you the power to intimidate.”

I often think back to the morning of 12 May. I was in New York at the time. I remember my astonishment both at the news of the tests and also at the response to them: the tone of chastisement, the finger-wagging by countries that still possessed tens of thousands of nuclear warheads. Did they think that it had escaped the world´s attention that the five peacekeepers of the United Nations Security Council all had nuclear arms? If so, then perhaps India´s nuclear tests served a worthwhile purpose by waking the world from this willed slumber. So strong was my response to the West´s hypocrisy that I discovered an unusual willingness in myself to put my own beliefs on nuclear matters aside. If there were good arguments to be made in defence of the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests, then I wanted to know what they were: I wanted to hear them for myself.

**II A Answer in about 120 words each: [2x10=20]**

1. Ghosh leaves us with vivid impressions of Chandan Mitra and K. Subramanyam. Based on these observations of their physical appearance, whose opinion would you support and why?
2. “So strong was my response to the West´s hypocrisy that I discovered an unusual willingness in myself to put my own beliefs on nuclear matters aside.” Drawing on personal experience, describe a situation where you were willing to put aside your own beliefs to hear opposing views.

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