

**Nuclear Deterrence, Rivalry, and Conflict Escalation in South Asia**  
**(Final)**

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**Abstract:** In this paper, I seek to demonstrate the fragility of nuclear deterrence in South Asia. Some students of nuclear weapons proliferation issues tend to believe the argument of “proliferation optimists,” where nuclear-armed states will never clash militarily with one another for fear that such clashes may escalate to conventional war and risk nuclear exchange. “Proliferation pessimists” on the other hand argue that, owing to miscalculation or misperception, this risk is real. Prior to India and Pakistan’s overt nuclearization in 1998, this debate surrounding nuclear deterrence occurred almost exclusively on theoretical grounds. These historic rivals have fought once and endured two crises since going nuclear, challenging “proliferation optimism.” Since independence, both India and Pakistan have come to distrust each other’s motives, and all efforts at rapprochement have been spoiled by military forces and terrorist organizations which stand to benefit from the endurance of the rivalry and the maintenance of Kashmir as the key contested issue.

In a nuclear South Asia, the materially-weaker Pakistan is emboldened to engage India in limited conflict, confident that India cannot retaliate lest it risk escalation, which could become nuclear. India has thus explored doctrines which are designed to allow significant retaliation below the nuclear threshold. Pakistan, in turn, has invested in so-called ‘battlefield’ nuclear weapons, designed to ensure that any such actions could well trigger the use of nuclear weapons. This growing set of risks is very real and has prompted international mediation in many crises. This has been the pattern since both states went nuclear. Being restrained by another party is not the same as deterrence and self-restraint, however. South Asian stability is not guaranteed indefinitely.

Both sides believe that failure to achieve key objectives in past crises has been a result of not demonstrating sufficient resolve, and thus, in a regional game of Chicken, both parties demonstrate a willingness to escalate conflict and force the other to retreat. This is problematic due to the conventional and nuclear doctrines of both parties which have yet to be tested, as they rely on the premise of striking back aggressively against even the most limited of territorial transgressions in an aggressive manner. Worse yet, these doctrines mutually trigger retaliatory action in response. Should a crisis occur in the future due to the actions of non-state actors allegedly tolerated or supported by Pakistan (yet who cannot be easily controlled or deterred), India has said it will not demonstrate the same restraint as it had in the 2001-2002 Twin Peaks Crisis nor the aftermath of the 2008 Mumbai Attacks. Doctrines will be tested, and in order to

maintain the credibility of its threats and therefore deter aggression against its people and its territory, either party may seek to punish whomever seeks to conflict with it. Such demonstrations of resolve may be immune to the international intervention that has eased past crises. This scenario would bring great destruction to South Asia, and devastate the foundation of “proliferation optimism.”

## **Nuclear Deterrence, Rivalry and Conflict Escalation in South Asia**

*“And if nuclear weapons are acquired by two states that are traditional and bitter rivals, should that not also foster our concern?” – Rhetorical question by Kenneth Waltz, 1981<sup>1</sup>*

India and Pakistan have maintained a relationship of animosity since partition in 1947, characterized by recurring military clashes and crises, mutual distrust fuelled by negative interpretations of one another’s motives, and a competition over territory considered vital to the identity of both states. Having engaged militarily multiple times since independence, optimistic observers such as Šumit Ganguly thought that the acquisition of nuclear weapons by both sides would temper their conflict and force them to resolve their problems in a diplomatic fashion. Indeed, “by making Indo-Pakistani conflict prohibitively risky,” Ganguly argued, “nuclearization would stabilize South Asia”<sup>2</sup> and reduce “the risk of full-scale war in the region [.]”<sup>3</sup> Stephen Cohen acknowledges that “some argued that the possession of nuclear weapons by both states would eventually lead to a reconciliation of their outstanding differences.”<sup>4</sup> Despite efforts by government leaders to do exactly that in the 1999 Lahore Declaration and other attempts at détente ever since, Indian and Pakistani efforts to ease their rivalry have consistently been derailed by actors operating outside of civilian government authority (who view such rapprochement as problematic). Moreover, each government questions whether the other truly aspires for peace. The Kargil Conflict of 1999 was very likely ordered and planned by Pakistani military officials without Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s knowledge or approval (poor civil-military relations have been well-documented in Pakistan, where civilian leaders are readily

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Waltz, “The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better,” *The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 21, No. 171 (1981): 1.

<sup>2</sup> Šumit Ganguly and S. Paul Kapur. *India, Pakistan, and the Bomb: Debating Nuclear Stability in South Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010): 1.

<sup>3</sup> Šumit Ganguly, “Nuclear Stability in South Asia,” *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (2008): 46.

<sup>4</sup> Cited in Jacques Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation: Identity, Emotion and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 172.

challenged by their military officials); while the Twin Peaks Crisis of 2001-2002 and the 2008 Mumbai Attacks were carried out by non-state actors (allegedly backed by the Pakistani security apparatus). All three of these instances could have pushed Indian and Pakistani forces into conventional warfare owing to miscalculation and misperception, thus allowing a remote possibility that nuclear weapons could be used – whether by accident or on purpose. Repeated crisis mediation by concerned powers (namely the United States) demonstrates the international community's fear that such a risk could become reality, owing to the bitter Indo-Pakistani rivalry. Were the conflicts and crises so alarming that they could have prompted conventional, or worse, nuclear war? Could they have been resolved peacefully without international involvement, as the proponents of rational deterrence theory tend to argue?

In the theoretical debates surrounding nuclear weapons proliferation, two schools of thought exist. On the one hand, international relations experts such as Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer believe that the spread of nuclear weapons (to states other than those who currently possess them)<sup>5</sup> is conducive to peace – that “more may be better” for regional, even global, security.<sup>6</sup> These proliferation “optimists” argue that nuclear weapons only serve a deterrent function and would never be used offensively in conventional war<sup>7</sup> against another nuclear-weapons state (NWS). This is grounded in the theory of rational deterrence whereby the awesome destructive power of nuclear weapons prevents any rational actor from initiating a conventional war with another NWS for fear that it could escalate into nuclear exchange. Such

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<sup>5</sup> At the time of writing this essay, the list of states armed with nuclear weapons is confined to: the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Israel.

<sup>6</sup> Referencing the title of Kenneth Waltz's 1981 Adelphi Paper, “The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better.”

<sup>7</sup> In this essay, I define war according to Melvin Small and J. David Singer's formula: an armed conflict with at least 1,000 battle-related deaths among all participating states, and an annual average of 1,000 battle deaths for wars lasting more than a year

From Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, *Causes of War* (United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010): 10.

restraint is due to the fact that a nuclear attack on an enemy might leave even the smallest shred of its nuclear capability intact, which could then be used to respond in kind (known as second-strike capability). This would trigger an escalatory conflict spiral likely resulting in a state's annihilation – or at best, for the materially stronger party, crippling destruction (eliminating any prospect that the society may function “normally” again). This is the core of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), a concept held in mind by Cold War strategists especially after the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. It should be noted however that the stability of MAD has not been as universally accepted as previously thought; even after the Cuban Missile Crisis, there were cases of near nuclear use owing due to miscalculation or error, avoided only due to individual decision-making in disobedience of protocol and political guidance.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, “it is likely that the probability of nuclear use or accident has hitherto been underestimated.”<sup>9</sup> That being said proliferation optimists largely support the principles of MAD and thus argue that introducing nuclear weapons to an unstable region would generate stability among the neighbours, forcing them to trust one another and build confidence in order to prevent the outbreak of conventional – or nuclear – war.

On the other hand, Scott Sagan<sup>10</sup> and other proliferation “pessimists” believe that the increased number of NWS does not rule out conventional war or the possibility of escalation into nuclear conflict, and as such “more will be worse.” In fact, the increased number of nuclear

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<sup>8</sup> As Patricia Lewis et al write, “A shared belief in nuclear deterrence is not the only plausible explanation for our escape from nuclear war [...] Whereas the popularized image of the ‘Moscow-Washington hotline’ gives the illusion that vital communication in times of crisis is possible [incidents of near-use] reveal the reality that the possessors of nuclear weapons will continue to be distrustful of one another and remain reliant on data transmitted by systems that are vulnerable to error or misjudgment, particularly when leaders have to respond too quickly to be able to make fully informed decisions.”

From Patricia Lewis et al, eds. *Too Close for Comfort: Cases of Near Nuclear Use and Options for Policy* (London: Chatham House, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2014): 1.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid: 5.

<sup>10</sup> Scott Sagan, “The Perils of Proliferation: Organization Theory, Deterrence Theory, and the Spread of Nuclear Weapons,” *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (1994).

weapons and NWS increases the likelihood of a nuclear mishap.<sup>11</sup> While the likelihood of unrestrained conflict between NWS is reduced, clashes can still happen at a relatively low level, confined to a particular space or a certain threshold of violence – such as during the Kargil Conflict of 1999, to be expanded upon later. Yet even low-level conflict remains open to the possibility that a state leader or military official will miscalculate the cost-benefit equation of a particular strategy, or misperceive the actions and intentions of its enemy. Such errors in judgement, especially during a crisis,<sup>12</sup> risk pushing states to escalate their conflict, perhaps into conventional war. When war begins, matters of reputation, state security, misperception, territorial possession and many other factors become involved, reducing the ability of decision-makers to view their conflict in an objective manner and increasing one's sensitivity to aggressive behaviour. This invites the possibility for further escalation especially if military and political officials use increasingly bellicose rhetoric or demonstrations of force to threaten one another and hasten their enemy's retreat. The initiation of war marks a true crisis point between nuclear-armed rivals, for "it is hard to predict the course of a war once it has begun."<sup>13</sup> When state leaders or military officials feel sufficiently threatened (or worse, overconfident of the prospects for victory), how long can a conflict remain confined to the conventional level? Decision-makers must keep their finger away from the "nuclear button" long enough for the conflict to be resolved, preferably in a manner that prevents such hostilities from occurring in the future.

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<sup>11</sup> Rizwana Abbasi, *Pakistan and the New Nuclear Taboo: Regional Deterrence and the International Arms Control Regime* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang AG, 2012): 19-20

Abbasi notes that such mishaps could be the result of accidental detonation, false warning of an attack or deliberative use of a weapon whether it is authorized or unauthorized by a state leader.

<sup>12</sup> Crisis is defined as "a severe threat to important values, a high probability of war, and a finite time for coping with the threat."

From Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*: 155.

<sup>13</sup> Rajesh Basrur "Nuclear Weapons and India's National Security Strategy" in *Grand Strategy for India: 2020 and Beyond* (2012), eds. Krishnappa Venkatesh and Princy George (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2012): 134.

Prior to the India and Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear weapons,<sup>14</sup> proliferation optimists had been winning this theoretical debate. Until then, very few conflicts had emerged between NWS with the potential for escalation into conventional war, let alone a risk of nuclear use.<sup>15</sup> While it could be argued that the Cold War held such a risk, the United States and the Soviet Union both understood the principles of MAD and consciously took steps to avoid *direct* confrontation with one another, including through arms control agreements. Furthermore the Cold War rivalry was one of ideology and influence rather than one of territory (spheres of influence were arguably a "status quo" which both parties could accept or compromise upon), and the risk of direct conventional or nuclear war due to miscalculation and misperception was tempered by frequent communication and geographic distance. This mitigated any existential threat perceived by either state (due to physical encroachment or an impending attack on one's territory) and established a time buffer for both states to mitigate potential crises and clarify actions perceived as hostile (especially following the lessons learned from the Cuban Missile Crisis).

"[O]ne of the most enduring and unresolved conflicts of our times,"<sup>16</sup> the Indo-Pakistani rivalry is not like the Cold War rivalry between the U.S. and the USSR. Not only do the South Asian neighbours share a border (and can thus easily feel threatened by the other), but they have maintained incompatible claims on the disputed territory of Kashmir (essential territory for the identity of both states) since 1947. Furthermore, India and Pakistan have engaged conventionally

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<sup>14</sup> The open-declaration of a nuclear weapons capability came following the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests of May 1998. However, India's first nuclear weapons test took place in 1974 and it could have developed a nuclear weapons capability shortly thereafter, while Pakistani nuclear scientists had declared as early as the 1986-87 *Brasstacks* Crisis that Pakistan had acquired the means to produce a nuclear weapons capability.

<sup>15</sup> In the introduction to Peter R. Lavoy, ed. *Asymmetric War in South Asia: Causes and Consequences of the Kargil Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), Lavoy stipulates that the 1969 conflict between China and the Soviet Union over the Damanskii Island and Ussuri River was the only direct military clash between NWS that posed a very real – however remote – possibility for escalation.

<sup>16</sup> T.V. Paul, "Causes of the India-Pakistan enduring rivalry" in *The India-Pakistan Conflict: An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 3.

four times in their post-independence history (three times over Kashmir)<sup>17</sup> and have engaged in numerous military crises since having acquired nuclear weapons capability. This last point is cause for concern, as these crises could have escalated into open warfare. Indeed, evidence of regional conflict and tension since the nuclearization of South Asia poses a significant challenge to proliferation optimism.

Still, proliferation optimists maintain that the presence of nuclear weapons renders conflict between the neighbours and rivals incredibly risky and therefore eliminates the prospect of conventional war, forcing them instead to resolve their conflicts by diplomatic means. In support of their argument, the optimists point to the restraint exhibited by both India and Pakistan during times of conflict and crisis since their overt nuclearization in 1998, observed by the fact that the 1999 Kargil Conflict, the Twin Peaks Crisis of 2001-2002, and the aftermath of the 2008 Mumbai Attacks did not escalate into conventional war. Proliferation pessimists, however, maintain that this is not a sufficient cause for optimism, since “given India and Pakistan’s bitter historical rivalry, as well as the possibility of accident or miscalculation, [nuclear weapons] make the subcontinent more dangerous.”<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, they argue that the shared fear of general war and the potential for escalation into nuclear war actually *emboldens* Pakistani authorities to engage in low-scale military ventures (and allegedly support terrorists engaged against India) knowing that Indian decision-makers would restrain themselves in a

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<sup>17</sup> These include the First Kashmir War of 1947, the Second Kashmir War of 1965, the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971, and the Kargil Conflict of 1999. The classification of Kargil as a “war” is debated (some preferring to call it a “conflict” or “near war”), since though it exceeded the peacetime violence along the Kashmir Line of Control separating Indian- and Pakistani-administered Kashmir, it was confined to a remote section of mountainous terrain; it involved only a limited number of conventional forces and weaponry and restraint was demonstrated by both parties; and, since the casualty figures vary, some feel it does not meet the classical definition of war “as an armed conflict with at least 1,000 battlefield deaths[.]”

From Lavoy, ed. *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia*: 1.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid: 1.

response.<sup>19</sup> India however can only be so tolerant of these transgressions before seeking to respond, and a forceful reaction can provoke a military crisis that risks breaking into open warfare. Past crises have not been resolved; they have been managed. The issues that drive them still remain, and may prompt a crisis in the future. While both India and Pakistan recognize that escalation during a crisis is self-defeating, both parties have nonetheless repeatedly heightened tensions by threatening one another (through verbal statements or through demonstrations of force) during such crises. In order to avoid crises with escalatory potential in the future, India has developed (though not yet tested) the Cold Start doctrine in order to conduct limited offensives below the nuclear threshold in quick response to Pakistani-supported aggression before the latter has an opportunity to mobilize or respond in kind. Pakistan however has responded by deploying short-range nuclear munitions known as “tactical nuclear weapons” (TNW) as a means of deterring India, threatening their use to defend against even the most limited incursions. This lowers the nuclear-use threshold, and risks inviting a “massive retaliation” which India has declared as its nuclear-use doctrine. As a result, “escalatory steps could occur for the same reason that crises reoccur: miscalculations need not stop once they have triggered a crisis.”<sup>20</sup>

This essay proceeds in three parts. The first part of this paper explores the Indo-Pakistani rivalry and the outstanding issue of Kashmir. These points provide a context to the posture and rhetoric of the two countries vis-à-vis one another, while demonstrating the difficulty of resolving the conflict. Fear and distrust in the Indo-Pakistani relationship contributes to making military crises (and the outbreak of war) more likely than a conflict between neighbours that have clarified their perceptions and normalized relations. This is demonstrated by the

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<sup>19</sup> Mark Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers,” *The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 53, No. 433 (2014): 48.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Krepon and Nate Cohn, eds. *Crises in South Asia: Trends and Potential Consequences* (Washington, D.C.: Stimson Center, 2011): 24.

From [http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/Crises\\_Complete.pdf](http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/Crises_Complete.pdf)

stability/instability paradox in South Asia, which establishes a threshold for low-intensity conflict that is presumably restrained either by the parties in the conflict or by international actors from escalating into conventional war.

The second point analyses the evolution of the Indian and Pakistani nuclear programmes respectively, illustrating the motives behind them and highlighting the strategic utility both sides place in these weapons. Such motives can establish which party (if at all) would “shoot first” or consider the use of nuclear weapons in defense of vital interests (including territorial integrity). By combining the two above arguments, the hostility between the parties is understandable – though it can be observed that it is less present in the minds of Indian leaders (though the new government has yet to be tested in this regard) than it is for Pakistani leaders. As such it could be argued that, if “push came to shove,” Pakistan, with its nuclear programme necessitated by feelings of insecurity due to Indian ambitions, would, in a worst-case scenario, shoot first. The likelihood of inadvertent nuclear use is further compounded by a unidirectional security dilemma in South Asia and the expansion of both Indian and Pakistani arsenals. It is just these two parties balancing against one another (and therefore, making it possible to come to an arms control agreement), but Pakistan seeking to deter India, which is in turn seeking to deter China (and exacerbating Pakistan’s feelings of insecurity) which. Indeed, the likelihood of nuclear use increases as the states expand their arsenals, enabling more points of vulnerability that may fail during a time of crisis. Though I do not believe that state leaders would *consciously* choose to engage in a conflict with the potential of breaching a threshold justifying nuclear use, the historic rivalry and the security concerns of both parties do not bode well in times of crisis if a terrorist attack may be traced back to Pakistani support; a threat (whether verbal or through demonstration of capability) to security is misperceived as evidence of impending attack; or

where a military official poorly calibrates their actions (failing to consider how the other party may respond).

This leads me to the last element of this paper, which explores the stability of deterrence in South Asia. Establishing the complex premises of deterrence, I then turn to the strategic doctrines of India and Pakistan which, though designed to deter one another, place immense strain on the credibility of both parties and have yet to be tested. Should these doctrines be tested during a crisis, they – as well as other problems of decision-making during conflict – may generate problems for deterrence stability in South Asia. Accidents can happen. Decision-makers can miscalculate the likelihood of their strategy’s success, and can misperceive the intentions of their enemies as overly hostile (while casting their own as benign). Emotion (fear, pride<sup>21</sup>), religion, and a particular interpretation of history can distort one’s capacity for reason, exacerbated when decisions for using conventional or nuclear forces are decentralized. As Mark Fitzpatrick notes, “there is no reason to think that India and Pakistan are less careful with nuclear weapons than the superpowers have been. This is little reassurance, however, given the long history of nuclear mishaps and near misses involving the United States and the Soviet Union.”<sup>22</sup>

The landslide election victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)<sup>23</sup> and the meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif at the former’s inauguration in May 2014 provide a case for cautious optimism. In a new phase of relations between the historic rivals, an opportunity has risen to generate trust and work to resolve longstanding disputes. It is too soon to say, but this may be a chance for rapprochement

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<sup>21</sup> As Jacques Hymans notes, “the dictionary definition of pride has two key elements: it is both a general sense of one’s proper dignity and value, and a specific pleasure or satisfaction taken from (actual or expected) achievement or possession.”

From Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*: 33.

<sup>22</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 48.

<sup>23</sup> The BJP translated into English is “The Indian People’s Party” – to give you an idea of how it views itself acting on behalf of Hindu India.

between India and Pakistan. Such a development could reduce the propensity for future conflict. The longer India and Pakistan fail to trust one another and ease their relations, the more likely it is that a crisis could reoccur and risk a conflict with escalatory potential. Furthermore, “nuclear deterrence must work not only once, but for infinity. One slip and total destruction is the end game.”<sup>24</sup> Benoît Pelopidas adds that deterrence, careful management of nuclear forces, and technology (what he refers to as “nuclear realism”) are not something to be relied upon indefinitely to prevent a nuclear mishap. He writes: “to expect that no country [...] will use nuclear weapons in a world that contains them for an indefinite period of time is not as safe a bet as it [...] It is at least as unrealistic as a belief in a peaceful and stable, nuclear weapon-free world.”<sup>25</sup> Should deterrence fail, it may happen at a point where international actors cannot play the mediating role they have in the past due to a damaged reputation in the region. Proliferation optimists consistently argue that “for fear of escalation, nuclear states [...] do not want to fight at all.”<sup>26</sup> While one would hope that this argument is strong enough to prevent worrisome conflict from erupting between India and Pakistan it cannot be guaranteed going forward; indeed, to quote the wise Yogi Berra, “predictions are hard to make, especially about the future.”

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<sup>24</sup> John A. Vasquez, “The India-Pakistan conflict in light of general theories of war, rivalry, and deterrence” in T.V. Paul, ed. *The India-Pakistan Conflict: An Enduring Rivalry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 77.

<sup>25</sup> Benoît Pelopidas, “Why nuclear realism is unrealistic,” (26 September 2013)  
<<http://thebulletin.org/why-nuclear-realism-unrealistic>> (11 July 2014)

<sup>26</sup> Lavoy, *Asymmetric War in South Asia*: 31.

## Section One: A Rivalry in South Asia

*“Deterrence also is influenced by history, by the stories that challengers and defenders come to share over time.” – Janice Gross Stein<sup>27</sup>*

### **Clashing over Kashmir, Consolidating Ideological Credentials**

Lord Salisbury once remarked that “the only bond of union that endures’ among nations is ‘the absence of all clashing interests.’”<sup>28</sup> Since independence, India and Pakistan have made competing claims to the disputed territory of Kashmir, and observers have identified it as the “primary source of regional tension and [...] the likely cause of any future Indo-Pakistani conflict.”<sup>29</sup> Many wars over the course of history have been fought for the purpose of defending or expanding one’s territory (to secure sufficient resources for a state’s economic well-being and security), and Kashmir is no different in that regard. However, the motive behind securing control of Kashmir “has less to do with the geostrategic or economic significance of the small province, and more with the symbolic value that it holds for dominant perceptions of national identity in [India and Pakistan].”<sup>30</sup> This fits the so-called territorial explanation of war, explaining why the conflict over Kashmir is seemingly immune to compromise:

“what makes territorial disputes so intractable is that concrete tangible territorial stakes, like pieces of land, that are in principle divisible, become infused with ‘symbolic’ and even ‘transcendent’ qualities that make them intangible, perceived in zero-sum terms, and hence difficult to divide.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Janice Gross Stein, “Rational Deterrence against ‘Irrational’ Adversaries? No Common Knowledge” in *Complex Deterrence: Strategy in the Global Age*, ed. T.V. Paul, Patrick M. Morgan, and James J. Wirtz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009): 70.

<sup>28</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, “Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace,” (1948; reprint, New York: Knopf, 1960): 10.

<sup>29</sup> Ganguly and Kapur. *Debating Nuclear Stability in South Asia*: 9.

<sup>30</sup> Vali Nasr, “National Identities and the India-Pakistan Conflict” in *The India-Pakistan Conflict: An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 179.

<sup>31</sup> Vasquez, “The India-Pakistan conflict in light of general theories of war, rivalry, and deterrence” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 61.

Following the partition of British India in 1947, the Hindu ruler of the majority-Muslim Kashmir (77% of 4 million people at the time)<sup>32</sup> Maharaja Hari Singh wished to remain independent from both India and Pakistan. Pakistan, incensed by an alleged subjugation of Muslims hoped to liberate Kashmir from Hindu rule. Fearing reprisal for any perceived mistreatment of the Muslim population, Singh sought Indian military support to halt any advance by Pakistani forces. This marked the beginning of the First Kashmir War. The resolution to this conflict saw the establishment of a ceasefire line (known today as the Line of Control – or LOC – a *de facto* border) dividing Kashmir between Pakistan (controlling a third of the territory in the north, known as “Azad” or “Free” Kashmir) and India (controlling the southern two-thirds of Jammu and Kashmir). The dispute ever since has not been over the LOC, but whether Kashmir should accede to India or Pakistan (or to the disappointment of both parties, be independent). Both countries had agreed in the past to hold a UN-supervised referendum (legitimized by UN Security Council Resolution S11196 on 5 January 1949), but continuous political disruptions have prevented such a referendum from taking place.

Since then, the means of resolving the issue has been fiercely contested. India – the materially stronger party of the rivalry<sup>33</sup> – argues that Kashmir has been an important element of the “Indian Union” since the Treaty of Accession in 1947 when India intervened to defend Kashmir on the condition that it would accede to Indian authority. Furthermore, the Simla Agreement of 1972 put India in an advantageous position, stipulating that outstanding disputes with Pakistan could only be resolved through bilateral negotiations,<sup>34</sup> thereby ruling out “extra-

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<sup>32</sup> Stanley Wolpert, *India and Pakistan: Continued Conflict or Cooperation?* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2010): 21-22.

<sup>33</sup> Owing to the distribution of material resources and the possession of developed institutions following partition of British India, as well as an eventual arms-recipient of the Soviet Union

<sup>34</sup> Article 1.II of the Simla Agreement states

“That the two countries are resolved to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them.”

regional involvement in the resolution of the Kashmir dispute.”<sup>35</sup> As the stronger party, India wishes to define the terms of negotiation with Pakistan, ensuring it can make as many relative gains on the issue as possible. In this way, the Simla Agreement gave India leverage in its relationship with Pakistan, “recognizing the former’s regional primacy.”<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, Pakistan argues that the accord does not rule out external mediation of the Kashmir dispute by the UN or another third-party, nor discard the UN Security Council resolution in question. Instead, it only establishes that the status quo in Kashmir will not be altered by force<sup>37</sup> and that, “[p]ending the final settlement of any of the problems between the two countries, neither side shall unilaterally alter the situation.”<sup>38</sup> For Pakistan, the involvement of additional parties in resolving the conflict would give it greater bargaining power and negate India’s advantage, allowing it to point to perceived injustices suffered by Muslims under Indian rule and either have the relevant third party decide in Pakistan’s favour, or force a referendum on the issue (which Pakistan feels it would win).

Pakistan’s commitment to liberating Kashmir from Hindu rule stems from the view that it remains “unfinished business of the partition of the subcontinent on a religious basis in 1947,” and the goal of seizing Jammu and Kashmir from Indian control is considered by Pakistani leaders to be “their core national mission” to prevent the subjugation of Muslims.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, as Varun Vaish argues, Pakistan believes that “the ‘completeness’ of the nation depend[s] on the

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From: Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, “Agreement Between The Government of India and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Bilateral Relations (Simla Agreement, ”(2 July 1972) <<http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/5541/Simla+Agreement>> (16 July 2014)

<sup>35</sup> Bhumitra Chakma, *Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons* (New York: Routledge, 2009): 33.

<sup>36</sup> Feroz Hassan Khan, *Eating Grass: The Making of the Pakistani Bomb* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012): 97.

<sup>37</sup> Chakma, *Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons*: 33.

<sup>38</sup> I. Gandhi and Z.A. Bhutto, “Simla Agreement” (2 July 1972)

<sup>39</sup> Paul, “Causes of the India-Pakistan enduring rivalry” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 8.

integration of the contiguous Muslim-majority state into Pakistan.”<sup>40</sup> By contrast, the governing party of India post-independence “embodied all major ethnic groups [and] had a vision of a state not supporting any single religion.”<sup>41</sup> To let go of Kashmir would, in India’s view, signal its inability to govern Hindus, Muslims, and other religious groups together as one, defined by their loyalty to India rather than a commitment to religion or ethnicity. By extension, they feel that this would “open the floodgates of separatist movements in other parts of India.”<sup>42</sup> As a result, both India and Pakistan are of the mind that, were they to compromise on or relinquish Kashmir, the ideology upon which their states were born would be discredited.

To illustrate the Kashmir dispute’s intractable nature, neither India nor Pakistan can unilaterally resolve the matter in its favour. As Ishtiaq Ahmed notes, “[i]f India believed it could win the plebiscite in Kashmir, it would have agreed to one long ago.”<sup>43</sup> Indeed, India has been unable to integrate the Kashmiri population and legitimize its control,<sup>44</sup> and Indian authorities repeatedly deny Kashmir a level of autonomy from India, breeding opposition to their rule. Even in India’s most recent elections, one Kashmiri resident commented, “[a]re we allowed to vote on our own collective future, about the army outside every house against our will?”<sup>45</sup> Another added his view: “[An] [e]lection is the soul of any democratic process, but in a place where basic human and religious rights are trampled by the boots of the 650,000 occupational forces, it is a completely irrelevant process.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Varun Vaish, “Negotiating the India-Pakistan Conflict in Relation to Kashmir,” *International Journal on World Peace*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (2011): 62.

<sup>41</sup> Paul, “Causes of the India-Pakistan enduring rivalry” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 6.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid: 9.

<sup>43</sup> Ishtiaq Ahmed, “India-Pakistan Relations Post-Mumbai Terror Attacks,” *ISAS Insights*, No. 89 (2010) : 6.

<sup>44</sup> Paul, “Causes of the India-Pakistan enduring rivalry” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 10.

<sup>45</sup> Bijoyeta Das, “India elections fail to inspire Kashmiris: Low voter turnout and boycott mar parliamentary elections in India-administered Kashmir” (27 April 2014)

<<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/04/india-elections-fail-inspire-kashmiris-20144276443869365.html>> (11 June 2014)

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

“On the other hand,” Ahmed continues, “if Pakistan could liberate Kashmir through warfare, that too would have taken place by now.”<sup>47</sup> While it is argued that India could accept the LOC status-quo as a permanent border,<sup>48</sup> Pakistan rejects such a compromise. In this view, Pakistan could be considered a “revisionist” state, seeking to alter in its favour the status quo that has largely held since 1947 by wresting control of Kashmir from India’s grasp. This has been evidenced by Pakistan’s military gambits to such ends (in 1965 and 1999, respectively), as well as its alleged support for insurgent activities in Kashmir directed against India. While Pakistan acknowledges that it cannot win a conventional war against the superior material and manpower forces of India, it still seeks to force India to reconsider its position in Kashmir or draw third-party attention to the issue and bring about a resolution in favour of Pakistan.

This illustrates the stability/instability paradox. Now that conflict escalation in South Asia into the conventional realm risks a small (but real) potential for nuclear exchange (the instability element), Pakistan feels emboldened to conduct limited attacks against its rival without fear that India will respond (the stability element). As highlighted by former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, “having [a] nuclear capability would ensure that India could not launch a conventional war, knowing that if it did, it would turn nuclear, and that hundreds of millions would die. . . . It would have meant suicide not just for one, but for both nations.”<sup>49</sup> Indeed, India’s forces have been rendered impotent in the face of attack by Pakistani forces or the insurgents they support. Where India has sought to retaliate and make use of its superiority, a crisis unfolds which presents the possibility of escalation. The fear of such escalation and potential nuclear exchange is very real and has repeatedly induced third parties to

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<sup>47</sup> Ahmed, “India-Pakistan Relations Post-Mumbai Terrorist Attacks”: 6.

<sup>48</sup> Paul, “Causes of the India-Pakistan enduring rivalry” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 10.

<sup>49</sup> S. Paul Kapur, “India and Pakistan’s Unstable Peace: Why Nuclear South Asia is Not Like Cold War Europe,” *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Fall 2005): 143.

intervene and manage crises (without resolving the issues that facilitate them). Pakistan has not had much success in using third-party mediation to its advantage (namely, bringing international attention to the issue of Kashmir), as external parties are quick to condemn the actions either carried out or supported by Pakistan that brought about a crisis in the first place.<sup>50</sup> India benefits from international mediation in this regard, as focused attention on Pakistani transgressions mitigates pressure on India to negotiate over Kashmir. Where the international spotlight is shined on Indian policies and or control of Kashmir (and push for an internationally-mediated resolution to outstanding issues), policymakers in New Delhi feel they are being forced to compromise an aspect of their sovereignty.

This was the case in Kargil in 1999, when it was discovered that Pakistani forces had claimed advantageous Indian posts along a remote section of the LOC, betraying the mutual practice of vacating such posts during the winter months. Despite Pakistan's belief that India would not retaliate due to fear of escalation, India responded to evict what it initially believed were Pakistani-backed militants (a claim maintained by many Pakistani officials to this day), unaware that the risk of conflict escalation was so high. The seriousness of the issue prompted the U.S. to intervene and press Pakistan to withdraw its forces from Kargil. Had this not been arranged, escalation would have been a reality: "Indian troops were within days of opening another front across the LOC and possibly the international border, an act that could have triggered large-scale conventional military engagement, which in turn might have escalated to an exchange of recently tested Indian and Pakistani nuclear weapons."<sup>51</sup> International powers could hardly shrug off the serious risk to regional stability that the Kargil episode demonstrated.

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<sup>50</sup> Kapur, "India and Pakistan's Unstable Peace": 129.

<sup>51</sup> Lavoy, ed. *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia*: 1-2.

John Vasquez argues, “as disputes between the same two parties repeat, war is more likely.”<sup>52</sup> The stability/instability paradox is a risky game, for the level of conflict a party is willing to tolerate can change over time. It is possible that one day an actor may overstep the “stability” threshold by responding more forcefully than anticipated, plunging the region into conventional conflict and a potential escalatory spiral.<sup>53</sup> At that point, dysfunctional learning from past conflicts may encourage aggressive crisis behaviour, and international powers may not have sufficient credibility to restrain both parties. The intractable nature of the Kashmir issue makes it unlikely that the LOC will demilitarize or that insurgency will cease. As it stands, limited insurgent and military activity seems tolerable only if it does not alter the status quo in Kashmir (or infringe on the territory of either India or Pakistan). Beyond that, provocation can only be tolerated for so long and to such a degree, and, like repeatedly poking a sleeping tiger with a stick and hoping to draw blood, the tiger may one day wake up in a bad mood seeking to deal with the source of its annoyance. How the stick-wielder then responds is anyone’s guess. This argument will be explored further in Section Three: In Deterrence We Trust. As former US presidential advisor on South Asian affairs Bruce Riedel has argued, resolving the outstanding dispute of Kashmir will not resolve the longstanding animosity between India and Pakistan, but not resolving it will ensure the animosity continues for decades to come.<sup>54</sup> I now turn to the constructivist components of this rivalry that were born and have since been sustained by the inter-subjective relationship between the two.

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<sup>52</sup> Vasquez, “The India-Pakistan conflict in light of general theories of war, rivalry, and deterrence” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 59.

<sup>53</sup> Dinshaw Mistry, “Complexity of Deterrence among New Nuclear States: The India-Pakistan Case,” in *Complex Deterrence: Strategy in the Global Age*, eds. T.V. Paul, Patrick M. Morgan and James J. Wirtz : 187-188

<sup>54</sup> Bruce Riedel, “Avoiding Armageddon: America, India, Pakistan, to the Brink” (17 April 2013)  
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zz7hfyXKmNI>> (15 May 2014)

## Ensuring National Cohesion and Territorial Integrity: Pakistan's Fear of Indian Ambition

*"[T]hreat perceptions of [...] leaders [...] extend beyond the judgement of material capabilities of inter-state rivalries and are informed by complex interactions of historical, social, political and cultural factors."* – Runa Das<sup>55</sup>

Pakistan's rivalry with India guides its strategic calculations. In international relations, anarchy (the absence of a final authority above sovereign states) is a social environment – it is "what states make of it."<sup>56</sup> States may define whether they relate to one another in an amicable or hostile manner not by their rival power capabilities and balance of power considerations (as structural realism would command), but through their interactions with one another. Prior to their relationship as independent states and the dispute over Kashmir, India and Pakistan (in theory) could have developed an amicable relationship based on trust. However, as Jennifer Mitzen argues, when the competitive practices of a neighbour "are repeatedly recognized and reinforced, the routines supporting the identity of a competitor likely will feed back on the states' self-concepts."<sup>57</sup> India and Pakistan's interactions since independence have only reinforced Pakistan's perception of India as a hostile, revisionist state and its self-perception as a victim of Indian enmity, thereby necessitating Pakistan's aggressive behaviour in response.

While the bloody partition of British India in 1947 hardly started Indo-Pakistani relations "on the right foot," the conflict over Kashmir has only exacerbated any prospect of normalized relations and fuelled Pakistani distrust of Indian ambitions in South Asia. Since partition, Pakistan has felt that India did not accept its legitimacy as a state; that India would seek to retake Pakistani territory by force or wait for the Pakistani state to collapse before absorbing it back into

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<sup>55</sup> Runa Das, "Strategic Culture, Representations of Nuclear (In)Securities, and the Government of India: A Critical Constructivist Perspective," *Asian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (2009): 125.

<sup>56</sup> Referring to Alexander Wendt's influential work, "Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (1992).

<sup>57</sup> Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (2006): 360.

a greater Indian union. This was due to the fact that though Pakistan was formed to prevent the subjugation of Muslims by a majority Hindu population, “[m]ost Indians, especially the policymakers, viewed the establishment of Pakistan as a negation of the [secular] principles they stood for during the struggle for independence.”<sup>58</sup> Also fuelling distrust was the fact that India competed for the distribution of civil and military assets left by the former authority of British India. Though Pakistan as a newly born state was in greater need of resources than India to establish its administrative and military structures, India took many of these resources for itself. Pakistan viewed this as India’s attempt to “strangle the new state in its infancy.”<sup>59</sup> To make matters worse, the First Kashmir War of 1947 saw a developed Indian army face off against and defeat a small, undeveloped Pakistani army. Since Kashmir was integral to the state-founding ideology of Pakistan as a homeland for Muslims, this particular defeat was taken by Pakistan as a sign that India was not only “kicking Pakistan when it was down,” but that it was unwilling to legitimate Pakistan’s ideological foundations.

The 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War accentuated Pakistani fears (and have to this day) that India is determined to destroy or subjugate Pakistan. Not only had Pakistan’s military been crushed by Indian forces, but Pakistan’s eastern wing (Bangladesh) – an asset for waging a two-front war against India – was no longer under Pakistan’s control. Furthermore, to Pakistan, its conflict with secessionists in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) was not India’s concern and so the only reason for India to enter the conflict in support of secessionists would have been to further its own interests and break apart Pakistan.<sup>60</sup> Encouragement by Indian parliamentarians and scholars to exploit the situation in East Pakistan even before the Pakistani military crackdown

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<sup>58</sup> Hasan-Askari Rizvi, “Pakistan’s Strategic Culture,” in *South Asia in 2020: Future Strategic Balances and Alliances*, ed. Michael R. Chambers (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, 2002): 308-309.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid: 309-310.

<sup>60</sup> Abbasi, *Pakistan and the New Nuclear Taboo*: 104.

against Bengali dissidents had begun (enforcing Pakistan's suspicion of Indian intent).<sup>61</sup>

Nonetheless, India justified its intervention on humanitarian grounds as well as preventing "threats to its own economic and social stability, which were generated by the more than 8 million refugees who fled into India to escape the civil war."<sup>62</sup> Certainly, "the 'Bangladesh factor' had to be neutralized in such a manner that a refugee surge from East Pakistan would not destabilize India's northern states."<sup>63</sup>

Pakistan likely could not recognize the legitimate claims India had to intervene in Kashmir and in Bangladesh due to problems generated by the fundamental attribution theorem, wherein apparently hostile actions are interpreted as evidence of hostile intentions, since

"Individuals have a tendency to interpret others' behavior, particularly behavior that they regard as undesirable, as reflecting dispositional factors rather than situational factors. If the adversary adopts hardline security policies, we tend to attribute these policies to the adversary's hostile intentions or evil character, not to a threatening environment (including our own actions) that might have induced such policies."<sup>64</sup>

Such attribution would have been built up over a relationship of animosity, where recurring conflict is perceived by one party (Pakistan) to be evidence of the other's (India) natural tendency towards aggression. That being said, as recently as 1996, Pakistan's fears of India have been reinforced by BJP statements such as "in 1971 the unprecedented defeat of Pakistan had offered the opportunity for 'a full and final settlement of the Kashmir problem' but this was squandered away."<sup>65</sup> Pakistan's history of resisting India has generated a sense of ontological

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<sup>61</sup> Khan, *Eating Grass*: 77.

<sup>62</sup> Russel J. Leng, "Realpolitik and learning in the India-Pakistan rivalry," in *The India-Pakistan Conflict: An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 105.

<sup>63</sup> Khan, *Eating Grass*: 77-78.

<sup>64</sup> Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*: 143.

<sup>65</sup> Abbasi, *Pakistan and the New Nuclear Taboo*: 163.

security for Pakistan, generating expectations for Pakistani decision-makers of how India will behave and therefore how best to respond to perceived hostility from India.<sup>66</sup>

Pakistan's conflict with and distrust (fear) of India has served to build up and reinforce two elements that dominate its society today. The first is the role of the Pakistani Armed Forces vis-à-vis the country's democratically elected leaders. The second is the importance of Islam in Pakistani society. Since independence, not only have Pakistani officials maintained an outlook premised in the Westphalian notion of equality among states, but due to the conflict over Kashmir and its desire to define itself in contradistinction to India Pakistan feels it *must* maintain some level of parity in terms of military power and international status.<sup>67</sup> Since the 1950s, Pakistan has aligned itself with outside powers (China and the U.S.) to offset Indian power and status, and has sought to acquire sufficient conventional weaponry to deter India's conventional forces and the possibility of attack. This is very much in line with the dictates of structural realism, where, in international anarchy, a state will seek to balance against a power it perceives as a threat to its survival, and will do so through either external means (forming alliances with other states) or internal means (arming oneself in case an alliance fails) – or some combination of both. Pakistan's fear that Indian decision-makers would seek to destroy or subjugate it were perceived as valid when India began to build up its military forces after 1962 (though at the time, doing so was not in response to Pakistan, but to China, with whom it had just fought and lost a conventional war). Here, the fundamental attribution theorem – the perception of hostile actions as evidence of hostile intent – neglects the security dilemma, and prompted Pakistan to arm itself as much as possible (which, in turn, has prompted Indian policymakers to view Pakistan as hostile towards them). The military has benefited from these perceptions, as the arms and

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<sup>66</sup> Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics": 345, 347.

<sup>67</sup> Paul, "Causes of the India-Pakistan enduring rivalry" in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 18.

economic aid flowing from China and the U.S. have strengthened the Pakistani military's position in its society and created a vast security apparatus (which also wields extraordinary influence in the Pakistani government and economy), using the threat posed by India to justify its increasing budget and size.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, it has used the rivalry (and any willingness of civilian Pakistani leaders to compromise) as evidence of the need for the military to hold a large influence in Pakistani society and policymaking.<sup>69</sup> The overwhelming power of Pakistan's military is evidenced by its number of military dictatorships over the course of its history, which has in turn undermined the development of democratic institutions.<sup>70</sup> Since Pakistan's military stands to benefit from the conflict with India, it has sabotaged many attempts by democratically-elected leaders to decrease tensions, build trust and establish normal relations with its longstanding rival. This was seen as recently as the 1999 Kargil Conflict, where General Pervez Musharraf thwarted the work invested by Prime Minister Sharif into the landmark Lahore Declaration<sup>71</sup> – which could have seen a period of détente with India, perhaps even a resolution of outstanding issues – and subsequently removed him from office.

The influence of Islam in Pakistani society has also grown as a result of its conflict with India – but only after India was identified as an enemy, for the conflict has unified Pakistan beyond its Islamic ideal. As Mitzen argues, “a key part of society is its identity and distinctiveness vis-à-vis other societies.”<sup>72</sup> As a country struggling to establish an identity post-independence, Pakistan sought to define itself “not in terms of any indigenous cultural or civilizational values, but in contradistinction to the idea of India.”<sup>73</sup> Part of this was to prevent

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<sup>68</sup> Paul, “Causes of the India-Pakistan enduring rivalry” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 14-15.

<sup>69</sup> Nasr, “National Identities” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 191.

<sup>70</sup> Paul, “Causes of the India-Pakistan enduring rivalry” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 18.

<sup>71</sup> The Pakistani military allegedly launched its incursion across the Kashmiri Line of Control without the knowledge of Sharif.

<sup>72</sup> Mitzen, “Ontological Security in World Politics”: 352.

<sup>73</sup> Nasr, “National Identities” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 179.

Pakistan's disintegration at the outset, halting any separatist ambition in Pakistani territory by defining an enemy to unite against. Islam initially was not enough to justify the unity of Pakistan (as much as it has been used to legitimate Pakistan's foundations as a state); its provinces, though predominantly Muslim, held many ethnic, linguistic and cultural distinctions that set them apart from one another.<sup>74</sup> As philosopher Jean Bodin once noted, "the best way of preserving a state, and guaranteeing it against sedition, rebellion, and civil war is... to find an enemy against whom they can make common cause."<sup>75</sup> Pakistan thus used India to legitimate its existence and its unity, using the conflict as a means of overcoming inner antagonisms fearing it might otherwise break apart.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, the practice of securitization – the "establishment of an existential threat" to justify "breaking free of procedures or rules he or she would otherwise be bound by" in self-defence<sup>77</sup> constitutes political unity in Pakistan by "identifying what is hostile to the unity rather than [...] structuring the substance of the unity itself."<sup>78</sup>

To contrast itself against Indian secularism, then, Pakistan has leaned heavily on Islam as its founding ideology since independence. While Pakistan initially sought to be a secular society, many thought that such an ideal was not good enough to demonstrate its difference from India, arguing "if Pakistan was to be secular then what was the point of separating from India? Pakistan [...] should exist as an Islamic ideal and not merely a negation of Hindu authority."<sup>79</sup> Pakistan has thus increasingly portrayed the Indian "Other" as morally inferior and bolstered resentment against it by "equating all Indians with Hinduism (a religion which they consider inferior to

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<sup>74</sup> Nasr, "National Identities" in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 181.

<sup>75</sup> Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War* : 99.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid: 100.

<sup>77</sup> Mark Salter, "Securitization and desecuritization: a dramaturgical analysis of the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority," *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 11 (2008): 323.

<sup>78</sup> Jef Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity: Fear, Migration and Asylum in the EU* (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2006): 50.

<sup>79</sup> Nasr, "National Identities" in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 184.

Islam).”<sup>80</sup> The role of Islam in Pakistan has only increased over time with the proliferation of *madrassa* schools, while the military’s suppression of Pakistani civil society and democracy have exacerbated prospects of conflict resolution with India by preventing conciliatory views towards its neighbour. Indeed, Pakistan’s societal development has rendered it “virtually impossible” for ordinary Pakistanis to “develop a secular [objective] understanding” of other religious beliefs – particularly Hinduism, maintaining the notion that India’s Hindu identity is fundamentally at odds with Pakistan’s Islamic one.<sup>81</sup> Since Islam is tied to the establishment of Pakistan, “its defense, especially vis-à-vis India, is projected by civilian and military leaders as the defense of Islam.”<sup>82</sup> As a result, every recurring conflict between India and Pakistan reinforces in the mind of Pakistanis that India is a threat to not only their territorial integrity, but their individual and collective identity. Such a mindset is problematic as the youth present during the bitterest moments of the Indo-Pakistani rivalry are growing up, entering positions of public life – including, but not limited to, the military – hardening Pakistan’s negative perception of the relationship. As Hasan-Askari Rizvi notes, “Islamic conservatism has increased in the military since the 1970s as the number of officers from the middle and lower-middle classes has risen. Invariably, they have come from conservative religious backgrounds.”<sup>83</sup>

Pakistan’s historic conflict with India (generating a perception of Indian ambitions as revisionist, reinforced with each negative interaction) has fed both the role of the Pakistani military and the influence of Islam in its society, which has in turn generated insecurity among the citizenry and the decision-making circles. Runa Das supports this notion, arguing that

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<sup>80</sup> Runa Das, “State, Identity, and Representations of Nuclear (In)Securities in India and Pakistan,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (2010): 149.

<sup>81</sup> Paul, “Causes of the India-Pakistan enduring rivalry” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 17.

<sup>82</sup> Rizvi, “Pakistan’s Strategic Culture,” in *South Asia in 2020*, ed. Michael Chambers: 320.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

“insecurities are social and cultural productions rather than natural facts.”<sup>84</sup> Certainly, India’s expansion of its conventional forces after 1962 would have been cause for alarm – but only in the context of the Indo-Pakistani relationship. The fundamental attribution theorem guided by the constructivist notion that anarchy “is what states make of it,” implies that actions or events that generate alarm would otherwise not do so outside of one’s relationship with another – a relationship which has generated expectations and certain (mis)perceptions over time. As Mitzen notes, “a crucial requirement of a stable self-understanding” which in turn generates stable expectations of the outside world “is that one’s actions can sustain it over time.”<sup>85</sup> While Pakistan’s Indo-centric security strategy is guided by the fear that India seeks its destruction, it is further exacerbated by a unidirectional security dilemma: India’s acquisition of conventional (and nuclear) armaments, in reality guided by the China factor and Indian aspirations of great power status, only reinforces the idea that India seeks Pakistan’s subjugation. For many Indians (excluding certain hard-line, hawkish members of the BJP), this is not at all India’s intent.

### **“The Semi-Autonomous Puppet of the Western World (and now China)”: India’s Distrust of Pakistan**

Indian policymakers claim that the rivalry with Pakistan (before the rise of the BJP) does not factor highly into India’s strategic calculations nor in its behaviour as an independent state. If this is true, it is certainly an interesting aspect of the Indo-Pakistani, almost completely dismissing Pakistan’s perception of India as a hostile neighbour with the destruction of Pakistan as its top priority. Indeed Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India post-independence (and definer of its strategic culture for decades to come), felt that “the partition which gave rise to bitterness of feelings between India and Pakistan has no ancient roots ... Therefore, there was

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<sup>84</sup> Das, “Strategic Culture, Representations of Nuclear (In)Securities, and the Government of India”: 128.

<sup>85</sup> Mitzen, “Ontological Security in World Politics”: 344.

no reason why India should... champion... the animosities and past history ... which has bred quarrels.”<sup>86</sup> India thus was tolerant of Pakistan despite its quarrel over Kashmir, and many Indians believed Pakistan would collapse or seek to rejoin India when it realized the “mistake of partition.” India thus felt it had to communicate to Pakistan that it was trustworthy and had only benign intent towards its former colonial family member. Nehru believed that India and Pakistan could be friendly neighbours on the basis of respecting the territorial status quo, offering a “no-war agreement” with Pakistan in December 1949 which was subsequently rejected.<sup>87</sup> This was regrettable to India, but its true ambitions lay beyond South Asia, and so focusing on its conflict with Pakistan was unnecessary. Instead, it devoted its energies to what it perceived was its historic destiny.

Since partition, India has felt that as the former jewel of the British Crown it is entitled to be a great power comparable to the permanent members of the UN Security Council, deserving of the same status and authority. India’s elite, for example, identified with the reputation and status held by U.S. and the American self-image as “leader of the free world,” for India in turn viewed itself as “the world’s largest democracy and leader of the underprivileged world.”<sup>88</sup> Furthermore it felt that “as an ancient civilization encompassing one-sixth of the world’s population, India had both a right and a duty to seek great power status.”<sup>89</sup> However, India also felt that as a state with insufficient material resources relative to the U.S. and the USSR, it would have to define its greatness and its uniqueness by rejecting the dictates of *realpolitik*, namely ideas such as the balance of power and bipolarity of the Cold War. This owed much to the

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<sup>86</sup> Das, “State, Identity, and Representations of Nuclear (In)Securities in India and Pakistan”: 153.

<sup>87</sup> Das, “Strategic Culture, Representations of Nuclear (In)Securities, and the Government of India”: 131.

<sup>88</sup> Karsten Frey, “Guardians of the Nuclear Myth: Politics, Ideology, and India’s Strategic Community,” in Itty Abraham ed., *South Asian Cultures of the Bomb: Atomic Publics and the State in India and Pakistan* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2009): 204.

<sup>89</sup> Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*: 70.

mentality left by Mahatma Gandhi, wherein “fear leads to hatred, [and] as such is incompatible with a true spirit of independence [. It] therefore has no place in the Indian heart.”<sup>90</sup> Instead, India would “tame the anarchy of international politics” through non-violence. It is worth noting here that Pakistan, consistently sceptical of Indian intent (and nature), believes that Indian political and security officials have never subscribed to this vision. As a result, Pakistan remains insecure. Nevertheless, as a founding member of the non-aligned movement (presenting a “third” group outside of the Cold War superpowers) India followed the principle of *panchseel* (peaceful co-existence) to define its relations with others and handle any disputes which would arise.<sup>91</sup>

Building military strength did not factor highly in India’s strategic calculations for over ten years following its independence, for such investments would not only generate fear among their neighbours (bringing “danger where there was none before”),<sup>92</sup> but also bankrupt “the country through unnecessarily grandiose military schemes.”<sup>93</sup> India was forced to abandon its aversion of *realpolitik* during its loss in the 1962 war with China. Recognizing the reality of the anarchical international system and the need to ensure its survival, such a change in tactics was necessary. In the aftermath of the war, Nehru noted his regret of a naïve friendship-with-all policy that had made India so vulnerable relative to China, noting that Indians “had been living in a world of unreality.”<sup>94</sup> Indeed, “Indian defence spending virtually doubled between 1962 and 1964.”<sup>95</sup> Despite its focus on China, as a direct consequence of its arms build-up (the Second Kashmir War in 1965), India’s distrust of Pakistani intentions began shortly thereafter.

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<sup>90</sup> Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*: 75.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid: 70.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid: 181.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid: 180.

<sup>94</sup> Vasquez, “The India-Pakistan conflict in light of general theories of war, rivalry, and deterrence” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 73.

<sup>95</sup> Priyanjali Malik, *India’s Nuclear Debate: Exceptionalism and the Bomb* (London, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2010): 47.

In line with power transition theory, Pakistan felt that India's growing investment in its military would quickly close a window of opportunity to alter the status quo in Kashmir.

Furthermore, rather than considering India's arming as a response to China, Pakistan perceived the arms build-up as helping India prepare to correct the "mistake of partition" and subjugate Pakistan. As a result, Pakistan was prompted to attack and begin the Second Kashmir War, for

"India's massive rearmament effort meant that within two or three years India's military power would be such that 'Pakistan would be in no position to resist her.' Assuming that India's 'ultimate objective' was nothing less than the 'destruction' of Pakistan, [Zulfiqar Ali] Bhutto<sup>96</sup> [sought] to make it virtually impossible for India to embark on a total war against Pakistan for the next decade."<sup>97</sup>

Once again, I return to fundamental attribution theorem to explain how this reinforced India's distrust of Pakistan. Despite the insecurity felt by Pakistan, India perceived this attack as unprovoked. As Jack Levy and William Thompson note, "we believe that our own actions are defensively motivated and [we] assume that the adversary understands that [. Thus] we interpret the adversary's hostile behavior as evidence that it *must* be hostile [*emphasis added*]."<sup>98</sup> Though Pakistan's attack meant simply to add unrest in Kashmir and increase India's willingness to negotiate on the Kashmir issue, Indian leaders interpreted this as an "attempt to seize the Indian-controlled sector of Kashmir by force."<sup>99</sup>

The continued economic and military support Pakistan received from the U.S. and China over the years led some Indian policy-makers to believe that Pakistan was merely a puppet of the great powers (rather than a serious competitor for India).<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, many Indians believe that Pakistan is only able to exist *because* of this external support, without which it would not be

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<sup>96</sup> Henceforth Z.A. Bhutto.

<sup>97</sup> Lavoy, *Asymmetric War in South Asia*: 24.

<sup>98</sup> Levy and Thompson, *Causes of War*: 144.

<sup>99</sup> Leng, "Realpolitik and learning in the India-Pakistan rivalry" in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 110.

<sup>100</sup> Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*: 186.

able to exist, let alone challenge India.<sup>101</sup> Even though the U.S. motive for aid to Pakistan was due to Cold War considerations (namely Pakistan's proximity to the USSR), the existence of warm Sino-American relations as well as warm Sino-Pakistani relations (not to mention India's 1962 war with China) led India to fear collusion between and encirclement by the three to constrain its potential. The aftermath of the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War further reinforced India's suspicion of great-power collusion and distrust of Pakistani intent. Having defeated Pakistan in war, India sought to be "soft" towards Pakistan in subsequent peace talks – only to learn shortly thereafter that Pakistani Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto had put his country on the path of developing a nuclear weapon. It became clear to Indian leaders that "Pakistan was not only unbowed by its defeat, but was in fact intending to raise the stakes in the subcontinental military competition," which to Indian decision-makers was only possible "if the great powers let it (or made it) happen."<sup>102</sup> It is in this context that the peaceful nuclear explosion (PNE) was conducted in 1974 "as a warning shot to the great powers [...] meant to cause them to rethink their policy of assisting Pakistan."<sup>103</sup>

As Pakistan constantly arms itself to deter Indian ambitions (including in its nuclear programme) and supports an insurgency in Kashmir to blur the lines of the stability/instability paradox (paralyzing India in the face of aggression), India has only grown more distrustful and frustrated with Pakistan's leaders and intentions. Indeed, part of India's strategic calculus was defined by Pakistani actions during the 1986-1987 "Brasstacks crisis" and in the subsequent 1990 Kashmir crisis, in which misperception by both parties led to a military standoff, presenting

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<sup>101</sup> Feroz Khan notes that "Pakistan was barely surviving" before the U.S. allied with it, but that the "U.S. compulsion to 'contain' the communist threat" breathed "new-life" into Pakistan "as a member of U.S.-led military alliances"

From Khan, *Eating Grass*: 11.

<sup>102</sup> Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*: 185-187.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*: 184.

a very real risk of escalation into conventional war (these points will be elaborated further below). Despite these crises, India did not define Pakistan as its “key comparison other” until the Hindu nationalist BJP became increasingly influential in Indian politics.

The BJP operates on the basis of *Hindutva*, guided by the “quest for rediscovering India’s Hindu genius and restoring the nation to its superior ancient Hindu glory.”<sup>104</sup> As a result, BJP officials interpret past and present events in the context of Hindu ideology and aspirations of a great Hindu nation. In this context, both the BJP and its predecessor Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) have consistently viewed the creation of Pakistan as a mistake, an “‘artificial by-product’ of Congressional<sup>105</sup> appeasement and lust for power.”<sup>106</sup> This was in fact the founding principle of the BJS, which aimed to reverse partition and re-establish *Akhand Bharat* (undivided India).<sup>107</sup> Over sixty years after partition, this view may have been tempered somewhat. For example, most BJP officials no longer advocate for achieving *Akhand Bharat* **through force** but instead to wait “for the people of Pakistan to realize their mistake.”<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, some BJP officials have tried to reassure Pakistan that India welcomes its progress and prosperity,<sup>109</sup> but Pakistan remains sceptical. BJP founding principles (and statements by BJP officials) thus reinforce Pakistan’s view of India as a hostile actor. Furthermore, extreme right-wing BJP officials have advocated for India to “forcefully integrate Kashmir and even recover the portion held by Pakistan (Azad Kashmir), since ceding it to Pakistan or allowing independence to Kashmiris will be tantamount to placating the minority Muslims.”<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Sreeram Chaulia, “BJP, India’s Foreign Policy and the ‘Realist Alternative’ to the Nehruvian Tradition,” *International Politics*, 39 (June 2002):220.

<sup>105</sup> Referring to the Indian National Congress, one of India’s major political parties and the governing party at independence.

<sup>106</sup> Chaulia, “BJP, India’s Foreign Policy and the ‘Realist Alternative’ to the Nehruvian Tradition”: 224.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Paul, “Causes of the India-Pakistan enduring rivalry” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 9.

The election of a BJP-led coalition government under Prime Minister Atal Vajpayee in 1996, 1998 and 1999 marked a shift away from decades of Congress Party rule – a party which had emphasized Nehruvian ideals of secularism and peaceful coexistence with neighbours. Indeed, Vajpayee “pushed aside the old dream of creating a new and better [tolerant] world in favor of the much narrower dream of defending the Motherland – and, notably, of defending it against Pakistan.”<sup>111</sup> This was only logical for many BJP supporters, who felt that the ancient, “fractured past” of Indo-Pakistani relations which “began with the Muslim invasion and the grinding down of the Hindu-Buddhist cultures” in India *necessitated* an aggressive defence of India’s frontiers.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, pro-BJP commenters have noted that “Islam is an illustration of a religion that exists with a mentality of attack and brutality [and thus] India’s nationalist integrity is at stake as long as the forces of Islam are alive,” and that Pakistan maintains an “anti-Indian and anti-Hindu frenzy [...] without which Pakistan cannot exist.”<sup>113</sup> Interpreting Pakistani behaviour through such ideological lenses, therefore, India saw the test-firing of the nuclear-capable *Ghauri* missile as Pakistan’s attempt to symbolically re-assert history, “where the Hindu King Prithviraj Chauhan was defeated by the Islamic King Muhammad Ghauri.”<sup>114</sup> By presenting the test-firing in such a way, the BJP (having long planned to conduct nuclear tests) could use the missile threat emanating from as an opportunity to demonstrate India’s deterrent capability. Former BJP State Secretary Sabitri Pande commented later on that “through [Pakistan’s] test-firing of the Ghauri in 1998, they have come as far as challenging our might [...] As representatives of our nation, we call our leaders to answer this call. A nuclear policy for

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<sup>111</sup> Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*: 76-77.

<sup>112</sup> Das, “Strategic Culture, Representations of Nuclear (In)Securities, and the Government of India”: 139.

<sup>113</sup> Runa Das, “Revisiting (In)-Security as the Cultural Production of Danger: Nationalism, Xenophobia and the Role of Religious Ideology in the Indian Political Space,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (2005): 43.

<sup>114</sup> Das, “State, Identity, and Representations of Nuclear (In)Securities in India and Pakistan,”: 157.

India to give Pakistan a befitting reply is a must.”<sup>115</sup> When Pakistan responded to India’s nuclear tests with tests of its own, this not only reinforced a negative image of Pakistan, but helped to justify India’s nuclear tests (which had until that point been subject to widespread condemnation).

Indian policymakers have increasingly learned over the course of the rivalry with Pakistan that its neighbour cannot be trusted; that every measure of conciliation towards Pakistan is in reality a sign of weakness ripe for exploitation and subsequent betrayal. The Lahore Declaration of February 1999 was one such betrayal. In a welcomed thaw of Indo-Pakistani relations Vajpayee and Sharif pledged to de-escalate tensions and push for the resolution of outstanding issues surrounding Kashmir. Nonetheless, the Kargil Conflict broke out only months later, vindicating BJP views of Pakistan as an “incorrigible foe” and leading to the belief that “Nawaz Sharif was fully in the picture” regardless of his claims to the contrary.<sup>116</sup> Despite the possibility for escalation, India felt it had to respond forcefully or risk conveying to Pakistan that it would tolerate territorial incursions and invite further attempts across the LOC in the future. Indeed, allowing Pakistani forces to remain in place would have been an “unacceptable outcome for New Delhi because it would signal a lack of national resolve in the region’s first military crisis of the post-1998 nuclear era.”<sup>117</sup> Pakistan’s behaviour in the Twin-Peaks Crisis of 2001-2002 (where Pakistan justified its military build-up as an exercise of protecting its sovereignty), and later the 2008 Mumbai attacks (which again damaged prospects for détente) has only reinforced the view that Pakistan is not serious about peace. Indeed, Pakistan’s failure to fully prosecute terrorists operating on its soil has led many Indian officials to believe that Pakistan

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<sup>115</sup> Runa Das, “Encountering Hindutva, Interrogating Religious Nationalism and (En)gendering a Hindu Patriarchy in India’s Nuclear Policies,” *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (2006): 382-383.

<sup>116</sup> Chaulia, “BJP, India’s Foreign Policy and the ‘Realist Alternative’ to the Nehruvian Tradition”: 225.

<sup>117</sup> Lavoy, ed. *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia*: 34.

either tolerates or actively supports terrorist groups for the purposes of targeting India under the stability/instability paradox.

## **Section Two: The Birth of a Nuclear Neighbourhood**

The birth of Indian and Pakistani nuclear weapons programmes is tied to the previous argument surrounding Indian and Pakistani self-perception of their place vis-à-vis the great powers, with certain decisions prompted by their relationship between each other. How these two states interacted with (and within) the international community influenced how they came to view the merits of “going nuclear.” In its desire to carve out a postcolonial identity, India’s nuclear weapons programme evolved as a means of self-expression for the aspiring great power. In this way the nuclear bomb is a *political* weapon meant to display power and prestige but never to be used in battle. Over time however its nuclear programme evolved to take on a security dimension, and Indian decision-makers began actively seeking a deterrent capability owing to a fear of encirclement by China, Pakistan, and to an extent, the U.S. By contrast, Pakistan’s nuclear weapons programme began as a means of self-defence against its Indian neighbour, only evolving at later stages under international pressure into a matter of national pride (defying the international community it grew increasingly distrustful of). Pakistan views its nuclear deterrent as a *military* weapon, something which could one day be used to deter its enemies who seek to violate Pakistani territorial integrity. The mentality surrounding nuclear weapons in South Asia has implications for deterrence stability, increasing the likelihood that one would seek to *use* its deterrent capacity.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> To illustrate why nuclear weapons are so valued, Hymans writes that the “desire for nuclear weapons is largely the result of the bomb’s symbolic significance as a totem of power, and this significance is somewhat reinforced by big-state possession of it. But the basic reason for the bomb’s totemic significance is its truly awesome destructive consequences[.]”

From Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*: 222.

## India's Quest for Modernity

*“[Nuclear] weapons are the currency of power, the ‘million pound note’ that will never be cashed and which allow India to ‘be a player and not an object of this global nuclear order.’” – Priyanjali Malik<sup>119</sup>*

Scott Sagan notes that despite conventional wisdom in support of structural realist principles<sup>120</sup> – namely that “states will seek to develop nuclear weapons when they face a significant military threat to their security that cannot be met through alternative means; if they do not face such threats, they will willingly remain non-nuclear states”<sup>121</sup> – the motives for nuclear proliferation do not always follow this logic. He presents three arguments for why states want “the bomb:” the **security model** (illustrated by the previous quote), the **domestic politics model** (wherein key societal and policymaking elites push for nuclearization to further their own power and importance in society), and the **norms model**, wherein nuclear proliferation (or restraint from proliferation) “provides an important normative symbol of a state’s modernity and identity,” enhancing its prestige, and therefore, it is hoped, increasing “the state’s international influence and security.”<sup>122</sup> Any one of these models can be used to explain elements of a state’s nuclear proliferation, and though Sagan uses the case of India’s nuclear weapons pursuits to illustrate the domestic politics model, I argue the norms model is the most appropriate model in which to view India’s nuclear programme as it corresponds with how India viewed itself and the role of nuclear weapons.

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<sup>119</sup> Malik, *India's Nuclear Debate*: 23.

<sup>120</sup> These principles are: 1) Under international anarchy, states can never be 100% certain of other states’ intentions and therefore do not know whom to trust; 2) States regard their physical survival as members of the international system as their top priority (for no other goals can be achieved without a functioning state); and 3) Due to these two factors, states will pursue security through balance of power mechanisms, whether internally – self help through the acquisition of weaponry – or externally – forging alliances with a materially stronger power this state can trust to offset the power of one they cannot.

<sup>121</sup> Scott Sagan, “Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons?: Three Models in Search of a Bomb,” *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Winter 1996-1997): 54.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*: 55, 76.

As the former jewel of the British Crown, India felt that its achievement of independence through non-violent means, as well as its size, population, and history rendered it different from other states. The leaders of the newly sovereign, post-colonial India had great ambitions for it, finally free from subservience to great powers. The non-violent element of India's independence movement contributed greatly to India's initial foreign policy of friendship with other states, its rejection of balance of power politics, and its general "distaste for the indiscriminate large-scale destruction" that war (let alone nuclear weapons) presented.<sup>123</sup> India's nuclear programme started as a solely peaceful civilian project, where the mastery of the atom would be used for purposes of state development and achieving modernity. This mastery would not only help India's economic and societal progress, but demonstrate its skill as a "scientifically adept, multicultural people capable of achieving great things with minimum resource."<sup>124</sup> Nuclear weapons were not a priority for Nehru, for they "represented the fundamental corruption of Western modernity, which India should not merely reject itself but also teach humanity to spurn."<sup>125</sup>

India's consideration of a nuclear military **option** only changed following the 1962 war with China and the subsequent Chinese nuclear test in 1964. Yet India still held reservations towards nuclear weaponry, recognizing both the enormous economic cost (which could only be justified except under "circumstances of dire military peril" which did not exist at the time)<sup>126</sup> and the arms race and security dilemma they would prompt. As Nehru's successor Prime Minister Lal Shastri put it: "[o]ur neighbours will be more frightened if we begin to make the atom bomb... It does not help at all in reassuring our neighbors with whom India wants

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<sup>123</sup> Basrur "Nuclear Weapons and India's National Security Strategy" in *Grand Strategy for India*, eds. Krishnappa Venkatshamy and Princy George: 129.

<sup>124</sup> Das. "Strategic Culture, Representations of Nuclear (In)Securities, and the Government of India": 132-133.

<sup>125</sup> Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*: 176.

<sup>126</sup> George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*: 64-65.

friendship.”<sup>127</sup> Even when India’s request for a nuclear guarantee from the U.S., United Kingdom, and the USSR “not merely to protect India but *all* non-nuclear states from nuclear attack [*emphasis in original*]”<sup>128</sup> was rejected, India restrained itself from developing a nuclear weapon – despite an assertion by the head of India’s Atomic Commission that it could detonate such a device in 18 months. The fact that a test was not conducted until ten years after the Chinese nuclear test and that after the 1974 PNE no further testing was carried out reinforces that India’s nuclear programme was not motivated by security concerns.<sup>129</sup> Indeed, the PNE was motivated by a desire for respect by the international community, whom the Indian elite felt was supporting Pakistan’s nuclear ambitions. What they sought through the PNE was to remind the international community that India “was naturally part of the great power club, too, they would not treat it in this way. What the [great powers] needed was a healthy indication both of India’s potential might and of its self-restraint.”<sup>130</sup> This was of course the Indian narrative only, subsequently rejected by many external observers leading them not only to condemn India’s nuclear test but to understand Pakistan’s own desire for a nuclear weapon (as much as they tried to prevent it through sanctions). The tests had failed to demonstrate Indian restraint and its worthiness of international respect.

India’s rejection of the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was not due to any desire to manufacture a bomb, but the fear that it would restrain India’s **sovereign right** to pursue modernity. Even Indian elites that opposed nuclear weapons rejected

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<sup>127</sup> Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*: 210.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid: 178.

<sup>129</sup> Scott Sagan acknowledged a potential counterargument to this prior to India’s 1998 tests, noting that “[a]ccording to realist logic, India has maintained an ambiguous nuclear posture since that time – building sufficient nuclear materials and components for a moderate-sized nuclear arsenal, but not testing or deploying weapons into the field – in a clever strategic effort to deter the Chinese, while simultaneously not encouraging nuclear weapons programs in other neighboring states.”

From Sagan, “Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons?”: 59.

<sup>130</sup> Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*: 187.

the treaty. Believing not only that inspections of and rules for India's nuclear programme "represented continuing Indian enslavement" akin to colonialism, the mentality was widely held that the NPT's division of the world into nuclear "haves" and "have nots" was discrimination tantamount to "nuclear apartheid."<sup>131</sup> To this day, rejection of both the NPT and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) are justified due to the feeling that "[over] five decades of independence would be grossly devalued if outside powers [...] could presume to dictate to India how to manage its security[.]"<sup>132</sup> This was not a matter of military security itself, but of political sovereignty. Indeed, from 1968 and onwards, the "unwelcome Western interest in the country's nuclear intentions shone a spot light on India's 'option,' turning it into a test of New Delhi's ability to defend its policies and set its own goals."<sup>133</sup> As Mitzen notes, "[a] crucial requirement of a stable self-understanding is that one's actions can sustain it over time."<sup>134</sup> Thus, by continuously defying the international community's pressure to rein in its nuclear programme, India has been able to sustain its self-image as a scientifically-adept "great power" that will not be pushed around by others.

It could be argued that the nuclear tests under the BJP government in May 1998 were more security-driven than status-driven. As early as 1984, even the Nehruvian Congress Party was acknowledging the growing conventional and nuclear threat emanating from its neighbouring rival, necessitating policies to "protect India's vital security interests in the context of the threat posed by the induction of large scale sophisticated weaponry in Pakistan."<sup>135</sup> The BJS (which would eventually become the BJP) had advocated for nuclear weaponry in response to China's 1964 test; and the BJP would later come "out in favour of an Indian nuclear deterrent,

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<sup>131</sup> Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*: 175.

<sup>132</sup> Malik, *India's Nuclear Debate*: 272.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid: 19.

<sup>134</sup> Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics": 344.

<sup>135</sup> Das, "Strategic Culture, Representations of Nuclear (In)Securities, and the Government of India": 134.

naming one cause for this change of heart: Pakistan's nuclear progress."<sup>136</sup> India was able to justify the timing of its nuclear tests as a reaction to Pakistan's test-firing of *Ghauri* (a missile capable of hitting most Northern Indian cities) in this context. Indeed, the "BJP's historic toughness on national security would have seemed hollow if the government did not respond decisively to the new Pakistani threat."<sup>137</sup> BJP elites further argued that an additional value to the nuclear tests was that a nuclear deterrent could prevent Pakistan from challenging India's claims to Kashmir.<sup>138</sup> Returning to BJS logic, India also used the fear of encirclement by nuclear China to publicly justify its nuclear deterrent despite bilateral efforts made shortly before the tests to strengthen Sino-Indian relations and the fact that the two had not engaged militarily since 1964.

However, the "security model" of India's programme is rather weak. As George Perkovich argues, nuclear weapons "without strategic and operational doctrines and delivery systems are political devices and symbols of power. They are not usable military instruments of security."<sup>139</sup> No such doctrine or delivery system existed in India. Furthermore, India could not properly justify its nuclear weapons programme based on a security threat. At that point in time, Pakistan was not the *objective* military threat (according to power politics and balance of power logic) that would necessitate a nuclear test, for it not only lacked a **demonstrated** nuclear capability at that point, but its conventional forces were outmatched by those of India's. Indeed, "from the mid-1990s up to [...] 1998 [...] threats from Pakistan played a minor role within India's nuclear discourse."<sup>140</sup> Furthermore, as Perkovich notes

"Indian officials did not worry greatly about Pakistan's reaction. If Pakistan truly had nuclear weapon capabilities, they would conduct tests. This would ameliorate India's

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<sup>136</sup> Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*: 198-199.

<sup>137</sup> Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*: 412.

<sup>138</sup> Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*: 202.

<sup>139</sup> Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*: 432.

<sup>140</sup> Frey, "Guardians of the Nuclear Myth," in *South Asian Cultures of the Bomb*, ed. Itty Abraham: 201.

international isolation. If Pakistan actually could not produce and detonate nuclear weapons, their weakness would be exposed.”<sup>141</sup>

If security concerns *did* dominate the Indian decision to become an NWS, it would have responded to the Pakistani tests with an arms race. However, India’s expansion of its nuclear arsenal has to date occurred at a relatively slow pace.<sup>142</sup> Regarding the “China” justification, Indian conventional forces were “clearly capable of successfully defending against a Chinese conventional attack,” and China would not risk damage to its international credibility and image by using a nuclear weapon to gain a decisive advantage.<sup>143</sup> For this reason, the “‘China threat’ invited criticism both at home and abroad.”<sup>144</sup> As far as security justifications go, until the Pakistani nuclear test a few weeks later, Vajpayee was under political pressure due to his needless invitation of international condemnation over India’s nuclear tests. “[I]f the Pakistani [nuclear] reply had not come when it did the government might well have fallen.”<sup>145</sup>

However, India’s real use of the China threat to justify its nuclear tests (and its defiance of the international community) was due to the competition for status in Asia. Indeed,

“[b]oth China and India wanted to be recognized within Asia and the broader global community as the premier state. By the mid-1990s it appeared that China had won the race. This could have alarmed Indian officials so much that they saw nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles as equalizers – symbolic counters more than military-strategic ones.”<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Perkovich, *India’s Nuclear Bomb*: 419.

<sup>142</sup> As of 2009, “India has only built, on average, about four warheads a year. This suggests that India feels no great pressure to rapidly increase its arsenal.”

From Rajesh Rajagopalan, “India’s Nuclear Policy,” in *Major Powers’ Nuclear Policies and International Order in the 21st Century* (presented at the NIDS International Symposium on Security Affairs in Tokyo, Japan, November 18, 2009): 111.

<sup>143</sup> Perkovich, *India’s Nuclear Bomb*: 441.

<sup>144</sup> Izuyama Marie and Ogawa Shinichi “The Nuclear Policy of India and Pakistan” *NIDS Security Reports*, No. 4 (March 2003) - [http://www.nids.go.jp/english/publication/kiyo/pdf/bulletin\\_e2002\\_3.pdf](http://www.nids.go.jp/english/publication/kiyo/pdf/bulletin_e2002_3.pdf)

<sup>145</sup> Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*: 199.

<sup>146</sup> Perkovich, *India’s Nuclear Bomb*: 441.

For the BJP, seeking prestige (an end) through nuclear weapons (a means) was the easiest route to doing so. Viewing nuclear weapons as *political tools* (feeling they were unlikely to ever be used) and being optimistic about foreign relations with others, India downplayed the potential security implications a nuclear weapons programme would have. Many Indian policymakers (BJP elite notwithstanding) felt that a nuclear weapons programme demonstrated the country's greatness, reinforcing national pride through scientific achievement. Alternative means to the end of prestige were far more difficult, and were ultimately abandoned as a strategy for achieving this goal. On the one hand, a strategy of economic growth had to be sustained over a long period of time to reach "global power status."<sup>147</sup> On the other hand the "moral high ground" approach never bore fruit; as former BJP foreign minister Jaswant Singh noted for that for "the first fifty years of Indian independence, the country's moralistic nuclear policy and restraint did not really pay any measurable dividends."<sup>148</sup> One drawback of course is that, in seeking great power status India would unintentionally heighten regional insecurity – as the security dilemma<sup>149</sup> would dictate.

### **Pakistan's Structural Realist Reaction**

*"If India makes an atom bomb, then even if we have to feed on grass and leaves – or even if we have to starve – we shall also produce an atom bomb as we would be left with no other alternative. The answer to an atom bomb can only be an atom bomb."*

– Z.A. Bhutto, then-foreign minister of Pakistan, 1965<sup>150</sup>

*"[I]t is a question not only of intentions but of capabilities [...] It is well established that the testing of a nuclear device is no different from the detonation of a nuclear weapon."*

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<sup>147</sup> Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb*: 442.

<sup>148</sup> Abbasi, *Pakistan and the New Nuclear Taboo*: 162.

<sup>149</sup> Under conditions of international anarchy as John Herz determined, "states, unsure of one another's intentions, arm for the sake of security," which in turn generates insecurity among another state with the same uncertainty, prompting them to arm in kind – sparking an arms race which leaves both parties threatened and increasingly resorting to self-help for the security.

From Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979): 186.

<sup>150</sup> Khan, *Eating Grass*: 7.

*Given this indisputable fact, how is it possible for our fears to be assuaged by mere assurances which may in any case be ignored in subsequent years? Governments change, as do national attitudes. But the acquisition of a capability, which has direct and immediate military consequences, becomes a permanent factor to be reckoned with.*”  
 – Pakistani Prime Minister Z.A. Bhutto, 1974<sup>151</sup>

I argue that Pakistan’s nuclear weapons programme was driven by Sagan’s **security model**, because as retired Brigadier General Feroz Hassan Khan notes, a dominant narrative of Pakistani strategic thought is that “nuclear weapons are the only guarantee of Pakistan’s national survival in the face of both an inveterately hostile India that cannot be deterred conventionally and unreliable external allies that fail to deliver in extremis.”<sup>152</sup> Though Pakistan’s nuclear programme was initially meant for civilian nuclear energy production (and not seriously committed to developing an *indigenous* nuclear capacity, content to receive outside assistance), the intent of the program would change as India defined its stance on nuclear (non) proliferation. Not only did India’s troop build-up after 1962 generate alarm in Pakistan, but its nuclear debates in 1964 and a declaration by leading Indian atomic scientist Homi Bhabha that “India could detonate a nuclear device in 18 months made a profound impact on the Pakistani perception about India’s nuclear intentions.”<sup>153</sup> Indeed, Pakistan felt India’s nuclear programme was anything *but* peaceful. Furthermore, Pakistani insecurity was heightened when its conventional force weakness was highlighted following its loss from the Second Kashmir War. Yet at this point in time, Pakistani Prime Minister Ayub Khan refused to “go nuclear,” instead relying on its alliance with the U.S. to balance against the “Indian threat.”<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Chakma, *Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons*: 21-22.

<sup>152</sup> Khan, *Eating Grass*: 6.

<sup>153</sup> Chakma, *Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons*: 14.

<sup>154</sup> Feroz Hassan Khan, “Nuclear Proliferation Motivations: Lessons from Pakistan, *The Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (2006): 503.

Under structural realist logic, countries can balance externally – by relying on the military capabilities of allies – or internally – relying on their own capabilities.<sup>155</sup> Until its devastating military defeat and partial territorial dismemberment in 1971, Pakistan had chosen the former strategy. The Bangladesh Liberation War not only reinforced Pakistan’s conventional weakness, but the abandonment by key strategic allies (China and the U.S.) in a time of need pushed Pakistan to an extreme form of self-help in the shape of a nuclear weapons programme.<sup>156</sup> The leadership of Z.A. Bhutto, who had wanted a nuclear weapon since 1965 (due to his belief that India was developing one as well), and this rude awakening shook Pakistan’s security calculation enough to warrant one.

Efforts to dissuade and prevent Pakistan’s nuclear programme after 1972 only emboldened it further. When India sought to deter outside assistance to Pakistan’s nuclear ambitions and used the 1974 PNE as a “warning shot,” Prime Minister Indira Gandhi sought to reassure Z.A. Bhutto “that the explosion had no military, political, or foreign policy implications.”<sup>157</sup> Nonetheless Pakistan saw the PNE as a tool of blackmail and coercion. Indeed, former Indian nuclear scientist Raj Ramanna acknowledged its threatening nature: “An explosion is an explosion, a gun is a gun, whether you shoot at someone or shoot at the ground. I just want to make clear that the [PNE] test was not all that peaceful.”<sup>158</sup> The unwillingness by the U.S. or China to provide security guarantees against the nuclear threat Pakistan now faced only further bolstered its resolve to pursue nuclear weaponry.<sup>159</sup> Indeed, “going nuclear” was no longer a

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<sup>155</sup> Peter R. Lavoy, “Pakistan’s Strategic Culture,” prepared for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (October 2006): 6.

Available at <http://fas.org/irp/agency/dod/dtra/pakistan.pdf>

<sup>156</sup> Chakma, *Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons*: 19.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid*: 21.

<sup>158</sup> Abbasi, “Pakistan and the New Nuclear Taboo”: 108.

<sup>159</sup> Chakma, *Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons*: 22-23.

matter of choice but of “compulsion, driven by the security environment.”<sup>160</sup> It could also be argued that India sought to halt Pakistan’s nuclear progress during the 1986-1987 *Brasstacks Crisis*, a military exercise along the Indo-Pakistani border (which sparked a crisis as Pakistan amassed its forces in response) which many scholars believe was meant to provoke a forceful response from Pakistan and thus justify a “decapitating” Indian counter-attack against Pakistani conventional forces and nuclear facilities.<sup>161</sup> This is supported by the statement of then-Indian Army General Krishnawarmi Sundarji, stating “the Brasstacks crisis was the last all-conventional crisis in which India could have used its conventional superiority to destroy Pakistan’s conventional and nuclear weapons capability.”<sup>162</sup> This event saw Pakistan declare its achievement of weapons-grade uranium enrichment (necessary for a nuclear bomb) as a means of deterring Indian hostility.

Pakistan’s eventual nuclear test was conducted *in response* to the Indian test only weeks prior. The BJP’s desire to seek a “preponderance of power” and “impose rapprochement on its [own] terms,” dissuaded Pakistani “doves” from leading in strategic debates (such a possibility could have otherwise existed) and **ensured** India’s test was perceived in a negative manner.<sup>163</sup> With all these factors in mind, it can be said that Pakistan’s nuclear posture is Indo-centric. For security reasons, Pakistan steadfastly refuses to sign the CTBT and NPT until India does so first, for doing otherwise (and therefore restraining its nuclear programme) “would be suicidal in view of India’s superior conventional and nuclear capabilities.”<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Abbasi, “Pakistan and the New Nuclear Taboo”: 133.

<sup>161</sup> Brigadier General Feroz Hassan Khan, “Pakistan’s Nuclear Future” in *South Asia in 2020: Future Strategic Balances and Alliances*, ed. Michael R. Chambers (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, 2002): 162-163.

<sup>162</sup> Abbasi, “Pakistan and the New Nuclear Taboo”: 143.

<sup>163</sup> Perkovich, *India’s Nuclear Bomb*: 406.

<sup>164</sup> Chakma, *Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons*: 35-36.

Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme also comprises of a status element. Akin to the Indian experience, every Western attempt to halt Pakistani nuclear progress through sanctions and the halting of nuclear-related business from Western allies was met by redoubled efforts of self-help in Pakistan. Nuclear achievement has come to be seen by many in Pakistan "as a symbol of defiance against Western attempts to block a Muslim nation's quest for its security."<sup>165</sup> Much like India's initial motivations, furthermore, "scientific achievement for a poor developing country is greater than any other accomplishment."<sup>166</sup> The nuclear weapons programme has since become "the most significant symbol of national determination and a central element of Pakistan's identity."<sup>167</sup>

The Indian and Pakistani nuclear programmes, though both security and status driven, place different weight in either motivation. While India sought mastery of the atom as a demonstration of its great power status and later justified its defiance of the non-proliferation regime as resistance to discrimination and neo-colonialism, its nuclear programme *did* have a structural realist element (though such justifications were weak when they were called upon to defend nuclear decision-making). As such, India did not develop its nuclear weapons with any real military utility in mind, instead viewing them as **political tools** meant to assert status and prestige, never to be employed in war. Pakistan's nuclear programme on the other hand has been consistently driven by fear of Indian ambition and power, emboldened by India's conventional superiority (including victory in war) and both diplomatic and military attempts to stunt Pakistani nuclear progress. Pakistan's value of nuclear weaponry is almost entirely in its deterrent function; the status dimension that has come from their development has only been an afterthought. As such, Pakistan views its nuclear arsenal as a **military tool**; something which

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<sup>165</sup> Khan, "Nuclear Proliferation Motivations": 508.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid: 511.

<sup>167</sup> Fitzpatrick, "Overcoming Pakistan's Nuclear Dangers": 10.

could one day be used to deter (or punish) enemies who seek to violate Pakistani territorial integrity. Due to the political versus military utility of nuclear weapons, I therefore argue that Pakistan (security driven) rather than India (norms-driven), feels insecure enough to use its nuclear weapons if backed into a corner by a historic foe – as evidenced by its rejection of nuclear “no-first-use” (NFU) and its development of tactical nuclear weapons. This is the goal of Pakistan’s deterrent strategy, to make its “red lines” for nuclear use as vague as possible and thereby force Indian prudence in calibrating an attack.

### **The China Factor**

Before evaluating the stability of deterrence in South Asia, I wish to address the unidirectional arms race present in the region which complicates prospects for any arms control agreement between India and Pakistan. Though both sides officially commit to having a “minimum credible deterrent” in order to reduce the costs of a nuclear arsenal and maintain a deterrent capability, this “minimum” number is not fixed, as India and Pakistan do not agree on acceptable arsenal size limits. For India, the commitment to a credible minimum deterrent is “a policy based on ‘retaliation only,’ in which great emphasis is placed on survivability of nuclear forces[.]”<sup>168</sup> Pakistan also has an interest in minimum deterrence as a cost-effective option to help reduce any pressure for an arms race (which it feels it would lose in the long run).<sup>169</sup> Nonetheless, Pakistani officials recognize that “[t]he minimum cannot be quantified in static numbers. The Indian build-up will necessitate review and reassessment in order to ensure the survivability and credibility of the deterrent.”<sup>170</sup> The difficulty of establishing a fixed, mutually-

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<sup>168</sup> Maria and Shinichi “The Nuclear Policy of India and Pakistan”: 68.

<sup>169</sup> Chakma, *Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons*: 49

<sup>170</sup> Ibid: 50.

acceptable minimum deterrent force in a relationship of animosity and distrust is exacerbated by the unidirectional arms race spawned by India's regional *competitor*, China.

As Michael Krepon notes, “[t]he Pakistan-India dynamic is certainly the most pronounced nuclear competition since the Cold War ended, made even more complicated because New Delhi must factor in China’s nuclear weapon-related capabilities,”<sup>171</sup> and China in turn has to factor in the structure of the U.S. nuclear programme and missile defence system. Despite the fact that Sino-Indian relations were improving in the late 1990s, India’s articulation of China as a threat following the former’s nuclear tests was not entirely unfounded. Though India has had fewer wars with China than it has with Pakistan, China is more of a challenge in the size of its conventional and nuclear forces alone. Indeed, “[i]t was China’s aggression and defeat of Indian forces in the 1962 border war and China’s nuclear tests two years later” that sparked an interest in an Indian nuclear weapons programme in the first place.<sup>172</sup> Furthermore, there have been ongoing boundary disputes over Aksai Chin (which India claims as part of Jammu and Kashmir, but which China administers and controls) and Arunachal Pradesh (which China claims as part of Tibet), and India has claimed “increased incursions by China across the border region.”<sup>173</sup> India thus feels a need to deter such aggression in the future.

The arms race in South Asia however, is unidirectional. Indeed, “India appears to play a marginal role in China’s nuclear posture and military modernisation, which are directed with the US and its allies in mind.”<sup>174</sup> Nonetheless, India feels it needs a nuclear deterrent to respond to any future threat emanating from China. Further, India feels any threat posed by China deserves

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<sup>171</sup> Michael Krepon, “Pakistan’s Nuclear Strategy and Deterrence Stability” (May 2012): 5.

From <[http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/Krepon\\_-\\_Pakistan\\_Nuclear\\_Strategy\\_and\\_Deterrence\\_Stability.pdf](http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/Krepon_-_Pakistan_Nuclear_Strategy_and_Deterrence_Stability.pdf)> (18 June 2014).

<sup>172</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 76.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 76.

more attention than that posed by Pakistan (though it still keeps Pakistan in mind for strategic planning). Indeed, “[b]y and large, India’s nuclear weapons do not figure prominently in discussions that address the military threat posed by Pakistan. China, on the other hand, has been a nuclear challenge for too long in Indian minds to be ignored completely.”<sup>175</sup> An example of India’s dual security concerns is its 2:1 conventional force advantage vis-à-vis Pakistan, which is maintained so as to defend against both Pakistan *and* China. Still, Pakistan fears the worst of India’s intentions, and feels that the latter’s conventional forces are directed solely towards it. This in turn defines Pakistan’s strategic considerations.<sup>176</sup> This is despite the fact that Pakistan has become increasingly peripheral to India’s ambitions for great power status, and as such India and Pakistan are unable to come to an agreement on nuclear arsenal limits, even if such an agreement would benefit regional stability. This is because not only is Pakistan suspicious of any Indian assertion that it claims to balance against China, but any acknowledgement by Pakistan’s civilian or military leadership that its historic rival “has more pressing interests than to punish [it] would only magnify a sense of [its] national decline.”<sup>177</sup>

As a result, it is believed that Pakistan has recently “emerged as the fastest arms builder in the world and is set to be the fourth largest nuclear-armed state in the next few years.”<sup>178</sup> This “will produce destabilising strategic consequences in South Asia and in the broader Asian region.”<sup>179</sup> Fitzpatrick agrees, noting that “[a]s the numbers of weapons systems increase, the

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<sup>175</sup> Malik, *India’s Nuclear Debate*: 271.

<sup>176</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 76, 78.

<sup>177</sup> Krepon, “Pakistan’s Nuclear Strategy and Deterrence Stability”: 16.

<sup>178</sup> Bhumitra. *Pakistan: Whither Minimum Deterrence?* (Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 2013): 2

From

[http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/175764/ipublicationdocument\\_singledocument/f05b7585-c62d-46d1-a846-ce501dfd48db/en/Policy+Brief++2013-12-31++Pakistan++Whither+Minimum+Deterrence.pdf](http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/175764/ipublicationdocument_singledocument/f05b7585-c62d-46d1-a846-ce501dfd48db/en/Policy+Brief++2013-12-31++Pakistan++Whither+Minimum+Deterrence.pdf)> 2.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

ways that accidents can occur expand as well.”<sup>180</sup> As an example: in a time of crisis where TNWs may be “on alert and therefore oriented toward readiness,” the “numerical requirements of TNWs deployed in a battlefield role, arrayed so as to cope with” a potential Indian attack, “mean that many more points of such vulnerability crop up than if Pakistan’s arsenal were based around long-range missiles alone.”<sup>181</sup> It can therefore be seen that the expansion of Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal to deter India “will heighten the risk of inadvertent nuclear use in the region.” Lacking an arms control regime, deterrence stability is undermined. The steel chain of deterrence is only as strong as its weakest link. The more nuclear weapons present, the longer the chain, and therefore the more likely a weak link may emerge.

Owing to its fear of Indian ambition and intent, Pakistan is unable to trust India’s “China justification” for its diverse nuclear weapons programme (and its investments in ballistic missile defense), fearing that India seeks solely to undermine Pakistan’s deterrent. Even though India certainly seeks to deter Pakistan to a degree, it would be beneficial for regional stability if Pakistan were to acknowledge and accept India’s larger security concerns emanating from China. Doing so would reduce pressure on Pakistan to keep up with India’s nuclear programme and slow the expansion of Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal. This would not only enable Pakistan to make more investments in its society than in its military (or at very least, reduce funding for and reliance on TNWs), but it would reduce the prospects of inadvertent nuclear use in a time of crisis. If it were to ever acknowledge and accept India’s “China factor” therefore, Pakistan could positively contribute to regional stability.

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<sup>180</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 148.

<sup>181</sup> Shashank Joshi, “Pakistan’s Tactical Nuclear Nightmare: Déjà Vu?” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 36 No. 3 (Summer 2013): 166.

### **Section Three: In Deterrence We Trust?**

*“[I]t was widely assumed that being nuclear weapons states, India and Pakistan could no longer go to war. Indeed, some argued that the possession of nuclear weapons by both states would eventually lead to a reconciliation of their outstanding differences. These expectations were wrong [.]”* – Stephen Cohen, South Asian security expert<sup>182</sup>

*“Pakistan’s future will remain in the shadow of crisis instability (a state of constant tension and intermittent crisis) with India, teetering at the precipice of conventional war. The specter of nuclear war will also be ever-present.”* – Feroz Hassan Khan<sup>183</sup>

The conflict between India and Pakistan since 1998 has allowed for the examination of deterrence stability beyond the theoretical realm. Indeed, Indo-Pakistani border tensions and clashes in Kashmir (Kargil being the most prominent) have cast doubt on the argument by nuclear proliferation optimists that nuclear weapons render conventional conflict impossible owing to fear of escalation. Recalling the argument of proliferation optimists, the deterrent value of nuclear weapons is that they “prevent someone from doing something he or she would otherwise like to do.”<sup>184</sup> Through the use of rhetoric on both sides, the Indian and Pakistani nuclear arsenals therefore serve the purpose of deterring one another from violating one’s territorial integrity or unilaterally altering the status quo in Kashmir. However, rational deterrence theory is grounded in the concept that policy-makers are rational – that they “learn from history [...] draw some propositions from the past and apply these propositions in an appropriate way to the future as they think about the likely consequences of their policy options.”<sup>185</sup>

Yet far from forcing India and Pakistan to resolve their differences, nuclear weaponry has prolonged the conflict. Rather than learning from previous crises that stability is best served

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<sup>182</sup> Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*: 172.

<sup>183</sup> Khan, “Pakistan’s Nuclear Future” in *South Asia in 2020*, ed. Michael Chambers: 154.

This is a particularly telling statement, as Khan is the former head of the powerful arms-control unit of the Pakistan Armed Forces’ Strategic Plans Division, and is thus well versed in matters of deterrence stability.

<sup>184</sup> Stein, “Rational Deterrence against ‘Irrational’ Adversaries?” in *Complex Deterrence*, eds. T.V. Paul et al: 60.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid*: 62.

through communication and trust (in particular taking steps to show benign intent), nuclear-armed India and Pakistan now believe that a threshold for violent conflict is permissible so long as certain “red lines” are not crossed (for fear that retaliation can spark escalation into open conventional war – or worse). Where these thresholds are violated and crises occur, leaders on both sides are slow to take steps aimed at resolving tensions; rather, they prefer to demonstrate their resolve through displays of force and bellicose rhetoric. Furthermore, this threshold has emboldened leaders on both sides to elevate crises to a level where international powers are willing to intervene and mediate, owing to the risk that crises can explode into conflict. Repeated clashes (both military and diplomatic) pose great risks to deterrence stability in South Asia because “as disputes between the same two parties repeat, war is more likely.”<sup>186</sup> Nuclear proliferation pessimists therefore fear that owing to a stand-off between NWS in such a tense region (defined by historical animosity) miscalculation or misperception can occur, prompting one side to overstep during a crisis and accidentally trigger conventional war (and a risk of nuclear exchange).

Despite these concerns, proliferation optimists believe that the fact that India and Pakistan have not engaged in a conventional war since becoming nuclear powers demonstrates the validity of their claim, and that rational powers will never seek to engage in a conflict with the propensity of becoming nuclear. And yet, many believe that Kargil (1999), the Twin Peaks Crisis (2001-2002), and the aftermath of the Mumbai Attacks (2008) had escalatory potential – eased only by restraint (owing to circumstance)<sup>187</sup> and timely international intervention. This is

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<sup>186</sup> Vasquez, “The India-Pakistan conflict in light of general theories of war, rivalry, and deterrence” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 59.

<sup>187</sup> Some have argued that in 1999 India would have opened up other military fronts beyond Kargil had it not recaptured the “vital Tololing-Point 5140 mountain complex in the Dras sector, from which Pakistani troops had been able to interdict India’s military buildup and troop movements with impunity. (Lavoy, *Asymmetric Warfare*: 12-13). It has also been argued that one of India’s main goals in the Twin Peaks crisis was to bring international condemnation to bear on Pakistan’s support of terrorism. Finally, restraint in the aftermath of the 2008 Mumbai

hardly reassuring even if only limited war is likely, for *any* conflict has the potential to get out of hand. When two cars collide head-on, even if the drivers and passengers of both cars survive this is of little comfort: a crash still happened; the cars are crumpled (or in case of a limited war, merely dented or scraped); and only through luck are drivers and passengers still alive – albeit physically and psychologically scarred. Rationality would dictate that the drivers become more attentive or defensive on the road in the future, or that they stop driving entirely. Yet in the case of India and Pakistan, the conventional doctrines of and thresholds warranting nuclear use by both parties prompt policy-makers to get back behind the wheel and park on opposite ends of a road (or drive very slowly towards one another), ready to play a game of “chicken” at a moment’s notice. If this happens, whether one driver swerves in time or a previously-unnoticed “drivers-ed” teacher applies the brakes (via international intervention) is not an indefinitely-reliable guarantee; it is a gamble.

### **Guessing at Thresholds: Maintaining Deterrence Credibility with Thin Red Lines**

*“Given India’s stated deterrence policy and the nuclear-response doctrines enunciated by both sides, it is not hard to imagine a conventional conflict escalating to nuclear use.”*  
 - Mark Fitzpatrick (Director of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Programme at the International Institute for Strategic Studies)<sup>188</sup>

In crises involving India, Pakistan, and Kashmiri- or Pakistani-based insurgent groups since the 1990s, Indian attempts to punish (or put an end to) what they perceive as Pakistani aggression have been repeatedly frustrated by the workings of the stability/instability paradox. On the one hand, each time India has prepared for (or considered and threatened) a limited incursion into Pakistan or Azad Kashmir, Pakistan has had sufficient time to mobilize its forces

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attacks was attributed to the fact that an Indian retaliation would have only worsened civil-military relations in Pakistan, something which would do very little to help eventually normalize relations between India and Pakistan. (Krepon and Cohn, *Crises in South Asia*: 9).

<sup>188</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 47.

closer to their borders or the LOC in response (raising the stakes that a limited offensive could lay the ground for conventional war). Not only would troops be moved into potentially threatening positions (in 1990, Indian troops were only 160 km from the Pakistani city of Multan)<sup>189</sup>, but tensions would be heightened as either India or Pakistan – or both – would conduct military drills and missile tests to demonstrate resolve. On the other hand, higher stakes combined with the risk of nuclear conflict has forced restraint upon Indian policymakers and has often prompted international intervention to pressure one side or the other to concede before India could risk a retaliatory move.

This has consistently been the case. In the 1990 Kashmir Crisis, India's sending of additional troops to protect its segment of Kashmir from insurgent activity was perceived as readying for a limited strike against Pakistan. Indeed, Indian planners reportedly had considered limited airstrikes against militant training camps inside Pakistani territory.<sup>190</sup> This prompted a counter-mobilization, reports of Pakistani jets being fitted with a crude nuclear capability, and eventual international intervention to ease the crisis. While India and Pakistan officially deny the presence of a nuclear element to the crisis, if the assertion by Pakistani Chief of Army Staff General Miza Aslam Beg is correct – that Benazir Bhutto “ordered the army and air force to get ready. A squadron of F-16s were moved to Mauripur and we pulled out our devices ... to arm the aircraft [,]”<sup>191</sup> the 1990 Kashmir Crisis would mark the first confrontation since the Cuban Missile Crisis that had a nuclear element to it;<sup>192</sup> hardly a comforting prospect.

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<sup>189</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 54.

<sup>190</sup> Chakma, *Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons*: 42.

<sup>191</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 55.

<sup>192</sup> As noted by Fitzpatrick, “Richard Kerr, former CIA deputy director, described the stand-off as: ‘The most dangerous nuclear situation we have ever faced since I’ve been in the U.S. government. It may be as close as we’ve come to a nuclear exchange. It was far more frightening than the Cuban missile crisis.’”

Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 55.

As already mentioned above, the 1999 Kargil Conflict had an escalatory potential, could have risked nuclear exchange, and as a result, prompted international intervention. This particular episode dashed the notion that NWS do not fight one-another. Yet Indian Admiral Raja Menon argued that Kargil was caused by New Delhi's failure to clearly signal "a coherent set of principles applicable to Pakistan immediately after the nuclear tests," which encouraged Pakistani planners "to guess at Indian nuclear thresholds, with inaccurate results" almost triggering conventional (possibly nuclear) war – hence why the U.S. took the issue so seriously. Recall that prior to the 1998 nuclear tests India had not formally contemplated a nuclear doctrine. Kargil demonstrated such a doctrine's necessity to prevent miscalculation in the future. Such a doctrine was articulated in 1999, based on a minimum credible deterrent (a sufficient quantity of nuclear warheads to survive a surprise attack) "no-first-use" (NFU) of its nuclear weapons against NWS and non-use against non-NWS. Any retaliation would be "punitive" and only in response to a nuclear attack. While India maintains a policy of NFU of its nuclear weapons Pakistan does not have a similar policy. The belief that Pakistan may not be as responsible a nuclear power as India has induced caution in the minds of Indian policymakers. Indeed, upholding the norm (also referred to as a taboo or tradition) of non-use of nuclear weapons helps to constitute India's self-conception as a civilized, moral, and responsible country; but the Pakistani 'other' is consistently presented by pro-BJP media and politicians as immoral, and therefore perhaps not as restrained. Rajesh Rajagopalan argues that "Indian officials do not think that nuclear weapons have stabilized the region; rather, they believe that nuclear weapons in Pakistani hands increase the nuclear risk in the region because Pakistan is seen as irresponsible."<sup>193</sup> This perceived irresponsibility stems from the recurring conflicts launched by Pakistan and a shared history of animosity; Pakistan's refusal of NFU and its brinkmanship in

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<sup>193</sup> Rajagopalan, "India's Nuclear Policy": 97.

support of the stability/instability paradox; and the absence of any clear Pakistani nuclear doctrine of its own. This last point is crucial for Pakistan's deterrent capacity, forcing Indian leaders to pause and consider whether they may end up violating one of Pakistan's thresholds warranting conventional (or nuclear) retaliation. Nonetheless, India felt that with its nuclear doctrine laid out, miscalculation by Pakistani leadership could not occur.

Yet a risk of conflict was again present in the Twin Peaks Crisis, with a cycle much like Kargil in 1999 and Kashmir in 1990, reinforcing a sense of Indian distrust towards Pakistan. Following a terrorist attack on the Indian parliament in 2001, India, under intense media and political pressure to retaliate, mobilized its army at the Pakistani border – seeking to compel Pakistan to take action against the militants responsible, believed to be operating either with the support of the Pakistani government, or tolerated on Pakistani territory. With the recent Kargil experience, Indian officials had certainly considered the use of force; indeed, the 1999 conflict had taught them “that the only way to deal with Pakistan was through the application of force.”<sup>194</sup> On two occasions India considered striking at terrorist camps in Pakistan and Azad Kashmir, or seizing limited amounts of Pakistani territory to force concessions in eventual negotiations – namely, that Pakistani authorities crack down on militant activity on their territory. These occasions were in January 2002, a month after the Parliament attacks; and May 2002, when militants attacked an Indian army compound in Kashmir despite Pakistani promises that militant activity was being tackled (an event seen in India as a further betrayal by Pakistan). Such hesitation however, allowed the Pakistani military to mobilize at its border facing India, ready to intercept any limited attack.<sup>195</sup> As a result, even a limited attack would have seen highly mobilized Indian and Pakistani military forces clash, “resulting in a major conflagration in the

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<sup>194</sup> Leng, “Realpolitik and learning in the India-Pakistan rivalry” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 120-121.

<sup>195</sup> Mistry, “Complexity of Deterrence among New Nuclear States,” in *Complex Deterrence*, eds. T.V. Paul et al: 186.

subcontinent.”<sup>196</sup> Indeed, “[t]he line between pin-prick, cross-border operations against Pakistan-supported terrorist camps and all-out conventional war was increasingly blurred in Indian planning as the crisis progressed from January onwards.”<sup>197</sup> Fortunately, General-turned-President Musharraf was pressured by the U.S. to crack down on Pakistani-based militant organizations (though his enthusiasm for doing so was limited), and India eventually withdrew its troops. This foreign pressure or Pakistani compliance may not have been as strong had the Twin Peaks Crisis not occurred so shortly after 9/11 or had Pakistan been a key U.S. ally in the War on Terror. Under these circumstances, Musharraf acknowledged that he had no choice but to support U.S. demands in the War on Terror, for “any other decision could have caused ‘unbearable losses’ to the security of the country, the health of the economy, the Kashmir cause, and to Pakistan’s strategic nuclear and missile assets.”<sup>198</sup>

India has learned that such a failure to demonstrate resolve comes at a price, even when the international community condemns one’s enemy. The fact that Pakistan was able to stand its ground and that India ultimately backed down without fully achieving its objectives (ending support for militants operating out of Pakistan) demonstrated to Pakistan that the presence of nuclear weapons could allow Pakistan to call India’s bluff and test the credibility of its retaliatory threats. Recognizing that the time it took to mobilize armed forces had given Pakistan the opportunity to mobilize in response, India develop a strategy would could pre-empt Pakistani force mobilization. This strategy would facilitate the rapid conduct of limited war, and became known as the “Cold Start,” which would allow smaller groups of Indian forces to strike targets in Pakistan (and Azad Kashmir) “promptly and decisively in response to a triggering event without

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<sup>196</sup> Mistry, “Complexity of Deterrence among New Nuclear States,” in *Complex Deterrence*, eds. T.V. Paul et al: 186.

<sup>197</sup> Lewis et al, eds. *Too Close for Comfort*: 19.

<sup>198</sup> Lavoy, “Pakistan’s Strategic Culture”: 20.

waiting for a larger mobilization and or diplomatic intervention.”<sup>199</sup> The goal of the Cold Start, then, is “to provide India with retaliatory measures against Pakistan without escalating to nuclear war.”<sup>200</sup> Indeed, India hopes that its incursions into Pakistani territory would be limited enough to prevent a significant retaliation from Pakistan; certain Indian officials believe that Kargil demonstrated the possibility for limited war under a nuclear threshold, and have thus argued that “[i]t would be irresponsible for Indian military officers not to engage in planning for military operations below the nuclear threshold.”<sup>201</sup> Advocates of the Cold Start believe the strategy is limited enough as to avoid escalation, but thus far it has not been formally adopted by Indian policymakers; the slightest potential of escalation is enough, and without proven defences against a Pakistani nuclear attack, “Indian vulnerability may therefore restrain India’s decision makers from risky offensive operations.”<sup>202</sup> If Indian confidence of surviving a nuclear attack on its soil were higher, however,<sup>203</sup> the Cold Start could be viewed (and used) as an exercise of coercive diplomacy, getting Pakistan to do something it would otherwise not do – namely, stop tolerating or supporting aggression and insurgency against India.<sup>204</sup>

Against this conventional tactic, Pakistan developed an unconventional response. It must be remembered that Pakistan has rejected NFU, and has reserved the right to use nuclear weapons even if it is not attacked with them. By introducing tactical nuclear weapons (TNW) to the battlefield as of 2011, Pakistan lowered the threshold for nuclear use in South Asia. These

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<sup>199</sup> Lavoy, ed. *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia*: 14.

<sup>200</sup> Joshi, “Pakistan’s Tactical Nuclear Nightmare: 162.

<sup>201</sup> Krepon and Cohn, eds. *Crisis in South Asia*: 10.

<sup>202</sup> Mistry, “Complexity of Deterrence among New Nuclear States,” in *Complex Deterrence*, eds. T.V. Paul et al: 196.

<sup>203</sup> Such confidence could arise from the induction of missile defence systems or the belief espoused by India’s defence minister during the Twin Peaks Crisis, George Fernandes, that “that Pakistan would eventually refrain from a nuclear strike because a nuclear exchange would ‘destroy’ Pakistan while India would ‘win’ and lose ‘only a part of [its] population.’”

From Lewis et al, eds. *Too Close for Comfort*: 19.

<sup>204</sup> Stein, “Rational Deterrence against ‘Irrational’ Adversaries?” in *Complex Deterrence*, eds. T.V. Paul et al: 60.

short-range nuclear-capable missiles are highly mobile and could be rapidly assembled for use in blunting a potential advance by Indian conventional forces into Pakistani territory. As one Pakistani commentator put it, it would “pour cold water on Cold Start.”<sup>205</sup> The idea behind TNWs is that they are designed to be used in lieu of conventional deterrence, especially relevant in the Indo-Pakistani conflict where Pakistan is the conventionally-weaker party. Combined with Pakistan’s renunciation of NFU (which is intended to raise the stakes of any Indian attempt at low-intensity conflict), TNWs lower the nuclear-use threshold, as their use is justified by Pakistani strategists “not just in cases where Pakistan face[s] an existential threat, but also against limited conventional attacks.”<sup>206</sup> This is only the case of course assuming that India would even consider launching a conventional attack against Pakistan.

Pakistan’s nuclear doctrine is intentionally vague so as to force Indian restraint in planning a conventional attack, as to clarify the “red lines” justifying nuclear use “might embolden Indian military actions just beneath them.”<sup>207</sup> The limit of conventional attack Pakistan might tolerate is not entirely clear; its small territory relative to India and the perception of India as an enemy aggressively seeking its destruction makes it far more sensitive to any incursions than India has been to date. Indeed, “even limited Indian thrusts would risk severing Pakistani lines and threatening key cities,” and regardless of whether India held only limited aims, Pakistan would feel less than secure.<sup>208</sup> This benefits Pakistan in that, “ambiguity is seen as an essential aspect of effective deterrence,” causing India to consistently second-guess any retaliatory actions that could be perceived as offensive by Pakistan.<sup>209</sup> In a scenario where India tests Pakistan’s ambiguous nuclear posture, Pakistan feels the international community would

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<sup>205</sup> Joshi, “Pakistan’s Tactical Nuclear Nightmare”: 162.

<sup>206</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 50.

<sup>207</sup> Michael Krepon, “Pakistan’s Nuclear Strategy and Deterrence Stability”: 10.

<sup>208</sup> Joshi, “Pakistan’s Tactical Nuclear Nightmare”: 167.

<sup>209</sup> Khan, “Pakistan’s Nuclear Future” in *South Asia in 2020*, ed. Michael Chambers: 175.

support (or at least sympathize with) its means of self defence; for not only would TNW use be limited, but its response would be justified “because it would have occurred on Pakistani territory and casualties would be caused only to ingressing military targets.”<sup>210</sup>

Whether Indian strategists or military units would tolerate even a *limited* nuclear attack (with nuclear weapons being directed “only” at ingressing military forces rather than against Indian territorial assets) is subject to debate. In the wake of failed coercive diplomacy after the Twin Peaks Crisis, India modified its NFU nuclear doctrine, lowering the nuclear threshold. This modification saw India declare it would launch *massive* nuclear retaliation to any “attack against India, **or Indian forces anywhere [emphasis added]**,” whether it is attacked with biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons.”<sup>211</sup> The change was India’s “response to domestic criticism about the NFU being too weak to deal with potential threats,” where, frustrated by Pakistan’s support for terrorism and India’s inability to compel it to do otherwise, “[a] muscular nuclear doctrine may have been seen as one way of responding to this frustration.”<sup>212</sup> While this strategy is meant to deter, indeed, to strike fear in one’s enemy, an attack on India or its troops could force Indian decision makers into what Sagan calls a commitment trap, whereby India “feels forced to follow through in order to maintain deterrence because of past assertions.”<sup>213</sup> Rajagopalan also notes concern, because it is not very credible to threaten massive retaliation under all circumstances involving weapons of mass destruction, especially if their use is limited, for it forces the party making the threats to act on them or risk a loss to credibility. This is because, “unless you carry out your threats, threats on which your deterrence depends might not be very credible in the

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<sup>210</sup> Vinod Anand, “Contours of Pakistan’s nuclear doctrine,” *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (June 2000): 624.

<sup>211</sup> Mistry, “Complexity of Deterrence among New Nuclear States,” in *Complex Deterrence*, eds. T.V. Paul et al: 194.

<sup>212</sup> Rajagopalan, “India’s Nuclear Policy,” in *Major Powers’ Nuclear Policies and International Order in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*:101.

<sup>213</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 87.

future,” thereby signalling a lack of resolve and inviting an attack (and therefore a test of one’s resolve) in the future.<sup>214</sup> Pakistan too has a doctrine of massive retaliation to nuclear attack and thus falls into the same trap, which it is also subject to due to its TNW strategy. Indeed, “[t]o maintain the credibility of its claims, [Pakistan] may feel bound to use low-yield nuclear weapons against an Indian cross-border incursion that falls well short of threatening Pakistan’s vital interests.”<sup>215</sup>

As a result, putting the Cold Start doctrine and TNW strategy to the test would very likely yield disastrous results. The best that South Asia could hope to see from pitting the strategies against one another is a loss of face for one of the parties. However, since indeed, threats of retaliatory action must remain credible in order for deterrence to work and must be reinforced by both the capability to implement the threat and a firm resolve to do so,<sup>216</sup> outcome loss of face would risk sending a message to the other party that it is able to tolerate aggression (and thereby invites it in the future). A more pessimistic outlook would be horrific destruction and terrible suffering in South Asia: it is thought that any war in South Asia involving nuclear exchange “could kill 20 million people in the first week and put up to 2 billion people at risk of famine globally.”<sup>217</sup> While one might hope that no decision for nuclear war is consciously made, Indian and Pakistan decision-makers are not the only variables in question. Should terrorists based in (or perceived to be supported by) Pakistan strike targets in India much like they did during the Twin Peaks Crisis and the Mumbai 2008 attacks, India may feel compelled to respond. As Fitzpatrick notes, “India’s response to the next terrorist attack may not be as restrained as in 2001 and 2008 [...] There is a strong sense in India today that deterrence

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<sup>214</sup> Rajagopalan, “India’s Nuclear Policy,” in *Major Powers’ Nuclear Policies and International Order in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*: 101-102.

<sup>215</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 87.

<sup>216</sup> Stein, “Rational Deterrence against ‘Irrational’ Adversaries?” in *Complex Deterrence*, eds. T.V. Paul et al: 60.

<sup>217</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 72.

credibility must be restored by responding forcefully to any further attack.”<sup>218</sup> That being said, India may not need to put boots on the ground to respond to a terrorist attack and risk violating Pakistan’s TNW threshold; it is felt that “[t]argeted missile strikes against jihadist headquarters or training camps held responsible for terrorist attacks should not trigger a Pakistani nuclear response.”<sup>219</sup> This of course, depends on the perceptions and the responses of those responsible for decisions regarding the use conventional or nuclear force during a period of crisis. Amid such high tensions, would Pakistani decision-makers merely *trust* (and hope) that an incoming Indian missile is *not* nuclear-tipped or directed against insurgent safe-havens rather than Pakistani cities? As retired Indian Major General Dipankar Banerjee notes, “a doctrine of nuclear ‘first use’ has a number of problems and inherent uncertainties,”<sup>220</sup> one of which is in line with the fear of proliferation pessimists: that the doctrine “may lead to nuclear use by mistake or even in response to an imagined attack, neither of which can always be discerned clearly in the fog of war.”<sup>221</sup>

### **When Gambling with South Asian Stability, there are Wild Cards**

*“We are heading towards the next crisis – it is only a matter of time. While people tend to minimise the potential for a new crisis or rationalise that a future crisis will not escalate into a nuclear exchange based on this history or previous crises, the best analogy is that of ‘Russian roulette’, and at some point there is going to be a bullet in the chamber.” – Bruce Riedel<sup>222</sup>*

*“Relying on nuclear deterrence to produce peace is at best a high-risk strategy.”*  
– John Vasquez<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 49-50.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid: 81.

<sup>220</sup> Major General Dipankar Banerjee (Retd), “Addressing Nuclear Dangers: Confidence Building Between India-China-Pakistan,” *India Review*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (2010): 351.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 65.

<sup>223</sup> Vasquez, “The India-Pakistan conflict in light of general theories of war, rivalry, and deterrence” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 77.

Few observers feel that India and Pakistan would *intentionally* come to blows reminiscent of Kargil or a risky stand-off like Twin Peaks again. Indeed, both parties acknowledge (though downplay) the risk that such a scenario could escalate beyond a crisis and into conventional war if not managed correctly. However, if a crisis of this nature *were* to occur in the future, it would be incredibly problematic for deterrence stability and overall security in South Asia. The two sides have “faced off” repeatedly without coming to *serious* blows since the 1980s: during the Brasstacks Crisis of 1986-1987; the Kashmir Crisis of 1990; the Kargil Conflict of 1999; the Twin Peaks Crisis of 2001-2002; and it was feared that a similar stand-off would occur following the 2008 Mumbai attacks. Indeed in this last instance, when evidence of collusion between perpetrators of the attack and Pakistan’s intelligence services was becoming apparent,

“India opened all the options and highlighted its war alertness to encounter terrorism and concentrated to influence the international community against the Pakistani extremism. Pakistan responded with the same preparedness, the Pakistani military and Political authorities made it clear that they were ready to face war consequence in order to defend their country.”<sup>224</sup>

Repeating these interactions gives India and Pakistan new knowledge of one another and generates expectations of future behaviour based on previous patterns. This allows both parties to plan for such interactions in the future, whether or not they want them to occur.<sup>225</sup> This is particularly troublesome as past crises have taught some in both parties that a lack of sufficient resolve and the decisions to “back down” were the reason for failure to achieve their objectives in these interactions. Indeed, “realpolitik beliefs encourage policymakers to assume that a lack of

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<sup>224</sup> Umbreen Javaid and Marium Kamal, “The Mumbai Terror ‘2008’ and its Impact on the Indo-Pak Relations” *South Asian Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (2013): 35.

<sup>225</sup> Mitzen, “Ontological Security in World Politics”: 359-360.

success was a function of a failure to adequately demonstrate resolve.”<sup>226</sup> By believing that an enemy acknowledges the potential for conventional war and possible nuclear exchange, both sides have actually been *encouraged* to display willingness to escalate during a crisis. During the Kargil crisis, for example, Pakistan’s foreign secretary Shamshad Ahmad proclaimed that Pakistan would “not hesitate to use any weapon in [its] arsenal to defend [its] territorial integrity.”<sup>227</sup> In the Twin Peaks Crisis, “[w]hen Vajpayee declared that India was ready for war, Pakistan responded defiantly with three missile tests,”<sup>228</sup> and President Musharraf declared “if war is thrust upon us, we would respond with full might, and give a befitting reply.”<sup>229</sup> Vajpayee also recalled India’s high commissioner to Pakistan, a step that had not been taken by either side **since war in 1971** – the war which entrenched Pakistan’s great fear of malicious Indian intent.<sup>230</sup> All the while, tests of missiles capable of striking Indian and Pakistani territory were carried out by both sides, respectively, throughout the crisis. Such rhetoric and demonstrations of force may only be means of reinforcing deterrence, but how they are perceived could generate insecurity and a feeling that one side needs to strike the other first in order to gain an advantage if a conflict seems inevitable. Indeed, “threat perception [...] is in the eye of the beholder. It is not necessary for threats to be issued in order for threats to be perceived.”<sup>231</sup> Even when missile tests, for example, have been scheduled prior to a crisis, to carry out the tests amid high tensions certainly does not help crisis stability. A scenario is certainly possible in a time of crisis where a decision-maker or a military officer misperceives such bellicose behaviour as the preparation for (or the

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<sup>226</sup> Leng, “Realpolitik and learning in the India-Pakistan rivalry” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 108-109.

<sup>227</sup> Scott Sagan, “The Perils of Proliferation in South Asia,” in *South Asia in 2020: Future Strategic Balances and Alliances*, ed. Michael R. Chambers (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, 2002): 203.

<sup>228</sup> Leng, “Realpolitik and learning in the India-Pakistan rivalry” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 122.

<sup>229</sup> Chakma, *Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons*: 51.

<sup>230</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 60.

<sup>231</sup> Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*: 222.

opening stages of) an impending armed conflict. Such an impression would increase the value of a pre-emptive war option as a means of limiting the destruction they would otherwise incur.

A finer point must be mentioned here. Since Kargil, some Indian decision-makers have felt that Pakistan's aggressive behaviour is based on "bluff and bluster," and "exaggerating the likelihood of nuclear escalation," and that it would not seriously consider nuclear use.<sup>232</sup> This is problematic, as it may embolden a limited Indian incursion in the future. Furthermore, Pakistani officials consider the possibility of Indian escalation to be very low (though it cannot be said for sure)<sup>233</sup> and this encourages Pakistan's reliance on TNWs as part of its deterrence strategy and its willingness to continue tolerating a certain level terrorist activity against India. The fact that Pakistan feels India is out to destroy it, and the assertion by BJP leaders that "Pakistan is determined to use its nuclear bomb against India ... as long as Pakistan will exist, India will be in danger. Pakistan should, therefore, be wiped off the map [,]"<sup>234</sup> only makes matters worse, that one side may be prompted to attack pre-emptively to ensure its security. Indeed, "perpetual dynamics could cause statesmen to see policies as safe when they actually were very dangerous or, in the final stages of deep conflict, to see war as inevitable and therefore to see striking first as the only way to limit destruction."<sup>235</sup> As Khan writes, though "[d]eception is part of adversarial relationships," such as the one between India and Pakistan,

"misperceptions during crisis can lead to risks of false warnings and possible nuclear exchange. Creating doubts in the minds of the opponent is a deliberate act, and in a hostile environment and during a crisis, confusing the other side could have very dangerous consequences."<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Kapur, "India and Pakistan's Unstable Peace": 147.

<sup>233</sup> Fitzpatrick, "Overcoming Pakistan's Nuclear Dangers": 86.

<sup>234</sup> Das, "Revisiting (In)-Security as the Cultural Production of Danger": 46.

<sup>235</sup> Robert Jervis, "War and Misperception," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (1988): 675.

<sup>236</sup> Khan, "Pakistan's Nuclear Future" in *South Asia in 2020*, ed. Michael Chambers: 177.

Crises are exacerbated by the fact that even actors representing the state, but outside of the government *proper* (namely, military officials) can act on their own. In Pakistan, the command and control of its nuclear assets is problematic:

“if control of the nuclear weapons is too loose [delegated], deterrence can ‘fail deadly’ triggering unauthorized or accidental launch, but if control is too tight [centralized], deterrence can ‘fail impotent’ when a first strike against the nuclear command leadership eliminates any chance of retaliation.”<sup>237</sup>

In the face of what it believes to be a hostile rival, Pakistan feels that the better option to ensure its survival and strengthen its deterrent capacity is to delegate the authority for a nuclear launch to more dispersed field commanders. Yet this still leaves TNWs vulnerable to use by “disaffected or radicalized officers.” The dispersal of these units, furthermore, raises the probability that accidents, tampering, or un-authorized use could occur.<sup>238</sup> Especially in a time of crisis, such a field commander could feel threatened enough (even if objectively no real threat is present) to use such weaponry, feeling that by striking against the Indian “danger,” he is preserving and guaranteeing “the optimal survival of the community of people who,” he feels may be endangered.<sup>239</sup> Indeed, “a heightened level of fear and threat motivates people to take some kind of action – any action [,]”<sup>240</sup> and such fears have been entrenched over time in a society that views Indian ambitions in a pessimistic light (as a threat not only to Pakistan, but perhaps to Islam as well).

Not only Pakistani officials enable the possibility of unauthorized escalation. During the Twin Peaks Crisis, for example, “Indian Lieutenant General Vij [...] exceeded his orders with provocative armor movements along the border. The risk created by [Vij] bears some

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<sup>237</sup> Chakma, *Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons*: 73-74.

<sup>238</sup> Joshi, *Pakistan’s Tactical Nuclear Nightmare*: 166.

<sup>239</sup> Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity*: 57.

<sup>240</sup> Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation*: 31.

resemblance to when the United States and the Soviet Union were brought to the brink of war in the Cuban missile crisis.”<sup>241</sup> Indeed, some military officers may be overly ambitious, believing that the balance of force is in their favour and that an opportunity exists for a quick victory. Military officers in general may see war as highly likely and may be willing to take offensive actions in order to force “adversaries to react to their favored strategies.”<sup>242</sup> This is problematic especially in Pakistan, where the military holds more authority than the civilian leadership.

The fact that neither India nor Pakistan have instituted a Personnel Reliability Program to psychologically screen those entering its military (for mental health issues, for example) leaves open the risk “that an unstable civilian or military officer would be involved in critical nuclear weapons or command and control duties.”<sup>243</sup> In the past, for example, the qualifications for holding nuclear responsibilities in Pakistan were rather low. In this case, officers potentially responsible for nuclear use were “reviewed and approved for duty if they are not suspected of being Indian agents by the Inter Services Intelligence agency.”<sup>244</sup> While this may not be the case any longer and recent recruits have been more thoroughly vetted, the possibility that a subversive, extremist, or mentally unstable officer has “slipped through the cracks” and now has access to nuclear assets is a troubling thought. Yet many outside observers do not worry about a fragile command and control system for either India or Pakistan, and view the possibility that a lone military officer would make decisions beyond his authority during a crisis as an incredibly slim one. The true worry for observers is that breaching the threshold of limited conflict and crossing of “red lines” warranting retaliation will lead to an uncontrollable escalatory spiral in a

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<sup>241</sup> Leng, “Realpolitik and learning in the India-Pakistan rivalry” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 123.

<sup>242</sup> Sagan, “The Perils of Proliferation”: 76.

<sup>243</sup> Sagan, “The Perils of Proliferation in South Asia” in *South Asia in 2020*, ed. Michael Chambers: 214.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid*: 217.

time of crisis. Such possible mistakes can only be mitigated through extensive communication and increased trust between India and Pakistan.

Neither India nor Pakistan want a crisis to occur going forward; indeed, Prime Minister Modi seems willing to reach out to his counterpart Sharif and establish better relations between the two neighbours. But a wildcard is found in the South Asian deck in the form of non-state actors, namely, anti-Indian terrorist groups which India believes are supported by the Pakistani security apparatus. Certainly, “there is a tendency among the Indian political leaders to blame Pakistan for every terrorist strike in the country [.]”<sup>245</sup> A crisis could certainly recur, caused by non-state actors seeking to keep Kashmir at the forefront of Indo-Pakistani relations or simply in order to damage prospects for peace between the two. Indeed, Islamist forces that have long enjoyed Pakistan’s unofficial backing often conduct operations without its authority and sometimes contrary to its interests. In the past, when national leaders sought more normal relations, “high profile, mass-casualty attacks happen to short-circuit diplomatic progress.”<sup>246</sup> For the perpetrators, the goal of the Mumbai attacks was likely to trigger a conventional war between the two parties.<sup>247</sup> In fact, non-state actors are well-aware of the escalatory potential in the Indo-Pakistani conflict (including its nuclear element): one Pakistani terrorist leader said “it would be ‘no problem’ if fighting over Kashmir led to nuclear war between Pakistan and India.”<sup>248</sup> Though this did not occur, it did achieve the more limited objective of setting back Indo-Pakistani relations, for the “major casualty was the peace process that both sides had been

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<sup>245</sup> Paul, “Causes of the India-Pakistan enduring rivalry” in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 17.

<sup>246</sup> Krepon and Cohn, eds. *Crises in South Asia*: 3.

<sup>247</sup> Javaid and Kamal, “The Mumbai Terror ‘2008’ and its Impact on the Indo-Pak Relations”: 35.

<sup>248</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 111.

claiming for quite some time that it was about to furnish a historic resolution of all outstanding disputes between the two rivals.”<sup>249</sup>

Without significant effort by Pakistani officials to clamp down on these non-state actors, these attacks will continue in the future. India alone cannot deter terrorist groups: “[i]f adversaries are not rational, deterrence is impossible. Indeed, if adversaries are not rational, then no strategy is possible and leaders are left with no choice but to resort to force when they are threatened.”<sup>250</sup> But even this is not likely to deter non-state actors – in fact, it might embolden them. If non-state actors are willing to lose their lives, anything short of removing them from the equation will not stop them, because “[d]eterrence is impossible against those informed by a culture that considers death a lesser cost than dishonour.”<sup>251</sup> Furthermore, retaliation by India is *exactly* what these non-state actors seek, and so it is difficult to deter those who “hope for a coercive response, so that the conflict escalates and people [whether in Pakistan or Kashmir] turn against the perpetrators of violence.”<sup>252</sup> As Stein notes,

“the purpose of low-intensity warfare is to force the enemy to escalate so that the weaker ‘wins’ a political victory [... It] inflicts serious damage on far more expensive military assets and on civilians and domestic infrastructure, which in turn provokes widespread anger and frustration. When leaders resort to escalation because they cannot be seen by their publics to do nothing and because they fear that their deterrent reputation will be weakened, insurgents waging asymmetric warfare achieve their political objectives and are emboldened.”<sup>253</sup>

Due to a past history of Pakistani support (or at least, tolerance) of terrorist activity emanating from its soil and directed against India, India will remain suspicious of possible links between Pakistan’s security apparatus and terrorist networks until Pakistan is seen to take

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<sup>249</sup> Ahmed, “India-Pakistan Relations Post-Mumbai Terrorist Attacks”: 1.

<sup>250</sup> Stein, “Rational Deterrence against ‘Irrational’ Adversaries?” in *Complex Deterrence*, eds. T.V. Paul et al: 58.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid: 76.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid: 75.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid: 75-76.

concrete action against them. In an effort to hasten normalization of Indo-Pakistani relations, perhaps Sharif could take more aggressive action against non-state actors and communicate to Modi that he is doing so. The Pakistani military, for one, is increasingly acknowledging the threats that emanate from non-state actors – at least as far as Pakistani security goes.<sup>254</sup> Whether Pakistan takes seriously the threat that extremism poses *to India* and Indo-Pakistani relations, however, is another matter. Until it does take such a threat seriously, however, as noted elsewhere, India may be emboldened to act against those threatening its people and territory, thus prompting a crisis. Such a crisis will test the deterrence postures of one party or the other. Someone is going to lose face; otherwise both parties will lose much more than that.

As Stephen Philip Cohen has noted, “previous crises between India and Pakistan have been managed, not resolved.”<sup>255</sup> These crises ended only due to restrained decision-making, which itself was the result either of a lucky break which allowed certain strategic gains (India having retaken Kargil, for example), or international intervention (the U.S. pressuring Pakistan to withdraw from Kargil or to cease its support of terrorists during the Twin-Peaks Crisis and in the aftermath of the 2008 Mumbai attacks). In the future however, South Asia may not be so lucky. As U.S. strategic interests in South Asia change from supporting Pakistan to balance against the USSR to allying with India to balance against China, U.S. credibility to act as a mediator and pressure Pakistan in the future has suffered. Furthermore, a civilian nuclear energy deal between India and the U.S. is viewed with contempt in Pakistan, generating distrust of American authorities in the region. This is all of course against a backdrop of U.S. activities within Pakistan itself which undermine Pakistani government authority: where drone strikes have killed many innocent civilians and in some cases military officers; and activities by the American

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<sup>254</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 108.

<sup>255</sup> Krepon and Cohn, eds. *Crises in South Asia*: 24.

military (notably, the May 2011 raid which saw Osama bin Laden killed) have violated its sovereignty. Relations between the U.S. and Pakistan have certainly been better. On the other hand, India's Modi has diplomatically clashed with the U.S. in the past, and may not be willing to accept any mediation that undercuts its sovereignty and nuclear deterrence. Another crisis will occur at some point in time, for "another terrorist attack against India is widely seen as a matter of when, not if."<sup>256</sup> When such an attack spawns "the next crisis, US diplomacy may fail to prevent nuclear first use by Pakistan and/or nuclear retaliation by India."<sup>257</sup> At this point, to refer to Bruce Riedel's quote above, the South Asian game of "Russian Roulette" may finally reach a point where the gun's chamber is loaded with a bullet. The gun's safety may be off.

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<sup>256</sup> Fitzpatrick, "Overcoming Pakistan's Nuclear Dangers": 49.

<sup>257</sup> Lewis et al, *Too Close for Comfort*: 19.

### **Conclusion: How Valid is Proliferation Optimism in South Asia?**

In this paper, I have sought to demonstrate the fragility of nuclear deterrence in South Asia. Proliferation optimists argue that, in line with rational deterrence theory, the acquisition of nuclear weapons by historic rivals increases regional stability by forcing both parties to work together on a basis of trust and conflict management. Proliferation pessimists, however, argue that owing to miscalculation or misperception, conventional war can occur between nuclear rivals, generating a risk that it could escalate into nuclear exchange. Indeed, the key component of rational deterrence theory is that *all parties involved are rational*. This is not necessarily the case. While it is traditionally assumed that all states behave in a rational manner and pursue their interests through cost-benefit calculation, this is only “an assumption, not an empirically tested insight.”<sup>258</sup> Furthermore, even where some government officials are rational, it may not be the case that their sub-units (namely, the military, with the power to act on its own should it desire to do so) are equally so; the problem is compounded by the fact that not all actors see rationality the same way. Emotions of fear and pride, a connection nationalism or religion, and memories of a bitter historic rivalry are all factors which can influence one’s sense of what is “rational” and encourage suboptimal decision-making.

Adding to the complexity of deterrence is the fact that non-state actors which operate in Pakistan *cannot* be deterred, and the Pakistani government has yet to take serious action against those which could attack India in the future and prompt a crisis. India and Pakistan’s conventional and nuclear doctrines, furthermore, are problematic as they force both sides to guess at thresholds under the stability/instability paradox in the hope that low-intensity warfare does not trigger escalation into conventional war or worse yet, nuclear exchange. While India

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<sup>258</sup> Sagan, “The Perils of Proliferation”: 71

and Pakistan are both sufficiently rational to acknowledge the catastrophic consequences of such a war, they downplay its possibility – despite their adherence to doctrines which set a “trip-wire” that enables a possibility in the first place. These doctrines are exacerbated by a historic rivalry between India and Pakistan, which has generated a sense of distrust and potentially damaging expectations of crisis behaviour. Past crises were eased due to a combination of luck and international intervention; in the future, South Asia may not be so lucky.

But there is still hope. The election of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the attendance of his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif at his inauguration was symbolically significant. Perhaps relations between the two parties could proceed towards normalization. Sharif was able to negotiate the landmark Lahore Declaration in 1999 with India’s Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Atal Vajpayee; who is to say such rapprochement could not happen again? To some degree, India and Pakistan have established certain confidence building measures to avoid accidental conventional or nuclear war: in 2005, they agreed to provide advanced notice of ballistic missile tests, and in 2007 they agreed to inform one another of potential nuclear accidents.<sup>259</sup> South Asian stability is further helped through communication between India and Pakistan, and “[u]nofficial discussions between retired senior officials have helped clear up misperceptions and misinterpretations” that have plagued their relationship.<sup>260</sup> An example of such contact is the Ottawa Dialogue, which brings together distinguished academics as well as former high-ranking Indian and Pakistani political and military officials to discuss matters pertaining to nuclear conflict reduction and regional stability in an unofficial capacity. In this environment “insulated from the political climate”<sup>261</sup> both sides are able to

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<sup>259</sup> Mistry, Complexity of Deterrence among New Nuclear States,” in *Complex Deterrence*, eds. T.V. Paul et al: 191.

<sup>260</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 66.

<sup>261</sup> University of Ottawa, “University of Ottawa leads discussions on India and Pakistan nuclear relations” (27 June 2010)

develop a more objective understanding of issues affecting regional stability. These retired officials can then privately relay valuable lessons to their respective strategic community (and any government contacts they may have), and push for new or updated confidence-building measures to reduce tensions and the prospects of inadvertent nuclear use.<sup>262</sup> Maintaining lines of communication and refraining from weapons testing during a time of crisis, for example, go a long way to reducing the likelihood of conflict. Sustaining such positive contact through the Ottawa Dialogue may enable Pakistani leaders to fully understand India's "China woes," which could in turn encourage it to reduce the reliance on TNWs and allow both sides to explore arms control options, further strengthening regional stability.

There have also been indications that India and Pakistan "can and have learned how to manage some of these militarized conflicts along the LOC, as well as terrorist incidents."<sup>263</sup> But as Vasquez notes, though there is cause for optimism, efforts at crisis management and normalized relations "still have a long way to go before they reach the level of crisis management and preventive diplomacy achieved by Kennedy and Khrushchev after the Cuban missile crisis."<sup>264</sup> Should economic ties between India and Pakistan get stronger over the coming years as Fitzpatrick optimistically observes, trust can be established between the two countries (despite long-standing animosity), communication will only get stronger, and the likelihood of crises spiralling out of control will decrease substantially. Perhaps, as he argues, "[r]egularising cross-border trade and investment is the most promising path for long-term peaceful

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<http://socialsciences.uottawa.ca/dialogue/eng/documents/OttawaDialogue-finalpressrelease.pdf> (20 July 2014)

<sup>262</sup> Ernie Regehr, "The Mumbai attacks, South Asia's nuclear confrontation, and the 'Ottawa Dialogue'" (15 July 2011)

<http://disarmingconflict.ca/2011/07/15/the-mumbai-attacks-south-asia%E2%80%99s-nuclear-confrontation-and-the-ottawa-dialogue/> (20 July 2014)

<sup>263</sup> Vasquez, "The India-Pakistan conflict in light of general theories of war, rivalry, and deterrence" in *An Enduring Rivalry*, ed. T.V. Paul: 76.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid*: 76.

relations.”<sup>265</sup> This is the best-case scenario. India and Pakistan need to take steps to normalize relations and communicate with each other in a more trusting fashion. Both parties must acknowledge that nuclear exchange is a very real and dangerous possibility in South Asia, and as such must move away from “nuclear saber-rattling” so prevalent in past crises. Both India and Pakistan need to take steps to dismantle the prevalent “us versus them” mentality that pits two neighbours against one another, and instead find an “us and them” where cooperation is actually possible. A failure to build trust between the Indian and Pakistani societies *and* governments will only ensure that crises in the future invite catastrophe.

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<sup>265</sup> Fitzpatrick, “Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers”: 66.

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