

Nuclear Doctrines in South Asia

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Acronyms

CBMs	Confidence Building Measures
DND	Draft Nuclear Doctrine
FMCT	Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty
LoC	Line of Control
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCA	National Command Authority
NEST	Nuclear Emergency Support Team
NFU	No First Use
NMD	National Missile Defence
PRP	Personnel Reliability Programme

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Abstract

Military doctrines play a critical role in decisions by states to use force in support of their policy objectives. This paper examines the structure and character of the doctrinal beliefs of India and Pakistan regarding the role of nuclear weapons in their respective security strategies. It argues that despite their asymmetrical nuclear postures, India and Pakistan have sought to stabilize their nuclear equation by pursuing the path of nuclear risk reduction and war avoidance. New Delhi's advocacy of no nuclear first use against Pakistan will not be a credible confidence building measure unless accompanied by efforts to address the issue of conventional military imbalance between the two nuclear adversaries.

Introduction

South Asia's passage to overt nuclearization in May 1998 and the occurrence of the successive events of the Kargil war of 1999 and the May-June 2002 military stand-off between the two nuclear armed adversaries has evoked a great debate among scholars and policy makers about the dynamics, underlying causes and consequences of more states going nuclear. Drawing upon Kenneth Waltz's famous dictum "more may be better" deterrence optimists have put forth the nuclear peace thesis, which states that nuclear weapons by making war catastrophically costly generate incentives for war avoidance between nuclear rivals and therefore create stability between them. Questioning the analytical and historical validity of nuclear peace thesis, deterrence pessimists, on the other hand, have argued

that most new nuclear states will not be able to fulfil the basic functional requirements for deterrence stability as they will be prone to fighting preventive wars, willing to yield to preemptive war pressures, build vulnerable second-strike forces, and construct nuclear weapons that are prone to accidental or unauthorized use. While highlighting both stabilizing and destabilizing consequences of horizontal proliferation, the academic debate¹ between nuclear optimists and

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nuclear pessimists, however, has tended to neglect the critical role that nuclear doctrines of the emerging nuclear weapon states might play in either causing deterrence failure or ensuring its robustness.² Because doctrine “consists of plans about how and when military force is to be used”³ its study can not only tell us how doctrine and organizational routines form a causal chain contributing to war but also draw attention to those mechanisms, steps and processes the adoption of which can reinforce deterrence stability and reduce the dangers of inadvertent escalation.

This paper attempts to examine the key elements of the Indian and Pakistani approaches towards toward nuclear weapons, the roles in their security doctrines and the dilemmas posed by “nuclear use” issues. The discussion is divided into two broad sections. The first section provides an account of the different factors that impact on the formulation of doctrines and the various functions performed by them. The second section focuses on the salient features of the evolving Indian and Pakistani nuclear doctrines with special reference to

nuclear use issues. It also notes the implications of the evolving Indian and Pakistani security doctrines for deterrence stability issues between the two nuclear rivals in the context of multiple paradoxes⁴ spawned by South Asia’s nuclearization.

Section I

Doctrine refers to a set of principles that a country employs to conduct its security strategy in pursuit of its national objectives. Its essential task is to “translate power into policy” by defining “what objectives are worth contending for and determine the degree of force appropriate for achieving them.”⁵ The sources of military doctrines are diverse. These range from such topical considerations as “current policy, available resources, current strategy, current campaign concepts, current doctrine, current threats, and fielded and emerging technology” to more enduring influences stemming from “lessons learned from history, the strategic culture of the nation and the individual

¹ The debate between deterrence optimists and deterrence pessimists suffers from other problems as well. First, having been framed as a contest between rival theories, it lacks a policy focus. As remarked by Jeffrey F. Knopf “Ascertaining which theory is stronger, however, does not necessarily lead directly to sound policy advice.” Second, by focusing almost exclusively on the question whether nuclear proliferation will encourage or discourage the use of force, this debate has tended to ignore the “economic, environmental, psychological, and domestic political implications of obtaining a nuclear arsenal.” Jeffrey F. Knopf, “Recasting the proliferation Optimism-Pessimism Debate,” *Security Studies* 12, no. 1 (Autumn 2002), p. 42

² Scott D. Sagan is an outstanding exception to this general scholarly neglect of the critical role played by doctrinal beliefs in determining deterrence stability. See Scott D. Sagan, “The Origins of Military Doctrine and Command and Control Systems,” in Peter R. Lavoy, Scott D. Sagan, and James Wirtz, eds, *Planning the Unthinkable: How New Powers Will Use Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), pp. 16-46.

³ Scott D. Sagan, “The Origins of Military Doctrine and Command and Control Systems,” *op.cit.* p.17

⁴ Analysts of South Asian security have drawn attention to at least three such paradoxes: the instability/stability paradox, the vulnerability/invulnerability paradox and the independence/dependence paradox. Simply put, the instability/stability paradox states that by precluding general war, the destructiveness of nuclear weapons seems to open the door to limited conflicts.

The vulnerability/invulnerability paradox refers to the increased risks of unauthorized use, accidents and theft of nuclear assets that arise from attempts to secure them against preemptive strikes. The dependence/independence paradox refers to the inability of the feuding nuclear rivals to effectively manage situations of crisis without the involvement of the third parties. For an excellent discussion of the dilemmas posed by each of these three paradoxes see Michael Krepon, “The Stability-Instability Paradox: Misperceptions and Escalation Control in South Asia,” *Stimson Centre Report* (Washington, D.C.: Henry L. Stimson, May 2003), Scott D. Sagan, “Perils of proliferation” *Asian Survey* (November 2001), Feroz Hassan Khan, “the Independence-Dependence Paradox: Stability Dilemmas in South Asia,” *Arms Control Today* (October 2003).

⁵ Henry Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), pp.7-8.

service, geography and demographics, and the type of government.”⁶

Scott Sagan has identified three different approaches to understanding why specific military doctrines are chosen by states. These relate to organizational processes and interests of security establishments of states, their responses to security dilemmas generated by conditions of anarchy in the international system and vagaries of domestic politics and strategic cultures.⁷

According to organization theory military doctrine reflects the interests of military organizations and their routines. These interests are parochial in nature and involve efforts to protect their “own organizational strength, autonomy, and prestige.”⁸ Because of these compulsions, organization theory predicts that militaries tend to “hold strong preferences in favor of offensive doctrines, preventive war, and decisive military options” and are inclined to “support counterforce targeting doctrines” and to be averse to building secure second-strike forces on their own volition.⁹

In marked contrast to these claims of organization theory, the realist approach posits the overriding influence of the logic of “self-help” in an anarchical international system as the key determinant of military doctrines. As rational actors, states, according to the realist theory, are “aware of their external environment and they think strategically about how to survive in it.”¹⁰ The survival imperative in a world of constant security competition forces them “to lie, cheat, and use brute force if it helps

them gain advantage over their rivals.”¹¹ War is the main strategy states employ to acquire relative power. Other strategies include: blackmail, “bait and bleed”, balancing, buck-passing, appeasement and band-wagoning.¹² For realists, military doctrine, like war, is nothing but an extension of policy by other means. Its principal aim is to safeguard the national security interests of a country based on its position in the international system and with a focus on the military power of its rivals.

According to the strategic culture¹³ theory, the third perspective on sources of military doctrines, doctrinal choices made by states, are heavily influenced by such factors as historical experiences, myths, religious beliefs and cultural norms. The key assumption behind the strategic culture theory is that cross-cultural differences not only reflect differences in specific policy issues, but also often reflect more fundamental differences concerning motivations, events and their specific contexts that result from different philosophical, ethical or cultural traditions. Strategic cultural influences have an internal as well as an external dimension. Internally, recent experiences of war, the particular social weight and role of armed forces can both shape security policies themselves and the influence of other actors on security policy-making. Externally, such factors as the existence of a regional affinity community that shapes perceptions of living in a basically hostile or friendly world, or images of potential enemies and threats,

⁶ James J. Tritton, “Naval Perspectives for Military Doctrine Development,” (Unpublished Paper, 1996), pp. 21-22.

⁷ Scott D. Sagan, “The Origins of Military Doctrine and Command and Control Systems,” *op.cit.* pp. 16-46.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁰ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton and Company, 2001), p. 31.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 138-9.

¹³ Alastair Johnston has defined strategic culture as: “an integrated system of symbols (e.g., argumentation structures, languages, analogies, metaphors) which acts to establish pervasive and long-lasting strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficiency of military forces in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and efficacious.” Alastair Johnston, “Thinking about Strategic Culture”, *International Security*, vol. 19, no. 4 (Spring 1995), p. 46.

ethnocentric influences (crude enemy images, polarized disputes, posture of superiority, insensitivity to the impact of one's actions) can critically affect the way a state chooses to pursue its security.¹⁴

The doctrinal choices made by a state in the realm of security and the evolution of its doctrinal beliefs not only reflect organizational interests of the military within that state but also represent efforts to cope with security challenges stemming from the anarchical nature of the international system. This pursuit of security is critically shaped by the security culture of the state which defines the "range of appropriate or acceptable behaviors; provides a corpus of widely shared but often tacit social conventions regarding approaches to security building; generates a set of inter-subjective constraints which limit consideration of alternative behaviors to less than the range of possible options; establishes norms of diplomacy and statecraft; and defines problems and their solutions in ways that might seem irrational, counter-productive or simply cynical to observers from other societies."¹⁵

As a complex phenomenon embedded in competing dynamics of military organizations, structures of security dilemmas and pervasive influence of security cultures, military doctrine performs several critical functions. These include the following:

- It spells out the rationale for a country's security objectives and policies.
- It clarifies the circumstances under which a country will go to war.
- It spells out parameters for employment of use of force.
- Removes ambiguities from strategic planning and thinking.

¹⁴ Keith R. Krause, ed. *Culture and Security: Multilateralism, Arms Control and Security Building* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), pp. 17-18.

¹⁵ Andrew Latham, "Constructing National Security: Culture and Identity in Indian Arms Control and Disarmament Practice," in *Ibid*, pp. 131-132.

- Its articulation creates possibilities for self-correction through scrutiny and critique.
- Offers guidelines for force structures.

Section II

On 11 and 13 May 1998, India conducted five nuclear tests codenamed "Shakti" which heralded its arrival as the sixth nuclear weapon state.¹⁶ The Indian nuclear tests created a great sense of alarm in Pakistan. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan described the Indian nuclear tests as a "death blow to the global efforts at nuclear non-proliferation" and called upon the international community to issue a strong condemnation.¹⁷ An intense public debate on the appropriate Pakistani response to Indian nuclear tests followed. A small group of pacifists urged Islamabad to claim the high moral ground by renouncing the nuclear option, while a vast majority of Pakistanis called upon the government to "continue its policy of nuclear ambiguity by holding back on nuclear testing."¹⁸ Those advocating restraint pointed to Pakistan's precarious economic position and warned that country's troubled economy would not be able to withstand the burden of economic sanctions that would ensue in the post-explosion period.¹⁹

¹⁶ According to official Indian statements, these tests ranged from sub kiloton devices to 43-kiloton thermonuclear devices. The purpose of these tests was to generate additional data for improved computer simulation for design and for attaining the capability to carry out some critical experiment if necessary. For text of these statements see *The News* (International) 12 and 14 May 1998.

¹⁷ *The News*, 13 May 1998.

¹⁸ Hasan-Askari-Rizvi, "Pakistan's nuclear testing," *Asian Survey* (November-December 2001), p. 951.

¹⁹ Representing this line of argument, Pakistan's former Foreign Minister, Abdul Sattar wrote: "Pakistan, with reserve of only a little above on billion dollars, heavy repayment obligations on a huge debt mountain and an economy teetering on the brink, is hardly in a position to emulate India's dare-devil posture. Living on thin margin, it has to weigh its options with much greater care and calculation."

Under pressure from the pro-bomb lobby for a tit-for-tat Pakistani response to the Indian nuclear tests, the government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif stated that “as being a sovereign state Pakistan has every right to undertake measures for national defence and security.”²⁰ The top brass of the Pakistan military including Chief of Army Staff, General Jehangir Karmat, at least initially, seemed supportive of the Nawaz government’s decision to keep the testing option open.²¹ However, belligerent statements by Indian leaders which warned Islamabad to roll back its anti-India policy and vacate Pakistan-administered Kashmir not only aggravated Pakistani threat perceptions but convinced Islamabad that the Shakti tests had decisively tilted the strategic balance in India’s favor.²² And this change in strategic balance could only be rectified by a matching Pakistani response. Amid escalating tensions along the Line of Control (LoC), General Jehangir Karamat, the Army Chief, visited forward Pakistani positions in Kashmir on 23 May and 25 May 1998. He came back with the “strong

impression that the troops and officers were shaken by India’s post-test posture.”²³

To review Pakistan’s security options in the wake of the Indian nuclear tests, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif convened a meeting the Defence Committee of the Cabinet. Joining strident calls for an immediate tit-for-tit response by the small but powerful pro-bomb lobby in Pakistan, Leader of Opposition, Benazir Bhutto called upon the Nawaz Government to “immediately respond to the Indian test.” Two weeks later on 28 May and 30 May, Pakistan matched Indian action by conducting five nuclear tests in the Chagai Hill range in the province of Baluchistan.

Pakistan’s relations with India suffered a marked decline after the May 1998 nuclear tests. The escalation in India-Pakistan verbal hostility coupled with intensive firing by both sides along the volatile LoC in Kashmir generated considerable international concern. On 3 August 1998 Washington reportedly sent “urgent messages” to Islamabad and New Delhi asking them to “refrain from proactive actions and rhetoric”, to “resume the senior level dialogue as soon as possible” and, to “approach the problem imaginatively and constructively.”²⁴

Motivated partly by their shared interest to avoid risks of inadvertent escalation inherent in the prevailing explosive situation along the LoC and partly by the need to play to the international gallery, both New Delhi and Islamabad expressed their willingness to resume the stalled India-Pakistan talks. The joint statement issued after the Nawaz-Vajpayee meeting in New York on 24 September said: “they reaffirmed their common belief that an environment of durable peace and security was in the

Abdul Sattar, “Reestablishing nuclear deterrence,” *The Nation*, 16 May 1998.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s reluctance to commit himself decisively in favor of Pakistan conducting nuclear tests is reflected in the following statement he made immediately after the Indian tests. He said: “We are undertaking a re-evaluation of the applicability and relevance of the global non-proliferation regimes to nuclearized South Asia. We are ready to engage in a constructive dialogue with other countries, especially major powers, on ways and means to promoting these goals, in the new circumstances.” Quoted in Shahid-ur-Rehman, *Long Road to Chagai* (Islamabad: Print Wise Publication, 1999), p. 115.

²² Mr. S. Singhal, head of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad party declared that a “war would be a better step to teach Pakistan a lesson.” “A War is needed to teach Pakistan a lesson: Singhal” *Asian Age* 24 May 1998. Similarly Home Minister of India, Mr. K. L. Advani stated on May 19, 1998 that “Islamabad should realize the change in the geo-strategic situation in the region and the world and roll back its anti-Indian policy, especially with regard to Kashmir. India’s bold and decisive step to become a nuclear weapon state has brought about a qualitatively new stage in Indo-Pakistan relations, particularly in finding a solution to the Kashmir Problem.” See *The News* 20 May 1998.

²³ Hasan Askari-Rizvi, “Pakistan’s nuclear testing,” *op.cit.*, pp. 952-3.

²⁴ Shaheen Sehbai, “Washington concerned over LoC fighting,” *Dawn* 4 August 1998.

supreme interest of both India and Pakistan and of the region as a whole.²⁵

In October 1998, India and Pakistan resumed Foreign Secretary level talks, which paved the way for a summit meeting between Prime Ministers of the two countries, which was held in Lahore on 20-21 February 1999. The Vajpayee-Sharif summit resulted in three agreements: the joint statement, the Lahore Declaration and the Memorandum of Understanding. The MoU dealt with nuclear issues and committed both sides to adopt a wide-range of confidence-building measures aimed at avoidance and prevention of conflict. The hopes of better India-Pakistan relations generated by the Lahore Summit were dashed by the May-July 1999 Kargil crisis, which brought the two countries to the brink of war with each other. Angered by Pakistan's military incursion, which endangered its vital supply routes to Leh and the Siachin, New Delhi threatened to impose a war on Pakistan in order to restore the status quo. India also effectively mobilized world opinion against Pakistan.

Caving in to mounting international pressure for withdrawal, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif made a dash to Washington on 4 July and signed a joint statement with President Clinton, which called for the restoration of the "sanctity" of Line of Control in accordance with the Simla Agreement.²⁶ Riding the wave of world sympathy unleashed by the Kargil episode, Indian adopted an uncompromising attitude toward Pakistan. In August 1999, India shot-down a Pakistan navy aircraft "Atlantique", killing all nineteen people on board after the ill-fated plane went astray during a training flight in Baluchistan.²⁷ Shunning Pakistani and international calls for the resumption of

India-Pakistan "dialogue", New Delhi declared that it would not talk to Islamabad unless the latter committed itself to severing its links with the Kashmiri militants and ending its alleged support for "cross-border" terrorism" in Indian-held Kashmir.²⁸ Pakistan's retreat from democracy after the 12 October 1999 military coup in Pakistan intensified Islamabad's regional and international isolation, as the world did not approve of this development.

The advent of the Republicans led by George W. Bush to power in 2001 intensified the Clinton opening to India.²⁹ Taking a "less absolutist" view of New Delhi's nuclear aspirations, the Republican Party platform described India as "one of the great democracies of the twenty-first century" and raised expectations that the Bush Administration would be "more sensitive to Indian security concerns, and

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ In her influential article "Promoting National Interest," Condoleezza Rice, stressed the need for maintaining close cooperation with India. She argued that the United States "should pay closer attention to India's role in the regional balance. There is a strong tendency conceptually to connect India with Pakistan and to think only of Kashmir or the nuclear competition between the two states. But India is an element in China's calculation, and it should be in America's, too. India is not a great power yet, but it has the potential to emerge as one." Condoleezza Rice, "Promoting National Interest", *Foreign Affairs* January/February 2000, p. 56. Echoing Ms. Rice's characterization of India as a rising great power which the United States must take seriously, Robert B. Zoellick, wrote: "India, the world's largest democracy and before long its most populous nation, will play an increasingly important role in Asia. To grow and prosper, it will need to adjust to the global economy. To contribute to its prosperity and regional security, India will need to lower the risk of conflict with its neighbors. And to have influence with India, America must stop ignoring it. A more open India, possessing a broader understanding of its place in the world, could become a valuable partner of the United States in coping with the Eurasia's uncertainties. In addition to proposing trade and investment liberalization, the United States should open a regular, high-level security dialogue with India on Eurasia and the challenges to stability." Robert B. Zoellick, "A Republican Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* January/February 2000, p. 75

²⁵ *The News*. 25 September 1998.

²⁶ Rifaat Hussain, 'Pakistan's relations with Azad Kashmir and the impact on Indo-Pakistani relations', in Henry Rowen and Rafiq Dossani, eds. *Prospects for Peace in South Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 130.

²⁷ Ibid.

more willing to accommodate India's own aspirations to be a great power."³⁰

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 offered New Delhi a golden opportunity to further deepen its security links with Washington. New Delhi promptly endorsed President Bush's declaration of "war on terrorism" and promised full cooperation. In doing so "New Delhi hoped to turn the war on terrorism to its advantage as a lever to end Pakistan's decade-long cover support for the anti-India insurgency in disputed Kashmir."³¹ These Indian hopes were temporarily eclipsed when Pakistan itself joined the US-led global campaign against terrorism and ditched the Taliban. The rejuvenation of Pak-US ties after 9/11 raised fears in New Delhi of yet another American strategic tilt toward Pakistan. These apprehensions, however, turned out to be ill founded.

Following the 13 December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament, which New Delhi blamed on Pakistan-based militant groups, India threatened war. New Delhi initiated a full-scale military mobilization and in May 2002 war between India and Pakistan seemed a distinct possibility. Faced with the nightmare scenario of an India-Pakistan shooting war turning into a nuclear conflagration with devastating consequences for the region and the American anti-terror campaign against Al-Qaida, Washington exerted intense diplomatic pressure on New Delhi and Islamabad asking them to pull back from the precipice. Washington helped

³⁰ Robert M. Hathaway, "The US-India Courtship: From Clinton to Bush," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* vol 25, No. 4 (December 2002), p. 10.

³¹ Dennis Kux, "A Remarkable Turnaround: U.S.-India Relations," *Foreign Service Journal* (October 2002), p. 20.

defuse the crisis by extracting a pledge from Islamabad to permanently end infiltration across the Line of Control.³² As a result of the American diplomatic intercession both countries declared a cease-fire along the LoC in December 2003. Following the January 2004 meeting between President

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Pervez Musharraf and the Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee on the side-lines of the 12th SAARC Summit in Islamabad both countries agreed to resume their stalled bilateral peace process. With the advent of the

Congress-led coalition government headed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, India-Pakistan peace talks under the rubric of composite dialogue covering eight subjects including the thorny issue of Kashmir gained momentum. Following a meeting between India-Pakistan Foreign Secretaries in New Delhi on 29 June 2004 both countries issued a joint statement which emphasized the fact that the "nuclear capabilities of each other" constituted a "factor for stability" and it called for a "regular working level meetings to be held among all the nuclear powers to discuss issues of common concern."³³

³² This pledge was later codified in a joint statement issued in Islamabad on 6 January 2004, following a meeting between President General Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee on the sidelines of the 12th SAARC summit in Islamabad.

³³ Commenting on the significance of the reference in the India-Pakistan joint statement to nuclear weapons as a factor for stability, prominent Indian analyst, C. Raja Mohan observed: "New Delhi and Islamabad should know that the willingness of the rest of the world to accept them as part of the official nuclear club depends on the ability of India and Pakistan to responsibly manage their own nuclear relationship. In their last statement on the subject, the two foreign secretaries reiterated their self-perception as nuclear weapon powers and demanded a dialogue with other nuclear powers. If India and Pakistan want to be taken seriously, they must show results from their nuclear

The resumption of the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus service between divided Kashmir in April 2005 after a hiatus of four decades and the first-ever visit of the leadership of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) from the Indian-held Kashmir to Azad Kashmir and Pakistan in June 2005 have spawned hopes that India and Pakistan are closer than ever to composing their differences over Kashmir.³⁴

talks.” C. Raja Mohan, “Beyond Nuclear Stability: Towards military peace and tranquility on the Indo-Pak border,” *The Indian Express* 14 December 2004.

³¹ Since its resumption in February 2004, India-Pakistan composite dialogue has yielded tangible progress in different areas. Its most concrete results include the commencement of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad Bus Service; the agreement to re-establish the Khokhrapar-Munnabao route by 1 January 2006; initiation of discussion on agreement to reduce Risk of Nuclear Accidents or Unauthorized Use of Nuclear Weapons and Preventing incidents at Sea; conclusion of several nuclear CBMs including the agreement to establish a permanent hotline between their Foreign Secretaries and a decision to conclude an agreement with technical parameters on pre-notification of flight tests of missiles. On 8 September 2004 Foreign Ministers of India and Pakistan met in New Delhi to review the progress of the composite dialogue and issued a 13-point road map for the peace process. The road map covered the following points: Expert level meetings on conventional and nuclear CBMs, inter alia, to discuss a draft agreement on the advance notification of missile tests; Meeting between railway authorities on the Munnabao-Khokharapar rail link; Biannual meeting between Indian Border Security Forces and Pakistan rangers in October 2004; Meeting between narcotics control authorities, including the finalization of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in October/November 2004; Meeting between the Indian Coast Guard and the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency in November 2004 to, inter alia, discuss the MoU for establishing communication link between them; Establishment of a Committee of Experts to consider issues related to trade; On Siachin, the outcome of the August meeting of defence secretaries would be implemented; Joint survey of the boundary pillars in the horizontal segment of the international boundary in the Sir Creek area; Meeting on all issues related to commencement of bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad; Add a new category of tourist visa in the visa regime between the two countries, and to promote group tourism; Set up a mechanism to deal with the issue of civilian prisoners and fishermen, effectively and speedily; Further measures for facilitation of visits to religious shrines, and upkeep of historical sites; Enhanced interaction

and exchanges among the respective Foreign Offices, including study tours of young diplomats/probationers to each other’s country.

Pakistan's Doctrine

At a broader level, Pakistan's strategic doctrine is derivative of the following three system-wide effects of nuclear weapons on interstate relations. First, nuclear weapons provide the nuclear state with an "infrangible guarantee of its independence and physical integrity."³⁵ Second, mutual deterrence among antagonistic nuclear states places a limitation on violence and in turn acts as a brake on total war. Third, by altering the "offense-defence" balance in favor of defence, nuclear weapons have made it possible for weaker states to defend themselves effectively against large powerful countries. These perceived security and deterrence benefits underpin Islamabad's unwilling to commit itself to a policy of no first use. As noted by a leading Pakistani security analyst:

"Being on a weaker military footing as compared to India, Pakistan's nuclear employment doctrine should assert that since she would be fighting for her very survival as an independent nation state in any future war, it couldn't renounce the policy of no first use as India has done in her draft nuclear doctrine. Pakistan, while announcing and emphasizing the deterrent basis of its nuclear employment doctrine must reserve the right of first use of nuclear weapons and this assertion should

be made as part of her nuclear employment doctrine."³⁶

Besides serving as guarantors of its survival, Pakistan's nuclear weapons also perform many other functions. Peter R. Lavoy has divided these roles into two broad categories: military and political. The military uses include the following: as "last-resort weapons to prevent military defeat or loss of territory"; as "deterrent to conventional military attack", as "facilitators of low-intensity conflict." The political utility of Pakistani nuclear weapons stems from their multiple roles as instruments of "nation-building"; as "tools for domestic political and civil-military competition"; and as "tools to internationalize the Kashmir issue."³⁷

³⁶ Air Commodore Tariq Mahmud Ashraf, *A Nuclear Pakistan: The Way Ahead* (Islamabad: Unpublished Manuscript, 2004), p. 38.

³⁷ Peter R. Lavoy, "Pakistan's Nuclear Doctrine," in Rafiq Dossani and Henry S. Rowen, *Prospects for Peace in South Asia* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2005), pp. 280-300. Lavoy also mentions "the provision of Pakistan's nuclear weapons, materials, and/or technology to foreign governments or non-state movements in exchange for money, military equipment, or other considerations" as another "potential use" of Pakistan's nuclear weapons. This so called "commercial" use of Pakistan's nuclear weapons, despite the A.Q. Khan episode, remains more of an apprehension than a reality. In response to the discovery of the global nuclear commerce network involving A.Q. Khan, Pakistani Parliament passed "Export Control on Goods, Technologies, Material and Equipment related to Nuclear and Biological Weapons and their Delivery Systems Act, 2004" in September 2004. This Act is aimed at strengthening controls on export of sensitive technologies particularly those related to nuclear and

³⁵ Ian Smart, "The Great Engines: The Rise and Decline of a Nuclear Age," *International Affairs* vol. 51 (1975), p. 548.

Despite having possessed a nuclear weapons capability since the early 1980s and having gone overtly nuclear in 1998, Pakistan has kept its nuclear doctrine opaque.³⁸ This opacity is partly attributable to the secretive mindset of the Pakistan military that has

biological weapons and their means of delivery. Its salient features include the following:

- a) Control over export, re-export, transshipment and transit of goods, technologies, material and equipment, including prohibition of diversion of controlled goods and technologies.
- b) Wide jurisdiction (over Pakistanis' visiting or work abroad.
- c) Oversight Board to monitor the implementation of the Act.
- d) Comprehensive control lists and catch all provisions;
- e) Penal provisions: up to 14 years imprisonment and Rs. 5 million fine or both, and on conviction offender's property and assets, wherever they may be, shall be forfeited to the Federal Government.

³⁸ President General Pervez Musharraf enunciated Pakistan's policy of credible minimum deterrence in his address to the nation on 28 May 2000. These may be summarized in the following points:

- Pakistan's nuclear tests, after Indian blasts, were to protect its security and sovereignty. Pakistan's nuclear programme is security driven. To maintain security balance, Pakistan had to rely on its own strength and not on others to protect national security. Our own experience would tell us that no outside power could protect us against a belligerent India.
- Pakistan would maintain a minimum credible nuclear deterrent and work for economic development for country's progress.
- Pakistan's nuclear capability was maintained only for deterring aggression. There was no question of compromise on defence capabilities.
- We refuse to enter a nuclear arms race and instead seek stability in the region.
- Pakistan, unlike India, does not have any pretensions to regional or global power status. We are committed to a policy of responsibility and restraint by maintaining a credible minimum nuclear deterrent.
- Pakistan is ready to work on nuclear restraint regime with India. Pakistan has offered India a nuclear restraint regime to avoid accidental nuclear war.
- Pakistan renews its offer of a dialogue for resolving outstanding disputes, particularly for just and equitable solution of Kashmir, which remains a constant source of tension between the two countries. Pakistan's peace offer, however, should not be construed as a sign of weakness. See *The News*, 29 May 2000.

dominated Pakistani politics for more than half of the country's existence and partly a function of the clandestine manner in which Islamabad was constrained to pursue its nuclear and missile programme due to strident American opposition.

But there is a deeper reason that accounts for Pakistan's posture of doctrinal ambiguity. This relates to the role of uncertainty as a factor in India-Pakistan deterrent equation: as a weaker party it is in Pakistan's self-interest to maximize Indian uncertainty about Pakistani perceptions of Indian intentions in a situation of conflict.³⁹ As argued by former Pakistani Foreign Minister, Agha Shahi:

“What would be the moment of last resort would be difficult to precisely define, given the asymmetry in conventional as well as nuclear arms in relation to India and its lack of geographical depth. Whether, a limited war imposed by India would warrant Pakistan's nuclear response would turn on the scale and gravity of the threat to Pakistan's existence. In these circumstances...a policy of ambiguity would appear to be best for Pakistan's security. Spelling out its nuclear doctrine would detract from the imperative of uncertainty about when a nuclear strike is to be resorted to. Not precluding first strike as a last resort would...reinforce maximally credible nuclear deterrence by raising the threshold of Indian calculation of unacceptable nuclear risk.”⁴⁰

Notwithstanding the opacity surrounding it and the difficulties this fog of ambiguity

³⁹ This point is well made by Michael Ryan Kraig who observes that it is “simply not in the Pakistani interest to create a minimal definition of its nuclear option, i.e. to make it a true “weapon of last resort” that is hidden from view.” Michael Ryan Kraig, “The Political and Strategic Imperatives of Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia,” *India Review*, vol.2, no, 1 January 2003, p. 37.

⁴⁰ Agha Shahi, “Command And Control of Nuclear Weapons in South Asia,” *Strategic Issues* (March 2000), p. 56.

poses for scholarly analysis, Pakistan's nuclear doctrine seems to be based on the following claims made by most authoritative sources:

1. Nuclear weapons are viewed as ultimate guarantors of Pakistan's territorial integrity, national independence and sovereignty. By having them Pakistan has gained the assurance of existential deterrence.⁴¹
2. Given the Indo-centric nature of Pakistani threat perceptions (as narrated above), the sole aim of these weapons appears to be to deter India from committing aggression against Pakistan.⁴² Several corollaries follow from this premise.
 - Nuclear weapons are deemed essential for offsetting India's conventional superiority.
 - Islamabad's threshold for possible nuclear use is a function of the vagaries of conventional balance of forces between India and Pakistan. Consideration of conventional force

⁴¹ Lawrence Freedman has described existential deterrence as a situation in which "the deterrent effect is almost wholly impervious to the location and capabilities of nuclear weapons and the doctrines that would notionally govern their use. *All that is required is the availability of some nuclear weapons that could be used in anger.* (emphasis added). Lawrence Freedman, "I Exist, Therefore I Deter," *International Security* 13 (Summer 1988), p. 184.

⁴² The deterrent function of Pakistan's nuclear weapons is well laid out by Zafar Iqbal Cheema in his most authoritative analysis of Pakistan's strategic doctrine: "The growing disparity between Indian and Pakistani conventional military capabilities forced Islamabad to cling more tenaciously than ever to its nuclear weapons. Pakistani policy is influenced by the belief that nuclear weapons are the only way to preserve a broad strategic equilibrium with India, to neutralize Indian nuclear threats or blackmail, and to counter India's large conventional forces. Pakistan's strategic nuclear objective is to deter India from further dismembering Pakistan, not to pursue any wider international power and status. Pakistan, therefore, could be seen as the poster case of defensive realism." Zafar Iqbal Cheema, "Pakistan's Nuclear Use Doctrine and Command and Control" in Peter Lavoy, Scott. D Sagan and Jim Wirtz, Eds. *op.cit.*, p. 169.

ratios appears to be an important determinant of the success or failure of nuclear deterrence between the two sides.⁴³

- To the extent changes in military technology qualitatively impact on these conventional ratios, they become important drivers of arms race stability between India and Pakistan.⁴⁴
3. Pakistan's deterrence strategy is based on the threat of punishment with counter value targets.⁴⁵
 4. Pakistan's strategic posture is that of minimum credible deterrence.⁴⁶ It is

⁴³ Brian Cloughley has suggested that if India, were to penetrate a line joining Gujranwala, Multan, Sukkur and Hyderabad then "it is likely Pakistan would have to accept defeat or employ nuclear weapons." Brian Cloughley, *A History of the Pakistan Army: Wars and Insurrections* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 340

⁴⁴ As noted by Agha Shahi the "acquisition by India of anti-ballistic systems...would inject new instability into or gravely undermine any nuclear restraint regime. To main the credibility of its nuclear deterrent Pakistan would be confronted with the imperative of increasing the number of its missiles and warheads as more would be needed to pierce the ABM shield and to maintain retaliatory capability." Agha Shahi, "Pakistan's Response to the India Nuclear Doctrine," *Strategic Issues* (March 2000), p. 10.

⁴⁵ Lt. General (Retd) Kamal Matinuddin states: "[Indian] Population centers, industrial assets, resources, and nuclear or conventional forces of the enemy can all be targeted. It would be very difficult for India to strike first if it recognizes that a massive retaliation on its cities would be the response from Pakistan. While giving primacy to counter-value targets, the enemy' concentration of armoured formations in the rear should also be considered as targets for a nuclear strike. *Nuclearization of South Asia* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 242

⁴⁶ Addressing an international seminar in Islamabad on 25 November, 1999, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar stated: "Minimum nuclear deterrence will remain the guiding principle of our nuclear strategy. The 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 our deterrent, Pakistan will have to maintain, preserve and upgrade its capability. But we shall not engage in any nuclear competition or arms race." Abdul Sattar, "Pakistan's Nuclear Strategy: Inaugural Address," *Strategic Issues* (March 200), p. 3.

minimum because nuclear weapons have no other role but to deter the use of the adversary. As a consequence, extensive targeting and war fighting plans are unnecessary. The credibility of Pakistani deterrence does not stem from the quantity of its weapons⁴⁷ but rather resides in its quality which is primarily a function of the willingness of the Pakistani leadership to pursue a “no-holds barred” approach towards defensive use of nuclear weapons in the event of a war with India.⁴⁸

5. Given Indian advantage in conventional forces, Islamabad cannot commit itself to a policy of no nuclear first use (NFU). Doing so would only make it safe for India to fight a conventional war with Pakistan with impunity. Banning use of force between India and Pakistan is a more realistic approach towards conflict prevention than NFU declarations.

⁴⁷ According to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Pakistan has from 12 to 18 nuclear warheads, each with 20 kilotons of power, similar in strength to the bomb the US dropped on Hiroshima in 1945. (Other estimates put Pakistan's capability as high as 30 warheads.) India, by contrast, has an estimated 70 to 120 nuclear warheads of 20 to 30 kilotons in strength. Scott Baldauf and Howard LaFranchi, “Why Pakistan might turn to nukes,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 4 June 2002.

⁴⁸ In a rare revelation of the possible circumstances under which Islamabad might contemplate resort to defensive nuclear use, General Kidwai, Head of Pakistan's Strategic Planning Division, which acts as a Secretariat for the Nuclear Command Authority set up in February 2000, reportedly outlined the following four contingencies: a) India attacks Pakistan and takes a large part of its territory; b) India destroys a large part of Pakistani armed forces; c) India imposes an economic blockade on Pakistan; and d) India creates political destabilization or large-scale internal subversion in Pakistan. These conditions or “Red Lines” would warrant considerations of nuclear use by Pakistan only if they created a situation in which “the very existence of Pakistan as a state is at stake.” *Nuclear Safety, Nuclear Stability and Nuclear Strategy in Pakistan: A Concise Report of a Visit by Landau Network –Centro Volta*. Available at <<http://Lxmi.mi.infn.it/~landnet/Doc/pakistan.pdf>>.

6. Pakistan has credible means of inflicting assured destruction on counter-value targets in India.⁴⁹
7. The National Command Authority (NCA), comprising the Employment Control Committee, the Development Control Committee and the Strategic Plans Division, is the locus of all nuclear decision-making in Pakistan.
8. Pakistan's nuclear assets are deemed to be secure, safe and virtually immune to risks of inadvertent use.
9. Pakistan is willing to pursue a restraint regime “predicated on the lowest level of nuclear capability, non-weaponization and non-deployment”.⁵⁰

The above-mentioned elements constitute the essence of Pakistan's undeclared nuclear doctrine. It has three distinct policy objectives: a) deter a first nuclear use by India; b) enable Pakistan to deter or blunt an overwhelming Indian conventional attack; c) allow Islamabad the “capacity to use nuclear weapons as a demonstration instrument to internationalize the crisis and invite outside intervention if the circumstance prove unfavorable to Pakistan”⁵¹ – the external balancing factor. Some analysts have suggested another policy goal for Pakistan's nuclear weapons capability, namely, to use the availability of nuclear deterrent as a cover for waging low-intensity war against India in Kashmir.

⁴⁹ On the occasion of Haft-V (the Ghauri) missile's induction into the Army on January 9, 2003, President General Pervez Musharraf proclaimed that it was a “proud day” for him “to accept the Ghauri on behalf of the army's Strategic Forces Command” and expressed the hope that its induction would “radiate the necessary effects of deterrence.” Rana Qaiser, “Pakistan army gets Hatf-V missiles,” *Daily Times*, 9 January 2003.

⁵⁰ Agha Shahi, “Pakistan's Response to the Indian Nuclear Doctrine,” *Strategic Issues* (March 2000), p. 10.

⁵¹ Andrew C. Winner, Toshi Yoshihara, *Nuclear Stability in South Asia* (Tufts University: IFPA, 2002), p. 38

The Kargil conflict, initiated by Islamabad a few months after going overtly nuclear in 1998, has been used as a paradigm illustration of the “stability-instability” paradox characterizing India-Pakistan nuclear deterrence. This paradox holds that

“lowering the probability that a conventional war will escalate to a nuclear war – along preemptive and other lines – reduces the danger of starting a conventional war; thus, this low likelihood of escalation – referred to here as ‘stability’ – makes conventional war less dangerous, and possibly, as a result more likely.”⁵²

The belief that Pakistan tried to exploit the advantage of its nuclear umbrella to make territorial gains at the expense of India through sub-conventional means during the Kargil conflict is well stated by P. R. Chari: “The availability of the nuclear deterrent to Pakistan encouraged its undertaking the Kargil intrusion, and exponentially increasing its cross-border terrorism and proxy war in Kashmir. The presence of nuclear deterrent also seems to inform Pakistan’s chimerical policy to incorporate Kashmir into its body politic.”⁵³

Was Kargil launched by Islamabad because it felt that the country had the security of the nuclear umbrella? Pakistani analysts have questioned the validity of this claim made by deterrence pessimists. Major-General (Retd) Mahmud Ali Durrani observes that

⁵² Charles L. Glaser, *Analyzing Strategic Nuclear Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 46

⁵³ P.R. Chari, “Nuclear Restraint, Risk Reduction, And the Security-Insecurity Paradox in South Asia,” in Michael Krepon, ed, *Nuclear Risk Reduction in South Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 25

“Kargil was the result of flawed strategic thinking in Pakistan and not as a result of going nuclear”.⁵⁴ Maleeha Lodhi attributes Kargil’s occurrence to “systemic flaws” in the Pakistani decision-making process, which “is impulsive, chaotic, erratic and overly secretive...playing holy warriors this week and men of peace the next betrays an infirmity and insincerity of purpose that leaves the country leaderless and directionless”.⁵⁵ Shireen Mazari asserts that the Kargil operation was a defensive move by Pakistan to counteract Indian designs for incursions along the Line-of-Control.⁵⁶ These alternative interpretations of Pakistani motives for launching the Kargil Conflict call into question the widely held belief that the initial incursion was an offensive, war-fighting move induced by Pakistan’s possession of the absolute weapon.

Banning use of force between India and Pakistan is a more realistic approach towards conflict prevention than NFU declarations.

Instead of viewing Kargil as the instability end of the stability-instability spectrum induced by the induction of nuclear weapons in South Asia, one can see its occurrence as a manifestation of

extreme dissatisfaction by Islamabad with the prevailing regional status quo. Recent scholarly work has focused on the role played by status quo evaluation in deterrence success. As van Gelder observes, “it is too often forgotten that successful deterrence requires not only that the expected utility of acting be relatively low, but that the expected utility of refraining be

⁵⁴ M.A. Durrani, *Pakistan’s Strategic Thinking and the Role of Nuclear Weapons*, CMC Occasional Paper (Albuquerque: Sandia National Laboratories, July 2004), p. 31.

⁵⁵ Maleeha Lodhi, “Anatomy of a debacle,” *Newsline* (July 1999), pp. 32-33

⁵⁶ Shireen M. Mazari, *The Kargil Conflict, 1999: Separating Fact from Fiction* (Islamabad: Islamabad Institute of Strategic Studies, 2003), pp. 42-43.

acceptably high'.⁵⁷ That planning for Kargil was longstanding⁵⁸ and predated the May 1998 nuclear tests by Pakistan clearly suggests that its genesis lay more in the Pakistani perceptions of the instability of the territorial status quo in Kashmir than in the nuclearization of the subcontinent. As pointed out by Robert G. Wirsing:

“There is great likelihood, in fact, that Pakistani expectations of military gains from Kargil were quite modest, that the main motivation was simply to bring relief to Pakistan’s exposed beleaguered transport routes along the Line-of-Control by bringing India’s own primary route within range of Pakistani artillery, and that Pakistani decisions were caught significantly off guard by the effort’s stunningly swift escalation into a major conflict.”⁵⁹

While deterrence forms the essence of Islamabad’s nuclear employment doctrine, Pakistani leaders have consistently pointed out that Pakistan’s nuclear posture would be based on the possession and fielding of a minimum credible deterrence. The minimality of deterrence refers to the desired quantum of nuclear potential that Pakistan needs to dissuade India from considering the prospect of an all-out conventional war as well as nuclear use because of the dangers of a nuclear response.⁶⁰ The credibility aspect of

deterrence not only refers to Islamabad’s demonstrated and proven capacity of delivering nuclear warhead but also to the “demonstration of national will and resolve to use nuclear weapons”⁶¹ to ensure country’s survival.

An important external influence on Pakistan’s nuclear employment strategy is the early exposure of the Pakistan military to “Western nuclear strategizing”. As pointed out by Stephen Cohen, “Present-day Pakistani nuclear planning and doctrine...very much resembles American thinking of the mid-1990s with its acceptance of first-use and the tactical use of nuclear weapons against onrushing conventional forces.”⁶² Using the strategic culture theory argument, Cohen points out how Pakistani military officers exposure to the “full force of the American defence establishment” during their training in the U.S. in the fifties and the sixties led to their “reference-group identification with the American armed forces” and their doctrinal beliefs.⁶³ This distinctly different “reference-group” experience of the Pakistani armed forces also destabilized the civil-military relations in the country as it gave “Pakistan’s military officers the (over)confidence to think themselves capable of governing as well, if not better, than their erstwhile civilian masters.”⁶⁴ This was in marked contrast to the experience of the Indian military officers who, due to the non-aligned policies of their country did not receive any exposure to the American military and as a result never tried to seize the reins of power in India.”⁶⁵

⁵⁷ T. J. van Gelder, “Credible threats and usable weapons: some dilemmas of deterrence,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, vol. 18, 1989, p. 163.

⁵⁸ According to H. Abbas, “the Kargil operation had been discussed at least twice before in earlier years. It was first discussed during the time of General Zia ul Haq who was given a briefing by the Military Operations Directorate. Zia turned down the plan on grounds that “it would lead us into full scale war with India.” See H. Abbas, *Pakistan’s Drift into Extremism: Allah, the Army, and America’s War on Terror* (London: M. E. Sharpe, 2004), p. 170.

⁵⁹ Robert G. Wirsing, *Kashmir In The Shadow of War: Regional Rivalries in a Nuclear Age* (London: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), p. 30.

⁶⁰ Air Commodore Tariq Mahmud Ashraf, *A Nuclear Pakistan: The Way Ahead* (Islamabad: Unpublished Manuscript, 2004), p. 35.

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 36.

⁶² Stephen Philip Cohen, *The Idea of Pakistan* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 2005), p. 102.

⁶³ Ibid, p. 92.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 92.

⁶⁵ Apurba Kundu, *Militarism in India: The Army And Civil Society In Consensus* (New Delhi: Viva Books, 1998), p. 97

Robert Price has also noted the phenomenon of positive reference-group identification of third world military officers with the officer corps of the educating states.⁶⁶ According to him “so powerful is the desire of third world officers to retain all aspects of their prestigious Western academic training,” that they sometimes become “non-nationalistic” – sharing their mentor’s dislike for politicians, especially anti-colonial leaders – and “non-puritanical” – demanding first world standards of compensation and social liberties. If such officers judge their country’s new leadership and/or status in society as inferior to that previous to independence, adds Price, they may forcibly overthrow the government. Reference-group identification may be further reinforced by a newly independent country’s leadership’s decisions regarding international co-operation and agreements, which link their armed forces with those of other states. The chances of officers staging a coup are thought to rise, especially if “external military assistance facilitates a role expansion and greater autonomy for the armed forces.”⁶⁷

Pakistan’s nuclear first-use posture is conditioned by two interrelated vulnerabilities. First, Pakistan’s lack of strategic depth geographically. Unlike, India, which has huge landmass and far-flung dispersed population, centers, Pakistan feels highly exposed to a “deep conventional military thrust that could geographically cut

The absence of geographical depth also makes it impossible for Pakistan to pursue a defensive strategy.

the nation in two.”⁶⁸ Such a blow would render the Pakistani state dysfunctional. The historical memory of the loss of East Pakistan in 1971 due to Indian military intervention only reinforces these Pakistani fears. The absence of geographical depth also makes it impossible for Pakistan to pursue a defensive strategy by trading away geographic space for reaction time.⁶⁹ Second, the vulnerability generated by a substantial imbalance in conventional military power between the two countries. According to a recent study on conventional military balance between India

⁶⁸ Ibid. p. 39.

⁶⁹ According to one analyst “The absence of strategic depth affects Pakistan’s insecurity dilemma in three ways. First, “it strips Pakistan” of the classic “defensive strategy” whereby “a country ought to give up ground initially in the face of an enemy’s offensive and withdraw into the depths of its own territory...simply put trading away geographic space for reaction time...”Second, the geography of Pakistan leaves its major cities and lines of communication vulnerable to India. According to a Pakistani assessment of its own strategic weakness, “Pakistan feels exposed because its lines of communication and the highly developed canal system that irrigates the fertile area of Pakistan that are critical to its economic survival run close to the Indo-Pakistan border...India’s capture of just (140 kilometers) would wipe out Pakistan because its communication, irrigation, industry, and population are all together within the depth.” Shirin TahirKheli, “Defense Planning in Pakistan,” Stephanie Neuman, ed. *Defense Planning in Less-Industrialized States* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1984), p. 212. Third, all of Pakistan’s air bases...are extremely vulnerable to massive Indian preemptive air strikes with smart-bomb technology supplied to India by none other than the United States. This is a particularly troublesome problem for Pakistani defense planners because air support is a crucial element of an effective defensive combat strategy, especially in modern warfare. [Given these vulnerabilities in future war] “Pakistan would face the classic dilemma vis-à-vis its nuclear arsenal in the event of war with India: use them or loose them.” *NUCLEAR BRINKMANSHIP: Is Kashmir the Most Dangerous Place in the World?* (Unpublished manuscript, 2002), pp. 8-12.

⁶⁶ Robert. Price, “A Theoretical Approach to Military Rule in New States: Reference Group Theory and the Ghanian Case,” *World Politics* vol 23, no. 3 (April 1971).

⁶⁷ C.E. Welch, Jr. and A.K. Smith, *Military Role and Rule: Perspectives on Civil-Military Relations* (North Scituate: Duxbury Press, 1974), pp.18-19.

and Pakistan, India has an advantage of 2.22:1 over Pakistan in land forces, 2:1 in naval forces and a 3:1 in air power.⁷⁰ The study notes “given Pakistan’s geophysical vulnerability with the proximity of major cities such as Lahore and lines of communication to the international border, the strength and technological superiority of the Indian armed forces pose a serious threat to Pakistan in the event of a conventional war.”⁷¹

Given these vulnerabilities, it is a matter of little surprise that “in meeting [a] security threat from an adversary, with small nuclear forces in hand and [a] big gap in conventional military balance”⁷² Pakistan has retained the option of nuclear use as a central element of its deterrent strategy against India.

Dilemmas of Pakistan’s First Use Posture

Because of the smaller size of its nuclear arsenal, the inherent vulnerability of this nascent nuclear force to decapitation and pre-emption by a bigger and conventionally stronger India and the Pakistani doctrinal belief in “nuclear first use” in a situation of unwinnable conventional war with New Delhi, Islamabad has to opt for a delegative command and control system.

The well-known tension between security and stability becomes acute as survival through dispersal emerges as the only realistic option for the evolving Pakistani nuclear force structure. ‘Mobility’ because of lack of sound and reliable rail and road infrastructure in the country and ‘sufficiency’ due to financial constraints and limited fissile material are not viable options for Pakistan, at least not in the immediate future. It is essentially by geographically

dispersing its small nuclear forces that Islamabad can have a high degree of confidence in the survivability of this force. Pre-delegation of launch authority to local commanders become inevitable if problems of connectivity associated with “dispersal” are to be effectively tackled. The credibility of Islamabad’s nuclear deterrence would be seriously compromised if India were to entertain the belief that Pakistan’s dispersed nuclear assets could not be brought into play through too much centralization of authority in a single command post.

A decentralized command and control system in Pakistan would entail setting up alternate and secondary nuclear commands that would be lower in rank than those located in the Nuclear Command Authority. To guard against the danger of its “distributed communication system”, linking the primary launch authority with secondary command sites, being rendered dysfunctional by the surprise enemy attack, Islamabad will have to accord a certain degree of autonomy of decision-making to those manning the secondary posts. As launch authority flows downward, the “human instability”⁷³ factor in those responsible for pulling the nuclear trigger assumes paramount significance. Islamabad has shown considerable sensitivity towards evolving national procedures for reducing the risk of unauthorized use of nuclear weapons.

⁷³ Herbert L. Abrams, “Weapons in Jeopardy: Human Instability in the Nuclear Forces,” *Unpublished Manuscript* (Stanford University, 2001).

⁷⁰ Zawar Haider Abidi, “Threat Reduction in South Asia,” *Henry L. Stimson Report* (Washington, D.C: Henry Stimson Centre, 2003).

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

Besides relying on the professionalism⁷⁴ of its armed forces to manage its nuclear assets, Pakistan has taken additional steps to guard against risks of unauthorized launch. In his keynote address to the Carnegie International Non-Proliferation Conference in Washington D.C. on 18 June 2001, Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar categorically stated, “procedures have been implemented to minimize the chance of accidental or unauthorized launch.” He went on to state that Islamabad was “studying the US Personnel Reliability and Nuclear Emergency Support Teams (NEST) concept for adaptation.”⁷⁵ Pakistan announced the establishment of a three tiered nuclear command and control structure in February 2000⁷⁶, with the National Command Authority, as the apex decision making body Chaired by the President with the Prime Minister as the Vice Chairman, the Foreign Minister as the Deputy Chairman and the Ministers of Defence, Interior and Finance besides the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff and the three services chiefs as members. The second tier comprises the secretariat of NCA called the Strategic Plans Division. The third tier consists of the Strategic Force Commands of the three services.

However, as highlighted by the A.Q. Khan episode⁷⁷, Pakistan needs to work

⁷⁴ A recent study of the Pakistan Army says the following about its professionalism: “In spite of problems with organization and junior officer standards, the army is in good shape. It is capable of defending the nation. The army has good equipment. C3I is improving measurably. Force structure and mobility are adequate. Its plans are well constructed and viable. It has some of the best soldiers in the world. Its senior leadership is impressive.” Brian Cloughley, *A History of the Pakistan Army: Wars and Insurrections* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 355-357.

⁷⁵ See text of his Keynote Address at the Carnegie International Non-Proliferation Conference: “New Leaders, New Directions” 19 June 2001, Washington, D.C.

⁷⁶ Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Organization of Pakistan’s National Command Authority. Available at <<http://www.forisb.org/NCA.html>>.

⁷⁷ In a televised appearance on 4 February 2004, Abdul Qadeer Khan, former head of the Kahuta

relentlessly to develop impregnable barriers against risks of nuclear inadvertence.⁷⁸

Despite the small size of its nuclear force, which is tightly controlled by the military, and its conscious decision not to operationally deploy its arsenal of “forty-five to sixty nuclear warheads”⁷⁹, Islamabad should not minimize the risk of “true believers”⁸⁰ in the armed forces trying to gain access to nuclear weapons and materials. The abortive “Islamist coup ‘d’etat’ planned for action on 26 September 1995 by Major General Zaheerul Islam Abbasi and Brigadier Mustansir Billah along with some army officers and civilians is a paradigm case of the rising phenomenon of “true believers” in the Pakistan army especially among its officer corps.⁸¹

Research Laboratories and Advisor to Prime Minister for Science and Technology, acknowledged that during the past two decades he had secretly provided North Korea, Libya, and Iran nuclear expertise and technologies. He apologized to the people of Pakistan for what he had done and was pardoned by Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf. Reacting to disclosure of Khan’s role as the ‘Lord of the worldwide nuclear proliferation ring’, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee stressed the need for developing a United Nations system to “prevent such clandestine transfer of nuclear capability.” Describing Khan’s activities as a “serious issue” Mr. Vajpayee said “We are taking whatever steps necessary on the security front.” Karen Yourish and Delano D’ Souza, “Father of Pakistan Bomb Sold Nuclear Secrets,” *Arms Control Today* (March 2004), p. 22.

⁷⁸ Karen Yourish and Delano D’ Souza, “Father of Pakistani Bomb Sold Nuclear Secrets,” *Arms Control Today* (March 2004), p. 22

⁷⁹ Zafar Iqbal Cheema, “Pakistan’s Nuclear Use Doctrine and Command and Control” *op.cit.* p. 179.

⁸⁰ True believer is the man of fanatical faith who is ready to sacrifice his life for a holy cause. For an insightful and penetrating analysis of the mind of the true-believer see Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer: Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements* (New York: Harper and Row Publisher, 1951).

⁸¹ Following Pakistan’s military defeat and dismemberment in the 1971 India-Pakistan War, its military high command unearthed a conspiracy – the so called Attock conspiracy – that was hatched by a group of junior officers led by Brigadier F.B. Ali. During their court trial, the officers expressed their belief that “East Pakistan had been lost because of the government’s “un-Islamic” ways and Yahya Khan’s drinking in particular.” Syeed Vali Reza Nasr traces the roots of this concern for “Islamicity” in the

According to the official statement made by Defence Minister Aftab Shah Mirani in the Pakistan Senate on 14 November 1995, the “conspirators planned to eliminate the military leadership as well as the President and the Prime Minister. The plan envisaged storming the conference hall by hired assassins during the Corp Commanders Conference scheduled on 30 September. After taking over the Army leadership the conspirators, the General Officer (Abbasi) was to proclaim himself Chief of Army Staff and Ameer-al-Momineen.”⁸² While dismissing the coup plotters as a “disgruntled lot who were incensed with frustration”, the official statement did acknowledge the fact that they had successfully “disguised their personal ambitions in the garb of religious enthusiasm” and managed “to motivate” their “accomplices to join their demented plot.”⁸³

The emergence of the concept of an “Islamic soldier”, committed to the pursuit of an Islamic ideal at home and transcendental “Islamic” causes abroad, underscores the need for Islamabad to institute a full-fledge Personnel Reliability Programme (PRP) for those guarding its nuclear assets. The rise of the “Jihadi culture”- to use Jessica Stern’s apt phrase - in Pakistan makes it imperative

Pakistan army to the mid-1960s when the “officer corps...opened its ranks to cadets from the lower middle classes” which “made it markedly more subject to the influence of traditional Islamic values.” He argues that the 1972 Attock conspiracy showed that “the armed forces...were no longer a bastion of secularism and were gradually turning to religion.” (p.171). Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama’at-i Islami of Pakistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

⁸² “Text of Mirani’s statement,” *The Muslim* (Islamabad) 15 November 1995.

⁸³ Ibid.

that Islamabad should take all necessary steps to ensure that those infected by this culture never become part of its nuclear management operations.

The emergence of the concept of an “Islamic soldier”... underscores the need for Islamabad to institute a full-fledge Personnel Reliability Programme (PRP) for those guarding its nuclear assets.

The gravity of the “insider” threat posed by religious extremism in the Pakistan armed forces was dramatically illustrated in two successive attempts in December 2004 to assassinate

President Musharraf. The failed attempts were carried out by Al-Qaeda supporters with the active collaboration of some elements of the Pakistan army and air force.⁸⁴ In view of these emerging challenges, nuclear security and safety in Pakistan is too serious a business to be left to the not too insurmountable barriers of security clearance, file reviews and medical evaluation followed in the Pakistan military. Reports of nuclear theft in Russia by

⁸⁴ Speaking on national television immediately after the second attack on him on December 25, 2003, President Musharraf blamed the “terrorists and extremists” opposed to the global war against terrorism for plotting to kill him. He said: “There is a strong possibility of this. We are fighting a war against terrorism,” Quoted in *The Nation* (Lahore) 26 December 2003. In his interview to the Geo Television on 27 May 2004, President Musharraf disclosed that some junior officials of the Pakistan Army and Pakistan Air Force had been arrested for their complicity in the plot to assassinate him. When asked whether those associated with the state apparatus were involved in the 14 and 25 December 2004 attacks on him, President Musharraf said: “Yes, there are some people in uniform. Junior-level people in uniform in air force and army.” He denied any link between those arrested and senior level of the armed forces: “No, not all. I am 100 per cent sure or 200 percent sure, because we have unearthed every thing. We know exactly who is involved. We know entire picture of both the actions...we know their names, their faces, their identity, their families and everything.” Amir Waseem, “Musharraf says military men tried to kill him: Mastermind absconding, operatives held,” *Dawn*, 28 May 2004.

“trusted insiders” coupled with the fact that the US PRP decertified between 2.5% and 5.0% of previously certified individuals for each year between 1975 and 1990 suggest both the vulnerability of the national control system for nuclear materials and the efficacy of the screening procedures in minimizing the risks of human instability factor in nuclear forces.

Pakistan’s posture of nuclear first-use⁸⁵ seems to contribute toward escalation in a situation of active conflict with India in a number of ways. First, intrinsic to this posture is the assumption that it is important to wield nuclear weapons at an early stage in India-Pakistan conventional conflict. This would enormously compress decision-making time and increase the pressure on Islamabad to use nuclear devices in response to conventional attack. As noted by a Pakistani scholar: “...being outnumbered conventionally, Pakistan may be forced to use the nuclear option as a weapon of last resort forcing India to retaliate in kind. Such an eventuality will have grave regional and global consequences.”⁸⁶ Second, this posture

may entail integration of nuclear weapons with conventional forces and thereby increasing the risk that Islamabad would be forced to choose between using nuclear weapons quickly or allowing them or the military units possessing to be captured – the classic use-them-or-lose them scenario. Third, the first strike posture enhances the risks of accidental or unauthorized war in a situation of crisis. In a crisis the control over nuclear forces are loosened, enhancing the chances of an accidental firing of nuclear weapons. Jessica Stern and Gregory Koblentz have mentioned different scenarios of unauthorized use of nuclear weapons by military units equipped with nuclear weapons. These range from the possibility of “the legitimate custodians of nuclear weapons acting without prior orders, to commanders exercising their authority in an inappropriate manner or in reaction to false warning” “or rebellious military units wresting control of nuclear weapons and the launchers from their legitimate custodians.”

None of these apply to Pakistan at this time for the simple reason that Pakistan’s nuclear weapons programme remains at a pre-deployment stage. However, issues of unauthorized launch stemming from pre-delegation of authority would begin to confront Islamabad as its nuclear programme experiences creeping deployment under the escalatory pressures generated by India-Pakistan crises.⁸⁷ A stage

⁸⁵ Pakistani security analyst Farah Zhara has given the following explanation for Pakistan’s first-strike posture: “First, the asymmetry between Indian and Pakistani conventional forces makes a first-strike capability an equalizer for Islamabad. ...Second, the development of a first-strike capability is less cumbersome for Pakistan. Investment in retaliatory forces requires intense planning and enormous resources, which Pakistan cannot afford. Furthermore, it is likely that Pakistan’s nuclear doctrine will necessitate the targeting of major population centers rather than strategic and military facilities. The underlying reason is that Pakistan will not have the quality and quantity of nuclear weapons to attack ‘hard’ targets such as command and control facilities, and instead will simply opt for inflicting ‘grievous harm’ against population centers, knowing that such an attack will certainly result in a catastrophic retaliatory response.” Farah Zhara “Pakistan’ road to a minimum nuclear deterrent,” *Arms Control Today* (March 2001).

⁸⁶ Air Commodore Tariq Mahmud Ashraf, *A Nuclear Pakistan: The Way Ahead* (Islamabad: Unpublished Manuscript, 2004), p. 6.

⁸⁷ There have been reports of nuclear forces being readied by Pakistan and India for possible use during periods of crises. Bruce Riedel, formerly the Senior Director for Near East and South Asian Affairs at the US National Security Council, has claimed that “Pakistanis were preparing their nuclear arsenals for possible deployment” during the 1999 Kargil crisis. Bruce Reidel’s assertion was vehemently denied by General Khalid Kidwai, Head of the Strategic Plans Division, as “totally baseless” in an interview with the author on 7 April 2004 in Islamabad. General Kidwai characterized Bruce Reidel’s claim as “non-sensical” and said, “nothing of that sort ever happened nor was it contemplated.” Raj Chengappa, a senior Indian journalist has claimed that during the Kargil crisis, India “activated all its three types of nuclear delivery vehicles and kept them at what is known as Readiness State 3 – meaning that some nuclear bombs would be

thus might be reached when warheads are mated to delivery systems and these systems get deployed. Pre-delegation of authority to its local commanders to use nuclear weapons would be unavoidable for Pakistan, as their primary command posts remain vulnerable to decapitating strikes by Indian missiles.

Just as American Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson had “pre-delegated authority” to “six or seven three-and-four star generals” for retaliatory use in the event of a massive Soviet attack,⁸⁸ Pakistan will have to do the same to deal with the scenario of a decapitating strike on its primary command post by India. In the absence of an India-Pakistan agreement committing them not to attack each other’s nuclear command posts, the only way Islamabad can protect its centralized nuclear command authority from being attacked by India is to scatter its “nuclear triggers” in secondary commands through pre-delegation.

Fourth, the commitment to using nuclear weapons runs the risk of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. When confronted with a

The commitment to using nuclear weapons runs the risk of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.

grave threat, Islamabad may have little choice but to react by unleashing a nuclear war at the expense of exploring other options. Fifth, the first use posture creates strong domestic resistance

to potentially beneficial arms control proposals that seek to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons. Finally, in any serious crisis, India leaders, well aware that Islamabad might use nuclear weapons first, would be prepared to launch a preemptive nuclear attack of their own. This is the dynamic of the well-known “fallacy of the last move” described by Thomas Schelling as “reciprocal fear of attack.”

ready to be mated with the delivery vehicles at short notice... Prithvi missiles were deployed and at least four of them were readied for a possible nuclear strike. Even an Agni missile capable of launching a nuclear warhead was moved to a western Indian state and kept in a state of readiness”. More recently, there were a few reports that as part of the military mobilisation following the December 2001 attack on India’s parliament and the subsequent crisis following the May 2002 attacks in Kashmir, Pakistan and India had deployed nuclear weapons. Cited in R Rajaraman, M.V. Ramana, Zia Mian, “Possession and Deployment of Nuclear Weapons in South Asia,” *Economic and Political Weekly* (June 22, 2002).

⁸⁸ Paul Bracken, *The Command and Control of Nuclear Forces* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 202.

Indian Nuclear Doctrine and NFU

India proposed the no-first use (NFU) pledge in 1994 as a formal arms control measure and it has been reiterated by Indian political leaders many times since.⁸⁹ In his statement to Lok Sabha on 27 May 1998 India's Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee declared that India "does not intend to use these weapons for aggression or for mounting threats against any country; these are weapons of self-defense, to ensure that India is not subjected to nuclear threats or coercion." A week later he told the Indian parliament that India would follow a policy of "minimum deterrence" and "will not be the first to use nuclear weapons." In the same vein, in an interview in November 1999, India's foreign minister Jaswant Singh stated that "the principal role of [India's] nuclear weapons is to deter their use by an adversary" and argued that to maintain this "policy of retaliation only," "survivability become critical to ensure credibility." The August 1998 "Draft Indian Nuclear Doctrine" envisaged that

"India shall pursue a doctrine of credible minimum deterrence. In this policy of 'retaliation only', the survivability of our arsenal is critical. This is a dynamic concept related to our strategic environment, technical imperatives and the needs of national security. The actual size, components, deployment and employment of nuclear forces will be

decided in the light of these factors. India's peacetime posture aims at convincing any potential aggressor that:

- Any threat of use of nuclear weapons against India shall invoke measures to counter the threat;
- And any nuclear attack on India and its forces shall result in punitive retaliation with nuclear weapons to inflict damage unacceptable to the aggressor.

The fundamental purpose of Indian nuclear weapons is to deter the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons by any state or entity against India and its forces. India will not be the first to initiate a nuclear strike but will respond with punitive retaliation should deterrence fail.

India will not resort to the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against states which do not possess nuclear weapons, or are not aligned with nuclear weapons powers."⁹⁰

⁸⁹ W. Lawrence Prabhakar, "The challenge of Minimal Nuclear Deterrence," in Michael Krepon and Chris Gagne, Eds. *The Impact of US Ballistic Missile Defenses on Southern Asia Report No. 46* (Washington, D.: The Henry L. Stimson Center, 2002), p. 51.

⁹⁰ India's advocacy of NFU was governed by a number of key assumptions. These, according to C. Raja Mohan, entailed "rejection of tactical nuclear weapons," "forfeiting of brinkmanship" in early stages of conflict, the desire to "avoid the requirement of a hair-trigger reaction," and the effort "to keep its nuclear warheads and delivery systems separate and thereby ensure the survival of its arsenal from a pre-emptive strike." "No First Use and India's Nuclear Transition," *Pugwash Meeting* no. 279 (London: November 2002), pp. 4-6.

During the Islamabad round of foreign secretary-level talks between India and Pakistan on 15-18 October 1998 New Delhi reportedly offered a pledge of “no nuclear first use” to Islamabad as part of a package to promote confidence building measure between the two countries. Concomitantly, New Delhi also informed the UN General Assembly’s disarmament committee that it would want to introduce a resolution in the world body calling for a global ban on the first use of nuclear weapons.

The fundamental problem with India’s offer of nuclear no-first-use is that it does not address the security dilemma that a smaller and weaker Pakistan will face at the hands of a militarily superior India after Islamabad pledges itself not to have recourse to nuclear threats to ensure its survival. Additionally, as noted by Lawrence Prabhakar, “India’s no-first-use pledge does not, by itself, prevent conventional military strikes against [Pakistani] nuclear facilities. Pakistan might well not differentiate between the means used to attack its nuclear deterrent, in which case India’s no-first-use pledge would lose its meaning.”⁹¹

As long as conditions and incentives for going to war between the two sides persist, efforts to get nuclear weapons declared by them as weapons of either first or last resort will remain totally meaningless.⁹²

⁹¹ W. Lawrence Prabhakar, “The challenge of Minimal Nuclear Deterrence,” in Michael Krepon, *op.cit.*

⁹² As Richard Falk has astutely observed: “As long as causes of insecurity persist, and as long as the weaponry continues as an existing part of the security package then the structure of nuclear, however, contained, will cast its long shadow across our lives, posing in some form risks to human survival, impairing democratic relations between state and society, and, very likely, inducing a tensed reliance on non-nuclear militarism to offset the diminishing role of nuclear weaponry. Furthermore, so long as the war system persists, a purely defensive posture for nuclear weapons would always be drawn into question whenever a government possessing nuclear weapons was facing the prospect of a military defeat. Worthy and ambitious as is the shift to a purely defensive posture, it cannot hope to be entirely stable.”

In January 2003, New Delhi published a brief official nuclear doctrine. The 4 January 2003 official statement said the following:

1. Building and maintaining a credible minimum deterrent.
2. A posture of "No First Use": nuclear weapons will only be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian territory or on Indian forces anywhere;
3. Nuclear retaliation to a first strike will be massive and designed to inflict unacceptable damage.
4. The civilian political leadership through the Nuclear Command Authority can only authorize nuclear retaliatory attacks.
5. Non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states.
6. However, in the event of a major attack against India, or Indian forces anywhere, by biological or chemical weapons, India will retain the option of retaliating with nuclear weapons.
7. A continuance of strict controls on export of nuclear and missile related materials and technologies, participation in the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) negotiations, and continued observance of the moratorium on nuclear tests.
8. Continued commitment to the goal of a nuclear weapon free world, through global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.

The 4 January 2003 official statement also announced the setting up of the Nuclear Command Authority. It “comprises Political Council and an Executive Council. The Prime Minister chairs the Political Council. It is the sole body, which can authorize the use of nuclear weapons.”

While reiterating some of the elements of the DND including a posture of no-first-use, wherein ‘nuclear weapons will only be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian territory or on Indian forces anywhere,’ the 4 January 2003 statement significantly

weakened the NFU policy by claiming the right to nuclear retaliation if India was attacked using chemical and biological weapons. As pointed out by M.V. Ramana and Zia Main: “In this it appears to be

following the lead of the USA, which had also announced that it would consider responding to CBW attack with nuclear weapons. This policy may also reflect the advice of the National Security Board, which had argued that India should drop the no-first use policy. The caveat about CBW attacks may well be the first step in completely repudiating the no-first use policy.”⁹³ The policy implications of the dilution of New Delhi’s commitment to the NFU have not been lost on Pakistan. Drawing a parallel between the American stance on the NFU and that of New Delhi, Major General (Retd) Jamshed Ayaz Khan, thus argued:

“While earlier, to show its ‘non-violent’ nature, India was categorical in its No First Use Policy, India now says, ‘In the event of a major attack against India, it will retain the option of retaliating with nuclear weapons.’ That means ‘No First Use’ is really out, India has now made it more ambiguous. Whenever they decide to use Nuclear Weapons against a State, they could just say that State X was

⁹³M.V. Ramana and Zia Mian, “The Nuclear Confrontation in South Asia,” in *SIPRI Yearbook 2003, Disarmament and International Security* (London: Oxford University Press, SPRI, 2003), p. 201.

planning to launch a major biological or chemical attack on India – the theory of unilateral preemptive strike formula could be commissioned. United States – the only Superpower has retained a similar option to prevent nations with chemical

and biological weapons from assuming that the use of these weapons of mass destruction will not invite a nuclear response. India has taken out this part from USA’s doctrine.”⁹⁴

New Delhi’s claim to have the right to pursue preemption against a nuclear-armed Pakistan is extremely dangerous for deterrence stability.

The US preemption doctrine announced prior to the American invasion of Iraq in March 2003 and adopted as a strategic precept since then, seems to be setting a dangerous precedent for war-prone South Asia. Following the US invasion of Iraq, Indian Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha claimed that his country reserved the right to use force against Pakistan. He said: “There were three reasons which drove the Anglo-US forces to attack Iraq; possession of weapons of mass destruction, export of terrorism and an absence of democracy all of which exist in Pakistan.” On 11 April 2003, Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes said he endorsed Mr. Sinha’s comments that India had “a much better case to go for preemptive action against Pakistan than the United States has in Iraq.”⁹⁵ New Delhi’s claim to have the right to pursue preemption against a nuclear-armed Pakistan is extremely dangerous for deterrence stability. As pointed out by Krieger and Chaffee “...[the] doctrine of preemption pursued by India towards Pakistan is

⁹⁴ Maj Gen (Retd) Jamshed Ayaz Khan, “India’s Nuclear Doctrine” *The Nation*, 31 January 2003.

⁹⁵ Quoted in David Krieger and Devon Chaffee, “Facing the Failures of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Regime.” Available at <http://wagingpeace.org/article/03.04/0423chaffee_np.t.htm>.

extremely dangerous, particularly given Pakistan's conventional weakness. In the face of an Indian policy of preemption, Pakistan is likely to approach its own nuclear arsenal with an even higher alert status, bringing these two countries a step closer to intentional or accidental war, as well as accelerate the regional arms race."⁹⁶

To guard against dangers stemming from a no first use pledge between adversaries with asymmetrical conventional capabilities, P. Terrence Hopmann has suggested that no first use proposals must be linked with efforts at conventional arms control. According to him

“the most promising way of stabilizing the conventional military balance, and thus of reaching a no-first use agreement, is through arms control...Such a dual agreement would mean that [nuclear] weapons could no longer figure prominently in NATO's plans to respond to a conventional conflict in Europe...[Such] an agreement to limit conventional forces would allow Western Europe greater confidence in its ability to defend itself conventionally in collaboration with U.S. conventional forces...The proposal to link a no-first-use policy with conventional force limitations in Europe [would]be the first step in a process of negotiating a more durable security arrangement in Europe.”⁹⁷

The logic of Hopmann's argument for a linkage between no-first-use pledge and negotiated limits on conventional forces in the European context applies with greater force to India-Pakistan relations. In the absence of both an offensive conventional capability, which will allow it to disrupt an

Indian offensive preemptively, and the geo-strategic space in which to maneuver and fight in a defense-in-depth strategy, Pakistan's physical protection can only be assured by nuclear weapons. As pointed out by Sardar F. S. Lodhi, a Pakistani security analyst:

“During any future Indo-Pak armed conflict India's numerical superiority in men and conventional arms is likely to exert pressure beyond endurance. In a deteriorating military situation when an Indian conventional attack is likely to break through our defences or has already breached the main defence line causing a major set-back to the defences, which cannot be restored by conventional means at our disposal, the government would be left with no other option except to use nuclear weapons to stabilize the situation. India's superiority in conventional arms and manpower would have to be offset by nuclear weapons. The political will to use nuclear weapons is essential to prevent a conventional armed conflict, which would later on escalate into a nuclear war. Pakistan's Nuclear Doctrine would therefore essentially revolve around the first-strike option. In other words we will use nuclear weapons if attacked by India even if the attack is with conventional weapons.”⁹⁸

⁹⁸In November 1999, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar declared, “Minimum nuclear deterrence will remain the guiding principle of our nuclear strategy.” He further stated that as India enlarges its nuclear arsenal, “Pakistan will have to maintain, preserve and upgrade its capability in order to ensure survivability and credibility of the deterrent.” Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar in a statement at a Seminar in Islamabad on 25 November 1999. That Pakistan, like NATO maintains a first-use threat to any aggression was clearly stated by Pakistani Foreign Secretary Inam Ul Haque during an official visit to Germany in July 2000. He reportedly said, “Pakistan would consider using nuclear weapons first if attacked by conventional forces. “He further stated “there is no way Pakistan can hold out any assurance that it will not use any nuclear weapons if its existence is threatened”. There is no such assurance on the part of India either”. “Pakistan may use nuke arms if

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ P. Terrence Hopmann, “Negotiating Security in Europe,” in John B. Harris And Eric Markusen, Eds. *Nuclear Weapons And the Threat of Nuclear War* (Orlando, Florida: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), pp. 209-220.

These Pakistani security concerns regarding the offence-defence balance underpin Islamabad's opposition to the missile defense deployments in the region. Reacting to New Delhi's public endorsement⁹⁹ of Washington's May 2001 announcement to deploy National Missile Defenses (NMD), Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf expressed concern that this move could "jeopardize strategic stability, trigger a new arms race and undermine international efforts aimed at arms control and disarmament."¹⁰⁰ In the same vein, Pakistan's Air Chief Marshal, Kaleem Saadat pointedly told Washington in November 2003 that its decision to allow Israel to sell India very "sophisticated early warning systems...has the potential of further tilting the military balance, specially relating to air power, totally lopsided." He warned that should the "imbalance continue to grow at the present rate, it will soon reach a stage where one side may conclude that it can militarily overwhelm its adversary with ease. The chances of a miscalculation then become even greater."¹⁰¹

The acquisition of a sophisticated air defense system with anti-missile capabilities

attacked," *The Nation*, (Islamabad), 21 July 2000. General Pervez Musharraf expressed similar views in October 2000 when he told CBS "I would never like to use it first of all. But if you ask me a direct question when I would use them, if Pakistan's security gets jeopardized, then only one would like to think of it."

⁹⁹ New Delhi's support for the Bush plan to deploy NMD was underpinned by several considerations. These included: "a strategic tie-up with the United States against China", "the desire to gain access to US surveillance data on Chinese and Pakistani missile tests" and "the moral appeal" of the superiority of defense over deterrence. For a good discussion of the last element see Rajesh Basur, "Missile Defense and South Asia: An Indian Perspective," in Michael Krepon and Chris Gagne, eds. *The Impact of US Ballistic Missile Defenses on Southern Asia* (Washington, D.C.: The Henry L. Stimson Center, July 2002), pp. 1-20.

¹⁰⁰ B. Muralidhar Reddy, "Musharraf opposes NMD," *The Hindu*, 13 May 2001.

¹⁰¹ Address by Air Chief Marshal Kaleem Saadat, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force at Global Air Chiefs Conference, Washington, D.C. 2002. *Centre For Aerospace Power Studies* (Karachi: November 2003), pp. 12-13.

by India¹⁰² would constrain Pakistan either to match India's defenses with similar systems or to build up its offensive forces to saturate India's defenses.¹⁰³ Either choice would invite countermeasures from India and thus lock both sides in a debilitating and destabilizing missile build up. Given broader Indian regional security concerns especially its long-term threat perceptions of China and the latter's strategic ties with Pakistan, India-Pakistan missile race would inevitably trigger a regional offensive arms race.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² New Delhi's impending purchase of the jointly-developed US-Israeli Arrow Missile Defense system from Israel which is designed to provide terminal boost phase intercept against short and medium range ballistic missiles will have a variety of implications for security in the region. Besides eroding Pakistan's confidence in the deterrent value of its F-16 and missiles, it would force the region to move out of the current state of mutual non-weaponized deterrence and create incentive for finding security in greater numbers.

¹⁰³ Some media reports claim that Pakistan has initiated negotiations with the Washington to acquire either the Patriot systems or the Hawk, or Nike-Hercules system. See "Pakistan to Acquire Anti-Ballistic Missiles from U.S.," *Times of India*, 15 May 2003. Islamabad would seek to deploy such systems to "insure that at least some of Pakistan's nuclear warheads and missiles would survive an Indian strike and be available as a deterrent." Andrew Feickert and K. Alan Kronstradt, "Missile Proliferation and the Strategic Balance in South Asia," *CRS Report for Congress* RL32115 (Washington D.C., Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2003), p. 17.

¹⁰⁴ In view of the prohibitively high costs of missile defenses some Pakistani analysts have suggested that Pakistan should counter an Indian missile defense with "hardened and mobile basing, countermeasures, and a small numerical preponderance in relation to Indian defense capability." See Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, "India's Endorsement of the US BMD: Challenges for Regional Stability," *IPRI Journal*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Summer 2001), pp. 28-43. The efficacy of these measures is seriously called into question by the "troubling reality" that "Pakistan has less than two-dozen airfields from which to operate nuclear capable aircraft. Its missile production, main operating bases, and nuclear facilities are very few in number, and their geographical coordinates are publicly known." Michael Krepon, "Missile Defense and the Asian Cascade," in Michael Krepon and Chris Gagne, Eds. *The Impact of US Ballistic Missile Defenses on Southern Asia* (Washington, D.C.: The Henry L. Stimson Center, July 2002), p.79.

Conclusion

Reflecting differences in their geographical circumstance, size, security environments, threat perceptions and domestic political structures, India and Pakistan have adopted radically different declaratory nuclear postures. Ashley J. Tellis has summarized these differences well:

“If the term nuclear weaponry is treated as the framework of analysis, New Delhi is likely to place its greatest emphasis on the adjective nuclear, as in “nuclear weaponry,” thereby using this term to connote national political assets that insure against strategic blackmail and potential nuclear use...Islamabad in contrast, is more likely to place greater emphasis on the noun weaponry, as in “nuclear weaponry”, thus using this term to refer to military instruments that might have to be employed in extremis for purposes of ensuring national safety.”¹⁰⁵

How do these different doctrinal beliefs impinge on the prospects for arms control between India and Pakistan? The conventional wisdom suggests that since arms control agreements regulate military capabilities and presuppose some form of cooperation or joint action among the participants regarding their military programmes, they ultimately end up reducing the likelihood of war.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, to reduce the harmful effects of the dangerous arms race and to achieve strategic

stability, it is imperative that Islamabad and New Delhi must work together to help evolve an arms control regime.¹⁰⁷ Despite their well-known stabilizing effects¹⁰⁸, arms

¹⁰⁷Tariq Rauf, for instance, has argued that “given overt nuclear-weapon and ballistic missile programmes in both countries, it is high time that all those interested in preserving peace and security in South Asia give more serious consideration than heretofore to a proper and effective implementation of certain basic CSBMs in the nuclear and missile areas.” Tariq Rauf, “Confidence-building and security-building measures in the nuclear area with relevance for South Asia,” *Contemporary South Asia*, vol. 14, no. 2 (June 2005), p. 181. In the same vein, Susan Willett has pointed out that “... there are a number of interim measures that could be implemented that would help to build trust and confidence and that could eventually pave the way for more ambitious arms control and disarmament measures. These include improved command and control arrangements, a moratorium on the weaponization and deployment of nuclear weapons, the formal establishment of a hotline, a missile notification agreement, a bilateral test-ban agreement, conventional arms control and restrictions on international arms transfers.” Susan Willett, *Costs of Disarmament – Mortgaging the Future: The South Asian Arms Dynamic* (Geneva: UNIDIR, 2003), p. 75. Some security analysts have questioned the value of arms control as tools for promoting peace and stability between India and Pakistan. C. Raja Mohan, for example, has argued that “the concept of arms race is marginal at best to the problem of peace and security in the subcontinent...for the past five and a half-decades, the case for conventional arms control in South Asia has been heard more outside the policy circles than within them” C. Raja Mohan, “Conventional Arms Race in South Asia: Politico-Strategic Dimensions: An Indian View,” in Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema and Imtiaz H. Bokhari, eds. *Arms Race and Nuclear Developments in South Asia* (Islamabad: Islamabad Policy Research Institute, 2004), p. 6.

¹⁰⁸These stabilizing effects are well-described by Joseph Nye: “...in a sense, all of arms control is a confidence and security-building measure. By increasing transparency and communication among adversaries, worst case analyses are limited and

¹⁰⁵ Ashley J. Tellis, *India’s Emerging Nuclear Posture: Between Recessed Deterrent and Ready Arsenal* (Santa Monica, CA.: Rand, 2001), p. 279.

¹⁰⁶ Jeffrey A. Larson, “An Introduction to Arms Control,” p. 1.

control agreements have been difficult to achieve in South Asia. There are many reasons for the absence of arms control regime in South Asia. The foremost among these is the general fact that “security regimes are more difficult to establish in the security area than in the economic realm because of the inherently competitive cast of security concerns, the unforgiving nature of the problems, and the difficulty in determining how much security the state has or needs.”¹⁰⁹ Lack of bureaucratic and political support for arms control coupled with general absence of peace constituencies in India and Pakistan also account for the irrelevance of arms control regime in the region. The end of the Cold War and the erosion of the constraints imposed by bipolar configuration of power have further weakened incentives for India and Pakistan to engage in arms control efforts. As noted by Jim Wirtz:

“Today multilateral treaties ...are under increasing pressure. Universal norms against the development and deployment of chemical or biological weapons, for instance, are threatened not only by non-conforming states but also the legitimate security concerns of countries that want to comply with treaty obligations but reduced benefits from arms control agreements that fail to constrain a growing number of international bad apples.”¹¹⁰

Technology also has created new challenges and dilemmas by enabling more states to acquire weapons that were once owned by the Soviet Union and the United States, by

security dilemmas are alleviated.” Quoted in Stephen Philip Cohen, “Policy Implications,” in Stephen Philip Cohen, Ed. *Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia: The Prospects for Arms Control* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1991), p. 347.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 251.

¹¹⁰ James Wirtz, “The Future of Arms Control” p. 344.

helping create new types of weapons and by empowering not only small states but also all types of non-state actors and groups to acquire lethal weapons.

Shaun Gregory has identified eight factors that have blocked the emergence of an arms control regime in South Asia. They include:

force asymmetry between India and Pakistan¹¹¹, asymmetry between bipolar and multi-polar conceptions of security, the asymmetry of national perceptions, the tendency to use

India and Pakistan have adopted radically different declaratory nuclear postures.

arms control initiatives as a political tool, lack of institutionalization, lack of political will and lack of trust between the two countries.¹¹² Tariq Rauf has listed five major obstacles on the road to arms control and CSBMs in South Asia. These, according to him, reside in “a preoccupation with global nuclear disarmament to the detriment of more modest region-specific nuclear restraint measures; a lack of discourse on the reasonable limits of conventional, nuclear and ballistic missile forces; an inability to implement arms control as a component of security policy; and an inability to transform the tacit dialogue to an explicit strategic dialogue, and a failure to evolve a common

¹¹¹ How divergent India and Pakistan security outlooks limit the prospect of conventional arms control in South Asia is well stated by C. Raja Mohan: “The divergent geographic circumstances and the mismatch in the security perspectives make it clear that the interaction between the two countries does not fit into the neat binary framework of an arms race. The story of Indo-Pak rivalry has been about the conviction in Pakistan that it must strive for political parity with India. The “arms racing”, if it has taken place, has been entirely one-sided and is based on Pakistan’s determination to maintain parity with India.” C. Raja Mohan, “Conventional Arms Race in South Asia: Politico-Strategic Dimensions: An Indian View,” in Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema and Imtiaz H. Bokhari, eds. *op. cit.* p.7

¹¹² Shaun Gregory, “Rethinking Strategic Stability in South Asia,” *SASSU Research Report* No. 3 (September 2005), pp. 22-23.

strategic language.”¹¹³ These difficulties notwithstanding, it would be imprudent to abandon the quest for arms control in South Asia. As convincingly argued by James Wirtz:

“Opportunities for arms control exist when parties come to believe that they might benefit from either unilateral or mutual restraint regarding the size of their forces, the kinds of weapons included in their arsenals, and the nature of their defense policies. Longtime critics of arms control have seized upon this necessary condition for constructive arms control to note that “arms control works best when least needed.” But dismissing arms control in this way ignores how agreements can save valuable resources and create constructive dialogues that calm unrealistic or imagined fears. Indeed, the very fact of talking about one’s own security concerns and plans with a potential opponent sends a strong signal that peace, not war, is possible.”¹¹⁴

Since their overt nuclearization in May 1998 and despite the occurrence of two nuclear crises in 1999 and 2001-2002, India and Pakistan have pursued the path of security dialogue, which has yielded a number of nuclear, and confidence-building measures aimed at regulating the dynamics of their security competition. The most salient among these include: the February 1999 Lahore Declaration, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by the Foreign Secretaries and a Joint Statement by the Prime Ministers, June 2004 Agreement on the establishment of a secure and dedicated hotline between the two foreign secretaries, August 2005 Agreement to provide advance notice of ballistic missile tests. The conclusion of these bilateral accords coupled with the 1991 Agreement on the Non-Attack

of Nuclear Facilities underscores a growing realization on the part of India and Pakistan that they need to chart a path toward nuclear risk reduction by identifying areas of common interests. The initiation of formal India-Pakistan dialogue since January 2004 covering all outstanding disputes including Kashmir coupled with expanded political and popular contacts between the two countries has made India-Pakistan deterrent equation look less fragile and more stable. The 8 October 2005 earthquake tragedy in which large areas of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir were destroyed has lent a new impetus to the India-Pakistan peace process. The opening of several contact points along the Line of Control in divided Kashmir for relief efforts has renewed hopes of a final settlement of the Kashmir dispute which has been the principal cause of discord, enmity and wars between India and Pakistan.

¹¹³Tariq Rauf, “Confidence-building and security-building measures in the nuclear area with relevance for South Asia,” *Contemporary South Asia*, vol. 14, no. 2 (June 2005), p. 187

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 347.