

Rethinking Strategic Stability in South Asia

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Contents

Introduction.....	3
Nuclear Deterrence	10
Nuclear Command and Control	18
Arms Control.....	21
Confidence-Building Measures.....	25
Non-Military Factors in Strategic Stability.....	29
Rethinking Strategic Stability in South Asia	35

Acronyms

CBM	Confidence-Building Measure
BMD	Ballistic Missile Defense
DGMO	Directors General of Military Operations
J&K	Jammu and Kashmir
LoC	Line of Control
PNE	Peaceful Nuclear Explosion

Rethinking Strategic Stability in South Asia

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Abstract

The debate about strategic stability in South Asia has been dominated by the nuclear paradigm developed during the Cold War in the United States. It has consequently not been sufficiently cognisant of the assumptions embedded within that paradigm or of the differences between the Cold War and the contemporary situation in South Asia. Furthermore debate about strategic stability has typically been narrowly defined in politico-military terms and has given insufficient attention to the economic, political and social factors that impact and condition the core politico-military relationship. This paper attempts to provide a corrective to this, arguing that there are real dangers inherent in assuming nuclear weapons dynamics will play out in South Asia as the Cold War paradigm would predict and setting out an agenda for the promotion of strategic stability in South Asia which is reflective both of the distinct dynamics of nuclear rivalry in South Asia and of the interconnectedness of the military, political, economic and social aspects of security in the region.

Introduction

Analysis of strategic stability in South Asia has been conducted almost entirely in terms of the nuclear discourse developed in the United States during the Cold War. Leading scholars from India and Pakistan, as well as those with South Asia specialisms from outside the region, construct and explore issues of deterrence, coercion, compellance, stability/instability, escalation, security dilemma, and arms control through the neo-realist bipolar lens of US-Soviet relations and thus draw heavily on the intellectual inheritance of the Cold War nuclear discourse, not least the work of Brodie, Kahn, Snyder, Schelling,

Wohlstetter, Osgood, and Jervis.¹ One consequence of this is that explanations

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¹ See for example the importance of these scholars, and others such as Halperin, Mearsheimer, and Waltz, in: Rifaat Hussain, "Nuclear Deterrence and Strategic Stability in South Asia", *Contemporary South Asia*, Vol. 15, No. 2, July 2005 (forthcoming); Michael Krepon, "Limited War, Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South

of, and predictions and prescriptions for, nuclear relations in South Asia are cast in almost exclusively American terms.² In a region acutely sensitive to external interference this extent to which this degree of intellectual imperialism has been embraced is perhaps surprising.

Elsewhere Graham makes similar points even more forcefully:

international academic and policy debates concerning nuclear deterrence, nuclear operations, C3I, arms control and CBMs have been dominated by Americans or by specialists schooled in the Americanized paradigm. [...] Almost all assume there is a single universal logic of nuclear deterrence that drives all nuclear states, *de jure* and *de facto*, to a standard set of policy issues and a standard set of answers constituting a single nuclear weapons paradigm. [...] The essential assumptions behind US nuclear systems have been hidden from view ... by intellectual hegemony.³

Asia”, In: Michael Krepon, Rodney Jones and Ziad Haider (eds), *Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South Asia*, (Washington: The Stimson Center, November 2004), Chapter 7; and Varun Sahni, “Explaining India-Pakistan Crises: Beyond the Stability-Instability Paradox”, In: Pervaiz Iqba Cheema and Imtiaz Bokahri, *Arms Race and Nuclear Developments in South Asia*, (Islamabad: IPRI, 2004).

² The explanations for this include that: (a) the US has the longest experience with the management and operation of nuclear weapons and has arguably paid the most open intellectual attention to these issues; (b) ideas developed in the United States have seemed pertinent to and many have been adopted at least to some degree by subsequent nuclear states such as the UK, France and China; (c) nuclear weapons seem to pose a set of challenges to new nuclear states consistent with those faced by the United States as it developed and expanded its nuclear arsenal; (d) scholars of South Asian nuclear issues have been trained in the American tradition; (e) participation in international nuclear policy and arms control fora require the adoption of a shared (American) conceptual nuclear framework and vernacular; and (f) there is an absence of coherent and fully developed alternatives.

³ Thomas W. Graham, “Don’t Americanize Deterrence in South Asia”, *The Monitor*:

At the same time, some analysts have been mindful of the idea that although nuclear weapons may exercise “universal” effects in relation to global politics such universality may erode or perhaps even break-down entirely in specific regional contexts. Quinlan, for example, has argued that we cannot take “for granted that [the Cold War example] constitutes a universal or canonical template ... against which to analyse the South Asian situation.”⁴ One question this poses for South Asia is whether the differences between the Cold War context and experience and the situation in contemporary South Asia are great enough to bring into serious doubt the utility of Cold War thinking for at least some of the region’s nuclear issues. If the answer to this question is positive, to almost any degree, then a second question is whether South Asia might not be imperilled by prescriptions which flow from Cold War thinking but which might play out in different ways to those which the Cold War experience would predict? If the answer to this question is also positive, again almost to any degree, then a further set of questions arise around the implications this has for analysis of, and prescriptions for, the nuclear dynamics of the region.

In one of the clearest statements of the problematic Hagerty has wisely commented:

It is important to recognise that patterns of proliferation and modes of deterrence will vary across regions. For too long, consideration of these issues has stalled in a quicksand of irresolvable deductive debates that *neglect the distinctive historical, political, cultural and geographic circumstances that shape nuclear behaviour in specific regions. Even more troubling, many US analysts*

International Perspectives on Nonproliferation, Vol. 7, No. 3, 2003, pp 3-5.

⁴ Michael Quinlan, “How Robust is India-Pakistan Deterrence”, *Survival*, Vol. 42, No. 2, Winter 2000-1, p. 141. See also Michael Quinlan, “India-Pakistan Deterrence Revisited”, *Survival*, Vol. 47, No. 3, Autumn 2005, pp 103-116.

*continue to view the rest of the world through outdated Cold War lenses, which raises the possibility that the dynamics of regional nuclear competitions may be profoundly misunderstood. US analysts should be prepared to question, modify or even jettison the models they inherited from their Cold War predecessors [emphasis added].*⁵

The issues Graham and Hagerty identify become clearer once the main differences between the Cold War and the contemporary situation in South Asia are laid out. Picking up some of the elements Hagerty introduced, these differences can be usefully, if somewhat artificially, separated into geo-political, domestic political, ethno-cultural-religious, and military issues.

In terms of geopolitics the main dissimilarities with the Cold War are the long shared border between India and Pakistan, the close proximity of the two capitals and major urban centres such as Lahore, and the lack of strategic space in Pakistan in particular. More broadly there is the absence of an agreed political dispensation – no Yalta, Potsdam or Helsinki – and consequently no agreement on the “status quo”. This is nowhere more problematic than in relation to the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir. In addition the India-Pakistan nuclear relationship is cast to greater or lesser extent in a multipolar context involving external nuclear players such as China, the United States and perhaps Russia.⁶

⁵ Devin T. Hagerty, “Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia”, *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 3, Winter 1995/96, p. 114.

⁶ In terms of a deterrent relationship China may prove to be the most profoundly complicating element. Notwithstanding trends for improved Sino-Indian relations discussed later in the text, were India to develop nuclear delivery systems centred

In relation to domestic politics the differences are equally starkly drawn. The instability of politics, uncertain civil-military relations, oscillating periods of civilian and military rule in Pakistan, intrastate conflict and violence, the domestic political support for irredentism and the promotion of instability, the demands of state-making, the problem of refugees, and terrorism are in marked contrast to the long-term internal political stability and homogeneity (in terms of fidelity to the prevailing political dispensation) enjoyed by the US and USSR. Less tangibly the limited understanding about the destructive potential of nuclear weapons amongst the populace, the absence of the experience of major war⁷, the importance of nuclear weapons as national symbols and crucially

as instruments of identity, and issues of political rhetoric create a very different internal context in South Asia both for debate about nuclear weapons and for the policy and operational aspects of nuclear weapons dynamics.⁸

These issues are compounded by ethno-cultural-religious issues including ethnic and communal violence⁹, religious

on China calibration of a Chinese-Indian deterrent relationship would immensely complicate the Indo-Pakistan deterrent relationship, not least with serious and potentially destabilizing mixed-signalling and possible misperception in Islamabad. I am grateful to Varun Sahni for discussion on this point.

⁷ India and Pakistan suffered the trauma of partition and Pakistan the loss of East Pakistan in the war of 1971. Neither however approximates the catastrophe of WWII, the experience of which was probably a significant factor for caution during the Cold War.

⁸ For an excellent overview of some of these issues see: Haider K. Nizamani, *The Roots of Rhetoric: Politics of Nuclear Weapons in India and Pakistan*, (Westport, Conn: Praeger Press, 2000).

⁹ For a range of views of the nature and implications of these divisions for the state see: Paul Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India*, (Seattle:

Explanations of, and predictions and prescriptions for, nuclear relations in South Asia are cast in almost exclusively American terms.

extremism, nationalism, intra-faith violence (for example between Sunnis and Shias), federal and secessionist tensions and violence, and issues of national “psyche”.

In the military sphere the key differential features are sub-conventional violence, the presence at different sub-conventional and conventional levels of direct military confrontation and “hot wars”, poor tactical and strategic intelligence (at each stage of the intelligence process from data collection, to analysis, to interpretation, to persuading leaderships to act)¹⁰, growing force asymmetry, a lack of shared strategic language, and asymmetrical patterns of civil-military relations.¹¹

Finally India and Pakistan are not superpowers and consequently do not dominate their respective security horizons in the way in which the United States and Soviet Union did. As such they are subject to outside pressure – for good or ill – and are not always able to control the intentional or unintentional consequences of that pressure which play

out regionally as well as within the respective states themselves.¹²

Each of these issues informs and is informed by the others and taken together their complex interrelations would seem to argue against the working through of nuclear dynamics in South Asia being adequately described or understood in Cold War terms. There would also seem to be some empirical evidence to support this. Events which would have been utterly incomprehensible in the US-Soviet context, such as a third-party attack on the Parliament of either or the eye-ball to eye-ball crisis mobilization of more than one million troops, have taken place in the South Asian context and similar events are not unlikely to happen in the future.¹³

The promotion of strategic stability¹⁴, that is assuring that neither side is incentivised nor pressured to use nuclear weapons, is an urgent albeit complex requirement if the region is to avoid nuclear war and in due course move towards a less conflictual and more predictable security relationship. As traditionally conceived the term strategic stability comprises at least three elements, the realisation of each of which poses far-reaching questions for the nuclear state:

Deterrence stability – that each side is credibly deterred (in relation to threats to core norms, values and interests¹⁵) by the

University of Washington Press, 2003); Asghar Ali Engineer, *Lifting the Veil: Communal Violence in Contemporary India*, (New Delhi: South Asia Books, 1996); Irm Haleem, “Ethnic and Sectarian Violence and the Propensity Towards Praetorianism in Pakistan”, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp 463-477; Mushirul Hassan, *Legacy of a Divided Nation: India’s Muslims from Independence to Ayodhya*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997); Human Rights Watch, *Crime or Custom: Violence Against Women in Pakistan*, (London: HRW, 2000) ; Musa Khan Jalalzi, *The Crisis of Governance in Pakistan: Sectarian Violence and Economic Crisis*, (Karachi: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2003); and, Ashutosh Varshey, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

¹⁰ For analysis of the persistent misinterpretation of political signals and the misreading of military and political intelligence during past Indo-Pak crises see: Andrew C. Winner and Toshi Yoshihara, *Nuclear Stability in South Asia*, (Cambridge MA: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 2002), particularly chapter 3, pp 53-81.

¹¹ The issues listed here are not exhaustive. The best discussion of the most pertinent differences in my view remains Michael Quinlan’s thoughtful comparisons in Quinlan, op cit, pp 141-150.

¹² In Andrew C. Winner and Toshi Yoshihara, “India and Pakistan at the Edge”, *Survival*, Vol. 44, No. 3, Autumn 2002, pp 69-86 the authors appear to see external intervention by the United States and other leading states as virtually the only means by which India and Pakistan will escape disaster.

¹³ For a thoughtful look forward see Stephen Cohen, *Nuclear Weapons and Nuclear War in South Asia: An Unknowable Future*, paper presented to the UNU Conference on South Asia, Tokyo, Japan, May 2002.

¹⁴ For a discussion of the meaning of strategic stability and the different ways of understanding the concept see: Syed Rifaat Hussein, “Nuclear Deterrence and Strategic Stability in South Asia”, *Contemporary South Asia*, Special Issue, Vol. 25, No. 1, forthcoming.

¹⁵ For more on this see: Lawrence Freedman, *Deterrence*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004) and Patrick Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

other and thus that there is no uncertainty in the minds of either party about the “pillars” on which deterrence rests: (a) means to deter; (b) ability to carry out deterrence threats; (c) willingness to carry out deterrent threat; (d) assured control of deterrent forces; (e) rational adversary making expected cost-benefit calculus.

Crisis stability – that stability is robust during crises, that is during periods of unanticipated threats to core norms, values and interests, characterized by time urgency and the risk of imminent escalation to the nuclear level.¹⁶

Arms race stability – that stability is not undermined by trends in arms developments (qualitative, quantitative or both) including the development of new technologies.

The demands of meeting these requirements are complicated further by the dynamic nature of strategic stability, that is that it is subject to change over time (in crises perhaps even on a minute-by-minute basis), and by the fact that strategic stability is subject to the vagaries of events and process outcomes within the state (for example the rise of religious extremism, the terrorist threat), within the region (for example, asymmetric economic development, the “war on terrorism”, the role of external players such as the United States and China), and at the international level (for example, globalisation).

The differences outlined above between the Cold War and contemporary South Asia point to at least six major dissimilarities with the Cold War pursuit of strategic stability which in turn suggests that Cold War prescriptions for promoting

¹⁶ See: Sumit Ganguly and K.L. Biringer, “Nuclear Crisis Stability in South Asia”, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 41, No. 6, 2001, pp 907-924.

or enhancing strategic stability may be questionable.

Strategic stability was managed in the Cold War in a relatively stable and largely predictable bipolar context. In South Asia nuclear dynamics between India and Pakistan exhibit both bipolar and multipolar features. The pursuit of bipolar balance and stability between India and Pakistan in a context in which India also seeks to balance China¹⁷ and

quite possibly the United States, and China seeks to balance India, Russia and the United States, is a greatly complicated task. If other states proliferate, such as Iran and North Korea, the situation will become even more complex:

1. In the Cold War the United States and Soviet Union were in a context, for all practical purposes, of sustained conventional¹⁸ and nuclear parity. In

¹⁷ On this “triadic” relationship see: Lowell Dittmer, *South Asia’s Nuclear Security Dilemma: India, Pakistan and China*, (New York: M.E.Sharpe Press, January 2005); and, Arpit Rajan, *Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia: China, India and Pakistan*, (New Delhi: Sage, October 2004).

¹⁸ The assertion of conventional parity between NATO and the Warsaw Pact may seem at odds with the force level statistics during the Cold War. However the qualification “for all practical purposes” makes the case that the numerical “bean count” misrepresented the real conventional relationship. The Soviet Union never achieved the kind of numerical superiority understood to be necessary for victory, and many issues, *inter alia*, of NATO’s qualitative advantages in key technologies and weapons systems (particularly defensive), the quality of the armed forces themselves, morale, and the questionable fidelity of some states in the Warsaw Pact to the Soviet Union all argued that the conventional relationship was less imbalanced than the numbers alone suggested. By contrast in the case of India and Pakistan, India has on at least three occasions (in 1947/8, 1965 and 1971) demonstrated the reality of its conventional superiority over Pakistan. For analysis of the conventional relationship during the CW see: Sherwood Cordier, *Calculus of Power: Current Soviet American Conventional Military Balance in Central Europe*, (London: Rowan and Littlefield, 1983); John Mearsheimer, “Why the Soviets Can’t

South Asia the projected context is one of growing conventional and possible nuclear asymmetry in India's favour. This asymmetry may be reinforced by the Indian uptake of "force-multiplier" information technologies the pace and trajectory of which Pakistan will struggle to match or offset.

2. In the context of a broadly agreed political dispensation both the United States and Soviet Union sought the shared objective of stability in order to avoid nuclear war. In the absence of an agreed dispensation and in relation to a number of unresolved problems, of which Jammu and Kashmir is the most serious, stability is not an agreed or shared objective for many amongst the political and strategic elites in India and Pakistan.¹⁹ For many on both sides the promotion of instability remains a valuable tool of policy, and an instrument with significant public support.²⁰
3. In the Cold War the United States and Soviet Union shared common perceptions of the loci of instability which were to be found in key unresolved problems areas such as

Berlin and in nuclear weapons technology developments such as cruise/Pershing and SS-20s or the SDI. In South Asia there is less agreement about the loci of instability. Pakistan sees these as located around issues of growing force asymmetry (quantitative and qualitative) in India's favour and India's perceived desire for "great power" status; India sees them as located around issues of sub-conventional violence and the stability and cohesion of the Pakistani state. The two share the view that Jammu and Kashmir is an important locus of instability though perhaps not of its relative importance. For Pakistan the issue is *a priori* while for India it is an issue which, historically at least, could be safely marginalised.

4. The United States and Soviet Union dominated the international strategic landscape and were able to set aside the concerns and pressures of others in pursuit of national and bilateral objectives which included the avoidance of nuclear war and the enhancement of their respective advantage over other states.²¹ India and Pakistan do not dominate the international strategic landscape and must, to a greater or lesser extent, accommodate the national interest objectives of other external powers, above all of the United States. Undoubtedly this pressure can be a powerful factor for stability at times (the crisis intervention of the USA being an obvious example), but it can also act against stability (the international pressures for proliferation, the complication of arms control, and the War on Terrorism being examples).
5. The United States and Soviet Union were politically stable and largely untroubled by internal threats. India and Pakistan by contrast are both, albeit to varying degrees, troubled

Win Quickly in Europe", *International Security*, Vol. 7, No. 2, Summer 1982, pp 3-39; Jim Garrison and Pyare Shivpuri, *The Russian Threat: Its Myths and Realities*, (London: Gateway Books, 1983), Barry Posen, "Measuring the European Conventional Balance: Coping with Complexity in Threat Assessment", *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 3, Winter 1984/5, pp 47-88; John Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985) and Eliot Cohen, "Towards Better Net Assessment: Rethinking the European Conventional Balance", *International Security*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Spring 1988, pp 50-89.

¹⁹ There is a strand of thinking in India which indeed believes that Pakistan should not exist at all and for which accommodation with Pakistan, except in relationship to that objective, is deeply problematic.

²⁰ For many, to accept measures to stabilize bilateral relations before key issues such as Jammu and Kashmir have been resolved would be to freeze into the strategic landscape issues of profound injustice with the potential to reignite conflict at a later date. Similarly, as in any conflict, those who benefit from the conflictual relationship are incentivized to maintain it.

²¹ See: Alva Myrdal, *The Game of Disarmament*, (London: Pantheon Books, 1976).

states in terms of internal instability and violence. Even more importantly at least some of these internal dynamics connect directly to pathways of conventional and nuclear escalation. This has profound implications for the way in which crises emerge and develop in the Indo-Pak context as well as for the capacity of the two states to manage bilateral dynamics.

Drawing from these issues, the security relationship between India and Pakistan may be said to be characterized by at least six asymmetries:

1. *Conceptual asymmetry* between the bipolar and multipolar conceptualisation of security dynamics.
2. *Conventional force asymmetry* in India's favour.
3. *Executive control asymmetry* in which the civil-military arrangements for the control of nuclear weapons are dominated by the civilian government in India²² and by the military in Pakistan.
4. *Nuclear policy asymmetry* around issues of strategy, doctrine, and command and control.²³
5. *Threat asymmetry* around the issues which are considered by the respective sides to be the principal threats to bilateral stability.
6. *Asymmetry of national self-perception* (India sees itself as a regional Great Power but is not accepted as such by Pakistan; Pakistan insists on "sovereign equality" but is not viewed as a sovereign equal by India).

In order to understand how these asymmetries play out in relation to

strategic stability it is useful to note that in the search for strategic stability there are typically three approaches: *the exercise and manipulation of threat* through deterrence; *the management of vulnerability* through the assurance of safety, security and command and control; and *the management of threat* through arms control and confidence-building and threat reduction measures. The argument here is that differences between the Cold War and South Asian contexts, particularly the asymmetries described above, suggest that we cannot expect the Cold War prescriptions for strategic stability to play in the same way in contemporary South Asia, and that we need consequently to rethink these approaches and perhaps search for alternatives.

²² For an interesting analysis suggesting that the Indian military's role in the control of nuclear weapons is growing and may erode civilian control see: M.V. Ramana, "Risks of a LOW Doctrine", *EPW Nuclear Notebook*, March 2003, pp 1-10.

²³ On the latter see Zafar Iqbal Cheema, "Command and Control Infrastructure: Operational Asymmetries and Dichotomy, IPRI, IPRI/DPG Nuclear Restraint and Risk Reduction Measures Dialogue, *IPRI Journal*, Summer 2002.

Nuclear Deterrence

Deterrence has received a great deal of scrutiny in South Asia but there is precious little agreement about whether it operates and if so how. Was the Kargil crisis of 1999, for example, evidence that nuclear weapons did not deter military risk-taking, did it demonstrate the effectiveness of deterrence in preventing escalation, or both? As elsewhere the core debate is centred between “nuclear proliferation optimists” who argue that nuclear weapons ultimately have a stabilising deterrent influence because they induce caution and conflict avoidance in protagonists through fear of nuclear war risk²⁴ and the “nuclear proliferation pessimists” who argue, *inter alia*, that the risks and dangers attendant on the proliferation of nuclear weapons – many of which arise from the organisational/bureaucratic nature of their control – act against stability and security.²⁵ The difficulty of reaching

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clarity on deterrence issues is not helped by the ambiguity surrounding operational issues in South Asia or by the deliberate obfuscation evident in the tensions between rhetorical and action policy.²⁶

Four contemporary crises are widely understood to have had a nuclear dimension and should therefore constitute an empirical body of evidence from which to reach some conclusions about nuclear deterrence in the region. Two of these – the “Brasstacks” crisis of 1987 and the “Kashmir tensions” crisis of 1990 (sometimes termed the *Zarb-i-Momin* crisis after the Pakistani

military exercise of that name conducted at the end of 1989) – predate the overt nuclear era which followed testing in 1998. In relation to the former the balance of analysis appears to be that nuclear weapons played only a very marginal role, if any, given the widely supported view that Pakistan at this time was not in a position to weaponise its nuclear know-how within a time-frame pertinent to a possible war.²⁷ In relation to the latter nuclear weapons certainly were a feature.

²⁴ The classic statement of the optimists’ position is Kenneth Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: Why More May be Better*, Adelphi Paper, (London: IISS, September 1981).

²⁵ Perhaps the most cogent of the pessimists is Scott Sagan. See his “Perils of Proliferation in South Asia”, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 41, No. 6, 2001, pp 1064-1086. See also: Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995) and Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002). For a helpful, if now a little outdated, critique of the pessimists position see also: David J. Karl, “Proliferation Pessimism and Emerging Nuclear Powers”, *International Security*, Vol. 21,

No. 3, Winter 1996/1997, pp 87-119. And for Sagan’s rebuttal see: *ibid* pp 120-125.

²⁶ Some of the most thoughtful work on nuclear deterrence in the region has been done by Rodney Jones. See for example his: *Minimum Nuclear Deterrence Posture in South Asia: An Overview*, (Washington D.C.; Defense Threat Reduction Agency, US DoD, October 2001).

²⁷ The most insightful study of the “Brasstacks” crisis remains Kanti Bajpai et al, *Brasstacks and Beyond: Perception and Management of Crisis in South Asia*, Urbana: Program in Arms Control,

In 1993 Seymour Hersh made rather sensational claims that India and Pakistan has come close to fighting a nuclear war in 1990.²⁸ Hersh's account has subsequently been critiqued, most comprehensively by Hagerty²⁹, but the presence and importance of nuclear weapons in the crisis has not been seriously disputed. By 1990 both India and Pakistan were understood, within a pertinent time-frame, to have in place the means to assemble and if necessary deliver (by aircraft) nuclear weapons: India because it has been a *de facto* nuclear power since its atomic test in 1974 and Pakistan because its nuclear weapons programme had matured since the experience of Brasstacks.³⁰ Analysis of the 1990 crisis demonstrates that nuclear weapons were a rhetorical referent of the protagonists (albeit in veiled form). L. K. Advani is reported to have warned, for example, that Pakistan would "cease to exist" in the event of war.³¹ Hersh went so far as to suggest that Pakistan deployed nuclear weapons on aircraft which were armed and readied for take-off in the event of an

Disarmament, and International Security, (Illinois: University of Illinois, 1995). It has to be noted that India's official report on the Kargil crisis made the retrospective claim that Pakistan had made an explicit nuclear threat during "Brasstacks" through India's diplomatic representative in Islamabad, a claim Pakistan denies. See: *From Surprise to Reckoning: The Kargil Review Committee Report*, (New Delhi: SAGE, 2000), section 111. The Indian claim would be strengthened if there was clearer evidence that Pakistan had achieved time-relevant weaponization of its nuclear forces as early as 1986/7.

²⁸ Seymour M. Hersh, "On the nuclear edge", *New Yorker*, March 29, 1993, pp 56-73.

²⁹ Devin T. Hagerty, op cit, pp 79-114.

³⁰ On this nuclear history see: George Perkovitch, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), Ashley Tellis, *India's Emerging Nuclear Posture*, (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001); Zahid Malik, *Dr A. Q. Khan and the Islamic Bomb*, (Islamabad: Hurmat Publications, 1992); and Shahid ur Rehman, *Long Road to Chagai: Untold Story of Pakistan's Nuclear Quest*, (Islamabad: Print Wise Press, 1999). A useful short analysis is: Samina Ahmed, "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons Program: Turning Points and Nuclear Choices", *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 4, Spring 1999, pp 178-204.

³¹ J. Fineman, "India's leader warns of an Attack by Pakistan", *The Economist*, 21 April 1990.

Indian conventional strike, but this has since been disputed by a suggestion of possible confusion on the part of US intelligence about a modification of Pakistani aircraft to nuclear capability.³²

Those who have looked more closely at the crisis argue there are no grounds for believing either side intended the use of nuclear weapons, believed the other might use nuclear weapons, or even contemplated conventional attacks on nuclear assets.³³ That said the United States despatched its Deputy National Security Advisor Robert Gates to the region to defuse the crisis, and Perkovitch reports one US official as describing the 1990 crisis somewhat hyperbolically as "the most dangerous nuclear situation we have ever faced ... as close as we've got to a nuclear exchange."³⁴

In relation to the third crisis, the Kargil crisis of 1999³⁵, sparked when Pakistani and irregular forces crossed the LoC to occupy positions around Kargil³⁶, nuclear sabre-rattling was a strong rhetorical

³² Owen Bennet-Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm*, (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 2002), pp 215-216.

³³ P. R. Chari et al, *Perception, Politics and Security in South Asia: The Compound Crisis of 1990*, (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), p. 128. See also Devin T. Hagerty, *The Consequences of Nuclear Proliferation: The Lessons from South Asia*, (Cambridge: MIT, 1998).

³⁴ George Perkovitch, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 309.

³⁵ For an excellent overview of the crisis, albeit focussing on the lessons for the two protagonists rather than the nuclear dynamics, see: Ashley Tellis, C. Christine Fair et al, *Limited Conflict Under the Nuclear Umbrella: India and Pakistan: Lessons from the Kargil Crisis*, (Santa Monica: RAND, November 2001). For the Indian view see; Jasjit Singh (ed), *Kargil: Pakistan's Fourth War for Kashmir*, (New Delhi: South Asia Books/ IDSA, October 1999); for Pakistan's position see: Shireen Mazari, *The Kargil Conflict 1999: Separating Fact From Fiction*, (Islamabad: ISS, 2003); Shaukat Qadir, "An Analysis of the Kargil Crisis", *RUSI Journal*, April 2002, pp 24-30; and Farzana Shakoor, "The Kargil Crisis: An Analysis", *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. 52, No. 3, July 1999, pp 49-65.

³⁶ For a good discussion of the military aspects of the conflict see: John H. Gill, *Military Operations During the Kargil Conflict*, (Washington D.C.: US National Defence University, April 2003).

feature of the political interactions between India and Pakistan. Pakistani political leaders spoke of using “all the military might at our disposal” to defend Pakistan, while one advisor to the Indian Prime Minister stated “we will not be the first to use nuclear weapons. But if some lunatic tries to do something against us, we are prepared.”³⁷ The rhetoric was the more potent because India exercised a limited war option – using airstrikes and a ground assault – to respond to the incursion, taking the risk of escalation. Many drew the lesson that nuclear weapons had not, at Kargil, deterred conventional risk-taking either by Pakistan or by India³⁸, others observed that the two had observed significant constraints within the conflict: Indian air action not crossing the LoC for example and Pakistan not taking reciprocal air action.³⁹ Others drew the additional lesson that Kargil had been a disaster for Pakistan in inviting international condemnation for initiating hostilities, in exposing Pakistan’s direct involvement in the operations, and in garnering both China and the United States support for the LoC (behind which Pakistan was asked to withdraw) and thus for the status quo.⁴⁰

The crisis was again defused by US intervention, this time led by the special assistant to the US President, Bruce Riedel. In his controversial report of the crucial meeting held on July 4 at Blair House in Washington between Clinton, Pakistan President Nawaz Sharif and Riedel himself, Riedel makes two points of particular relevance here. The first was

³⁷ Quoted in Owen Bennet-Jones, op cit, pp 216-217.

³⁸ A very useful insight is India’s internal reflection on the Kargil war. Although classified the main points of the analysis, candid about the blunders India made, were leaked. See: S. Datta, “War Against Error”, *Outlook India – Kargil Exclusive*, 2005; available at: <<http://www.outlookindia.com/full.asp?fodname=20020228&fname=Cover+Story+%28F%29&sid=1&pn=1>>.

³⁹ I am grateful to Sir Michael Quinlan for discussion on this point.

⁴⁰ See for example: Suba Chandran, *Revisiting Kargil: Was it a Failure for Pakistan’s Military?*, IPCS Report No. 1635, 8 February 2005.

that the US had intelligence that the Pakistani military was preparing nuclear missiles for use, something Sharif reportedly seemed unaware of; the second was that Sharif evidently believed India was preparing nuclear weapons for possible use⁴¹, a point supported by the subsequent claim made by Chengappa that India had indeed raised the alert level of its nuclear forces and moved them towards operational readiness.⁴²

The fourth and most recent crisis – the military stand-off which occurred through January to October 2002 – was sparked by attacks (the nature of which India and Pakistan dispute) on the provincial assembly building in Srinagar in October 2001 and on the Indian Parliament in New Delhi on December 13, 2001. In the wake of these assaults India mobilised more than 500,000 of its forces prompting a counter deployment by Pakistan of a similar scale. During the stand-off India reportedly twice came close to initiating offensive operations in January and June⁴³ and at one point almost lost control of the crisis as an over-zealous Indian Corps commander took his armoured formations into advanced strike positions.⁴⁴

The crisis played out the dynamics of coercive diplomacy⁴⁵ and exposed the

⁴¹ Bruce Reidel, *American Diplomacy and the 1999 Kargil Summit at Blair House*, CASI Policy Paper Series No. 5, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2002), p. 5. This account was confirmed by Stobe Talbott, *Engaging India: Diplomacy, Democracy and the Bomb*, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, September 2004), pp 154-169.

⁴² See Raj Chengappa, *Weapons of Peace: The Secret Story of India’s Quest to be a Nuclear Power*, (New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2000), p. 437.

⁴³ V.K. Sood and Pravin Sawhney, *Operation Parakram: The War Unfinished*, (New Delhi: Sage Press, 2003). See also: Arzan Tarapore, *Holocaust or Hollow Victory: Limited War in South Asia*, IPCS Research Papers, February 2005.

⁴⁴ S. Kalyanaraman, “Operation Parakram: An Indian Exercise in Coercive Diplomacy”, *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 26, No. 4, October-December 2002, p. 485. The whole article repays reading pp 478-492.

⁴⁵ For an insightful discussion see: Rajesh Basrur, “Coercive Diplomacy in a Nuclear Environment: The December 13 Crisis”, In: Rafiq Dossani and Henry S. Rowen, *Prospects for Peace in South*

limits of limited war in South Asia.⁴⁶ For India the mobilization was intended for three main interlinked purposes: to put maximum pressure on Pakistan to back away from supporting the separatist/terrorist groups India believed to be behind the October and December attacks and to constrain over the longer term Pakistan's support for Kashmiri separatism; to align India's struggle against separatism in Kashmir with the wider US-led War on Terrorism⁴⁷; and to deny Pakistan the scope to exploit the stability-instability paradox (directly or through deniable proxies).

For Pakistan the counter-mobilization was intended to offer a credible defence to the threat posed by the Indian mobilization, to deny India the opportunity to conduct limited war operations, and to raise the ante through the risk of escalation to the nuclear level. In this respect Pakistani General Kidwai's often quoted nuclear use thresholds provide a useful counterpoint. These are that Pakistan's nuclear first use policy could become implemented in relation to four main threats: (a) India attacks Pakistan and conquers a large part of its territory (space threshold); (b) India destroys a large part either of Pakistan's land or air forces (military threshold); (c) India proceeds to the economic strangling of Pakistan (economic threshold); or (d) India pushes Pakistan into political destabilization or creates a large-scale internal subversion in Pakistan (instability threshold).⁴⁸ These thresholds cannot be understood as definitive "red-lines" around which India might seek to calibrate limited war options. Their meaning remains imprecise both in their own terms

Asia, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), pp 301-325.

⁴⁶ For an excellent exposition of this concept in Indian thinking see; Jasjit Singh, "Dynamics of Limited War", *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 24, No. 7, October 2000, pp 1205-1220.

⁴⁷ So well timed were the October and December 2001 attacks to achieve this many in Pakistan continue to believe that India was instrumental in "staging" these attacks.

⁴⁸ See: Cotta-Ramusino and Maurizio Martelline, *Nuclear Safety, Nuclear Stability and Nuclear Strategy in Pakistan*, Landau Network – Centro Volta, January 2002.

(what exactly is a "large part" of Pakistan territory or a "large part" of Pakistan's land or air forces?) and in relation to one another (i.e. what combination of these threats, a number of which are not unlikely to occur simultaneously, could trigger nuclear first use by Pakistan?).⁴⁹ For some in India Pakistan indeed seeks to utilize the threat of nuclear use or nuclear escalation to condition even very low levels of conventional engagement which come nowhere near imperilling the Pakistani state.⁵⁰

The severity of the crisis and the risk of nuclear war⁵¹ once again drew in the United States who pressured Pakistan into a package of limited concessions on support for Kashmiri separatism as a face-saving formula for India. The more significant story however is that having marched its troops to the top of the hill India was forced to march them down again. Having opted for conventional mobilization on such a scale India found itself with no credible options in relation to its stated aims: it had no meaningful scope to increase the mobilization (either horizontally or vertically), could find no credible military options – punitive or coercive – with which either to threaten Pakistan or to implement in the face of the nuclear war risk⁵²; and no means (except in a limited way with US assistance) to attain its aims. This has been a blow to the

⁴⁹ In my own interview with General Kidwai in April 2005 these ambiguities and the inter-relationships between them were clearly paramount in Pakistani thinking.

⁵⁰ Raghavan makes this claim for example in relation to Kargil where the threat of nuclear use/escalation by Pakistan was, according to this Indian view, intended to neutralise any Indian limited war options. See: V.R. Raghavan, "Limited War and Nuclear Escalation in South Asia", *The Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 8 No. 3, Fall/Winter 2001, p. 7.

⁵¹ Some contemporaneous newspaper reports even suggested India and Pakistan had put nuclear weapons in the field. See, for example: Mayed Ali, "Tactical Nuclear Weapons Moved Along Borders", *The News*, 28 May 2002.

⁵² A key point here is that such options against Pakistan could have appeared offensive – with all the international implications which flow from that – rather than defensive and to restore the *status quo ante* as they were in the case of Kargil.

Indian strategic community which has responded predictably by searching for positives (one being that India could have bled Pakistan “white” by continuing the mobilization given India’s greater capacity to sustain attrition) and by revisiting limited war in a renewed search for credible options.⁵³ On reflection it is, at the time of writing, difficult to gainsay P. R. Chari’s shrewd observation that; “limited war in the present state of Indo-Pakistan nuclear relations cannot be pursued as a national strategy.”⁵⁴

The antagonists are engaged in a degree of nuclear risk-taking without actually understanding how a given crisis could go out of control.

In the aftermath of the military standoff and in the context of an on-going “irreversible” if hesitant peace process the central question is what do these crises tell us about deterrence and strategic stability between India and Pakistan? Sahni has usefully identified four trends evidenced by the crises:

- (a) The nuclear dimension is getting more and more explicit in each crisis.
- (b) Nuclear weapons are playing an increasingly more important role in crises.
- (c) The progressive sidelining and defeat of diplomacy.
- (d) The ever-more visible US role.⁵⁵

A similar pattern is identified by Khan who argues that India and Pakistan managed their early nuclear crises without overt outside intervention but “as their capabilities increased, so the crises

worsened ... and the United States became more involved.”⁵⁶

The most pertinent issue for present purposes is what, if anything, these trends suggest about future patterns of relations. There would appear to be at least three distinct possibilities: (a) a continuation of the dangerous trajectory of crisis escalation; (b) a pattern of “ugly stability”; (c) a benign trajectory of gradual accommodation conditioned by a growing awareness of the boundaries imposed by nuclear deterrence.

The experience of the emergence and escalation of crises which have required the intervention of the United States on at least three occasions to find a mutually face-saving solution could suggest that deterrence in South Asia is being nuanced around the twin ideas of “the threat that leaves something to chance” and the brinkmanship issue of resolve. Students of Schelling – which analysts of South Asian deterrence assuredly are – will recognise in the former a means to escape the credibility problem by consciously engaging in a “process – a crisis or limited war – that raises the risk that the situation will go out of control and escalate to a catastrophic nuclear exchange”. Powell demonstrates that while Schelling’s idea solved the credibility problem conceptually in the 1960s drawing on the experience of the Cuban Missile Crisis, it did not offer supporting data or arguments about how other crises might actually go out of control.⁵⁷ The implication for South Asia may be that the antagonists are

⁵³ See for example: Gurmeet Kanwal, “Pakistan’s Nuclear Threshold and India’s Options”, *Air Power*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2004, pp 109-124. and “Cold Start: The Theory Does Not Match the Capability”, *Force*, Vol. 2 No. 4, December 2004, pp 32-35.

⁵⁴ P. R. Chari, “Nuclear Stability in Southern Asia”, In: P. R. Chari et al, *Nuclear Stability in South Asia*, (New Delhi: Manohar Books, 2004), p. 146.

⁵⁵ Varun Sahni, “Explaining India-Pakistan Crises: Beyond the Stability-Instability Paradox”, In: Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema and Imtiaz Bokhari (eds), *Arms Race and Nuclear Developments in South Asia*, IPRI 2004, pp138-139.

⁵⁶ Feroz Khan, “The Independence-Dependence Paradox: Stability Dilemmas in South Asia”, *Arms Control Today*, October 2003; <http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2003_10/Khan_10>.

⁵⁷ Robert Powell, “Nuclear Deterrence Theory, Nuclear Proliferation and National Missile Defense”, *International Security*, Vol. 27, No. 4, Spring 2003, pp 86-118.

engaged in a degree of nuclear risk-taking without actually understanding how a given crisis could go out of control, a point underlined if Cold War models of crisis escalation dynamics have only limited utility in the South Asian context. It may even be the case that the assumed involvement of the US is giving India and Pakistan greater confidence to take nuclear risks.⁵⁸

This issue is complicated further by the issue of resolve which informs dynamics of brinkmanship. Powell offers a useful summary of the issue that is worth quoting at some length:

During a crisis, states exert coercive pressure on each other by taking steps that raise the risk that events will go out of control. Consequently ... a state faces a series of terrible choices throughout the conflict. [It] can quit, or it can decide to hang on a little longer and accept a somewhat greater risk in the hope that its adversary will find the situation too dangerous and back down. If neither state backs down, the crisis goes on with each state bidding up the risks until one of the states eventually finds the risks too great and backs down or until events actually do spiral out of control.⁵⁹

This is essentially a contest of resolve and one profoundly affected by the nuclear balance. In the case of overwhelming nuclear imbalance the weaker state may find it impossible to sustain risk-taking because the consequences are disproportionate. But in a context of lesser imbalance a weaker state with more to lose may actually find in resolve a means to face down a more powerful adversary. The essence here is to be prepared to risk all as a core deterrent proposition. Pakistan's refusal to rule out first-use, despite its suicidal implications, Pakistan's historic willingness to engage

India militarily even when the prospects of victory or avoiding defeat appeared slim⁶⁰, and Pakistan's evident willingness to exploit the stability-instability paradox⁶¹, suggest this may indeed be the heart of Pakistani strategy.

Deep psychological issues play at this point, in particular issues of decision-making behaviour⁶², empathy and national psyche. Cold War assumptions about escalation dynamics being determined by rational cost-benefit calculus may obscure the way in which escalation dynamics would actually play out in South Asia. India and Pakistan's strategic communities each claim to know the other through decades of scrutiny and interaction, but the visitor to Islamabad and New Delhi finds little evidence of meaningful empathy with the other. Rather, mutual antipathy often distorts perceptions of motives and behaviour leading to dangerous disjunction: for example,

⁶⁰ See: Sumit Ganguly, *The Origins of War in South Asia: The Indo-Pakistani Conflicts since 1947*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994); and Ahmad Farouqi, "Failure in Command: Lessons from Pakistan's Indian Wars, 1947-1999", *Defence Analysis*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 2001, pp 31-40.

⁶¹ The issue here according to the paradox is that the possession of nuclear weapons creates the space and opportunity for adventurism at lower conflict levels which can be exploited by revisionist states in the expectation that an adversary will be unwilling to risk nuclear war by escalation. The claim has been made that Kargil demonstrated this: Pakistan was willing to initiate and support low-intensity-conflict in the expectation that India would not risk conventional escalation for fear of nuclear escalation. On the paradox see: Michael Krepon, "The Stability-Instability Paradox, Misperception and Escalation Control in South Asia" In: Michael Krepon, Rodney Jones and Ziad Haider (eds), *Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South Asia*, (Washington D.C.: Stimson Center, November 2004), pp 1-24; and Imtiaz Bokhari, "Stability-Instability Paradox: the Case of South Asia", In: Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema and Imtiaz Bokhari (eds), op cit, pp 150-161.

⁶² Pakistan's present High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Dr Maleeha Lodhi, characterized Pakistani decision-making during the Kargil Crisis, for example, as "impulsive, chaotic, erratic and overly secretive ... playing holy warriors this week and men of peace the next [betraying] infirmity and insincerity of purpose, [leaving] the country leaderless and directionless". Maleeha Lodhi, "Anatomy of a Debacle", *Newsline* (July 1999).

⁵⁸ A helpful analysis is: P.R.Chari, *Indo-Pak Nuclear Stand-off: The Role of the US*, (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, January 2003).

⁵⁹ Robert Powell, op cit, pp 89-91.

Pakistan's resolve that it would use nuclear weapons under certain circumstances; India's equal confidence, under the same circumstances, that Pakistan would not. In relation to such interactions it is pertinent to ask, even if a definitive answer cannot be given, how issues of national psyche – particular those relating to face-saving, risk-taking, obduracy, overconfidence and fatalism – would inform such dynamics.⁶³

Couple the vagaries of these dynamics to the limited understanding of how Indian and Pakistani organisations/bureaucracies would perform in the different phases of crisis-and war and it is clear that there is still enormous uncertainty about escalation control in South Asia. The escalating pattern of nuclear risk-taking described above suggests deterrence is not operating to induce military caution and that consequently powerful oscillations in strategic stability are continuing to occur, any one of which could take India or Pakistan across the nuclear threshold.

The second trajectory, the idea of “ugly stability” refers to the notion, developed at RAND in thinking speculatively about the future of Indo-Pakistani relations in the wake of Kargil, that a certain level of “unconventional”/conventional conflict will persist but that this will remain confined at a low-level because the risks of engaging in conventional escalation are too great. It is therefore premised on

several assumptions: one that Pakistan will continue to be motivated to support unconventional violence in relation to the Kashmir issue; two that India will find no limited war options to neutralise unconventional conflict; and three that this dynamic will be durably “stable” in not escalating beyond certain parameters of violence.⁶⁴

This therefore suggests that deterrence is operating effectively in confining military conflict between India and Pakistan to a narrow band of operations and that consequently strategic stability, while oscillating, is oscillating within limits that pose little or no risk of nuclear escalation (otherwise the claim could not be made that this was “stability”).

The third, profoundly optimistic, way of viewing the four crises is to see in “Brasstacks”, Zarb-I-Momin, Kargil and the 2002 military stand-off an inward spiral rapidly bringing India and Pakistan to a point of paralysis in which both sides have run out of credible military options: sub-conventional, conventional or nuclear. If this view is correct the period 1999-2002 will probably be seen as the high watermark of danger for India and Pakistan after which the two learned that the risks of nuclear war were too great to countenance military adventurism on any scale. If so, the nuclear optimists' faith in nuclear deterrence would be vindicated and the oscillations in strategic stability would be declining and dampening.

Powerful oscillations in strategic stability are continuing to occur, any one of which could take India or Pakistan across the nuclear threshold.

⁶³ The notion of national psyche is difficult to evidence as a factor but in interviews in Islamabad and New Delhi it was widely accepted as an important issue in how nuclear dynamics would play out. For some insight see: Sudhir Kakar, *Culture and Psyche: Psychotherapy and India*, (New Delhi: Pysche Press, 1997); Som P. Ranchan, *Anatomy of Indian Psyche*, (New Delhi: Ajanta Press, 1987); and Pushpinder Singh, *Fiza'ya: Psyche of the Pakistan Air Force*, (New Delhi: Society of Aerospace Science, 1991).

⁶⁴ Ashley Tellis, C. Christine Fair, and Jamison Jo Medley, op cit.

A theoretical reconciliation of these views may yet be evidenced in the one or more future crises which may still be necessary to demonstrate to both strategic communities that further military confrontation – for example by Pakistan not yet persuaded of the dysfunction of sub-conventional violence or by India not yet persuaded of the folly and dangers of limited war – is futile. In other words historians may view not the two crises of 1999-2002 as the peak of bilateral danger, but the 2+n crises of 1999-20XX as that peak.

Nuclear Command and Control

The second strand informing strategic stability and complicating the foregoing issues is the requirement for robust command and control able to assure high-level control of nuclear weapons, reduce to acceptable levels the risk of accidental, unauthorised or irrational use of nuclear weapons, and to assure the survivability of nuclear weapons to the degree necessary to underwrite deterrence.

With nuclear arsenals widely accepted as still in double figures⁶⁵ and held in recessed – i.e. undeployed – postures and with India and Pakistan both having developed hierarchical command structures for nuclear policy, control and employment⁶⁶, much international anxiety

has focussed on the safety and security of nuclear weapons in the region, particularly in Pakistan where at least three threats are thought relevant: (a) the risk of a counter-coup or civil war which replaces President Musharraf and puts nuclear weapons in the hands of a military leader antagonistic to the West; (b) the risk of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of elements of the Pakistani military with extremist Islamic sympathies⁶⁷; (c) the risk that nuclear weapons will fall directly into the hands of radical political or terrorist organisations such as al-Qaeda. These scenarios have been the focus of interminable analysis in the west⁶⁸ and have led to wild speculation, *inter alia*, either that the US military and intelligence services have already taken control of Pakistan's nuclear weapons in the wake of

⁶⁵ The exact number of nuclear weapons in the Indian and Pakistani nuclear arsenals are not in the public domain. However most open source analysis of fissile material production put the two arsenals in the 30-70 nuclear weapons range, with the most up-to-date (such as SIPRI) suggesting Pakistan may presently have a slight nuclear numerical advantage. See: S. Albright, "India's and Pakistan's Fissile Material and Nuclear Weapons Inventories, end of 1999", Institute for Science and International Security, 11 October 2000, available at <<http://www.isis-online.org/publications/southasia/stocks1000.html>>; R. Norris et al, "Pakistan's Nuclear Forces, 2001", *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 58(1) January/February 2002, pp 70-71 and "India's Nuclear Forces, 2002", *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 58 (2), March/April 2002, pp 69-71; J. Cirincione et al, "Deadly Arsenals", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, (Chapter 11 India; Chapter 12 Pakistan), <http://www.ceip.org/files/pdf/Deadly_Arsenals_Chap11.pdf> [Chap12.pdf]; SIPRI Pocket Yearbook 2004, (London: Taylor and Francis, 2004) pp 25/40.

⁶⁶ For a range of views about nuclear command and control in South Asia see: Clayton P. Bowen and Daniel Wolven, "Command and Control Challenges in South Asia", *The Nonproliferation Review*, Spring-Summer 1999, pp 25-35; Zafar Iqbal Cheema, *op cit*, pp 1-18; and Zia Mian, *A Nuclear Tiger by the Tail: Some Problems of Command and*

Control in South Asia, PU/CEES Report No. 328, June 2001.

⁶⁷ For an exploration of this risk see: *Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military*, International Crisis Group, Report No. 36, Islamabad/Brussels, July 2002, *Pakistan: The Mullahs and the Military*, International Crisis Group Report, No. 49, Islamabad/Brussels, 20 March 2003. For insight into the Pakistan military more generally see: Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, *The Armed Forces of Pakistan*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 2002); Brian Cloughley, *A History of the Pakistan Army: Wars and Insurrections*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000) and Stephen P. Cohen, *The Pakistan Army*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press 1984 and updated 1998). On the Indian Military see; Stephen Cohen, *The Indian Army: Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation*, (New Delhi: OUP, 2002) and Apurba Kundu, *Militarism in India: Army and Civil Society in Consensus*, (London: I.B.Taurus, 1998).

⁶⁸ One of the most useful is Gaurav Kampani, *Safety Concerns about the Command and Control of Pakistan's Strategic Forces, Fissile Material and Nuclear Installations*, Center for Non-Proliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, 28 September 2001,

9/11 and the war in Afghanistan⁶⁹ or that they are planning (variously with India and/or Israel) to destroy or remove the nuclear weapons in the event of significant instability in Pakistan.⁷⁰ Risks to the safety and security of India's nuclear weapons have by contrast received almost no international credence.⁷¹

Many commentators are less pessimistic about the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.⁷² Pakistan has put in place robust measures for the management of its nuclear weapons, screens personnel with nuclear-related duties, operates a "two-person" rule, uses permissive-action-link

⁶⁹ Ramindar Singh, "Controlling Pakistan's Nukes: Has the US Taken over the Stockpile?", *The American Prospect*, Vol. 13, No. 1, January 1-14, 2002; and Hari Sud, *Has America Tricked Pakistan and Gained Control of their Nuclear Weapons?*, SAAG Paper 927, 17 February 2004. It needs to be stated that there is absolutely no evidence for this whatsoever.

⁷⁰ Seymour Hersh, "Watching the Warheads: The Risks to Pakistan's Nuclear Arsenal", *New Yorker*, 29 October 2001.

⁷¹ The recessed nature of the Indian deterrent, the NFU second strike policy, the absence of serious Islamic extremist threat within India, and the robust and redundant arrangements for command and control in India appear to have persuaded most that the threats to safety and security are negligible. Certainly this is the conclusion of Ashley Tellis's exhaustive *India's Emerging Nuclear Posture*, RAND, 2001, see particularly pp 428-466.

⁷² Some like Jordan Seng have even argued that new nuclear states have command and control advantages because they have only small nuclear arsenals particularly in relation to the "greater organisational simplicity that stems from the *small size and simple composition* of their nuclear arsenals" [emphasis in the original] and from the use of concealment as a means to protect their arsenals from counterforce attack. See: Jordan Seng, "Less is More: Command and Control Advantages of Minor Nuclear States", *Security Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 4, Summer 1997, pp 50-92; for a rebuttal and Seng's response to the rebuttal see: Peter D. Feaver, "Neoptimists and the Enduring Problem of Nuclear Proliferation", *ibid*, pp 93-125; and Jordan Seng, "Optimism in the Balance: A Response to Feaver", *ibid*, pp 126-136. In view of the way in which the Indian and Pakistani nuclear arsenals have evolved since these articles were written it would be immensely valuable to have the protagonists revisit their debate at some length. On the issue of concealment Sagan offers some thoughtful analysis about the unintentional betrayal of location intelligence in his "Perils of Proliferation in South Asia", *op cit*.

technology to "lock" weapons against unauthorised use, operates authenticating and enabling code systems, and has in place multiple layers of physical security around its weapons.⁷³ For similar reasons US "control" of Pakistan's nuclear weapons or the credibility of claims that the US, India or Israel could "take out" Pakistan's nuclear forces are dismissed in Islamabad, though it is clear that the US has provided considerable technical assistance to Pakistan in relation to the safety and security of its weapons.⁷⁴ All this said no systems or arrangements are completely reliable or immune to circumvention.

Of rather more concern are command and control issues around the deployment and operation of nuclear weapons. The dynamics of taking nuclear weapons from their recessed postures, mating warheads to deliver systems, deploying weapons in the field, and meeting the requirements of command and control through possible conventional and perhaps even nuclear engagement are immensely demanding and risk-prone.⁷⁵ It is in this realm that the reassurances of the strategic communities on both sides need to be most closely challenged.

The risks associated with the loss of centralised control, the pre-delegation of nuclear use, elision along the safety-security/readiness spectrum, "dyadic coupling" (this refers to the actions,

⁷³ See: Shaun Gregory, "Nuclear Command and Control in Pakistan", forthcoming.

⁷⁴ The twin challenges of threats to the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons and the risk of loss of centralised control in crises persuaded the United States to make the offer of technical and knowledge support. See: Sharon Squassoni, *Nuclear Threat Reduction Measures for India and Pakistan*, CRS Report for Congress, RL31589, 17 February 2005.

⁷⁵ For discussion of the problems which arise with "routine" and crisis deployment see: Stephen Jones, *From Testing to Deploying Nuclear Forces: The Hard Choices Facing India and Pakistan*, RAND Issue Paper No. 192, 2000, available at <<http://www.rand.org/publications/IP/IP192>>, and R.Rajamaran, M.V. Ramana, and Zia Mian, *Possession and Deployment of Nuclear Weapons in South Asia*, EPW Special Article, 22 June 2002,

reactions and interactions which take place between two nuclear adversaries effectively coupling their two nuclear arsenals and command and control systems into one dyadically-coupled system. The behaviour of this “coupled system” remains underanalysed in South Asia), conventional “over-run”, the conventional-nuclear interface, and unintended nuclear escalation are well known. It is worth reminding ourselves that some analysis of NATO’s nuclear command and control reached very pessimistic conclusions about the ability to control nuclear weapons operations in severe crises, let alone in the context of conventional or nuclear engagement.⁷⁶ Paul Bracken even went so far as to suggest that NATO had created a command and control system which would “fail deadly” precisely as a means of engineering the “threat that leaves something to chance” because NATO’s deterrent posture could not be held credible if it rested on a rational choice decision which could never in practice be rationally made. To Bracken the elements of this are clear:

Because of the absolutely fundamental importance for deterrence of being able to go into a suicidal nuclear war, it is important to explore some of the ways these threats could be carried out. *Broadly speaking, three factors make the NATO threat believable: decentralised and delegated control of nuclear weapons once they are put on alert, the ambiguity of command authority over the employment of nuclear weapons, and the complexity of wartime and crisis management* [emphasis added].⁷⁷

Bracken’s views were too alarmist for many but the points he made about finding a means to make the incredible credible

and the risk of the loss of escalation control remain crucial. It is not necessary to believe that NATO *deliberately* constructed a fragile nuclear command and control system to nevertheless accept that uncertainty about the control of nuclear use and escalation (including the risk of “fail-deadly” outcomes) provided a powerful deterrent against flirtation with nuclear options.

To the extent that US and NATO nuclear operational thinking is guiding the policies of India and Pakistan as they implement nuclear command and control arrangements it is valid to ask if the latter are not – wittingly or unwittingly – creating “fail deadly” mechanisms, rendered the more problematic because the dynamics of brinkmanship are likely to play out differently in South Asia for reasons discussed above. NATO and the Warsaw Pact appeared, at least after 1962, to understand that the uncertainty of managing nuclear weapons operations made it imperative to stay away entirely from direct military confrontations of any sort which contained the potential to engage nuclear escalation pathways. The evidence of the last four Indo-Pak crises suggests no such military confrontation avoidance outcome has yet materialised in South Asia, even if, for some, the present rapprochement proffers such a hope.

⁷⁶ See for example: Paul Bracken, *Command and Control of Nuclear Forces*, Yale University Press, 1981; Daniel Charles, *Nuclear Planning in NATO*, Ballinger Press, 1987, and Shaun Gregory, *Nuclear Command and Control in NATO*, Macmillan Press, 1996.

⁷⁷ Paul Bracken, *ibid*, pp 164-165.

Arms Control

If it is difficult to see how durable strategic stability might emerge through the exercise and manipulation of threat or through the management of vulnerability, it is pertinent to ask if the management of threat might provide a more sustainable approach. Thus far the indicators are not positive. No bilateral structural arms control agreements of any kind have been reached between India and Pakistan in more than fifty years of coexistence. The issue is the more curious given that both parties have – within limits – been willing to accede to international arms control agreements. India is presently a signatory, *inter alia*, to the Partial Test Ban Treaty (1963), the Seabed Treaty (1973), the Biological Weapons Convention (1974), the Enmod Convention (1978), the Outer Space Treaty (1982), the Antarctic Treaty (1983), the Inhumane Weapons Treaty Convention (1984), and the Chemical Weapons Convention (1993). Pakistan for its part is similarly signatory to the same set of treaties and conventions except for the Antarctic and Seabed Treaties.⁷⁸

This level of participation in international fora evidences that both parties are willing to accept the principles and obligations of arms control under certain circumstances and each accepts – at least in relation to the other signatory states – that ceding some autonomy in the area of arms as a means to acquire some influence over

**Arms control offers a means
to mitigate the security
dilemma between India and
Pakistan.**

others is a valid security strategy. Since both parties have also entered into international agreements which involve the other one may also reasonably draw the conclusion that both India and Pakistan have in the past demonstrated a degree of trust in each other to observe the terms of agreements and comply with the obligations of treaties and conventions. Each in other words has accepted the other as a trustworthy partner in arms control since neither would feel able to be bound by constraints within a treaty or convention framework which it did not feel the other was observing.

Given the spiralling cost of arms and the desperate need in both India and Pakistan for the expenditure of government resources on development, education, welfare, healthcare, infrastructure, and so forth, arms control appears to be a cost-effective means to manage important elements of bilateral security relations and might consequently be expected to appeal to policy-makers. Furthermore arms control offers a means to mitigate the security dilemma between India and Pakistan and to introduce into the security calculus a degree of predictability and durable stability which the manipulation of threat by deployments and counter-deployments cannot provide. It is also pertinent in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union that the perils of allowing burgeoning military expenditure to

⁷⁸ See: Jozef Goldbalt, *Arms Control: A Guide to Negotiations and Agreements*, PRIO/SAGE Press, 1996, pp 751-753.

dislocate a national economy are all too obvious.⁷⁹

Why then has arms control proven so elusive? From a review of the history of arms control engagement – or rather the lack of it – between India and Pakistan at least seven issues arise:

1. Force asymmetry: the present and future differences in the size, nature, balance and posture of military forces (non-nuclear and nuclear) between the two states creates a complex context for arms control agreements.⁸⁰
2. The asymmetry between the bipolar and multipolar conception of security of Pakistan and India respectively and a related, perhaps consequent, preoccupation with global measures.
3. The asymmetry of national self-perceptions: bilateral arms control confers a perception of equality between the parties and in political terms this can itself be a key gain of an arms control agreement for the “lesser” party. For the Soviet Union during the Cold War, for example, bilateral arms control with the US was prized in no small measure because it confirmed the equal superpower status of the Soviet Union to the wider world. In South Asia the issue of conferred equality remains a major obstacle given Pakistan’s insistence on “sovereign and equal” status and India’s (and most independent observers’) perception of itself as a regional hegemon and aspirant great power.⁸¹ Pakistan’s promotion of a

bilateral strategic restraint regime, for example, has fallen victim to these first three issues.⁸²

4. Arms control as a political tool: arms control has been used not for the genuine pursuit of shared security outcomes but as an instrument of political manipulation in at least two respects. The first has been the articulation of arms control initiatives designed by one side to wrong-foot or embarrass the other. Proposals are designed – most often in relation to the four issues outlined above – in the full knowledge that they will be unacceptable to the other. The pay-offs for this kind of posturing are the opportunity for each to argue the virtue of its own position and the vice of the other’s. The seemingly acceptable downsides include the many lost opportunities for real progress on arms control, the consequences these missed opportunities have had for the region’s security, and the lost opportunity to build meaningful trust through sustained bilateral engagement.

The second has been the use of arms control to create leverage around the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. For Pakistan, which throughout its history has made a resolution of this dispute the centrepiece of its national security policy, arms control has long been hostage to the dispute. For India progress on bilateral arms control has been long understood as a means to sidestep the J&K question. The asymmetric log-jam has typically led to stalemate.

5. Lack of institutionalisation: perhaps because of the absence of material arms control engagement or progress

⁷⁹ Around 30% of Pakistan’s national budget is spent on defence and a further 40-45% of the national budget is spent on debt servicing. There is thus little more than 25% of national budget available for the nation’s development.

⁸⁰ Rodney W. Jones, *Conventional Military Imbalance and Strategic Stability in South Asia*, SASSU Report No. 1, University of Bradford, March 2005.

⁸¹ For an interesting exploration of how this perception plays as a security factor see: Subrata Mitra, “The Reluctant Hegemon: India’s Self-Perception and the South Asian Strategic

Environment”, *Contemporary South Asia*, 12(3) (September 2003), pp 399-417.

⁸² For an elegant statement of the issues from Pakistan’s perspective see: Maleeha Lodhi, “Security Challenges in South Asia”, *The Nonproliferation Review*, Summer 2001, pp 118-124.

neither India nor Pakistan have yet fully institutionalised arms control into their security policy processes through the appropriate bureaucratic structures, the emergence of an appropriate discourse on force limits, and the appropriate linkage of arms control to wider security policy debates and decision-making. The full force of this argument has only become apparent as both countries have sought to rapidly develop such infrastructure in the wake of nuclear weapons testing in 1998.

6. Lack of political will: this simply-stated explanation reflects the more complex point that politicians and even military leaders operate to a greater or lesser extent within the constraints imposed by their domestic political contexts. India and Pakistan have made for themselves a political context in which bilateral accommodation and compromise is painfully difficult in the face of elite and public opposition. Lack of political will may in such a situation be better understood as the unwillingness to squander the political capital or bear the political costs of promoting arms control.
7. Lack of trust: the assertion that neither side trusts the other sufficiently to agree and implement bilateral arms control may have some explanatory utility, but, given that both India and Pakistan have been party to international arms control agreements and both have agreed bilateral CBMs (see below), the heart of the issue is patently more subtle. There would appear to be something specific about the combination of the nature of structural arms control and the bilateral context which has proven particularly problematic in relation to trust-building and agreement.

Asymmetric deals would seem an appropriate response to asymmetric problems.

If arms control is to provide a possible means for progress towards strategic stability in South Asia responses have to be found to the seven obstacles outlined above. Once again the differences between the Cold War and the contemporary situation in South Asia assert themselves at this point. Cold War prescriptions for arms deals arising from a different situation and a different set of barriers to progress on arms control can be expected to have only limited utility, if any, in relation to arms control in South Asia if those prescriptions are not finessed in relation to the specifics of India-Pakistani relations.

Leaving aside for the moment the issue of Kashmir which is addressed below, a number of approaches might achieve such finessing. Asymmetric deals would seem an appropriate response to asymmetric problems and these might be possible around (a) proportionate force levels; (b) bilaterally specific systems; (c) trade-offs: concessions/agreements in different areas; (d) co-ordination of unilateral measures; (e) linkage of arms control to enhancing deterrence and assured command and control.

A second key could be the internationalisation of the verification of bilateral deals. Verification is the *sine qua none* for trust-building and agreement in a conflictual context and India and Pakistan have already demonstrated bilateral trust within, and fidelity to, international arms control treaties. International verification could address the lack of trust by giving both parties confidence in bilateral deals and could also address the issue of political will by reducing the domestic political risks for leaderships in entering into bilateral agreements.

Clearly these two conceptual notions – asymmetric deals and the internationalisation of verification – present formidable practical challenges,

would need to be tested in relation to specific proposals, and the modalities of such arrangements would obviously be pregnant with difficulties. However such approaches have succeeded in other contexts and such approaches are conceptually cognisant of the realities of the situation in South Asia.

A third key could be to pursue confidence building measures (CBMs) designed specifically to improve the bilateral context for arms control deals (not least by responding to the eight obstacles outlined above) either as precursors to those deals or as supporting or conditioning adjuncts to them. To understand how this might operate it is necessary to give fuller attention to CBMs themselves.

Confidence-Building Measures

While India and Pakistan have been unable to achieve anything in terms of bilateral structural arms control, they have managed to agree a number of operational arms control measures, more usually understood as confidence-building measures. The objectives of CBMs – which traditionally may be summed up as “separating a state’s military capability from military intent” – distil to three main ideas:

- (a) Reassuring states of the non-aggressive intentions of their potential adversaries and reducing the possibility of the misrepresentation of certain activities.
- (b) Narrowing the scope of political intimidation by the forces of stronger powers.
- (c) Minimising the likelihood of the inadvertent escalation of hostile acts in a crisis situation.⁸³

Since security cannot be achieved by the agreement of military arrangements alone it follows that this definition needs to be broadened and economic, political and social measures need to come into play at some point if a hostile relationship is to be durably improved. One may consequently note that CBMs implemented across the world seem to fit into four categories, and in South Asia one can observe evidence of agreement in all four areas:

- CBMs that enhance communications between the parties:
 - DGMO “hotline” and Kashmir LoC sector commander “hotlines”.

⁸³ This definition is derived from Joseph Goldblat, *Arms Control: A Guide to Negotiations and Agreements*, PRIO/Sage, 1996, pp 4-5.

- Prime Ministerial “hotline”.
- Foreign Ministry “hotline”.
- Non-governmental “Track-two” fora for dialogue.
- CBMs that promote transparency and open-ness amongst the parties:
 - Prior notification of military exercises.
 - Advanced notification of ballistic missile flight tests.
 - Observer invitations for military exercises.
 - Notification of accidental, unauthorised or unexplained incidents that could create the risk of (nuclear) fallout or of a nuclear war.
- CBMs that impose constraints on the behaviour of parties:
 - Karachi agreement on the Cease-Fire Line (and revisions).
 - Agreement on border disputes (of the former West Pakistan).
 - Rann of Kutch Tribunal Award.
 - Tashkent Declaration (non-interference).
 - Simla agreement (renunciation of use of force).
 - Violation of airspace agreement.
 - Non-attack of nuclear facilities.
 - Declaration on prohibition of chemical weapons.
 - Moratorium on further nuclear weapons testing.
- CBMs that strengthen the security of the parties through economic, political and social co-operation.
 - Indus Water Treaty.
 - Joint Commission / Foreign Secretary meetings on

- communications, trade, tourism, and technology.
- “Track-three” people-to-people contact.
 - Sporting links.
 - Transport links.⁸⁴

While this appears to be a substantive set of achievements it is important to note that it represents the rather limited outcome of over fifty years of co-existence, that many of these measures have not been honoured or have only been partially honoured by one or both parties, that many of these measures continue to be hostage to the oscillations in relations between the parties, and that they amount to only a small fraction of the measures proposed formally and informally which for various reasons have not been adopted or implemented.⁸⁵

At least two important questions arise. One is whether military CBMs ought to have primacy because the avoidance of war is paramount and a prerequisite for economic, political and social co-operation (in which case initiatives in the

⁸⁴ This overview is drawn from Michael Krepon et al, *Global Confidence Building: New Tools for Troubled Regions*, (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1999), pp 169-208; Gabrielle Kohlmeier, “India, Pakistan hold nuclear talks”, *Arms Control Today*, July-August 2004, pp 17-26; and Moonis Ahmar (ed), *The Challenge of Confidence-Building in South Asia*, (New Delhi: Har-Anand Books, 2001).

⁸⁵ For an overview and analysis of CBMs in South Asia see the work of the Stimson Centre, in particular: Michael Krepon and Amit Sevak (eds), *Crisis Prevention, Confidence Building and Reconciliation in South Asia*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave/Macmillan, November 1995); Michael Krepon and Zaid Hauder (eds) *Reducing Nuclear Dangers in South Asia*, Stimson Report No. 50, February 2004; Michael Krepon (ed), *Nuclear Risk Reduction in South Asia*, Palgrave Macmillan, November 2004, and Michael Krepon, Rodney Jones and Zaid Haider (eds), *Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South Asia*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, November 2004). See also: Moonis Ahmar (ed), op cit.

realm of the latter can be expected to be subsumed or postponed until substantive military arrangements are in place) or whether economic, political and social CBMs can help create an improved climate and context for military CBMs and contribute to more rapid and comprehensive progress towards peace. A second is why has the uptake, implementation and observation of apparently mutually beneficial CBMs been so problematic and spasmodic?

Why has the uptake, implementation and observation of apparently mutually beneficial CBMs been so problematic and spasmodic?

The former is not quite the false dichotomy it appears because CBMs – like arms control – are hostage to other issues in the region, not least Jammu and Kashmir, and the issue of which measures to

adopt and in what sequence has emerged as a pertinent dynamic. The explanations for the latter would seem to revisit some or perhaps all of the obstacles, discussed above, that have impeded progress on arms control.

Bringing these strands together implies a different agenda for CBMs in South Asia. The region is not short of ideas for stabilizing almost any aspect of the Indo-Pakistani security relationship⁸⁶ as the

⁸⁶ See for example: Suba Chandran, *Nuclear Confidence Building in South Asia*, SASSU Report No. 2, University of Bradford, July 2005. P. R. Chari, “Conventional CBMs and Arms Control”, In Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema and Imtiaz Bokhari, op cit, pp 172-190; Pervez Hoodbhoy and Martin Kalinowski, “The Nuclear Subcontinent: The Tritium Solution”, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, July/August 1996, Vol. 52, No. 4, pp 41-44; Feroz Hassan Khan, Guarav Rajen and Michael Vannoni, *A Missile Stability Regime for South Asia*, (Sandia National Laboratories, SAND 2004-2832, June 2004); Gaurav Rajen, “An Indian and Pakistani CBM: The Sir Creek Trans Border Area”, *Disarmament Forum: The New Security Debate*, No. 1, 1999. Available at <http://www.unidir.org/bdd/fiche-article.php?ref_article+267>; Achin Vanaik, “Nuclear Risk Reduction Measures between India and Pakistan”, *EPW Notebook*, July 2002, pp 1-8; and Zia Mian and A.H. Nayyar, “An Initial

work of the US Stimson Centre, for example, has demonstrated over many years.⁸⁷ But the reasons why these ideas have not been adopted and how the obstacles to adoption might be overcome have not received equivalent attention. Some of the most important dimensions of this are the expansion of political space, the development of traction in bilateral processes, and sustainability in relation to the ebb and flow of Indo-Pakistani relation (that is ensuring agreements/arrangements are not hostage to crises and continue to function in periods of tension when arguably they may be most needed).

A second, closely related, dimension of the agenda needs to concern itself with the eight specific obstacles to progress outlined above. Is there a role in each area for CBMs – military and non-military – to address the core elements of each issue? How for example can CBMs provide the kind of reassurance that would permit both India and Pakistan to agree asymmetric arms control deals? What kind of CBMs could contribute to the emergence of a shared discourse on appropriate force levels or a shared strategic language? Can CBMs play a role in managing the implications of the bilateral and multilateral perceptions of security in the region? Do CBMs have a role in reassuring domestic elites and publics? Can CBMs be agreed to address the modalities of international verification of bilateral deals?

In an increasingly asymmetric military relationship a third under-analysed area of CBMs but one which is absolutely key to long-term stability is “narrowing the scope of political intimidation by the stronger power”. The importance of this issue becomes evident if one accepts that security is indivisible: India cannot make

Analysis of ⁸⁵Kr Production and Dispersion from Reprocessing in India and Pakistan, *Science and Global Security*, No. 10, 2002, pp 151-179.

⁸⁷ Stimson is not the only Centre of course working on these issues. Excellent work has also been done in particular at the ICPS in New Delhi, IPRI in Islamabad and the Program in Science and Global Security at the Woodrow Wilson School for Public and International Affairs, Princeton.

itself more secure by making Pakistan less secure and vice-versa; each can only make itself more secure by ensuring that the other is also more secure. In a conflictual and “neorealist” relationship this is a difficult understanding to reach, but it is nevertheless an essential step if real progress is to be made.

To take just one example: has India been made more secure by testing its nuclear weapons? Arguments that it has, particularly in relation to China and perhaps the United States, need to be balanced against counter-arguments that the 1974 PNE and 1998 Indian tests have provoked Pakistan into developing nuclear weapons while conventional force asymmetries have obligated Pakistan to eschew a no-first-use policy. Just a few years ago India’s cities were largely defensible against Pakistani attack, now India lives with their certain destruction in the event of nuclear war. Is India really more secure in a regional context that today features a nuclear-armed Pakistan committed to possible first use?

The core point is that any hegemon must understand the implications of its power for those who feel threatened and intimidated by that power – justifiably or not. If it does not wish its power to be instrumental in creating instability and insecurity it must act to limit the way in which it exercises power. Precisely how CBMs can be used to narrow India’s scope for political intimidation is thus a pivotal strand of the agenda in South Asia.

The issue of Jammu and Kashmir⁸⁸, which has dogged Indo-Pakistani relations since

⁸⁸ The Jammu and Kashmir issue is deeply contested. For an introductory range of views see: Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press/Woodrow Wilson Center, 1997); Alistair Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy 1846-1980*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1991); Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unfinished War*, ((London: I. B. Taurus, 2000); Robert Wirsing, *India, Pakistan and the Kashmir Dispute*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997); and Robert Wirsing, *Kashmir in the Shadow of War*, (New York: M. E .Sharpe, 2003).

partition, cannot here be explored in any depth but it remains arguably the key obstacle to meaningful progress on bilateral relations. The present peace process and the composite dialogue seeks to resolve the log-jam through the “composite” nature of the dialogue and through simultaneous engagement with the Jammu and Kashmir question and other issues. The argument is made below that India should seek accommodation on Jammu and Kashmir – consistent with its own position – with the objective of drawing the sting of Pakistan’s hostility and weakening those forces in Pakistan which act against democracy, liberalism and stability.

At the time of writing a grand political deal to finally agree a resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir seems as unlikely as ever but some leading commentators are optimistic that changes on the ground (political enfranchisement, open bus links, people-to-people contacts, etc) could be paving the way for the gradual transformation of the region around a “soft border” solution.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ I am grateful to Victoria Schofield for discussions on this point.

Non-Military Factors in Strategic Stability

Except for victory or defeat in war, protracted conflicts historically tend to end not through a negotiated military-politico deal but through economic, political and social transformation. It is typically the case that strategic communities do not anticipate such change, are powerless to halt or reverse it, and become co-opted by it as they seek to adapt to the new context. All these features were evident, for example, in the end of the Cold War between 1989 and 1991. Militaries stood by as social and political change swept across the Warsaw Pact and then became instruments to underwrite the change through arms control deals and force restructuring.

This idea can be expressed in another way: two countries in close geo-strategic proximity, armed with nuclear weapons, large standing armies, and with a history of protracted conflict between them ought, in realist parlance, to exert a powerful security dilemma on one another. In the case of India and Pakistan they do; in the case of Britain and France they do not. The explanation of the difference is that in the case of Britain and France changed economic, political and social realities have altered the meaning of military power between the two. This transformation was achieved not by a grand politico-military deal but by the gradual improvement of relations between

the two countries through economic co-operation, trade, bilateral deals (including arms deals), and more recently through alliance, regionalism, institutionalism and the pooling of elements of sovereignty.

South Asia is presently being swept by economic, political and social forces which do have the potential to transform Indo-Pakistani relations.

The point is that the nuclear weapons and standing armies of India and Pakistan do not pose a threat to one another simply by virtue of their existence, but by virtue of the political, social and economic relationships which condition the meaning of the weapons the two possess. It follows from this that one key to defusing the military hostility between India and Pakistan and moving to a context of sustainable strategic stability in which neither side seeks nuclear advantage over the other is to be found in changing the non-military elements of bilateral relations. Viewed in this way progress on economic, political and social issues are in no sense second order questions. This is all the more pertinent because South Asia is presently being swept by economic, political and social forces which do have the potential to transform Indo-Pakistani relations in the not too distant future. While some analysis shows present levels of economic co-operation between India and Pakistan to be marginal to both and insufficient to have substantive spill-over

in the military security realm⁹⁰, many analysts argue that the next decade or so will see this situation significantly changed.

The reasons for making this claim are the multiple pressures bearing on South Asia in the years ahead. The first of these is globalisation.⁹¹ Globalisation promotes liberal market economics and forces social and political change on states which are impacted by it. These social and political changes advantage those within a state positioned to adapt but further disenfranchise those who are not. Coping with the additional internal pressures this creates within a state is consequently one of the main challenges posed by globalisation.

For India globalisation is a key driver of economic growth (variously estimated to be around 7-8% per annum for the next decade⁹²), the expansion of the middle classes, and the further exaggeration of the polarity of wealth between the rich and poor. The Bharatiya Janata Party's failure to sell the idea of "India Shining" in the 2004 elections suggests much of the internal political debate of the next decade – though often expressed in other forms – will turn on the management and amelioration of the gap between rich and poor as globalisation bites deeper.⁹³ In any

⁹⁰ See, for example: E. Sridharan, "Economic Co-operation and Security Spill-Overs: the case of India and Pakistan", In: Michael Krepon and Chris Gagne, *Economic Confidence-Building and Regional Security*, Stimson Centre Report No. 36, October 2000, pp 59-90.

⁹¹ Globalisation is a complex issue, now the subject of a vast literature. The basics of the issues, theoretical and practical, can be gleaned from the following: Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Anchor Books, New York, 2000; Barry Gills (ed), *Globalization and the Politics of Resistance*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Press, 2000); and David Held et al, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*, (London: Polity Press, 2000).

⁹² *World Bank Country Brief: India*, available at <<http://Inweb18.worldbank.org/SAR/sa.nsf/Countries/India/4F3233D642E4BB3985256B4A00706AA7?OpenDocument>>.

⁹³ For a good overview of trends which also explores the internal implications of rapid economic growth in India see: Kaushik Basu (ed), *India's*

event the Indian economy seems poised to double in size over the next 7-10 years significantly increasing India's capacity for regional and extra-regional engagement.⁹⁴

Pakistan, by contrast, appears much less well positioned either to adapt to and benefit from globalisation or to handle the internal pressures it generates. The concentration of economic power in the hands of a ruling elite, the role of the military in economic activity⁹⁵, the weakness of democracy, the strength of reactionary forces (not least Islamic hostility to the "westernizing" effects of globalisation) and the weakness of institutions stand as barriers⁹⁶. Put another way: the rapid emergence of a sizeable, educated, meritocratic and genuinely politically enfranchised middle class is a necessary condition for successful engagement with globalisation – as China and India, for example, understand. Yet such a political force, unless it can be divided or co-opted⁹⁷, poses the starkest threat to the ruling "tripartite" elite of Pakistan – the military, the civilian bureaucracy and the dominant families⁹⁸ – and will be blocked for that reason.⁹⁹

Emerging Economy: Performance and Prospects in the 1990s and Beyond, (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, May 2004).

⁹⁴ See Juli MacDonald, "Rethinking India's and Pakistan's Regional Intent", *NBR Analysis*, 14(4), November 2003, pp 5-26.

⁹⁵ See Owen Bennett Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm*, (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 2002), pp 277-278 for a snapshot.

⁹⁶ For an excellent analysis see: Ishrat Hussain, *Pakistan: The Economy of an Elitist State*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, March 2000). See also: S.Akbar Zaidi, *Issues in Pakistan's Economy*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁹⁷ I am grateful to Tom Gallagher for discussions on this point.

⁹⁸ Tariq Amin Khan, "Economy, society and the state in Pakistan", *Contemporary South Asia*, 2000 9(2), 2000, pp 181-195. This article is particularly insightful in demonstrating "exclusionary" economic growth in Pakistan which further enhances the wealth of the "tripartite" while hardening the fissures in Pakistani society.

⁹⁹ For a thoughtful analysis of Pakistan's malaise and the means by which the army might be reformed see: Ahmad Faruqi, *Rethinking the National Security of Pakistan: The Price of*

This does not mean that globalisation will pass Pakistan by; that is already manifestly not the case.¹⁰⁰ It does mean, however, that economic growth in Pakistan will not keep pace with India. It also means that Pakistan will have less capacity to absorb and ameliorate the impact of globalisation internally.

The second trend is the growing domestic clamour for change, peace and stability inside both India and Pakistan, a clamour informed but not wholly explained by globalisation. Pressure in the business and financial communities for the governments of India and Pakistan to reconcile their differences and provide a stable context for economic progress is building. This is nowhere more evident than in the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline deal which is close to agreement.¹⁰¹ The same “will for peace” is evident in the widespread support for “track three” initiatives such as enhanced sporting ties, people-to-people contacts at many different levels, the opening of a bus-route across the LoC, the vociferousness of intellectuals in both countries for change¹⁰² and in the proliferation of NGOs building bilateral civil society or acting directly to promote peace.

Strategic Myopia, (Aldershot: Ashgate Press, 2003).

¹⁰⁰ Fatima Mahnoz, *Imperatives of Globalization: Implications for Pakistan*, ASCE, (Karachi: University of Karachi Press, 2001).

¹⁰¹ This deal which has the potential to greatly assist in the improvement of Indo-Pakistani relations is paradoxically being blocked at the moment by the USA which is insistent that Pakistan should not violate the US Iran and Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA) which forbids, on pain of possible forfeiture of US aid and the imposition of US sanctions, external investment of more than \$20 million in Iranian gas and oil projects. See: Tarun Sikhdar, “India, Pakistan and Iran Defy America on Gas Pipeline?”, *The India Daily*, 14 June 2005, p. 12.

¹⁰² See for example the joint statement of “Citizens Against War” during the 2002 military stand-off in which 26 Indian and 26 Pakistani eminent persons drawn from the academe, the arts, diplomacy, the law, the media, the military and politicians called for a new peace process. <<http://www.mnet.fr/aiindex/citizensagainstarwar02.html>>.

The third factor is the “war on terrorism”. The geostrategic importance of Pakistan in relation to the US-led war on terrorism has reinvigorated US-Pakistan relations but this is a marriage of convenience.¹⁰³ The United States both values the Musharraf government as an ally, above all for the military and intelligence co-operation it is providing in the region, yet is fearful of Pakistan’s role at the nexus of nuclear proliferation, terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism.¹⁰⁴ In supporting Musharraf’s¹⁰⁵ leadership and in pursuing a military campaign (itself and by proxy) on the ground in Afghanistan and Pakistan’s tribal areas the United States is allowing short-term expediency to override longer-term thinking. The US presence is strengthening anti-democratic forces in the country while at the same time deepening the divides in Pakistani society, not least between the government and the Islamic groups and between Islamabad and the tribal areas. It is clearly an exaggeration to claim, as some have, that Pakistan is a failed state on the cusp of disintegrating along various fault-lines, but equally it is clear that instability, division and autocracy drains Pakistan of resources, energy and direction.

¹⁰³ See: C. Christine Fair, *The Counter-Terror Coalitions: Cooperation with Pakistan and India*, (Santa Monica: RAND, June 2004); Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan 1947-2000 Disillusioned Allies*, (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, December 2000); Shirin Tahir-Kheli, *India, Pakistan and the United States*, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, September 1997); and Frank G. Wisner et al, *New Priorities in South Asia: US Policy Towards India, Pakistan and Afghanistan*, (Washington D.C.: Council for Foreign Relations, May 2004).

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, Hassan Abbas, *Pakistan’s Drift into Extremism: Allah, the Army, and America’s War on Terror*, (New York: M.E.Sharpe, 2004) and Anatol Lieven, “The Pressures on Pakistan”, *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2002, pp 106-118.

¹⁰⁵ On Musharraf’s early attempts to move the country towards more meaningful democracy and the stalling of his plans see: Rashid Ahmad Khan, “Political Restructuring and Transition to Democracy in Pakistan 1999-2002”, *IPRI Journal*, No. 2, 2004; and Ian Talbot, “General Pervez Musharraf: Saviour or Destroyer of Pakistan’s Democracy?”, *Contemporary South Asia*, (2002), 11(3), pp 311-328. See also: “The Man in the Middle”, *The Economist*, 11 March 2004, pp 63-65.

Paradoxically perhaps the economic, social and political progress which are widely accepted as one of the real antidotes to terrorism are being undermined in Pakistan by the US military presence.¹⁰⁶

The war on terrorism has also narrowed the political space for Pakistan's support for Kashmiri separatists since the Bush administration is all but blind to nuanced arguments about sub-national violence.

The fourth trend is post-Cold War and post-9/11 strategic realignments. Two strategic triangles exercise the most significant influence on Indo-Pakistan relations: the US-India-Pakistan relationship and the India-Pakistan-China relationship. While Indian-US relations have long been strained, the war on terrorism, India's geostrategic position at one edge of the "civilizational faultline" of the Islamic world, and India's trajectory as a democratic, liberal market, and rapidly westernizing, state seem likely in due course to position India as the US's principle strategic ally in the region.¹⁰⁷ The thrust of much analysis of US-Indian relations suggests that short-term difficulties will persist but that synergies and the convergence of interests will eventually lead to longer-term, if perhaps

¹⁰⁶ The US has however made the long-term political and economic stability of Pakistan an explicit objective and has structured aid packages accordingly. See: "Interview with Richard Armitage", *The Hindu*, 22 October 2001 <<http://www.hinduonnet.com>>.

¹⁰⁷ For many the crossroads moment arrived during the Kargil crisis of 1999 when the US responded to the crisis on its merits rather than by siding with its traditional ally Pakistan. The Bush administration's more recent decision agreed in January 2004 to enter into strategic partnership with India in the areas of civil nuclear technology, space technology and high-technology trade, and the decision to provide India as well as Pakistan with F-16 fighters suggest this realignment is well underway.

uneasy, co-operation.¹⁰⁸ It is also clear that while the United States is prepared to continue to support a certain level of military assistance to Pakistan (particularly while Pakistan is a useful ally in the war on terrorism¹⁰⁹) the thrust of US policy is to promote economic, social and political stability and progress in Pakistan rather than to empower Pakistan as a military rival to India. The US-Indian-

Pakistan triangle is therefore being recalibrated by the United States: a clear trajectory of closer and meaningful defence co-operation between India and the United States (evidenced further by the June 29, 2005 Defence Accord¹¹⁰) and a shift in emphasis towards

economic, social and political dimensions of the relationship in relation to Pakistan.

In a similar vein the Indian-Chinese relationship appears to also be evolving in a positive direction as both China and India emerge as economic giants.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ For a selection of views see: Gary Bertsch et al, *Engaging India: US Strategic Relations with the World's Largest Democracy*, (London: Routledge, November 1999); S. Datta-Ray, *Waiting for America: India and the United States in the New Millennium*, (New Delhi: HarperCollins, September 2002); Ashok Kapur et al, (eds), *India and the United States in a Changing World*, (New Delhi: SAGE Press, March 2002); W. P. S. Sidu, *Enhancing Indo-US Strategic Co-operation*, Adelphi Paper, IISS, 14 February 2005; and Strobe Talbot, op cit.

¹⁰⁹ T.Schaffer, "US Influencee on Pakistan: Can Partners Have Divergent Priorities?", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 2003, pp 169-183.

¹¹⁰ See: "India and US Sign Defence Accord", *BBC News Online*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/news/1/hi/world/south_asia/4632635.stm>.

¹¹¹ On the improvement and convergence of India and China's interests and relations, notwithstanding the continued obstacles, see: Kanti Bajpai and Amitabh Mattoo, *The Peacock and the Dragon, India-China Relations in the 21st century*, (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, June 2002), Francine Frankel and Harry Harding (eds), *The*

Mutual economic interests (bilateral trade has jumped from \$3 billion in 2000 to \$13.6 billion in 2004¹¹²), the implications of globalisation, and the emergence of an “Asian supercomplex”¹¹³ are altering the dynamics of the Sino-Indian-Pakistan triangle. China historically has no wish to be drawn into an Indo-Pak conflict and has avoided formal alliance with Pakistan for that reason. Aside from minor tensions around border issues China and India have since the 1980s maintained “correct but cool” bilateral relations given substance by regular diplomatic and political meetings. More recently China has become increasingly concerned about instability in Pakistan and in particular about the potential Islamisation of Pakistani politics with implications for China’s problems with its own Muslim minorities, particularly in Xinjiang province.¹¹⁴ In staking an interest in the new “great game”¹¹⁵ in Central Asia China may indeed be signalling the downgrading of Pakistan as a key regional ally, particularly as Pakistan declines as a credible counter-weight to India.¹¹⁶

India-China Relationship, (Washington D.C.: Columbia University Press, March 2004); and, W. P. S. Sidu and Jing-Dong Yuan, *China and India: Co-operation or Conflict?*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, April 2003).

¹¹² IISS, *Strategic Survey 2004/5*, (London: Routledge/IISS, May 2005), pp 327-328.

¹¹³ See: Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, CSIR, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), especially pp 93-184.

¹¹⁴ For an excellent essay see: Dru Gladney, “Xinjiang: History, Cultural Survival and the Future of the Uyghur”, In: Annelies Heijmans, Nicola Simmons, and Hans van den Veen, *Searching for Peace in Asia Pacific* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2004), pp 255-277.

¹¹⁵ See: Lutz Kleveman, *The New Great Game: Blood and Oil in Central Asia*, (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, September 2003) and Emmanuel Karagiannis, *Energy and Security in the Caucasus*, (London: Routledge Curzon, March 2002).

¹¹⁶ If China’s relations with the US sour and the US-Indian strategic relationship deepens China may yet see virtue in helping Pakistan to confront India. I am grateful to Samina Ahmed for discussion on this point. For a helpful discussion about the prospects for Indo-Pak competition in the Caucasus see: Juli MacDonald, op cit.

For Pakistan’s rulers the next decade looks increasingly problematic in the face of India’s rise and the economic and geostrategic trends outlined above. At least three options would seem open, each with implications for the bilateral security relationship with India. The first, an attempt to match India in the military sphere seems impractical for anything more than a short time and then only at the price of further dislocation of the domestic economy and the entrenchment of military rule. The second, a strategy of trying to pull India down through any means possible risks sustained bilateral conflict with attendant nuclear war risk and will exact a high price on Pakistan, as well as on India, in terms of lost economic, political and social opportunity.¹¹⁷

The third possibility, presently gaining currency in Islamabad, would be to accept a genuinely asymmetric accommodation with India, and seek to work with India both to move towards resolution of outstanding security issues and to maximise the shared economic opportunities which arise from India’s growth (the trans-Pakistan energy pipeline deal being an obvious example) and other trends.

For Pakistan an asymmetric accommodation would not mean a South Asian “Finlandisation”. Nuclear Pakistan has the means to develop a proportionate nuclear strategy – akin to the British strategy and the French “*du faible au fort*” – able to exact costs which outweigh any conceivable gain India might have through the exercise of nuclear or conventional muscle.¹¹⁸ The challenge for the strategic

¹¹⁷ For a flavour of this cost and lost opportunity see: Strategic Foresight Group, *Cost of Conflict Between India and Pakistan*, (Mumbai/Islamabad: ICPI, 2004).

¹¹⁸ Arguably, although there is presently thought to be a nuclear balance or perhaps even a slight nuclear advantage to Pakistan (see figures I have presented at note 52), Pakistan may already have been thinking along these lines in anticipation of eventual Indian nuclear superiority. As long ago as early 1999, while he was still Pakistan’s Chief of Army Staff, General Musharraf reportedly stated that Pakistan would not try to match India but would retain just enough capacity to “reach anywhere in

community of Pakistan would be to nuance such a strategy around India's growing conventional military superiority.

In India seeking an accommodation with Pakistan is now widely seen to be desirable. Stability in the region and a stable, democratic and liberal Islamic Pakistan are both in India's interests and indeed essential if India is to realise its potential. India presently has the motive and opportunity to improve relations with Pakistan and to the extent that it is willing to do this, Pakistan is likely to take steps down the path of normalisation.¹¹⁹

The idea that India might pursue its own security by seeking actively to make Pakistan more secure presently has little purchase in New Delhi, though many see the virtue of not making Pakistan jumpy.¹²⁰ The issue is *cui bono*? If New Delhi is to avoid Pakistan choosing the nihilistic path of dragging India down as a strategic objective (the second of the options outlined above) it must incentivize those in Pakistan motivated to adopt the third mutually beneficial path. Such incentivization could not be done by overt unilateral concession since this would be politically unsustainable in India at the present time. But it could be done through engagement, deal making around technical issues (again including asymmetric deals – concession on one side in area A in return for concession on the other side in area B), and by omission (i.e. not taking steps which might prove inflammatory or regressive, the issues around Indian BMD being an obvious example). For progressives in Pakistan the challenge would be to forego the temptation, and block the internal political pressures, to try to exploit India's search for accommodation. President Musharraf may presently be in a strong enough position to

India and destroy a few cities, if required". See: John Cheria, "The Arms Race", *Frontline*, Vol. 16, No. 9, 24 April-7 May 1999.

¹¹⁹ K.J.M. Varma, "If India Takes One Step, Islamabad Will Take Two: Musharraf", Quoted on <<http://www.rediff.com/news/2003/jun/18pak2.htm>>, 18 June 2003.

¹²⁰ I am again grateful to Sir Michael Quinlan for comments on this point.

do this, but is unlikely to be so indefinitely.

Progress and accommodation on Jammu and Kashmir should be the centrepiece of Indian moves, something former Prime Minister Vajpayee, evidently understood before the BJP's electoral defeat in May 2004. The waypoints to accommodation for India are around (a) ceasefire; (b) ending military excesses in Jammu and Kashmir and, at a later date, accountability and restitution for what has taken place¹²¹; (c) further political engagement with the peoples of Jammu and Kashmir; and (d) opening and softening the border along the LoC. To the charge that Pakistan must first do x or y there are two responses: first that Pakistan has already taken steps, albeit under pressure, to curtail its support for separatists in Kashmir; second that India needs to view progress on Jammu and Kashmir as a means to enhance its own security by reducing Islamabad's scope to exploit the issue domestically.

The non-negotiables on both sides of the Jammu and Kashmir issue – leaving aside for a moment the wishes of the peoples of Jammu and Kashmir themselves¹²² – are well known and need no rehearsal here. Indian movement on Jammu and Kashmir however would have the additional virtue of expanding the political space in Islamabad around other security issues.

¹²¹ This may seem fanciful at this point, but one of the keys to the future of Jammu and Kashmir is India's legitimacy in the region. Viewed in this way an eventual Indian-led process to redress the violent excesses of its military and security forces against the Kashmiri people would be an important stabilizing measure and could have enormous international support and pay-off.

¹²² It is important to note that there are "modernists" in Pakistan who are receptive to the idea of meaningful Kashmiri independence as well as those in Pakistan tied to the more "traditionalist" line. For a nuanced discussion of these dynamics in Pakistan see: Alexander Evans, "Reducing Tensions is Not Enough", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 2001, pp 181-193.

Rethinking Strategic Stability in South Asia

How then to synthesis the foregoing into a coherent reappraisal of strategic stability in the region? The traditional (Cold War) view that strategic stability will arise from both India and Pakistan achieving assured second strike nuclear capabilities to underwrite mutually assured destruction underplays the risks attendant on arms-racing and crises, the dangers that nuclear dynamics will play differently in the region not least in relation to sub-conventional escalation pathways, the risk of accidental or unauthorised use, the implications of technology trends and force asymmetries, and the internal and regional implications for both states of maintaining the conflictual relationship and high levels of militarization. These issues suggest that achieving strategic stability through the manipulation of threat will prove elusive in South Asia.

The argument made in the foregoing is that we have to approach strategic stability in South Asia in a more regionally nuanced way. This approach needs to begin with an understanding of the specificities of contemporary South Asia:

1. The nuclear relationship in South Asia does not operate in a vacuum, but in a complex politico-military-economic-social context subject to powerful forces of change. Analysis of strategic stability needs to be reflective of that context and of the dynamics of change.
2. Geostrategically South Asia is undergoing a transition from a vigorously bipolar conflict formation to an increasingly unipolar hegemony.
3. South Asia differs from the Cold War situation in many mutually informing ways. These differences are significant enough to require that “Americanized” analysis of, and prescriptions for, South Asia is challenged and adapted to realities on the ground.
4. Conceptions of national security centred on military power have failed South Asia, mirroring the region in conflict for more than fifty years. These need to be replaced by mutual conceptions of security and an understanding of security which links military and non-military factors.

A developed agenda for the promotion of strategic stability in South Asia must exhibit four features: firstly the analysis of nuclear dynamics must be more cogently related to the complexities of the region and to the specifics of nuclear policy and operations in India and Pakistan. The relevance and utility of the “American” nuclear paradigm therefore needs to be reassessed. Secondly prescriptions for arms control and CBMs must be fully cognisant of the structural obstacles to their agreement and implementation and must focus on addressing those obstacles. Thirdly the conception of strategic stability must be broadened from a narrow politico-military focus to one which links military, political, economic and social issues. Enhancing co-operation in any aspect of the Indo-Pakistani relationship contributes to the enhancement of the stability of the nuclear relationship because the latter is inevitably conditioned by the former. Fourthly the promotion of

strategic stability must be reflective of the dynamics of change impacting the region.

In relation to deterrence the contextual complexities and asymmetries suggest South Asian dynamics will not play out as predicted by Cold War models. The crises of the nuclear era in South Asia do not demonstrate, at least to this author, that a pattern of conflict avoidance from fear of nuclear war risk is yet evident in the region. Too little is known about the interplay between the psychological issues impacting deterrence, the performance of Indian and Pakistani bureaucracies and organisations in crisis and conventional and nuclear war, and the complexities and risks of managing nuclear weapons systems once such weapons are taken from recessed postures, to have any confidence that a stable deterrent relationship can be assumed either now or in the future.

With respect to arms control and CBMs South Asia's track record is poor despite the urgent need for progress in these areas and despite the sustained attention such issues have received from academic communities in particular. The obstacles to progress are clear but the means by which these might be addressed – in terms of the nature and positioning of proposals, the means to facilitate and support such proposals, the means to encourage political support and will (regionally and internationally), and the means to meet the costs (in the fullest sense) of these proposals – are not.

Non-military and military elements of stability in the region are part of one seem-less and mutually-informing agenda and separating them is artificial. Progress in improving bilateral relations at any level and in any area contributes to bilateral stability; progress on any of the disputes between India and Pakistan (for example, Siachen, Sir Creek, and above all Jammu and Kashmir) enhances stability directly and indirectly by expanding the political space for movement on other issues.

Military issues will likely continue to dominate the strategic stability agenda but the argument made here, that in the end it is economic, political and social progress which will deliver sustainable strategic stability, means non-military issues should in no sense be considered subsidiary concerns of that agenda.

This latter point gives added import to the need for discourse about strategic stability to be fully reflective of the profound forces impacting South Asia at the present time and in the years and decades ahead. Strategic communities have the choice to ignore these forces or to understand and adapt to them in pursuit of the shared objectives of security for all the peoples of the region.