

ADVERSE PARTNERSHIP A PARADIGM FOR INDO—PAKISTAN DÉTENTE

Imtiaz H. Bokhari*

Introduction

Moving from an adversarial relationship towards détente is a necessity for the nuclear-armed South Asian rivals. The use of the word “détente” is quite common, but is often understood to mean what is in fact “entente”. This article does not advocate a leap in Indo-Pakistan relations to entente; rather, it suggests a framework for détente, which simply means an improvement in the relationship between two or more countries that have been unfriendly towards each other in the past. Entente, on the other hand, denotes a friendly relationship between two or more countries and the absence of politico-strategic disputes and a common threat perception.¹ In the South Asian context, even the word “unfriendly” does not truly reflect the relationship between India and Pakistan since their emergence as two independent states in 1947. Détente may be understood as an instrument for managing an adverse partnership. It presupposes that the “partners” have common as well as conflicting interests.

Nuclear weapons generate their own logic and Henry A. Kissinger encapsulated this dilemma of nuclear-weapon states as early as 1962 in the following words:

In the past, the military establishment was asked to prepare for war. Its test was combat; its vindication, victory. In the nuclear age, however, victory has lost its traditional significance. The *outbreak* [emphasis original] of war is increasingly considered the worst

* Dr Bokhari received his Master’s degree and Doctorate from the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, DC, and is Vice President, Islamabad Policy Research Institute.

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¹ These definitions are from the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*.

catastrophe. Henceforth, the adequacy of any military establishment will be tested by its ability to preserve the peace.²

This philosophical leap from winning a war to preventing its outbreak is the most profound consequence of the development of nuclear weapons. All past attempts at acquiring greater lethality in the history of warfare were evolutionary, but the induction of nuclear weapons has revolutionized warfare, turning it upside down. Has this consequence of nuclearization been fully absorbed by defence planners in India and Pakistan? Empirical evidence after the May 1998 nuclear explosions does not inspire much confidence. Having fought three wars, the two countries are apparently experienced enough to know how to make war but there seems little to suggest that their military establishments are working hard enough to learn how to prevent the outbreak of the next war: the very *raison d'être* of their existence.

Interestingly, the South Asian and the East–West Cold Wars commenced in the same year (1947), but the former has the dubious distinction of having outlasted the latter; it seems to have become perpetual, while gaining greater intensity.³ At a time when the world's most intractable conflicts have either been resolved or the warring parties are engaged in negotiations, the South Asian scene appears to be an anachronism. A silver lining in the otherwise dark clouds of Indo–Pakistan relations was discernible in mid-2003, when some tentative moves by both countries indicated a thaw in their relations. But these measures, it appears, are more symbolic than substantive and do not constitute even the initial steps of the long and arduous journey towards peace.⁴ Peace—not mere absence of war—cannot be attained unless both countries agree on a settlement of the Kashmir problem.

² Henry A. Kissinger, *The Necessity for Choice: Prospects of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Anchor Books, 1962), pp. 11-12.

³ 12 March 1947, when President Harry Truman spelled out his Truman Doctrine, is generally considered the date of the onset of the East-West Cold War. On 14 August 1947, the partition of the Indian subcontinent resulted in the creation of India and Pakistan as independent states; in October of the same year, the two were involved in a conflict over Kashmir.

⁴ Pakistan's High Commissioner-designate reached New Delhi on 30 June 2003, while his Indian counterpart arrived in Islamabad a fortnight later; the bus services between New Delhi and Lahore was also resumed in July. Train and air services remain suspended, as do the sporting contacts. These contacts should never have been suspended in the first place. In sharp contrast, the diplomatic missions of

*“The Necessity for Choice”*⁵

It takes one to make war but two to make peace. If the military establishments of India and Pakistan exist to maintain peace, then both countries have to work together for the attainment of that objective. The prerequisite for peace is not tactical manoeuvring, aimed at one-upmanship, but statesmanship with a strategic vision. This should flow from the realization that the Indo–Pakistan conflict is the basic cause of nuclearization and poverty in South Asia. This twin menace must be viewed by the leaders of both India and Pakistan as a common enemy. A war involving nuclear weapons will destroy both countries, while poverty can bring either or both to the brink of annihilation, with regional ramifications. Only by forming a common front can Pakistan and India hope to fight their common enemies successfully. It has to be fought and won as a joint battle, otherwise both will lose. This realization should result in a reordering of the relationship between India and Pakistan on the basis of adverse partnership.⁶ The central thesis of this essay is that, by taking adverse partnership as a paradigm for building a peace in which the two nations can continue their efforts for the resolution of conflicts, including the Kashmir dispute, they could, simultaneously, “play partners” for the limited twin objectives of preventing the outbreak of nuclear war and fighting poverty until their pride and prejudices thaw a little.

National Interest

In an anarchic international system, such as obtains at present, the policies of states are determined largely by their interests. For policies to change, a redefinition of interests by both India and Pakistan is required. One of the foremost tasks which ought to engage the attention of regional leaders and academia is for both to start to perceive the prevention of nuclear war and the fight against poverty as vital national interests. Perhaps the most compelling collective needs of

both countries continued to work without interruption during the 1965 and 1971 wars.

⁵ The phrase has been borrowed from Kissinger’s famous book, *The Necessity for Choice*.

⁶ Coral Bell, *Conventions of Crisis: A Study in Diplomatic Management* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 50-52.

the region are the maintenance of peace and the alleviation of poverty: neither can be achieved without revisiting the concept of national interests and reordering priorities. The end of the Cold War has already rendered obsolete Stephen Cohen's three obstacles to Indo-Pakistan strategic co-operation.⁷ In fact, this co-operation would strengthen the democratic process in Pakistan by weakening the army's stranglehold on politics.

Apart from regional considerations, there are issues such as controlling the spread of weapons of mass destruction, protecting human rights and the environment, fighting terrorism, etc., that are supranational and may well be in conflict with the narrowly-defined national interests of a particular state. The need of the hour is a combined effort by Pakistan and India to foster international regimes that ensure political equilibrium with a balance of satisfaction, a balance of rights and obligations and pay-offs, rather than a balance of power.

“Adverse Partnership” as a model

Professor Coral Bell developed the concept of adverse partnership within the framework of the cold war, a situation in which the costs obviously outweighed profits of any direct confrontation between the two superpowers. By “adverse partnership”, Professor Bell does not “mean to imply anything particularly cordial, trusting, or friendly: only a consciousness, between the dominant powers, that they have solid common interests as well as sharp differences”.⁸ During the cold war years, one overriding factor dictated the need for the superpowers to act as “partners”: the mutual fear of nuclear weapons. The United States and the Soviet Union did not arrive at the stage of adverse partners all of a sudden; rather, it was the result of a developing consciousness of a common interest, following the 1962 Cuban Missile crisis. It took a crisis and almost a decade for the two nuclear rivals to formalize this

⁷ See Stephen P. Cohen, “South Asia: From Militancy to Cooperation”, in Edward Kolodziej and Robert Harkavy, eds., *Security Policies of Developing Countries* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1982), p. 102. The three obstacles he puts forth are: unstable politics in Pakistan and the military's role; the US-Pakistan military linkage; and Soviet fears that a rapprochement between India and Pakistan would allow them to turn their weapons outward rather than upon each other.

⁸ Bell, *Conventions*, p. 50.

relationship of adverse partnership, formulated during the May 1972 Nixon-Brezhnev summit in Moscow. During this summit, the two leaders signed seven agreements, including the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and the “Statement of Basic Principles of US–Soviet Relations”, outlining the parameters of adverse partnership, thus marking the beginning of “détente” between the two superpowers.⁹

Another important dimension of this model is that both superpowers were in a state of almost continuous negotiations. Unlike the Indo–Pakistan situation, the doors for negotiations, even at the highest level, were always kept open. The thread that ran through their decades-long negotiations and agreements was the strengthening of strategic stability. It took various forms and shapes, such as each keeping the population of the other hostage to nuclear strikes through the ABM Treaty; balancing stabilizing measures against destabilizing developments; mutually reducing the number of launchers and warheads; and banning the placing of weapons in space, etc.

These direct measures for ensuring the stability of the strategic balance were supplemented by political measures: the establishment of a hotline between Washington and Moscow, negotiations, and communicating information of an impending regional crisis to the other. In addition, the two superpowers never let their soldiers face each other in combat or even in a combat-like situation, so that the question of face-saving never arose and neither was seen retracting from a crisis under pressure from the opposing superpower.

‘Adverse Partnership’ and the Indo–Pakistan Equation

There is nothing more relevant, urgent or profitable for the safety and welfare of South Asia than learning and adapting this model of adverse partnership for reordering relations between India and Pakistan. These countries did not have to go through their own nuclear crises—not one but two (the 1999 Kargil and 2002 military stand-off)—to act as a nursery for learning. It is often argued that the political leadership in both India and Pakistan is mature, rational and shrewd enough in their decision-making and should therefore be capable of handling nuclear weapons

⁹ *Keesings*, June 1972, pp. 25309-25315.

with the same maturity and responsibility as Western leaders. This view is correct, but unfortunately crises sometimes generate a momentum of their own, imposing their own logic on the decision-making system. That is why crises between the nuclear-armed South Asian rivals are fraught with great dangers.

Through adept adverse partnership, Pakistan and India can initiate measures that mitigate the concerns of their own people as well as those of the outside world. This model can at least provide a framework for dialogue to advance common interests. It is the leaders of India and Pakistan who have to fill in the details and those are neither few nor straightforward. It is crucial that they first understand the complexity of the *common enemies* to their common interests, enemies that they will have to fight together as partners.

Enemy One: Militarism and Nuclearization

Increased militarism is very much the result of continuing conflict between India and Pakistan, but, over time, militarism in South Asia has become more a state of mind, with a dynamic and momentum of its own.¹⁰ The pace and level of militarism has assumed a life of its own, independent of the question it was supposed to address: security from external threat. In this meaning of the term, it is at the very root of the problem.

Both India and Pakistan have declared that their nuclear weapons are for deterrence only. Mere declarations are, however, not adequate insurance, when the cost of deterrence failure can be over one hundred million casualties.¹¹ A detailed study would be needed to assess

¹⁰ For definitions of militarism, see Cohen, "Militancy to Cooperation", in Kolodziej and Harkavy, pp. 93-94.

¹¹ Not many studies exist which give the costs of a nuclear conflict between India and Pakistan. One such work is by Marc Dean Millot, Roger Mollander and Peter A. Wilson, *The Day After... Study: Nuclear Proliferation in the Post-Cold War World*, (Santa Monica, Ca.: RAND, 1993). Lt. Gen. E. A. Vas, in "India's Nuclear Options in the 1990s and Its Effects on India's Armed Forces", in *Indian Defence Review*, vol. 1, no. 1 (January 1986), has also given casualty and damage estimates for major cities and military targets of India and Pakistan from 15 to 20 KT nuclear warheads detonated at a height of 3000 metres. With the increased number of warheads now held by both countries, the casualties and damage would be far more than originally estimated.

the damage to the industry and infrastructure in either country. This is intended to force serious thinking about the risk and cost of a nuclear confrontation. The two countries can fight this “enemy” together: in fighting it alone, both will be defeated. There is, therefore, a need to briefly analyse why, in going it alone, both will be losers.

Military Balance

The military balance in South Asia has two components: conventional and nuclear. A brief review of both follows.

Military Balance: Conventional

It is not intended here to go into the bean count of military balance but to review the implications of these balances.¹² Both countries have large defence forces with fine military traditions and fighting skills. Both forces are considered professional and are based on low- to medium-level technology and have yet to demonstrate their ability to effectively integrate advanced conventional technology into their operational and battlefield management.¹³ Although India inherited a much larger industrial base than Pakistan, both have expanded their defence industrial complex to become fairly self-reliant in conventional armaments, but both continue to buy major equipment from abroad. India’s purchases, particularly for its navy and air force, reflect its extra-regional ambitions.

In terms of manpower, India’s army is almost twice as large as that of Pakistan, its navy a little more than double, and its air force three times greater than Pakistan’s. As regards major items of equipment, India has 3,414 main battle tanks against Pakistan’s 2,320; 1,440 armoured fighting infantry vehicles against 1,150; 4,175 pieces of towed artillery against 1,590; 180 self-propelled pieces against 240; 2,400 air defence guns against 2,000. Both countries have an array of anti-tank guided weapons. India possesses about twice the number of aircraft that

¹² For details of manpower, equipment, etc., see the latest issue of *Military Balance* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2003).

¹³ Anthony H. Cordesman, *The India-Pakistan Military Balance* (Washington: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2002), p.4.

Pakistan has and enjoys a qualitative edge as well. The Indian navy enjoys a substantial superiority over its Pakistani counterpart.

An Assessment of Conventional Asymmetry

India's armed forces are substantially superior in numbers. The ratio is 2.25 to 1 in manpower and 5 to 1 in terms of defence expenditure. This superiority is not only in numerical terms but also in qualitative terms across the board. However, Indian conventional superiority is not decisive, and a conventional war would be a very costly affair. If India decides to launch an offensive, it can capture some Pakistani territory as it will have the advantage of surprise and will be able to concentrate men and arms at the time and place of its own choosing. For that matter, Pakistan also has the capability of launching a limited offensive in which it could capture some Indian territory. The advantage in an offensive operation is inherent.

Conventional asymmetry and the nuclear threshold have an inverse relationship: the greater the asymmetry, the lower the nuclear threshold. In this sense, the Indo-Pakistan conventional military imbalance is a destabilizing factor.¹⁴ This could adversely affect strategic stability, which is considered essential for preventing war amongst nuclear-armed rivals, like India and Pakistan.

Military Balance: Nuclear

The exact size of each country's nuclear arsenal remains a highly-guarded secret and the numbers are not publicly known. Estimated figures vary substantially, crediting India with 50 to 100 nuclear warheads and Pakistan with 20 to 30.¹⁵ The *Carnegie Analysis* suggests that India has a significant lead over Pakistan in "nuclear weapon equivalents" (NWEs). The former is estimated to have acquired more than 100 NWEs by 2000—at least twice and perhaps three times as many as those of Pakistan. However Pakistan's production of NWEs

¹⁴ Rodney Jones, "Minimum Nuclear Deterrence Postures in South Asia: An Overview", *Carnegie Analysis*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 19 July 2002.

¹⁵ Suboth Atal, "War in the summer: What are the choices?" *tehelka.com*, New Delhi, 6 April 2002.

increased in 1999 and may approximate India's current rate.¹⁶ Peter Lavoy gives figures of 40-120 for India and 35-95 for Pakistan.¹⁷ The figures of the *Carnegie Analysis* and *JFQ* indicate a closing of the gap between the NWEs of the two countries.

Both India and Pakistan have an adequate number of delivery systems and are working hard on the development of missiles with longer ranges and greater accuracy. The Indian *Prithvis* and Pakistani *Hatfs* cover the heartlands of both countries. The Indian Medium-range Ballistic Missile (MRBM), *Agni-2*, covers China, a major part of the Middle East and Central Asia, while Pakistan's *Shabeen-2*, with a range of 2000-2500 kilometres, covers the whole of India but falls well short of Israel. Pakistan needs to focus more on achieving greater accuracy rather than merely increasing the range of its missiles.

Nuclear Deterrence and Strategic Stability

While the West has moved far beyond the deterrence embodied in the Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) stage of their relationship, South Asia has just entered the pre-MAD stage of deterrence that is likely to provide the theoretical bedrock for analysing and understanding strategic issues in the foreseeable future. Conceptualizing nuclear deterrence is more complex than conventional deterrence, where a country can miscalculate and still survive to fight another day. Not so in the case of nuclear weapons. With nuclear weapons, a deterrent balance or "balance of terror" is perceived to exist, "when each side has somewhat more than the minimum strike-back requirement—i.e., when neither side, in striking first, can destroy enough of the opponent's forces to make the latter's retaliation bearable."¹⁸ If either of the countries perceives that it can absorb retaliation by its opponent after it has carried out a pre-emptive or preventive strike, then deterrence does not exist.

¹⁶ Jones, "Minimum Deterrence".

¹⁷ Peter Lavoy, "Fighting Terrorism, Avoiding War: The Indo-Pakistani Situation", *JFQ* (Washington DC), Autumn 2002.

¹⁸ Glenn H. Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense: Towards a Theory of National Security* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1961), p. 97.

Glenn Snyder goes on to explain that the existence of a deterrent balance is different from the stability of the balance. Stability refers to the change in the military, technological or political situation that gives one side a sufficient first-strike capability or sufficient incentive to strike first.¹⁹ The balance would be unstable if: i) either side required only a small additional expenditure of resources to achieve a first-strike capability that could reduce its opponent's retaliation to an acceptable level; or, ii) a technological breakthrough gave one side a first-strike capability; or, iii) if, politically, one side was willing to accept greater retaliatory damage.

Another form of instability could be a correlation of forces that would produce strong fears on one or both sides that the other was about to strike first, thus creating an incentive for a pre-emptive strike. This could lead to a very dangerous instability spiral.

In a conventional environment, adversaries try to attain as much superiority as possible over the other to ensure victory in case of war. However, between nuclear-armed rivals, concepts of strategic superiority and strategic inferiority become irrelevant as one can die only once. So, even if India believes that it has strategic superiority, the question is what will it do with it? In the unlikely event of a nuclear war, the question is not who will win but at what cost. If no conceivable political objective can justify the cost of a nuclear war, then both India and Pakistan have to focus on preventing the outbreak of a nuclear war. They both have stakes as partners in ensuring that the stability of the nuclear deterrent balance is maintained. This has to result from a deliberate and calculated policy, as it will be in the foremost national interest of both countries.

It is logical that the policies of Pakistan and India should not undermine strategic stability but instead strengthen it. An exceedingly important step forward in their relationship would be to start negotiations on this sensitive issue. As adverse partners, they should renounce the option of acquiring first-strike capability. This policy should not be merely declaratory, as only concrete measures in that direction will contribute towards mutual confidence. Other steps could

¹⁹ The concept of "stability" is based on Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense*, pp. 97-103

include storing warheads and missiles separately, thereby sending a clear message to the other country that initiation of war through a pre-emptive strike is not the preferred option. This measure will also obviate the chances of an accidental launch of nuclear warheads. Another factor needing careful attention is the balancing of defensive and offensive systems, with the explicit objective of strengthening stability. These measures are meant to suggest a possible direction in which the two countries need to proceed. Moreover, it is essential to take a number of steps through prolonged mutual dialogue in order to strengthen stability.

Nuclear Asymmetry

Empirical evidence suggests that a non-nuclear weapon state (NNWS) is most vulnerable to nuclear blackmail in situations of conflict with a NWS, particularly when it happens to be weaker in conventional forces as well. The United States, for instance, was not deterred by the Soviet nuclear weapons during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis as then Soviet Premier Khrushchev was relying on bluff and the Americans knew the exact number of Soviet long-range missiles. It was only after the Cuban crisis that a situation of MAD, with rough parity, emerged, providing not only a credible mutual deterrent balance, but also strategic stability in terms of Snyder's theoretical framework. The stability of the central strategic balance was assiduously and consciously sought and preserved through the ABM Treaty, SALT I, SALT II and other agreements. The process involved the balancing of stabilizing measures (i.e., invulnerable weapons such as SLBMs, hardening of silos, dispersion of a large number of bomber bases and missile sites) and destabilizing measures (i.e., improved war-head accuracy and yield, vulnerable offensive systems such as soft ICBMs). This is the route of negotiations and arms control which the South Asians rivals need to pursue.

An asymmetric balance in India's favour raises many fundamental questions about the deterrent value of nuclear weapons as well as about the stability of the balance. Pakistan's assumption that its ability to deliver a few nuclear weapons will deter India from both nuclear blackmail and nuclear confrontation needs careful evaluation. First, some Pakistani analysts believe that the country merely needs to

convey to India that it has the capability and the political will to make its nuclear threat credible. This thinking is simplistic and fraught with danger. Second, as credible deterrence is based on second-strike capability, this option will clearly depend on Pakistan's ability to successfully survive an Indian preventive or pre-emptive first strike. This is a highly significant component of strategic stability. Third, the present Indo-Pakistan balance is not a situation of MAD and is, therefore, inherently unstable. With its limited strike-back capability, the utility of Pakistani nuclear weapons lie only in a pre-emptive strike. Thus, the responsibility of initiating a nuclear war in South Asia would rest on Pakistan's decision-makers. Fourth, with fewer missiles and with most of its strategic targets within range of India's Prithvis, which have a launch-to-target time of a little over three minutes, Pakistan may be faced with a "use it or lose it" dilemma. For the Indian decision-makers, with superiority in numbers and awareness of Pakistan's compulsion for pre-emptive use of its nuclear assets, a rational and prudent course of action would be to use their nuclear weapons to pre-empt Pakistani pre-emption. This spiral will result in an extreme crisis instability, leaving open the possibility of nuclear weapons being used in the initial stages of a crisis rather than in the later stages as weapons of last resort, as several influential strategic thinkers posit.

What the leaders of South Asia do or fail to do will decide the fate of one-fifth of humanity. For arms control to succeed in South Asia, one of the two conditions must be met: first, if the would-be-winner of an arms race is willing to curtail its programme, an agreement is possible. The self-interest of the potential loser will carry it along the path of negotiations. Second, if each of the two powers can consider its mutual interests and fears, without factoring in how the capabilities of the other affect it, an agreement may be possible.²⁰ To meet either of Waltz's two conditions for arms control in South Asia, the onus is on India, as it is the likely winner²¹ and can keep Chinese military capability

²⁰ Kenneth N. Waltz, "The International System: Structural Causes of Military Effects", in Douglas J. Murray & Paul R. Viotti, eds, *The Defense Policies of Nations: A Comparative Study* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1983), p. 15.

²¹ This statement is based on a "bean count" of the military balance; it may not truly reflect the outcome of an actual war.

out of the South Asian calculus. In an asymmetric balance of power, as is the case in South Asia, a move by Pakistan would be perceived by India as an indication of weakness and an opportune time for putting greater pressure and not moving towards reconciliation. A substantive gesture from India would be taken by its smaller neighbours as an act of good faith, creating the right climate for reciprocal gestures. That is the proper role for India: a “team-captain” to guide South Asia away from a likely nuclear showdown and from “rags to riches”.

Enemy Two: Poverty

At the time of independence in 1947, the subcontinent inherited a secular democratic tradition and a thriving free-market economy, while their contemporaries in the Far East lay in ruins following the ravages of the Second World War. Both India and Pakistan were well on the path to industrial development by the 1960s, but then a series of wars, during the decade of 1961-1971, changed the scenario. The opportunity-cost of this policy of war and conflict can be surmised by comparing the state of development of South Asia with that of the “tiger” economies of the Pacific Rim.

This unending fratricidal conflict is the major cause of poverty in the region, which is the second “common enemy”. Almost 56 years of conflict have turned South Asia into one of the world’s poorest regions—a virtual “poverty bowl”. Turning the conflict qualitatively into a capital-intensive nuclear arms race will only widen the rich-poor divide, at both the national and the international level. India can argue that their defence expenditure is low, compared to other crisis-ridden regions, and that it does not affect allocations for the social sector. However, statistics relating to the state of development of the social sector in South Asia tell a different story. This situation is not peculiar to India alone: generally, statements on defence expenditure in South Asia do not tell the whole story. What they reveal is interesting, but what they actually conceal is vital, as substantial amounts meant for defence purposes are often budgeted under civil sector heads. *The Human Development Report 2003* of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) points out that South Asia “is the place where 40 per cent of the population lives on less than a dollar a day, and 35 per

cent of children do not get proper primary education”.²² The *Report* adds that, “Hunger has been reduced in South Asia, but 43 per cent of the world’s hungry are still in South Asia.... And it still has a very large number of the undernourished.”²³ Pakistan has a population of 31 per cent living on less than one dollar a day, while India has 44.2 per cent.²⁴ In terms of the Human Development Index, India is placed at 127 and Pakistan at 144 out of 175 countries.²⁵ The implications of this dire state of poverty cannot be emphasized too much and need to be fully grasped by the leaders of South Asia.

It is time to realize that “foreign direct investments” (FDIs) bring capital and technology, resulting in the setting up of factories that can create employment opportunities. These crucial investments could bring about real socio-economic changes in the countries concerned. It goes without saying that investment goes where there is profit and stays where it is safe. At present, South Asia, with its menacing nuclear rivalry and the emerging power of the radical right with its attendant risks, is not an attractive region for investment, notwithstanding the availability of skilled manpower and a huge potential market. For combating poverty, FDIs are the most effective weapon, as has been so successfully demonstrated by China in recent years.

Poverty provides a breeding ground for the radical right that has virtually hijacked the domestic and, in certain cases, even foreign policy of South Asian countries. The poorer sections of society teem with semi-skilled and semi-educated youth who cannot find gainful employments and thus become easy targets for those preaching religious extremism—Hindu or Muslim. These extremist organizations assuage bruised egos by giving these disgruntled young people not just sustenance but also identity, recognition, a sense of belonging, self-esteem and, most importantly, protection. By turning to violence, these

²² Statement made by Mallock Brown while launching the *Report* in London (7 July 2003).

²³ Sanjay Suri, “South Asia holds the key to millennium goals: UNDP”, <<http://www.dawn.com/2003/07/09/intl13.htm>> (9 July 2003).

²⁴ Statistical Tables, Table 3, *Regional Human Development Report* (New York: UNDP, 2002).

²⁵ *Human Development Indicators 2003* <<http://www.undp.org/hdr2003/indicators/indic-8-1-1.html>>

elements have nothing to lose and much to gain. However, the violence and terrorist acts which can result from this radicalism create a climate of fear and uncertainty that deters potential investors and slows economic activity. It is truly a Catch-22 situation: economic development alone can break the back of terrorism, but terrorism scares away foreign investment that is so vital for development.

If Indian decision-makers are working on the assumption that heavy defence spending will force Pakistan to the same, beyond its economic capacity, and thus in the long run succeed in establishing Indian hegemony in the region, theirs is a myopic approach. Furthermore, it will work manifestly against India's own national interests. A nuclear-armed Pakistan in political turmoil, in economic distress and possibly heading for a government by the radical right can be neither in the interest of India nor that of the region.

Selling the Concept of Adverse Partnership

Showing the two neighbours a route away from mutual *hara-kiri* should be an easy sell. That is what most rational thinkers believe. But history does not prove them right. The Indian thinking and policies of the last 56 years tend to suggest that "acquiring so much more weaponry", "isolating Pakistan from such-and-such ally" and "blocking such-and-such supplier of defence equipment" will bring Pakistan to its knees. What was a rational and perhaps justifiable policy when the two were conventional-weapons powers may not be as rational and justifiable when they have taken the leap towards nuclear weapons status. Now, there has to be a profound reversal in the guiding philosophy from fighting and winning a war to preventing a nuclear holocaust. The sooner India grasps this bitter truth and sees the dangers ahead, the better and safer it will be for South Asia. Being a smaller country, it will be easier for Pakistan to reciprocate if India makes the first move.

If adverse partnership is to succeed, it can only be through bilateralism, though not on the lines of the 1972 Simla Agreement, where the principle of bilateralism was put forward but was ineffective as there was no follow-up for a resolution of the Kashmir conflict. In fact, there was no subsequent meeting between the leaders of India and Pakistan after the signing ceremony. Now, there has to be a genuine

desire and firm commitment to meet the demands of adverse partnership as the space for gamesmanship or one-upmanship does not exist any more.

Another constituency where the concept of adverse partnership needs to be sold is the international arena, where the policy interests of major players will ensure that they have a stake in the success of the concept. Their policies can ensure that deterrence is not allowed to fail. It is for this role that international actors will have to find an effective strategy to “buy” and “sell” the concept. This aspect is dealt with at greater length later.

For adverse partnership to succeed, it has to be sold not only to the decision-makers, who must embrace it before any breakthrough can be expected, but also to the people of both countries. In this task, the two governments would be required to devise strategies for “selling” the concept to their respective peoples. One of the ingredients of that strategy would obviously be measures for creating mass awareness of the dangers and costs of a possible nuclear conflict. It must be admitted that the people of the subcontinent seem blissfully ignorant of the devastating effects of nuclear bombs and think that “nukes” are just another kind of bomb that boosts their macho image.

Another major initiative which the two countries need to take, if and when they meet next, is an agreement emphasizing sustained dialogue. A nucleus of peace advocates exists in both countries. It is time they expand and energize their role and activities and spread their message. Peace, of course, will return only when conflicts are resolved; in the meantime, the contribution of pacifists towards avoidance of war will be helpful. Their efforts could contribute to creating an environment conducive to the ultimate resolution of conflicts. These national groups and organizations will need support from outside actors to broaden their bases and effectively spread their message of normalization of relations and avoidance of war.

Role of Extra-Regional Powers

The non-proliferation policies of the West, particularly the United States, resulted in the opposite of what they were supposed to prevent: proliferation of nuclear weapons. Their policies failed because they were

based on faulty assumptions and were applied in a discriminatory manner. Now, with a nuclear-armed South Asia, the Western powers cannot afford to go wrong again as the cost will be simply prohibitive.

The relations of the major powers with India and Pakistan must now be determined by one overriding objective: the *prevention of a nuclear war*. The route to that objective is through *strengthening of the stability of the strategic balance*. All other considerations should be secondary. Apparently, this vital consideration does not seem to figure much in the policy formulation of major powers, as other factors such as commerce, trade or geopolitics play a more dominant role.

The present policies of some of the major powers, such as the United States, Israel and the Russian Republic are adversely impinging on strategic stability in South Asia. If the deleterious effects of these policies are not appreciated in time, these could increase the probability of a serious nuclear crisis. Irrespective of who wins or loses, South Asia as a whole, and adjoining regions to a lesser degree, would suffer the horrendous consequences of a nuclear Armageddon.

In the present international order, the United States, as the sole surviving superpower, has great responsibility and must fully appreciate what is at stake. After the gravity of the situation has been understood, it needs to forge a bipartisan policy that clearly states the promotion of nuclear stability in South Asia as an important foreign policy goal. Professor Ganguly affirms that, “What the United States needs to do is enhance long-term crisis stability in the region. At the broadest level, the pursuit of such goals will require Washington to remain engaged in South Asia long after bin Laden and his followers are brought to justice.”²⁶ He goes on to suggest that the United States “must re-engage Pakistan”.²⁷

The United States should echo the sagacious words of India’s strategic guru, Mr Subrahmanyam, expressed on the day Pakistan responded to Indian nuclear tests, that “a nuclear war could not be won

²⁶ Sumit Ganguly, “Beyond the Nuclear Dimension: Forging Stability in South Asia”, *Arms Control Today* (Arms Control Association, December 2001). The concerns of Professor Ganguly and of this article are the same: promoting nuclear stability; however, the routes suggested to attain that objective are different.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

and, therefore, should not be initiated”.²⁸ He further observed that India acquired nuclear weapons mainly to deter nuclear blackmail. Now that India has them, playing adverse partners with Pakistan will not detract from the basic objective of acquiring them. That is the message the United States should convey to India for the sake of strengthening nuclear stability. The United States should also be prepared to invest the requisite political capital in pursuit of this important foreign policy goal. Recently, it asked Israel to freeze all arms sale to India—including that of the Phalcon early-warning systems—but strengthening strategic stability was not the driving force behind the request.²⁹ The United States needs to provide this kind of leadership to save South Asia from itself. It needs to remember that it alone can provide leadership in shaping policy and organizing international efforts on issues of global significance. Consequently, it will get the acclaim or blame for whatever happens or fails to happen in the region.

Other linked efforts of the major powers should include bringing about a realization of the costs of nuclear weapons acquisition and of their likely use in war. In South Asia, for example, a conflict involving about a dozen nuclear weapons would certainly cause unprecedented disaster for both countries.³⁰ Even a single nuclear bomb dropped over a major city in South Asia would cause about 100,000-150,000 deaths.³¹ There is a need for the UN to co-ordinate its efforts with Washington and other major actors for initiating research on the dangers inherent in a nuclear arms race and to disseminate the results of these studies to the decision-makers in South Asia. This will also result in heightened awareness amongst the masses of the destructive power of nuclear weapons and the disastrous consequences of their use.³² Apart from the potential for enormous damage, Pakistan and India can be made aware about the huge economic, scientific, industrial and environmental costs of producing and maintaining nuclear weapons. These affect South Asia

²⁸ K. Subrahmanyam, “A nuclear strategy for India”, *Economic Times*, 28 May 1998.

²⁹ *Military Balance 2002-2003*, (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2003), p. 287.

³⁰ Peter R. Lavoy, “Nuclear Myths and the Causes of Nuclear Proliferation”, *Security Studies*, vol. 2, nos. 3&4 (Spring/Summer 1993).

³¹ Suboth Atal, *tebelka.com* (6 April 2002).

³² Vas, “India’s Nuclear Options”.

adversely as it happens to be one of the poorest regions of the world. The resources which should be spent on social sector development are currently being spent on the development of missile and nuclear weapons. Through heightened awareness, people's support for nuclear weapons should be transformed into support for non-proliferation. This is the role which Western powers and Japan could play in South Asia, helping to steer these countries towards peace and security.

The major world powers should undertake sincere and determined efforts for the resolution of the conflicts which fuel and intensify the regional arms race, which has recently acquired a nuclear dimension. Vigorous support for adopting the model of adverse partnership should figure prominently as part of their foreign policy agenda. Only sustained efforts to persuade Pakistan and India to interact as adverse partners hold the prospect of success. And succeed they must: failure would be simply catastrophic.

Conclusion

The qualitative leap by Pakistan and India from conventional to nuclear weapons has revolutionized the way South Asia needs to relate to itself. The region has been mired in war and poverty since independence and is hostage to history at the cost of its future. The two rivals need to sit on the same side of the table as "adverse partners" and find an answer to fight their two common foes: *nuclear weapons* and *poverty*. It is fatal to nurse the illusion that nuclear weapons, through deterrence, have rendered war obsolete. Strategic stability, the *sine qua non* for the success of deterrence, has to be expertly crafted and assiduously maintained jointly by Pakistan and India. It is a war which the two will either win or lose together.

Adverse partnership is an exercise in mature bilateralism. With nuclear weapons, there is no place for gamesmanship. Extra-regional actors can facilitate the process in various ways but only the motivation of the leaders of India and Pakistan can ensure success. Major international actors, particularly the United States, can help prevent a nuclear war in South Asia by defining such prevention as a major foreign policy objective and by according it priority over commercial or political objectives. They can ensure the realization of this objective

through economic and military assistance, if required, and by investing political capital to strengthen strategic stability. Only by creating a peaceful environment will programmes for poverty alleviation yield the desired results. Normal relations between India and Pakistan will also attract FDIs, an important tool for fighting poverty.

India and Pakistan have fought a number of wars. Now, they need to learn to wage peace since war is no longer a rational policy option. Nuclear weapons have finally led to the demise of Clausewitz's doctrine for South Asia. The leaders of India and Pakistan need to give it a decent burial by initiating a process of *détente*, while recognizing *entente* as the ultimate objective: the state of peace that can be attained, once the Kashmir dispute, along with other irritants, is resolved. ■

PAKISTAN AND THE INDIAN QUEST FOR HEGEMONY 1947-2003

Noor ul Haq*

In an interview given to a Swiss journalist on 11 March 1948, in answer to a question whether there was any hope of India and Pakistan reaching a peaceful settlement, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah said, “Yes, provided the Indian Government sheds its superiority complex and deals with Pakistan on an equal footing and fully appreciates the realities.”¹ This statement gives us an insight into the underlying reason for the unending conflict between the two nations.

Prior to independence, there was a conflict between the Hindu-dominated Indian National Congress (INC) and the All-India Muslim League (AIML) for an equitable share in power. The INC was determined to wield supreme authority on the basis of its absolute majority and was not prepared to accommodate the AIML. This attitude eventually alienated seventy-nine million Muslims,² who were not prepared to live as a permanent minority and second-class citizens in Hindu-dominated India. Initially, the AIML sought constitutional safeguards to attain equality with the Hindus in a united India. When this proved impossible, their quest turned towards the establishment of an independent state in regions where Muslims were in a majority.

Muslim separatism was essentially a struggle for political and socio-economic emancipation from the clutches of British imperialists and the brute authority of upper-caste Hindus. Conceptually, the conflict between Hindus and Muslims was not a conflict between two

* Dr Noor ul Haq received his Master’s degree from University of the Punjab, M.Phil. and Ph.D. from Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. He is Research Fellow at the Islamabad Policy Research Institute.

¹ M. Rafique Afzal, ed., *Selected Speeches and Statements of the Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah (1911-34 and 1947-48)*, (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, 1973).

² According to the Census of 1941, the population of the subcontinent was 388,988,000 (Muslims: 79,058,000; Hindus: 254,930,000 [including Scheduled Castes: 48,813,000]; Christians: 6,317,000; Sikhs: 5,691,000; and others: 30,002,000).

religions but a struggle between the urge for equality in the Muslims and the Hindu desire for domination. Some Hindu leaders had gone so far as to state that they would avenge the 700 years of their “slavery” under Muslim rule in India.

The “fear of the domination of Hindus governed Muslim policies and actions; the Muslim minority in undivided India considered itself to be in perpetual domination by an intolerant majority.”³ After independence in 1947, the belligerent mental attitude and posturing continued. India remained on course to dominate the South Asian region,⁴ whereas Pakistan has been struggling for security and equality.

Indian Secularism

The concept of Hindu supremacy and dominance was demonstrated in the recent riots in the Gujarat state of India, where more than 2000 people—mostly Muslims—were killed and more than “a hundred thousand [were] in makeshift shelters”. “The central and state governments, both run by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), have been disturbingly slow to curb Hindu retaliation”, writes Radha Kumar (Senior Fellow in Peace and Conflict Studies at the Council of Foreign Relations in United States).⁵ She further adds that “[the] state’s chief minister makes no secret of his belief that Muslims must be *second-class citizens* in the Hindu nation”⁶ (emphasis added). The BJP, contesting on the same slogan, won the December 2002 elections in the state of Gujarat with an overwhelming majority.

After the BJP’s victory in the Gujarat elections, the Prime Minister of India, Atal Behari Vajpayee, said, “[T]he real face of secularism has come out in the open after the recent elections in the State.” He further explained that “[T]he elections would not change the

³ G. W. Choudhury, *Pakistan’s Relations with India, 1947-1966* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1968), p.4.

⁴ Some politicians in India want their country to follow in the footsteps of an imperialist power and dominate the South Asian region.
<<http://www.cpgi.org/peace.html>>
(26 November 2002).

⁵ Radha Kumar, “India’s House Divided”, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 81, no. 4, July-August 2002, p.172.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.175.

national political scenario but concepts such as [Indian] secularism were now being defined correctly.”⁷ According to an Indian columnist, even the INC, which boasts of advocating secularism, has adopted the strategy of “soft-Hindutva” and has been described as “BJP’s B-team”, because both the INC and the BJP “believe that the Hindu voter is communal, and can only be persuaded by a communal dialectic.” Accordingly, Sonia Gandhi, as president of the INC, permitted her candidates “to treat Muslims as lepers. Congress candidates and leaders shy away from being seen with Muslims in localities that are predominantly or totally Hindu.”⁸ Thus “religious nationalism [Hindutva or Hinduization] is reshaping the national agenda of the world’s largest democracy” and is being sponsored by several right wing parties, collectively known as Sangh Parivar (joint family).⁹

Animosity towards Pakistan

The enmity between India and Pakistan goes back to 1947, when the new state of Pakistan was created despite the intense opposition of the INC. Later, the INC accepted Pakistan in the hope that it would seek reunion with the rest of India.¹⁰ Acharya Kripalani, the President of the INC, stated that Pakistan, after playing a fleeting role on the international stage, would be absorbed into India.¹¹ The Mahasabha voiced the claim that “India is one and indivisible and there will never

⁷ *The Hindu*, 26 December 2002,

<<http://www.hindu.com/stories/2002122604080100.htm>>

⁸ M. J. Akbar, “Congress is BJP’s B-team”, *Dawn* (Islamabad), 12 December 2002.

⁹ These parties are (1) Hindu Mahasabha, (2) Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSSS), (3) Bajrang Dal, (4) Vishva Hindu Parishad, (5) Shiv Sena, (6) Durga Bahini, (7) World Hindu Council (8) Hindu Jagran Manch, (9) Bharatiya Janata Party, (10) Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, (11) Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha, (12) Swadeshi Jagran Manch, (13) Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, etc. They are a threat to 216 million Indian minorities (150 m Muslims, 30 m Christians, 20 m Sikhs, 8 m Buddhists, 4 m Jains and 4 m other religious groups).

<<http://petitiononline.com/fascists/petition.html>> (3 December 2002).

¹⁰ Minutes of 25th meeting of India and Burma Committee, 17 May 1947, *Mountbatten Papers*, IOR: MSS. F.200/247.

¹¹ Also see the All-India Congress Committee Resolution of 14 June 1947, accepting the partition plan but expressing their earnest trust that “the false doctrine of two nations ... will be discredited and discarded by all.” V. P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India* (Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1957), p. 384.

be peace unless and until the separated areas are brought back into the Indian Union and made integral part thereof.”¹²

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who became the first Prime Minister of India, had already told General Frank Messervy, General-Officer-Commanding, Northern Command, India, that his “deliberate plan would be to allow Jinnah to have his Pakistan and then to make things so difficult for them that they would have to come on their bended knees and ask to be allowed back into India.”¹³ It is therefore not surprising that, immediately after partition, Jinnah complained to the Chief of the Viceroy’s Staff, Lord Ismay, that events such as the influx of refugees, etc., showed that the Indians were determined to strangle Pakistan at birth.¹⁴

Indian Expansionism

The philosophy of Indian expansionism is enshrined in the concept of Akhand Bharat (i.e., undivided greater India). It refers to the cherished historic dream of Hindus to reconstitute a great Hindu empire from the headwaters of the Indus River to eastern Burma and from Tibet to Cape Camorin.¹⁵ Currently, it is reported that:

[T]he geography books introduced by the BJP in the twenty thousand Sang Parivar schools show a new map of India with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Tibet, Myanmar, and the kingdoms of Nepal and Bhutan as integral parts of Akhand Bharat. [The] Indian Ocean is renamed as Hindu Mahasagar, the Arabian Sea as Sindhu Sagar, and [the] Bay of Bengal as Ganga Sagar.¹⁶

The ancient concept of Akhand Bharat is further strengthened by the Hindu belief that they are the inheritors of British imperialism east of Suez. It is in pursuance of this policy that India used its armed

¹² Ibid., pp. 384-5.

¹³ Sir George Cunningham’s *Diary, 1947-48*, entry dated 21 September 1947, p.12, cited in Khalid bin Sayeed, *Pakistan: The Formative Phase 1857-1948* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p.260.

¹⁴ Lord Ismay, *Memoirs* (London: Heinemann, 1960), p. 439.

¹⁵ Larry Collins and Dominique LaPierre, *Freedom at Midnight* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House (Pvt.) Ltd., 1976), p. 294.

¹⁶ Tanya Newar, *Dalistan Journal*, July 2001.

<<http://www.dalistan.org/journal/hindia/hin000/hind0005.html>> (3December 2002).

forces to occupy territories that did not accede or belong to it. First, the INC extracted several territorial favours from the last British Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, while international borders between India and Pakistan were being drawn. Mountbatten tended to favour India. The reason, in his own words, was that “[The] Indian Union consisting of nearly three-fourths of India, and with its immense resources and its important strategic position in the Indian Ocean is a Dominion we cannot afford to estrange.”¹⁷

Some of the territories that should have formed part of Pakistan (such as the districts of Gurdaspur and Ferozpur) were handed over to the Indian Union, though they had initially been included in Pakistan as they were Muslim majority areas.¹⁸ The British did not disappoint Nehru, who wanted a “variation of the boundary line”.¹⁹ Similarly, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which were initially included in the Free State of Bengal and not in India, were given to India in the revised partition plan of 3 June 1947.²⁰ Mountbatten paid no heed to the arguments advanced by Jinnah for their inclusion in Pakistan.²¹

“The most alarming development was India’s resort to arms to settle the accession of three princely states: Junagadh, Hyderabad and Kashmir,” writes G. W. Choudhry.²² The Government of Pakistan accepted the request of the ruler of Junagadh for accession of his state to Pakistan on 15 September 1947. Initially, Nehru, in his letter of 12 September 1947 to Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan of Pakistan, had suggested that the accession should be decided through a “referendum” in accordance with the “wishes of the people”, to which Government of

¹⁷ Mountbatten to Listowel, 8 August 1947, IOR: MSS. Eur. F200/136, document 39.

¹⁸ See map with C. Beaumont’s note, 8 August 1947, IOR: R/3/1/157. Also see Jenkin’s handwritten remarks in Beaumont’s note of 8 August 1947, *The Partition of the Punjab*, (National Documentation Centre, 1988), vol. 1, between pages 246 and 247.

¹⁹ Nehru’s note on ‘Revised Draft Announcement’, 17 May 1947, IOR: L/PO/6/121, f. 257-61

²⁰ Printed draft of a bill marked “secret” and entitled “Indian Dominions”, 28 May 1947, IOR: L/WS/1/1115.

²¹ Jinnah to Mountbatten, 5 July 1947, Nicholas Mansergh and others, eds. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, vol. X (London, 1981), pp. 938-9.

²² G. W. Choudhry, *Pakistan*, p. 6.

Pakistan agreed.²³ Instead of a referendum, India resorted to arms.²⁴ Indian troops marched into the city of Junagadh on 9 November 1947, taking advantage of the superiority of their armed forces. Pakistan's Foreign Minister was able only to retaliate in the Security Council:

Hundred of states, including . . . Kapurthala which has a Muslim majority in the population, acceded to the Indian Union, but in no case did the Pakistan Government intervene in any way. Junagadh was the first state to accede to Pakistan and at once the Indian Government started a campaign of vilification, threats and economic blockade . . . [and the Indian occupation of Junagadh was a] clear violation of Pakistan territory and breach of international law.²⁵

The New York Times commented that the Indian action was "extremely unwise and unfortunate."²⁶

Ian Stephens observes:

A technique of aggrandizement had been learnt to be repeated later elsewhere not only in 1961 successfully against Goa and in a modified form in 1950-51 and again in 1961-62 against Nepal, but in 1948 against another of three princely states which on Independence Day had remained undecided and a very much bigger and more important one, Hyderabad.²⁷

On 1 July 1947, the ruler of Hyderabad issued a *farman* (edict) declaring that after the departure of the British, the state would be independent.²⁸ Like Junagadh, Hyderabad had to suffer the consequences of Indian military aggression immediately after the death of Jinnah in September 1948. *The Times* of London observed:

[O]nce again a powerful Government by resort to arms has imposed its will upon a weaker neighbour . . . [The Indian Government] has, in the judgment of world opinion, violated the moral principles upon which hopes of international security must rest.²⁹

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 69 and 71.

²⁴ *Times* (London), 17 October 1947.

²⁵ Sir Muhammad Zafarullah Khan, Security Council Official Record, no. 64, 1948. Also see Choudhury, *Pakistan*, p. 73.

²⁶ *New York Times*, 11 October 1948.

²⁷ Ian Stephens, *Pakistan – Old Country, New Nation* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1964), p. 236.

²⁸ *Eastern Times (Lahore)*, 1 July 1947.

²⁹ *Times* (London), 18 September 1948).

The Security Council heard the Hyderabad complaint at several meetings in September 1948. It contented itself by keeping the question on its agenda without taking any action.³⁰ India camouflaged its military aggression by calling it “police action”.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir is a glaring example of how all other issues are sacrificed at the altar of the interests of the Indian Union. In June 1947, Nehru had formally asked Mountbatten to award the State of Jammu and Kashmir to India, in spite of the fact that Muslims formed 77.11 per cent of the population. The foremost reason for his demand was that the State was “of the first importance to India as a whole . . . because of the great strategic importance of that frontier state.”³¹ There is ample evidence to prove that the people of Kashmir had revolted against their ruler, Hari Singh, who had fled from his capital, Srinagar. India reportedly sent its troops³² into the Valley to secure Srinagar airfield; then armed forces in great numbers were airlifted to Srinagar and the signature of the fugitive ruler was obtained on the Instrument of Accession.³³ Thus the fate of the Kashmiris—more than seventy-five per cent of them Muslims—was settled not in accordance with popular demand but in pursuance of the expansionist policy of India. In October 1947, Pakistan’s armed forces were in a formative phase. Later, when the Pakistan Army was somewhat more organized, it prevented the Indian advance and forced India to seek a ceasefire. An editorial in *The Times* had this comment to make:

The course of events in Kashmir and Kathiawar [i.e. Junagadh] is steadily imperiling good relations between the Indian Union and Pakistan. Of the two Dominions . . . [Indian] action . . . seems . . . sheer exploitation of superior forces.³⁴

³⁰ Choudhury, *Pakistan*, p. 80.

³¹ Nehru to Mountbatten, 17 June 1947, IOR:R/3/1/137, pp. 90-80.

³² “[The] Instrument of Accession is reported to have been executed on 26 October 1947, but much earlier than that Indian forces were detected by locals active in fighting positions around Srinagar city”, writes G. N. Gauhar (a former District and Sessions Judge in Kashmir), *Elections in Jammu and Kashmir* (New Delhi: Manas Publications, 2002), p. 247.

³³ Listowel to Mountbatten, 2 August 1947; Viceroy’s Personal Report no. 15, 1 August 1947, IOR:L/PO/6/123 ff.

³⁴ Editorial in *Times* (London), 5 November 1947.

The practical manifestation of the concept of Akhand Bharat does not end with the Indian occupation of Hyderabad, Junagadh and Kashmir. India has had border conflicts with China, which led to the Sino–Indian War of October 1962; Indian armed forces occupied the Portuguese colony of Goa (1961) and the state of Sikkim (1975); they were enthusiastically sent to Sri Lanka in 1987, after a skewed Indo–Sri Lankan Accord was signed on 29 July 1987. India withdrew its forces after about three years under the intense pressure of the Sri Lankan Government. It is in pursuance of its policy of Akhand Bharat that India continues to occupy Kashmir on one pretext or the other and not in accordance with the will of the people.

Pakistan seems to have reconciled itself to the forcible occupation of princely states and territories by India, except the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It is difficult for Pakistan to barter Kashmir away, against the dictates of geography, economy, ethnicity, religion and, above all, against the imperatives of its own security and survival.

Kashmir: A Stumbling Block to Peace

Since independence, Pakistan–India relations have revolved mainly around the issue of Kashmir. India is defying United Nations resolutions³⁵ that call for holding a plebiscite under UN auspices to determine “the final disposition of the State of Jammu and Kashmir.” It is in violation of these resolutions and its own commitments that India is continuing its unjust occupation of Kashmir, justifying its actions on various grounds. In 1947, when Indian leaders were demanding division of provinces on a communal basis, they claimed Kashmir for strategic reasons. Now they argue that since *they* believe in secularism, Kashmir should be theirs, as its accession to Pakistan would have a domino effect in other provinces that face ethnic unrest.

The Indians seem to have forgotten their own history: that it was with their consent that the whole of the subcontinent was partitioned on a communal basis; that it was on their insistence that the Punjab and Assam were bifurcated on a communal basis; that they

³⁵ United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan Resolutions of 13 August 1948 (S/1100) and 5 January 1949 (S/1196) and UN Security Council Resolution of 24 January 1957 (S/3779).

refused to accept a secular “Free State of Bengal” and instead forced the partition of Bengal on a communal basis. When it comes to Kashmir, they try to wriggle out of their commitments to the UN and the people of Kashmir on the plea of secularism and pluralism—concepts they have rejected in the Punjab, Bengal and Assam.

It is common knowledge that India maintains approximately half-a-million strong armed forces in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, using them to suppress the voice of the people; in the process, tens of thousands Kashmiris have been killed since 1989 and innumerable atrocities committed. The reports of several human rights organizations bear ample testimony to these violations.

Pakistan views India’s continued occupation of Kashmir as a threat to its security. The strategic northern areas and the vital railroad of Pakistan, linking Lahore-Islamabad-Peshawar, would be both under constant threat from India if it held Kashmir. All the rivers flowing into Pakistan originate in Kashmir. “The shutting off of water supplies to the canals leading to Pakistan in 1948 was indicative of the damage that India could inflict upon Pakistan . . .”³⁶

The struggle for freedom that the people of Kashmir have been engaged in for fifty-five years was initially referred to by India as an “insurgency”; later, as “militancy”; now it is referred to as “terrorism”.³⁷ All these terms are used to mislead international opinion and to disguise the fact of the continued forcible Indian occupation of Kashmir.

Coercive Diplomacy

“India held the pistol at the head of Pakistan, until, in 1954, the American alliance delivered the country from that nightmare,” says an Indian writer.³⁸ India has demonstrated its tendency towards coercive diplomacy time and again threatening to attack Pakistan, confident because of its superiority in resources and armed strength. In 1950, India moved its armed forces to the borders of East Pakistan. The

³⁶ Tai Yong Tan and Ganesh Kudaisya, *The Aftermath of Partition in South Asia* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 98-100.

³⁷ Observation of Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, Islamabad Policy Research Institute.

³⁸ Nirad C. Chaudhuri, *The Continent of Circe* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1965), p. 224.

situation was eased as a result of Liaquat Ali Khan's visit to New Delhi. A declaration, subsequently referred to as Liaquat–Nehru Pact, was issued on 8 April 1950. Again, in 1951, there was a concentration of Indian troops on the ceasefire line in Kashmir. Both governments traded accusations of aggression, but eventually the tension subsided.

In August 1965, India and Pakistan clashed in Kashmir. Instead of limiting the conflict to the disputed territory of Kashmir, India escalated it and its forces crossed the international border on 6 September 1965 and a full-fledged war began. The intervention of the USA and the USSR made a ceasefire possible; in January 1966, the Tashkent agreement was concluded, restoring the *status quo ante* and requiring both countries to abjure the use of force to settle their disputes.

India flouted the Tashkent Declaration and the UN Charter again in 1971. Internal fighting and an insurgency in East Pakistan caused thousands of refugees to enter India. The then President of the United States, Richard Nixon, assured Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of the American “intention to continue to carry the main financial burden for care of the refugees.”³⁹ But India did not wish to miss this opportunity to dismember Pakistan through the use of its military might. Like her father, Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi also believed with great fervour in India's role of leadership and predominance over the other states of South Asia.

In April 1984, in a clandestine move Indian forces occupied the Siachin Glacier in violation of the Tashkent Declaration (1966) requiring the settlement of “disputes through peaceful means”, and the Simla Agreement (1972), which barred both countries from unilaterally altering the Line of Control in Kashmir. India took advantage of the fact that there was no physical demarcation of the border at Siachin. The armed forces of both countries are still engaged in conflict on the highest battlefield in the world.

³⁹ Draft reply from Nixon to Indira Gandhi, 17 December 1971, cited in Roedad Khan, *American Papers: Documents 1965-73* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 746-7.

In 1999, Pakistan retaliated and occupied the Kargil peaks, which were part of Azad Kashmir according to the cease-fire line drawn in 1949, but were taken by India during the 1971 war. Pakistan's purpose apparently was to dislodge Indian troops from Siachin, as the Kargil peaks dominate the Srinagar-Leh highway through which India supplies its troops on the Siachin Glacier. The intervention of the United States led to the withdrawal of Pakistani forces from the Kargil peaks but Indian troops continue to occupy Siachin.

In 2002, soon after an alleged terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament—which Pakistan forcefully condemned—India moved the bulk of its forces to the borders of Pakistan and Kashmir and remained there for ten months in an aggressive posture. Ari Fleischer, a White House spokesman, speaking on 20 December 2002 about the situation between India and Pakistan said:

[T]he tension reached alarming levels . . . As a result of the intervention of the President, the Secretary of State, and numerous leaders around the world including [Russian] President [Vladimir] Putin and [British] Prime Minister [Tony] Blair, there is now a markedly diminished point of tension.⁴⁰

What was the Indian objective? The identity of those who assailed the Indian Parliament is not known as all of them were killed. It is surprising that the so-called “trained terrorists” were not able to damage any part of the building; nor were they able to harm any of the legislators who, it is claimed, were their target. Recently, the Supreme Court of India arrested three Kashmiris (including a professor living in Delhi), accusing them of planning the attack. There were demonstrations in Srinagar against the sentences awarded to them. If Indian nationals were responsible, how was Pakistan involved. Whatever the truth maybe, immediately after the incident the Indian Prime Minister levelled the allegation that Pakistan was responsible for the attack, stating: “*Yeh larai ab aar-par ki larai hai*” (this will be a fight to the last).⁴¹ As is the pattern with India, Pakistan was blamed even before any inquiry was initiated, let alone concluded.

⁴⁰ *Dawn* (Islamabad), 21 December 2002.

⁴¹ Bhardeep Kang, *Outlook India* (New Delhi), 13 December 2001.

The reported crime might well have been the work of the Indian intelligence agency, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), in an attempt to forge a case of terrorism against Pakistan. It could have been an attack carried out by the Taliban or Al Qaeda, against whom India was actively supporting the Northern Alliance.⁴² It may have been intended to put a strain on Pakistan's economy. Perhaps the purpose was to find an excuse to suppress the Kashmiris' struggle for self-determination.

According to Pakistan's former Chief of Army Staff, General (retired) Mirza Aslam Beg, the objective was "to seek strategic relations with the US, force Pakistan to change [its] stand on Kashmir, to test [the] nuclear capability of Pakistan and to compel [the] Pakistan Army to control religious elements."⁴³ In the opinion of Pakistan's High Commissioner in India, the allegation was meant to provide an excuse for India to cross the Line of Control and destroy the terrorist training camps allegedly being run by Pakistan.⁴⁴ In any case, the amassing of troops by India on Pakistan borders was an extension of coercive diplomacy.

It is possible that the attack on the Indian Parliament was devised in order to start a fourth war against Pakistan: the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) indicated this possibility.⁴⁵ The Indians had already expressed their intention of starting a war: immediately after the explosion of their nuclear devices, Indian Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, warned that his country was a "nuclear weapons state" and would not hesitate to use the bomb if attacked, and that they had "the capacity for a big bomb now."⁴⁶ The Union Home Minister of India, L. K. Advani, told Pakistan that a "qualitatively new stage in Indo-Pak relations had been brought about by the country [India] becoming a nuclear weapons state."⁴⁷ Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Tourism, Madanlal Khurana, said, "India was ready to fight a fourth war

⁴² Vice Admiral (retd) F. Quadir, *Defence Journal*, January 2002.

⁴³ *Dawn* (Islamabad), 16 April 2003.

⁴⁴ *Asian Age* (New Delhi), 22 December 2001.

⁴⁵ George Tenet, Director CIA, cited by Humaira Niazi, *Defence Journal*, May 2002.

⁴⁶ *News* (Rawalpindi), 16 May 1998.

⁴⁷ *Telegraph* (Calcutta), 19 May 1998.

with Pakistan.”⁴⁸ BJP’s Vice-President and spokesman, K. L. Sharma, was quoted as saying that if Pakistan continued its “anti-India” policy, “Pakistan should be prepared for India’s wrath.”⁴⁹ The president of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (an ally of the BJP), Ashok Singhal, termed the nuclear tests “Hindu revivalism”; he said that, “a war would be a better step to teach Pakistan a lesson”.⁵⁰

To back up its coercive diplomacy, India is increasing its armed strength. In addition to bulk purchases of military hardware from Russia,⁵¹ India is reported to have been offered a “lavish range of hardware, including F-16 fighter jets . . . technology transfers and joint ventures”,⁵² by the US company, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics. India is expected to purchase six Scorpene SKK submarines from France, valued at \$ 1.8 billion, as well as 18 Mirage2000H fighter planes; the remaining 108 planes are to be built indigenously by India at an estimated cost of \$ 8 billion.⁵³ Israel is supplying sophisticated weapons and technology to India worth more than two billion dollars.⁵⁴ The Indian purchase of an aircraft carrier, its plans to build one indigenously, and its acquiring nuclear-powered submarines is part of a “strategy to build a blue-water navy capable of projecting power beyond Indian shores.”⁵⁵

Moorthy Muthuswamy, a US-based nuclear physicist and a director of the Indian American Intellectuals Forum, a New York-based organization, summarizes Indian coercive thought: “India is no longer defendable and is almost ungovernable. It must take the war to the enemy both outside [Pakistan and Bangladesh] and inside [minorities].”⁵⁶ The Indian “Army wants war, but [the] US and

⁴⁸ *Asian Age* (New Delhi), 22 May 1998.

⁴⁹ *Telegraph* (Calcutta), 23 May 1998.

⁵⁰ *Asian Age* (New Delhi), 24 May 1998.

⁵¹ For details see Lt Gen R. K. Jasbir Singh, ed., *Indian Defence Year Book 2002* (New Delhi, 2002), pp. 250-270.

⁵² *Dawn* (Islamabad), 4 February 2003.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Indian Defence Year Book 2002*, pp. 238-49. For Indo-Israel relations, see Musa Khan Jalalzai, *India-Israel Conspiracy against Pakistan* (Lahore: Institute of International Current Affairs, 1992).

⁵⁵ *Times of India* (New Delhi), 23 May 1988.

⁵⁶ “India needs a national security vision: an opinion”, South Asia Analysis Group, Paper no. 535, 14 October 2002. <<http://www.sag.org/papers6/paper535.html>>

Pakistan's nuclear capability make the government favour coercive diplomacy," says an article in *Outlook India* of 27 May 2002.

Isolating and Encircling Pakistan

The Indian policy of isolating, encircling, weakening and coercing Pakistan into a subordinate position is not new: it dates back to the time when Pakistan had not yet been established. In May 1947, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru requested Lord Mountbatten to make it obligatory for the new states (i.e., Pakistan and the Indian Union), once power was transferred, not to align themselves with any outside state or power. According to Mountbatten, Pandit Nehru was concerned that Pakistan "might be driven, by economic necessity" to align itself with the United States of America.⁵⁷ The British Secretary of State for India remarked that the Indian leaders were against Pakistan fortifying itself with outside assistance from Britain, America or any other country.⁵⁸ Even today, Indian leaders are pursuing the same policy: Nehru's "Monroe Doctrine" for South Asia, aimed at establishing Indian hegemony over the region.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established in 1985 "for promoting peace, stability, amity and progress . . . and peaceful settlement of all disputes."⁵⁹ One of the reasons that this organization has not made much headway is the structural imbalance amongst SAARC countries, i.e., the disparity between the size and resources of India and those of the other member states. The reason the last meeting of SAARC, scheduled for January 2003, was postponed was "India's hegemonic policies and its constant bid to isolate Islamabad."⁶⁰ In fact, India wants to "construct new regional associations based on economic ties", excluding Pakistan. Thus, India wishes to "benefit from regionalism without allowing Pakistan to

⁵⁷ Nehru to Mountbatten, 17 May 1947. See 28th Meeting of India and Burma Committee (minutes), annexure C, 28 May 1947, Mountbatten Papers, IOR: MSS. Eur. F. 200/176.

⁵⁸ Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, 27 June 1947, Mountbatten Papers, IOR: MSS. Eur. F. 200/6.

⁵⁹ Para 1 of the Charter of SAARC.

⁶⁰ M. S. Qazi, *News* (Rawalpindi), 22 December 22, 2002.

benefit” and to “further isolate Pakistan from other South Asian States.”⁶¹

India is encircling Pakistan on all sides, in a manner similar to the US encirclement of the USSR during the Cold War. It is partly in this perspective that India has demonstrated its eagerness to develop friendly relations with all the states adjoining Pakistan, namely, China, Russia, the Central Asian States, Afghanistan and Iran. Initially, India had established close ties with China, but these were strained due to the Sino–Indian border dispute. Now, in a bid to create a multi-polar world, relations between the two countries are improving. Premier Zhu Rongji visited India in January 2002 and reciprocated India’s desire for friendship.⁶² In a recent visit to China, on 24 June 2003, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee signed a Joint Declaration on “comprehensive co-operation” between the two countries.

India has maintained close links with the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and since the breakup of the USSR, with Russia. Since 1965, about 75 per cent of the arms imported by India have come from the former Soviet Union. The climax of Indo–Soviet relations was reached in 1971 with the signing of the Indo–Soviet Treaty of Friendship.⁶³ It was in collaboration with that great power that India fought its 1971 war to dismember Pakistan.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, India has been striving to develop cordial relations with the Central Asian states adjacent to Pakistan. This is reflected in India’s signing of a treaty on the “Principles of Inter-State Co-operation” with Uzbekistan, and a “Declaration on Principles and Direction of Co-operation” with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Besides, India has given “credit of US \$20 million each to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan; US \$15million to Turkmenistan, and US \$5 million each to Kyrgyzstan

⁶¹ Stephen P. Cohen, *India: Emerging Power* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), p 242.

⁶² Venu Rajamony, “India-China-US Triangle: A Soft Balance of Power System in the Making”, 15 March 2002.

⁶³ Javed Hassan, *India: A Study in Profile* (Rawalpindi: Army Education Press, 1990), p. 232.

and Tajikistan.”⁶⁴ As a result of these growing ties, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan supported India’s entry into the Shanghai Co-operation Organization (SCO), a group that includes Russia, China and the Central Asian states; they also voiced support for a permanent seat for New Delhi in the UN Security Council.⁶⁵

Since independence, India has successfully fostered closer ties with all those elements in Afghanistan who are against Pakistan, for whatever reason. In the case of Iran, India has recently managed to develop a very warm relationship. The President of Iran, Mohammad Khatami, was the Chief Guest at the Independence Day celebrations in India on 26 January 2003. A week before his visit, a defence pact between the two countries was signed by the Indian Naval Chief and the Iranian Defence Minister in Tehran.⁶⁶ “The Indo-Iran pact had shifted the strategic balance in South Asia and looked very much like an encirclement of Pakistan by India, putting Islamabad under overwhelming pressure.”⁶⁷ An Indian source has visualized the accord as giving India “the right to use Iranian military bases in the event of a war with neighbouring Pakistan, in exchange for India providing Tehran with military hardware, training, maintenance and modernization support.” In addition, an Indian Defence Ministry spokesman said, “Iran is very important for us in view of geopolitics . . . India will get a credible gateway to Central Asia.”⁶⁸ Indian defence co-operation with Iran may have an adverse impact on its relations with the US, but alliance with Iran will play an important role in the Indian policy of isolating and encircling Pakistan.

As mentioned earlier, India was “a virtual Soviet ally” during the Cold War, due to its extensive military reliance on Moscow. During the latter part of 1950s, “US-Indian relations became seriously strained on

⁶⁴ K. M. Pari Velan, ‘Geo-political Importance of Central Asia to India’.
<<http://www.ipcs.org/issues/articles/274-ifp-parivelan.html>> (1 February 2003).

⁶⁵ Press release, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, 17 August 2002.
<<http://www.meadev.nic.in/news/official/20020807/official.html>>

⁶⁶ *South Asia Tribune*, 24 February 2003, SIFY News, 3 March 2003.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Vivek Raghuvanshi, New Delhi, 23 January 2003. DefenceNews.com

the Goa issue.”⁶⁹ However, after the Sino–Indian conflict (1962), relations improved and the US resumed military assistance to India.⁷⁰ At the present point in time, Washington finds Delhi a “durable partner”. The US Ambassador to India said, “The catalogue of intensified cooperation now included diplomatic collaboration, counter-terrorism, counter proliferation, defence and military-to-military teamwork, exchange of intelligence and law enforcement.”⁷¹

In a nutshell, India wishes to weaken Pakistan’s linkages with its traditional allies, its neighbours and its potential friends. Ian Stephens, former editor of *The Statesman*, Calcutta, is of the opinion that “a cardinal underlying purpose” of Indian foreign policy is “to keep her smaller neighbour weak and isolated for eventual absorption.”⁷²

Strengthen Pakistan

To counter India’s hegemonic designs, Pakistan must strengthen itself, despite its disadvantages of size and resources. It cannot afford continuing confrontation and enmity with India. It has already suffered: in 1971, it lost its eastern wing and the majority of its population, due partly to its own faults but also because of Indian aggression. In the 1990s, on an average, Pakistan spent about five per cent of its annual GDP on its military, as against India, which spent around two per cent.⁷³ A projected comparison between India and Pakistan during the year 2003 is as follows:⁷⁴

⁶⁹ *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955-57*, vol. VIII, South Asia (US Government Printing Office: Washington, D. C., 1987), p.325.

⁷⁰ *Foreign Relations of the United States 1961-63*, vol. VIII, South Asia (US Government Printing Office: Washington, D. C., 1996), p.723.

⁷¹ *Dawn* (Islamabad), 28 January 2003.

⁷² Ian Stephens, *Pakistan* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 267.

⁷³ Anatol Liven, “The Pressures on Pakistan”, *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2002, p. 107.

⁷⁴ *The Military Balance 2002-2003* (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2002), pp. 288-91; <<http://www.indiabudget.nic.in/ub2002-03/eb/be.p&f>>; Jal Khambata, ‘India’s Bloated Budget’ <<http://www.angelfire.com/in/jalnews/2003/28002.htm>> *The Economic Survey of Pakistan 2002-3* claims that the defence expenditure of Pakistan has declined continuously over the last decade in terms of percentage of GDP. *Dawn* (Islamabad), 6 June 2003. (Total budget outlay for 2002-3: India: US \$ 63.1 billion; Pakistan: US \$ 13.9 billion; US \$ 1= Indian Rs 47 and Pakistani Rs 58.)

	India	Pakistan
GDP	US \$ 553 billion	US \$ 72 billion
GDP per head	US\$ 507	US\$ 492
Population	1.1 billion	150.7 million
GDP growth	6.1 %	5.1 %
Inflation	5.9 %	3.3 %
Defence budget	US\$ 13.8 billion	US\$ 2.7 billion
Defence exp. as %age of budget	2.5 %	3.8 %
Defence exp. as %age of total exp.	22 %	20 %

In spite of the disparity in their respective resources, Pakistan cannot accept Indian hegemony or its expansionist policy. “Every nation big or small has its honour and dignity,” said President Pervez Musharraf in his breakfast meeting with journalists in Agra on 16 July 2001.⁷⁵ Pakistan has to persevere with a two-pronged strategy: firstly, to strengthen itself internally; and secondly, to pursue a proactive foreign policy. A close nexus between internal strength and external relations is essential in ensuring the security of a nation.

Pakistan should be able to stand on its feet with dignity. It has shown improvement in the domain of macroeconomics and should now endeavour to increase its GDP growth from 5.1 per cent to something like that of China’s, i.e., about 8 to 9 per cent. This requires competitive scientific, technological and industrial capability, which in turn requires human development. The maximum possible funds should be made available for this purpose; meticulous planning and efficient utilization of resources will ensure progress.

In both India and Pakistan, vested interests deliberately misinterpret the two-nation theory of the AIML. What the AIML was advocating was that people of all religions living in Muslim-majority areas (now Pakistan and Bangladesh) would form a separate nation-state or states; and that all peoples, irrespective of their religion, living in

⁷⁵ *News* (Rawalpindi), 17 July 2001.

Hindu-majority areas would form another nation-state (Hindustan). National unity and harmony among all Pakistanis, irrespective of their religion, caste or creed—as advocated by the Quaid-i-Azam in his speech to the Constituent Assembly on 11 August 1947⁷⁶—is essential. This is possible through broad-based education, liberalism, strengthening the democratic process and establishing the rule of law.

Pakistan cannot enter into an arms race with India, but it should continue to maintain a credible level of nuclear deterrence and conventional preparedness to serve as a shield against aggression. Pakistan could benefit from the example of Israel, which maintains a well-trained and well-equipped regular force as well as a large reserve force that can be quickly mobilized during an emergency.

In foreign affairs, besides strengthening ties with its traditional allies, China and the United States, Pakistan should seek better relations with the European Union. Besides, instead of depending on assistance solely from western countries (which often impose sanctions), it should also look east for more dependable allies. The Russian attitude towards Pakistan is based on its resentment of the role Pakistan has played against the USSR during the Cold War, and in supporting the Afghan resistance to Soviet occupation. This perhaps is the reason why Russia supports “Indian hegemonic ambitions in the region.”⁷⁷ President Musharraf’s last visit to Russia did contribute towards assuaging their fears about Pakistan. It should be followed up because it is in the interest of Russia to have good relations with countries to its south, including Pakistan.

Efforts should be made to strengthen the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Economic Co-operation Organization (ECO). To ensure better interaction amongst ECO countries, a communications network is an important prerequisite and must be given due consideration. Pakistan should also improve bilateral relations with all Muslim countries, especially those in its neighbourhood, such as Iran, Afghanistan, as well as those that are

⁷⁶ *Quaid-i-Azam Mahomed Ali Jinnah: Speeches as Governor-General of Pakistan* (Karachi: Saifi Printers, n. d.), p. 9

⁷⁷ Maqbool Ahmad Bhatti, ‘Russian Asian Diplomacy’, *Dawn* (Islamabad), 19 December 2002.

important in the global scenario such as Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia (the OIC headquarters being located in the lattermost). The President of Iran, Mohammad Khatami, has already visited Pakistan (24-26 December 2002) and, in a joint communiqué, called for “enhanced strategic cooperation with Islamabad”; he proposed the enhancement of co-operation in all fields: political, defence, economic, commercial, cultural, and science and technology.⁷⁸

Pakistan should actively seek closer ties with the newly independent states of Central Asia for co-operative economic security measures, especially as each of them is within range of Indian missiles. The signing of an agreement in Ashkabad on 27 December 2002 between Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan for an oil and gas pipeline to Pakistan is an encouraging sign. Pakistan should work towards the building of an Iran-Pak-India gas pipeline as well: Iran appears to be keen on the venture, though India is reluctant. These pipelines will promote peace and stability in the region besides giving a boost to the economy by meeting increasing energy needs in the foreseeable future.

Pakistan should strive to maintain, improve and strengthen brotherly relations with all SAARC countries. The ‘policy of bilateralism has failed in establishing an environment of peace and understanding’ in South Asia and SAARC is ‘a hopeful step’ towards achieving peace and security in the region.⁷⁹

Strive for Détente with India

India will always have an ambivalent attitude towards Pakistan. If Pakistan submits to its wishes, India expresses its goodwill; if Pakistan demands justice in Kashmir, India will vilify Pakistan, and level several allegations—including that of terrorism—against it. The Muslim vision that the partitioning of the subcontinent would bring peace and security to the region seems an unattainable dream. However, efforts in the right direction should continue.

⁷⁸ *Dawn* (Islamabad), 27 December 2002.

⁷⁹ U. S. Bajpai, ed., *India and its Neighbourhood*, (New Delhi: India International Centre, 1986), cover page.

Both India and Pakistan should learn from history. Through the centuries, the subcontinent was attacked and dominated by outside forces, i.e., the Aryans, Persians, Greeks, Sakas, Yue-chis (Kushans), Huns, Arabs, Turks and British. These invasions were made possible by the lack of unity amongst the people of the subcontinent.

Both India and Pakistan should be pragmatic and address the underlying causes of conflict and tension, with the intention of establishing a durable peace. India must renounce any notion it harbours of dismembering Pakistan. Whilst Pakistan cannot accept Indian hegemony, it should recognize the pre-eminence of India in South Asia because of its size and resources. Indian hegemony would imply that all states in South Asia are subordinated to India, whereas pre-eminence would simply mean *primus inter pares*.

India and Pakistan can learn much from the erstwhile Cold War. The United States and the USSR wasted about forty years before coming to the conclusion that they could not afford to be enemies. Europe also provides an example: the European states have, historically, fought amongst themselves; now, they are endeavouring to forge some kind of unity on the basis of equality. Since 1871, French foreign policy was dominated by ensuring its security against her powerful neighbour, Germany. The two countries fought over the territories of Alsace-Lorraine and Saar for almost a century, but eventually resolved their disputes amicably and established cordial relations. Nuclear weapons have brought an end to fighting in western Europe. Similarly, these weapons can help India and Pakistan in maintaining peace. Nuclearization demands maturity and responsibility.

India should realize that it can no longer pursue hegemonic or supremacist policies because of the world becoming a global village with little space for regional overlords. It should dispense with the notion that if the US can bombard Afghanistan or launch a pre-emptive strike against Iraq, so India, as the largest and strongest state in the region, can also act unilaterally. Seeking cover of the US doctrine of pre-emption, countries like India “are behaving more unilaterally.”⁸⁰ This is a dangerous omen for peace. The alternative course is for all countries in

⁸⁰ <<http://www.peace-action.org/home/preempt.html>> (2 February 2003).

the region to co-operate with each other. India, being the biggest country, should “take the initiative to call for and work jointly with all the other states to make this region ‘a zone of peace’.”⁸¹

South Asia is a strategically important region of the world. If its leaders show maturity and wisdom, it can benefit immensely and establish its prominent place in the global village. It must be realized that peace and security are in the supreme national interest of both India and Pakistan, and that to achieve peace and security, the resolution of all outstanding issues—including the Kashmir dispute—is essential. If we behave irresponsibly and do not demonstrate the necessary maturity, outside powers are likely to benefit at the expense of both countries. They will play the Indian or Pakistani card at will to further their objectives and interests. The strategic and economic interests of both states would be better served if they pursue a policy of peace and friendship towards each other. Jawaharlal Nehru’s observation is very pertinent:

India and Pakistan cannot help playing an important role in Asia . . . If India and Pakistan follow a contrary policy and are opposed to each other, they will obviously be neutralizing each other and cannot play the role . . . conflict and wasteful effort will wipe us out from the face of the earth.⁸²

It might be argued that communal disharmony is the root cause affecting the development of relations between the two countries. Theoretically, the Indian constitution ensures equality of all citizens, as do Quaid-i-Azam’s inaugural address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan and, later, the Constitution of Pakistan in this country. But is equality seen in practice in either country? Hindu nationalism (Hindutva) and Muslim extremism are to be blamed for the continuing communal unrest. Recently, President Musharraf offered to join hands with India to fight extremism;⁸³ the Indian response is awaited.

⁸¹ Statement of the Communist Ghadar Party of India, <<http://www.cgpi.org/peace.html>> (21 November 2001).

⁸² Jawaharlal Nehru, *Speeches*, vol. II, p. 446, cited in S. M. Burke, *Mainsprings of Indian and Pakistani Foreign Policy* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 3.

⁸³ *Dawn* (Islamabad), 10 March 2003.

Two approaches can be taken for overcoming mutual antagonism. One is for the smaller, weaker nation to accept the domination of the other and submit to its dictates. This approach will lead to perpetual resentment. The second approach is that the larger nation should discard its mantle of superiority, shed its hegemonic designs, and create an atmosphere of mutual respect. The second is a more pragmatic approach in inter-state relations and should be acceptable to all.

Resolving the Kashmir Dispute

The issue of the accession of the state of Jammu and Kashmir cannot be resolved militarily, nor is the United Nations in a position to enforce its resolutions on Kashmir; nor is India prepared to grant self-determination under UN auspices to the people of Kashmir. India and Pakistan have taken extreme positions. Instead of playing the blame game, both countries should choose the path of peace and remove the cause of the insurgency in Kashmir. Although Pakistan cannot abandon its moral and political support to the Kashmir cause, it should redouble its efforts to stop anyone who wishes to cross the Line of Control. At the same time, India should take all necessary steps to stop human rights violations in Kashmir, violations which have increased during the past twelve years.

Both countries must seek a *modus vivendi* on Kashmir. A number of solutions have been proposed and can be worked out. Firstly, there is the UN Security Resolution which calls for a plebiscite in Kashmir under UN auspices. This Resolution was accepted by the Indian representative in the Security Council and by Jawaharlal Nehru.⁸⁴ However, it is yet to be implemented.

Secondly, there is the possibility of third-party mediation. Pakistan and India have solved some of their most sensitive disputes through third-party involvement. These include: the determination of the international boundary through the Radcliffe Award (1947); the settlement of the dispute over the distribution of water through the Indus Basin Water Treaty (1962) with the involvement of the World

⁸⁴ Burke, *Mainsprings*, pp. 27-9.

Bank and the Great Powers of the time; resolution of the Rann of Kutch Dispute (1965) through arbitration; the Tashkent Declaration (1966) through the mediation of the President of the USSR, and the Kargil Conflict (1999) with the intervention of the President of the USA. Similarly, the Kashmir dispute could be resolved through a UN mechanism or with the involvement of a neutral country/countries, or individual/individuals such as Nelson Mandela.

A workable solution can be found by ensuring the face-saving of the political leadership in both countries. Secret negotiations can be held amongst all concerned parties, i.e., the representatives of Pakistan, India, the people of Kashmir (representatives of the Governments of Indian-held Kashmir, Azad Kashmir and the All Parties Hurriyat Conference), supervised or facilitated by representatives from Russia and China (as neighbouring countries), and the USA, the only superpower. The solution thus arrived at should be enforced in the interest of the future prosperity of the people of Kashmir and of the subcontinent as a whole.

If the models of the Camp David Peace Treaty (1979) or the Oslo Peace Accord (1993) are not considered suitable, a multi-party solution on the lines of the Belfast Agreement (1998) should be considered. The opening paragraph of the Agreement says:

The two Governments [the Governments of the UK and of Ireland] (i) recognize the legitimacy of whatever choice is freely exercised by a majority of the people of Northern Ireland with regard to its status whether they prefer to continue to support the Union with Great Britain or a sovereign united Ireland; recognize that it is for the people of the island of Ireland alone . . .⁸⁵

The Chinese approach also bears consideration: they are patiently waiting for the resolution of the status of Taiwan at an appropriate time. New Delhi and Beijing are seeking to resolve their problems including the Himalayan border dispute peacefully through bilateral negotiations.

The problem with the bilateral approach between India and Pakistan is that India believes that the best way to strike a peace deal is through Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) and enhanced trade

⁸⁵ The Belfast Agreement, <http://www.gov.ie/iveagh/angloirish/goodfriday/BIA.htm>

ties, while Kashmir is kept on the back burner.⁸⁶ (Incidentally, India initiated the first trade cut-off in 1949.)⁸⁷ On the other hand, Pakistan feels that without the settlement of the Kashmir issue, there can be no real friendship between the two countries. A sane approach would be for both countries to start bilateral talks on all issues raised by either side.

President Musharraf's four-step mechanism⁸⁸ is worthy of consideration: the first step is to keep the dialogue between the leaders of the two countries alive; step two should be the acceptance that Kashmir is the main issue to be resolved; step three would be to look at all possible solutions to the Kashmir problem and agree on which ones can be mutually discarded as unworkable. The fourth step would be to go on to further discussion with a view to arriving at some reasonable solution acceptable to all parties concerned.

There have been Government initiatives in the past. From the inception of the two states, their Presidents and Prime Ministers have met time and again but they have been unable to make any headway so far as the Kashmir dispute is concerned. Recently, Prime Minister Vajpayee visited Lahore (1999) and President Musharraf went to Agra (2001). There was no substantive progress made and the opportunities for reconciliation were squandered. The political parties, leaders and governments in both countries have their own agenda—their vested interests and the lure of popularity amongst the masses—in keeping the Kashmir dispute alive. As a consequence, after more than half a century, we are nowhere near a solution.

An alternative course is people-to-people contact, which is minimal at present. This is possible if both countries are liberal in granting visas to intellectuals, journalists, sportsmen and the tourists. A former Indian Prime Minister, Inder Kumar Gujral, promoted the idea of people-to-people relations. According to him, “the civil society in all countries has come of age”, and that there were “extremely good relations between the Indian and Pakistani people.”⁸⁹ Fortunately, in

⁸⁶ *Nation* (Islamabad), 16 July 2001.

⁸⁷ S. M. Burke, *Mainsprings*, p. 14.

⁸⁸ *Nation* (Islamabad), 17 July 2001.

⁸⁹ 'The Rediff Interview', 23 May 2002.

both countries there is no dearth of people who desire amity and peace and resolution of all disputes. Such people can promote goodwill on both sides of the international border and the Line of Control. They should attempt to influence their governments and media to exercise maximum restraint and avoid acrimonious rhetoric against each other.

Positive Trends

There are some positive indications. Recently, in February 2003, the BJP's anti-Pakistan oratory did not work in the elections in Himachal Pradesh as it had in Gujarat. On 20 February 2003, Prime Minister Vajpayee ruled out the possibility of war with Pakistan and, two months later on 18 April, he announced his readiness for a dialogue to settle "all issues". Encouraged by this, Pakistan's Prime Minister spoke to Vajpayee on 28 April, breaking the 18-month-old deadlock; on 5 May, Prime Minister Jamali announced a number of confidence-building measures. President Pervez Musharraf and Foreign Minister Kasuri have been insisting for a dialogue with India. It seems even the conservative opposition leaders are of the same view. On 1 March 2003, the Jamaat-i-Islami Chief, Qazi Hussain Ahmed, stated his preference for normalization of relations with India rather than "submitting to the dictates of the US."

Earlier, both countries have offered "no-war pacts" and "joint defence" to each other. For instance, in April 1947, Quaid-i-Azam had pleaded for a common defence policy between India and Pakistan, but the INC did not respond.⁹⁰ Again, on 11 March 1948, he said:

[I]t is of vital importance to Pakistan and India as independent sovereign states to collaborate in a friendly way jointly to defend their frontiers both on land and sea against any aggression. But this depends entirely on whether Pakistan and India can resolve their own differences.⁹¹

<<http://www.rediff.com/news/2002/may/23inter.htm>> (1 March 2003).

⁹⁰ M. A. Jinnah, in an interview given to Doon Campbell, Reuters' correspondent, *Deccan Times*, 25 May 1947.

⁹¹ Afzal, *Speeches and Statements*, p. 459.

In March 1949, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan, suggested an offensive–defensive alliance. Later the same year, Pandit Nehru proposed a no-war pact. In March 1956, Pakistan’s Prime Minister Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, and President Ziaul Haq in September 1981 made similar offers.⁹² On 17 July 1959, President Ayub Khan had offered joint defence but Prime Minister Nehru had rejected the suggestion with the remark, “Defence against whom?”⁹³ Prior to the Agra Summit on 14-16 July 2001, President Musharraf proposed a no-war pact, but India rejected the suggestion out of hand.⁹⁴

The principal reason why these proposals have made no headway is the lingering Kashmir dispute. This dispute needs to be dealt with in a progressive and humanistic way, even if that approach involves a fundamental shift in strategies. On 20 December 2000, Prime Minister Vajpayee made a statesmanlike offer, saying, “We shall not traverse solely on the beaten track of the past. Instead we shall be bold and innovative designers of a future architecture of peace and prosperity for the entire South Asian region.”

The US President and other world leaders have shown interest in the peace process. They have asked the two countries to resume a dialogue and have offered their assistance, should it be required. On 26 January 2003, while addressing the World Economic Forum in Davos (Switzerland), US Secretary of State, Colin L. Powell, said, “[I]t is crucial that they both take risks for peace on the subcontinent and work to normalize their relations.” Referring to US efforts to reduce tensions between India and Pakistan in 2002, he said, “The United States has extended a helping hand to both India and Pakistan; we stand ready to do so again.”⁹⁵ Most important of all, there is no dearth of enlightened and peace-loving people in both countries: they are raising their voices calling for closer relations and resolution of disputes peacefully through dialogue.

⁹² Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, ‘No-War Pact Controversy’, *Muslim* (Islamabad), 28 July 1986.

⁹³ *Dawn* (Karachi), 25 April 1959. See also, Burke, *Mainsprings*, p. 171.

⁹⁴ Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, *News* (Islamabad), 15 July 2001.

⁹⁵ *Hindu*, 27 January 2003.

Conclusion

The present conflict between India and Pakistan is a legacy of the past. Since independence, India has been pursuing an expansionist, hegemonic policy, occupying several territories—including the state of Jammu and Kashmir—through military force. Some Indian politicians want their country to follow in the footsteps of an imperialist power.⁹⁶ But “India is destined to be compared with Pakistan until it can accommodate Islamabad or Pakistan ‘withers away,’” writes Stephen P. Cohen.⁹⁷ Since the latter idea will not bear consideration, there are little chances of peace between these two countries unless the Indian Government discards its pseudo-imperialistic designs and deals with Pakistan fairly and on an equal footing. Peace lies in discarding hegemonic designs, abandoning the politics of hatred and hostility, having faith in fundamental human rights, and accepting the internationally-recognized principles of tolerance, justice and equity. Otherwise, the consequences are bound to be disastrous. As Pandit Nehru rightly observed: “The conflict [between India and Pakistan] will wipe us out from the face of the earth.”⁹⁸ ■

⁹⁶ <<http://www.cgpi.org/peace.html>> (26 November 2002).

⁹⁷ Stephen P. Cohen, *India: Emerging Power* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 203.

⁹⁸ Nehru, *Speeches*, II, p. 446, in Burke, *Mainsprings*, p. 3

INDIA AND IRAN: EMERGING STRATEGIC CO-OPERATION?

Maqsudul Hasan Nuri*

Introduction

President Mohammad Khatami of Iran paid a four-day official visit to India from 20-24 January 2003, and the two countries signed “The New Delhi Declaration” on 25 January. During Khatami’s visit, Iran and India formulated a vision of a “strategic partnership” for a more stable, secure and prosperous region; and for this objective, enhanced regional and global co-operation between the two countries was stressed.¹ Earlier on 19 January, a defence agreement between the two countries had been signed in Tehran, together with a related one on internal security, exchange of intelligence, extradition, police training, drug-trafficking and terrorist activities.²

President Khatami’s visit was especially significant because he was invited as the chief guest at India’s Republic Day military parade for 2003. He was therefore able to see for himself the display of India’s formidable military might, and could thereby assess the important role that India and Iran could together play in the region. More importantly, the visit took place in the shadows of the looming Iraq crisis.

Iran and India signed seven agreements on economic exchanges, namely, on science and technology, information technology, educational training, the reconstruction of Afghanistan and anti-terrorism. They also agreed to “explore opportunities for co-operation in defence matters, including training and exchange of visits”, and pointed out the fact that

* Dr Maqsudul Hasan Nuri holds a Ph. D. from the University of South Carolina, Columbia, USA. Currently, he is Senior Research Fellow at the Islamabad Policy Research Institute.

¹ See “The New Delhi Declaration” in *Discover India*, <[http://meadev.nic.in/speeches/stmt-ind-iran-25 January.html](http://meadev.nic.in/speeches/stmt-ind-iran-25%20January.html)> (19 January 2003).

² “India, Iran hold talks on security issues”, *Dawn* (Islamabad), 15 February 2003, p. 16.

this collaboration was “not aimed at any third country.”³ The reference was, of course, to Pakistan.

Background

Though Iran and India were closely linked through geography, history and culture in the distant past, a new era in their relationship began with the independence of India in August 1947. These relations have had their vicissitudes, with Indo–Iranian ties remaining lukewarm for decades. This was due principally to Reza Shah Pehlavi’s strongly pro-US policies, at a time when India was pro-Soviet and an active and outspoken member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Following the 1979 Iranian Revolution, India–Iran relations continued to be strained until 1993. The 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and India’s support to Iraq in the 1980-86 Iran–Iraq war were sore points. During the 1991 Gulf war, India’s ambiguous posture of support to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait added yet another irritant to their existing relations.

Between 1978 and 1993, no Iranian head of state visited India. It was in 1993 that India took the initiative when the then Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao, made a historic visit to Iran; this was followed by President Hashemi Rafsanjani’s visit to India in 1995. It was, however, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee’s April 2001 visit to Iran that brought about a breakthrough in Indo–Iranian relations.⁴

The present urge for collaboration flows from a set of complementarities in Indo-Iranian relations. India considers itself as heir to the British Empire and sees a role for itself in the Gulf region, where many non-resident Indian live and work. Besides, both Iran and India have keenly followed developments in the Middle East, Central Asia and the Gulf region.

³ <<http://www.dawn.com/2003/01/26/top16.htm>> (27 January 2003).

⁴ For details, see Muhammad Naseem Khan, “Vajpayee’s Visit to Iran: Indo-Iranian Relations and Prospects of Bilateral Cooperation”, *Strategic Analysis* (New Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis), vol. XXV, no. 6, pp. 765-9.

Objective of Study

The objective of the study is to highlight the type and nature of the emerging security linkage between India and Iran. More specifically, the contention is that, despite some rhetoric and near-alarmist writings in some sections of Pakistani press in the last few months, the Indo–Iranian strategic understanding involves more of “security co-operation” rather than a longstanding strategic arrangement. This co-operation has limitations and liabilities in the emerging post-Iraq scenario as Iran is coming under increasing US pressure over its alleged nuclear buildup programme and harbouring of Al-Qaeda terrorists fleeing from Iraq.

Here it is pertinent to mention that that “alliance”, “partnership” and “co-operation” are often used interchangeably. In India–Iranian relations when the term “strategic co-operation” is used, it frequently implies consultations between the two nations on economic and security-related issues such as smuggling, terrorism, illegal arms, drug trafficking and signing of agreements. It may also encompass routine joint naval exercises as well as exchange of visits by higher defence officials of the two countries. While “alliance” is a strong, institutionalized arrangement of a longstanding nature, “strategic partnership” is at a lower level, and “strategic co-operation” comes at the bottom of this hierarchy.

Indo–Iranian Complementarities

India's Perception of Iran

Indo–Iranian historical links go back several centuries. At the time of the Delhi Sultanate and, later, in the Mughal era, India and Iran were closely linked. Persian was the court language in the subcontinent till the British replaced it with English in the mid-nineteenth century.

At present, India perceives Iran as a major power in the Gulf region, and an important Islamic country of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). It is geo-strategically located at the tri-junction of the Gulf, Southwest Asia and Central Asia, and is endowed with an abundance of natural resources like oil and gas.

India's tremendous advances in information technology, computer software, engineering and other technologies, are attractive for Iran. In particular, Iran needs engineering and construction expertise for the development of its transportation network and port infrastructure to link it with Central Asia and Afghanistan.

The Importance of Hydrocarbon Resources

During Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's visit to Iran, the two leaders signed the Tehran Declaration on 10 April 2001. Considered a milestone in the relationship between the two countries, the Declaration mentioned the growing "strategic consensus" between India and Iran, underpinned by economic ties, including further prospects of trade and investment flows. In fact, the volume of trade between the two countries tripled after Vajpayee's visit.⁵ Moreover, the document underlines complementarities in strategic sectors: Iran's abundant energy resources and India's growing energy needs for its rapidly developing economy draw them closer as "natural partners".⁶

Iran forms part of the 11-member Oil and Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) organization. Iranian oil and gas reserves, as of March 2002, were estimated at nearly 270 billion barrels, of which 63 per cent consisted of natural gas and 37 per cent of crude oil reserves. Iran exports 3.665 million barrels of oil per day (bpd);⁷ it has five per cent of the world's crude oil and 14 per cent of the natural gas reserves. In fact, after Russia, it has the largest natural gas reserves in the world, estimated at 23 trillion cubic metres.⁸

Iran is, therefore, keenly interested in exporting its surplus natural gas to South Asia. It floated a proposal for a regional pipeline in 1989, when major oil and gas discoveries were made in its territory, adjoining the Gulf state of Qatar. However, discussions for the construction of a \$3.5 billion pipeline began in earnest in 1994. The

⁵ Raja Mohan, "Iran calls for restraint", *Hindu* (Delhi), 22 May 2002.

⁶ See The Tehran Declaration, 10 April 2002.

⁷ "Islamic Revolution: a civilized transformation", Advertisement Supplement on the 24th Anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution, *Dawn* (Islamabad), 10 February 2003.

⁸ *Ibid.*

planned regional Iran–Pakistan–India gas pipeline, termed the “peace pipeline”, will be approximately 2670 kilometres long.

According to energy experts, in the previous two decades, the demand for natural gas in India and Pakistan has increased substantially. Estimates suggest that India’s demand for natural gas will increase four-fold by the year 2010, whereas Pakistan’s requirements could double. As a transit country, Pakistan would be a beneficiary of the pipeline, as it would get royalties amounting to \$6 million a year. The projected gas pipeline will connect the Assaluyen gas and oil fields in southern Iran to the Hazira–Vijaipur–Jagdishpur (HVJ)⁹ pipeline in India, with an intermediate focal point in Multan, southern Punjab, Pakistan.

As to the current status of the proposed pipeline, there is some uncertainty. Although it will benefit both India and Pakistan, the issues related to its security dominate Indian thinking. In this regard, the Iranian government tried to allay the Indian fears of possible stoppage of the gas by Pakistan, giving guarantees of uninterrupted supply.¹⁰ The issue was also discussed when Vajpayee visited Tehran in early April 2002. The Iran–Pak–India project makes eminent economic sense and is a better option than others, such as a deep-water gas pipeline through the Arabian Sea, or the transportation of liquefied national gas in tankers.

For its part, the Iranian government has undertaken responsibility of the security aspect, i.e., safe delivery of gas to India. In this regard, Iran has firstly held out an assurance that it would ensure supply to India at its border; secondly, international consortia would be made responsible for the provision of adequate safeguards in case of any disruption.¹¹

Indian concerns are understandable, though somewhat exaggerated. Their apprehension is that the gas pipeline passing through

⁹ The HVJ gas pipeline runs 2,300 kms cross-country from the western coastal city of Hazira in the Indian state of Gujarat, through Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan to Uttar Pradesh. <http://www.gail.nic.in?gail_eng/o_m/hbj1.html> (10 June 2003).

¹⁰ “Pakistan to abide by contractual obligations: Iran-India gas pipeline may soon be a reality”, *Pakistan Observer* (Islamabad), 2 February 2002.

¹¹ K. K. Katyal, “Iran, India to examine Pak route for gas pipeline”, *Hindu* (Chennai), 30 May 2002.

Pakistani territory might prove vulnerable to disruption or stoppage, since Pakistan will hold the lever. Added to this is the fear that the pipeline could be susceptible to subversion, sabotage or acts of terrorism by individuals or groups opposed to the normalization of relations between India and Pakistan. (Two incidents occurred in January 2003, when infighting between disgruntled warlords in Baluchistan led to unknown persons damaging the Sui Northern Gas Pipeline.) There is, in addition, the problem of an international consortium that would undertake to finance this costly project.

India, on its part, would prefer an interlocking arrangement, whereby the gas imported from Iran through Pakistan would be re-supplied to Pakistan. This would, in its view, minimize any chances of disruption through deliberate stoppage of supply or acts of sabotage.

Discoveries of gas deposits in eastern India along the Andhra Pradesh coastline seem to have reduced its earlier enthusiasm about the construction of the above-mentioned pipeline project. The new finds are estimated to be about five trillion cubic feet (tcf) of natural gas in the Krishna–Godavari basin, approximately 30 kilometres off the southeastern coast of India. Significantly, these are the world’s largest reserves of natural gas to be discovered in 2002.¹² CAIRN Energy, an Edinburgh-based firm, claims that it has found an additional 800 billion cubic feet of gas in an adjacent block of the sea floor.¹³ If and when developed, this will have a great impact on the energy scenario in South Asia and the Gulf region.

This is not to suggest that India is an energy-starved country, dependent on imported gas and oil supplies. It favours a deep-sea pipeline through the Arabian Sea, but this is a mere expression of desire. Iran, on the other hand, is not very keen on the sea pipeline option since the enterprise will be too costly. This option remains quite murky. A Pakistani analyst, Khaled Ahmad, believes that the “[deep-sea] pipeline fires the imagination in the region, but it ignores the law and order situation both in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the peculiar nature of India–Pakistan confrontation.” He adds that, albeit a tantalizing

¹² “India’s gas discovery may alter balance of power in the region: paper”, *Dawn* (Islamabad) 14 December 2002.

¹³ *Ibid.*

economic proposition, the economics of the Cold War era may make it unfeasible in our region.¹⁴

Iran has been an ardent supporter of an extended South Asian economic community—sometimes termed the “Asian League”—comprising Iran, Afghanistan and the SAARC states. During the visit of the then Indian Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao, to Iran in September 1993, an op-ed article in an Iranian journal observed that while the nineteenth century belonged to Europe and the twentieth century was American, the twenty-first century would be an Asian century;¹⁵ further, that, with the co-operation of China and the Central Asian Republics (CARs), Asia could “become the world’s largest economic power.”¹⁶

Being a member of the Economic Co-operation Organization (ECO), Iran has advocated links between the two groupings in order to lift the region out of its economic backwardness. India has been seeking a corridor through Pakistan for transit trade with Iran and Afghanistan, but this has not materialized due to the continuing hostile relations between India and Pakistan.

Common Interests in Afghanistan

India and Iran have been supporting the Northern Alliance and are currently extending all possible help to Hamid Karzai’s government. After the ouster of the Taliban regime, both countries wish to establish friendly relations with Afghanistan. For India, this means strategically outflanking Pakistan, while for Iran, it means securing its eastern border. In forging close political and economic ties, India has the advantage of exploiting its new links with the incumbent Tajik-dominated regime in Afghanistan that is strongly opposed to the ousted Taliban. Both Iran and India consider the early reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan highly desirable, and both have a stake in the durability and stability of the present government. Thus, India has

¹⁴ Khaled Ahmad, “Pakistan will have to be ‘next’ ”, *Friday Times* (Lahore), 7-13 February 2003.

¹⁵ Cited in A. G. Noorani, “India’s Diplomacy”, *Statesman* (Delhi), 31 December 1993.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

established two consulates—at Kandhar and Jalalabad¹⁷— as has Iran. While Iran’s primary focus is on eastern Afghanistan and northern Afghanistan, India is concentrating on other regions of the country, including the capital, Kabul, and has established a regular satellite-based communications link with its embassy there. It has also extended humanitarian aid in the form of one million tonnes of wheat and a \$100-million grant for reconstruction; it has also offered help in such diverse fields as civil aviation, transport, industry, health, education and agriculture.¹⁸

Forging Ties with ‘Democratic’ India

President Khatami’s January 2003 visit to India is significant in the sense that he chose to visit a democratic South Asian country, one which is now in the frontline of the international war on terrorism. Iran, meanwhile, is coming under US pressure and has even been included in the “axis of evil”. It is no wonder, therefore, that, during his visit to India, President Khatami included a declaration slamming “double standards” in the global campaign against terrorism and urged a widening of “co-operation against terrorism in bilateral and multilateral [ways]”, as well as the strengthening of “the international legal regime against terrorism”. Moreover, both countries agreed on an early finalization of a “comprehensive convention against international terrorism” at the United Nations.¹⁹ By associating with India as a strategic partner—one which already has a close partnership with the USA—Iran wants to reduce its international isolation.

In recent years, there have been some positive trends in Iranian foreign policy. Iran’s acquiescence in the war against the Taliban, its assistance to the Karzai government, and its emphasis on a “dialogue of civilizations” are steps seen as positive indicators. Where Iraq is concerned, like so many western countries, it is opposed to the US attack on Iraq and the US policies of “unilateralism”; it does not,

¹⁷ On his visit to Pakistan on 23 April 2003, Hamid Karzai stated that these consulates were set up soon after independence of India. Farhan Bokhari, “Karzai seeks help against Taliban”, *News* (Rawalpindi-Islamabad), 24 April 2003.

¹⁸ “India establishes satellite link with Kabul”, *The News on Sunday* (Rawalpindi), 16 February 2003.

¹⁹ <<http://www.dawn.com/2003/01/26/top16.htm>> (27 January 2003).

however, hold any brief for Saddam Hussein. India, on its part, views Iran as a country which has undergone a major Islamic revolution, a harbinger of cataclysmic change that ushered in its own brand of Islamic democracy in the Gulf region. These changes are looked upon with a mixture of envy and trepidation by some of its Arab neighbours, which are ruled by authoritarian rulers.

Diversification of Relations

Since the 1990s, diversification of its foreign relations has been the motivating impulse of Iranian foreign policy. Closer ties with India tend to reduce Iranian dependence on its northern neighbour, Russia, and on China. Incidentally, both these countries now have strong links with India.

During the Cold War, Iran was a Western ally and a pillar of US policy in the Gulf. At that time, the latter wished to contain pro-Soviet states, Iraq being one of them. Even at that juncture, Iran was desirous of normalizing relations with India in order to secure its eastern flank. As an advocate of India–Pak reconciliation, it floated some ideas for Asian security and regional co-operation. In Iran's view, a rapprochement between the two countries would help Iran to avoid taking sides with either its traditional eastern Islamic neighbour, Pakistan, or with India, a pre-eminent economic, military and technological power in South Asia. It could, perhaps, lead to a weakening of Indian support for Iran's erstwhile rival, Iraq.

Today, however, the evolving strategic understanding is underpinned by fears of Al Qaeda or Taliban elements regrouping in Pakistan after their defeat in Afghanistan. These elements could pose security problems for both countries. Hence, common points of interest between Iran and India include support for the Tajik-dominated Northern Alliance government in Afghanistan; shared interests and strategy in benefiting from the energy resources; and the stabilization and development of the Central Asian region.

The Central Asia Factor

India and Iran would like to see stability in Central Asia, as this would provide prospects for benefiting from the rich natural resources of the

region. Although Iran has enough indigenous gas reserves for its own requirements, it is keen to use its relatively well-developed infrastructure to export gas to the region. India sees Iran as a gateway to the Persian Gulf and Central Asia. It is also keen to exploit the potential of the traditional North-South corridor from Iran to Southern Russia and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Iranian Corridor, starting from its southern port of Bandar Abbas on the Persian Gulf and extending to the Caspian Sea and on into Russia, is an excellent outlet. It is because Afghanistan is still unstable and witnessing internal fighting by warlords. Iran could become a regional hub between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf, if transit routes could link it up to the Caspian Sea region, Russia and the Caucasus.

The Indian Border Roads Organization is assigned to upgrade the 200-kilometre track between Zeranj and Delaran; this links with the Garland Road network in Afghanistan, and goes on into the CARs. Iran is also asking India to take up the construction of the Chahbahar–Fahraj–Bam railway link. The construction of these road and railway links would make it possible for both India and Iran to bypass Pakistani land route.²⁰

Implications for Pakistan and the Gulf Region

Pakistan

President Khatami tried to achieve a balance in Iran's relations with the two South Asian countries by first visiting Pakistan from 23-25 December 2002. During his visit, he signed four agreements and a Memorandum of Understanding for enhancing bilateral co-operation in oil and gas ventures, electricity, education, trade (including free trade zones), software technology, agriculture, improvement in communications and railways.²¹ This was the first visit of the Iranian President to Pakistan after a gap of ten years, in which Khatami led a high-powered delegation of about one hundred members.

Iran and Pakistan have traditionally had friendly relations: Iran was the first country to recognize Pakistan on its independence in 1947.

²⁰ Ajai Sahni, "Strategic Realignment", *South Asia Intelligence Review* (New Delhi), vol. 1. no. 28.

²¹ See *Dawn* (Islamabad), 25 December 2002.

The heydays of the relationship were witnessed in the era of Reza Shah Pehlavi, when both countries were members of CENTO and both were also staunch US allies against communism. During the Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971, Iran extended full diplomatic and military support to Pakistan. Relations remained cordial till the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan when both emerged as “frontline states” against Soviet aggression. Both had to bear the burden of Afghan refugees, then the largest number of refugees in the world.

However, Pakistan-Iran relations began to deteriorate after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989. The cooling off in relations continued and mutual ties were further strained during the 1980s, when both countries backed opposing groups in the internecine fighting in Afghanistan. During the Taliban regime in the mid-1990s—a regime which Pakistan recognized and supported—the relations between the two countries turned tense and sour.

The seismic events of 9/11 led to the removal of the Taliban regime by the use of US military force. The installation of the Northern Alliance-led government in Afghanistan assuaged Iran’s feelings to some extent. At present, both Iran and Pakistan strongly feel that, with Taliban factor out of the way, there is no impediment to a thaw in their frosty relations. In this regard, President Khatami observed that, with the removal of the Taliban, there was no reason for both countries not to improve aid and trade relations, and increase bilateral co-operation.²²

Iran, for its part, wants to rebuild economic relations with the two important South Asian countries and wishes to see an end to the tension bedeviling Indo-Pak relations. It has, therefore, urged them to engage in talks and start early negotiations in order to amicably resolve their differences. Iran was the first country to contact India and Pakistan when there was an upsurge in hostilities between the two in late-2001. The Iranian Foreign Minister, Kamal Kharazi, called for “restraint” and “early dialogue” in order to break the “vicious cycle” in the Indo-Pak subcontinent.²³ Economic activities achieved through enhanced trade, technical, educational co-operation or the construction

²² Ihtesham ul Haque, “Resolution of Kashmir issue soon: Khatami’ ”, *Dawn* (Islamabad), 26 December 2002.

²³ Raja Mohan, “Iran calls for restraint”, *Hindu* (Delhi), 22 May 2002.

of pipelines, could serve as Confidence-building Measures (CBMs) that would benefit the entire region, including the Gulf.

Some quarters have alleged that Pakistan has transferred nuclear technologies to Iran and North Korea. These allegations have apparently been made in order to blackball Pakistan as a nuclear power. There are reports that Iran will soon be able to produce enriched uranium that could be used in manufacturing nuclear weapons at its facility in Natanz in Central Iran; the facility could become operational by 2005.²⁴ Iran, however, asserts that, as a member of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), it will take no irresponsible step and that its nuclear programme—for which it is receiving Russian assistance—is for peaceful purposes only.

Iran: A “Moderating” Influence?

Indo–Iranian relations could perhaps exert a moderating influence on Pakistan. It could be beneficial for the Arab Gulf states, too. Iran, through economic links and leverage, could exercise some sobering influence on Pakistan and India, and perhaps nudge their foreign policies towards realistic options, focusing on socio-economic development and an acceptable compromise over the festering and enervating Kashmir dispute. This view, however, is perhaps too optimistic.

A sizeable Indian and Pakistani community resides in the Persian Gulf states, contributing toward the economic development of the region. Normalization of ties between India and Pakistan would be a healthy development for these countries, as any increase in Indo–Pak tensions accentuate their foreign policy dilemmas. After all, both India and Pakistan are nuclear-armed states and are, for the present at least, locked in acrimonious enmity, proving a source of constant worry to the proximate Gulf region.

At the same time, any notion of Pakistan deliberately blocking or sabotaging the Iran–India pipeline are misplaced, as Pakistan also stands to gain substantially from Iranian gas supplies. Moreover, Iran is also helping to build an oil refinery in its eastern region. Thus, Pakistan

²⁴ “No Pakistan support to Iran’s N-plan: US”, *Dawn* (Islamabad), 12 March 2003.

can ill afford to risk poisoning its relations with its western neighbour–relations which have been on the mend for some years now. The “peace pipeline” could well prove to be a CBM; however, a minimum level of trust between India and Pakistan is a *sine qua non* for it to materialize. After all, history has shown that nations do not enter into economic ventures without a minimum level of normalcy and mutual trust.

After having reached their nadir, India–Pak relations now show a glimmer of hope, as demonstrated in Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee’s overtures for peace and his voicing an inclination for resumption of talks. However, any immediate prospect of embarking on economic collaboration between the two bitter rivals is, at best, bleak. The pipeline project will consequently remain in the doldrums until relations normalize; and this may not happen till after the Indian state elections in 2004. For the present, the BJP government is pressurizing Pakistan and is not willing to enter into negotiations until such time as the so-called “cross-border terrorism” is not completely stopped.²⁵

Dependence on Gulf Oil

Despite reports of recent discoveries of recoverable gas in India, its dependence on Gulf oil will continue in the foreseeable future. Gas accounts for only about 4.3 per cent of India’s total energy consumption and the country is heavily dependent upon mined coal for its energy needs, which results in greater environmental pollution.

Although substantial gas reserves have been discovered in the Middle East (off the coast of the Persian Gulf) and in the Arctic Sea in recent years, they are located far from international markets and their exploitation is economically unfeasible. Besides, the construction of pipelines and the setting up of liquefying plants to make the transportation of gas possible causes much delay. Gas discoveries in deep-sea waters thus pose technical problems as well as proving costly to develop.

While some American companies have procured gas from deeper waters in the Gulf of Mexico, southeastern India lacks a

²⁵ Aftab Kazi and Tariq Saeedi, “India and the gas pipeline”, *Nation* (Lahore), 16 October 2002.

comparable support network of drilling, supporting companies and pipelines through which it could benefit from the reserves discovered off its eastern seaboard. It is conjectured that development of deep-water gas wells will cost between \$300-500 million, and an additional \$500 million for laying of pipelines to Mumbai or New Delhi.²⁶ This may ultimately obviate the need to bring gas from Qatar and Bangladesh through deep-water pipelines. Although this may be bad news for Bangladesh and Qatar, the Indian Navy considers these new discoveries as grounds for upgrading its fleet for the development of these offshore deposits. China's naval presence on the eastern seaboard of India, with listening posts in southern Burma, can perhaps also be attributed to the vast gas deposits.

The Iran–Pakistan–India pipeline project, a victim of the mutual distrust between India and Pakistan, has, as one writer puts it, been “quietly buried”, and “ended up as a pipedream”,²⁷ at least for the time being. The focus now is on shipping in liquefied natural gas (LNG), which India will decide to import from either Qatar or Iran, depending upon its cost-effectiveness.

The Indo–Iranian Nexus

Although Iran has said that its “strategic consensus” and emerging relationship with India are not aimed at “any third country”, the incipient Indo–Iran nexus on strategic issues raises security concerns in Pakistan. It is feared that the cementing of Iran–India ties might well lead to a reduction of Iranian support to Pakistan in the event of another India–Pakistan war. Even in peacetime, Iran may tend to veer away from Pakistan.

The much talked about December 2002 Iran–India agreement is not a full-fledged defence agreement as such; it may, however, give India a subtle psychological advantage so far as the “operational” use of early warning systems, surveillance and military co-operation are concerned. Moreover, enhanced levels of scientific and technological collaboration could, over the years, impinge on Pakistani interests; the

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Farhan Bokhari, “View from Islamabad: Pipeline project with Iran could remain a pipe dream”, *Gulf News* (Dubai), 25 December 2002.

presence of Indian advisers in Afghanistan and Iran could also constitute a “holding threat” against its western border.²⁸

The emerging Indo-Iranian nexus, if any, faces many impediments. For instance, the US and Israel might also find this connection rather uncomfortable, should it go beyond limits. Of late, the Indo–Israel military nexus has become more robust due to the strategic convergence between the two countries, as has the India–US strategic partnership. Today, Israel is the second largest supplier of military equipment and hardware to India after Russia. While Russia supplies heavy weaponry such as tanks, aircraft and ships, Israel supplies small weapons, electronic equipment, radars and high-tech add-ons.²⁹

Iran is still one of the strongest opponents of Israel, a vociferous supporter of the Palestinian cause, and, as of now, a strong opponent of the Middle East peace process. It is difficult to comprehend how the Indo–Iranian linkage can be viable, taking into consideration the strategic matrix of the region. Of late, Iran is under threat by the US for allegedly building nuclear weapons and providing sanctuary to Al-Qaeda elements that might have been involved in the terrorist attacks in Riyadh in Saudi Arabia in early June 2003. One possibility, howsoever remote, since there is no love lost between Iran and the US, is that this emerging India–Iran nexus could eventually lead to a softening of attitudes between the US and Iran.

Factors of geographical and cultural and historical affinity should, in the nature of things, prove to be a bond between Iran and Pakistan. However, in actuality, the two countries have moved further apart in the last decade. As an illustration, during his visit to Pakistan, President Khatami did not make any forthright statement on Kashmir; instead, he underlined the need for an early settlement of the dispute through “dialogue and negotiations” between Pakistan and India.

Both Iran and Pakistan face some degree of international ire: the former as one of the countries the US chose to include in the “axis of evil”; the latter under perpetual threat of being declared a “terrorist

²⁸ Rizwan Zeb, “The Emerging Indo-Iran Strategic Alliance and Pakistan”, *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, 12 February 2002, <http://www.cacianalyst.org> (13 March 2003).

²⁹ Praful Bidwai, “Moving close to Israel”, *Frontline* (Chennai), 15 February 2003.

state”, should the US find it dragging its feet on its commitments, or showing a lack of competence, or co-operation in the so-called war against international terrorism. In any case, Pakistan does need to curb “Islamic fundamentalism” in the country and to implement imaginative and multi-dimensional policies. In this connection, President Musharraf has taken some bold measures, but much remains to be done in enforcing those measures.

On the other hand, Iran and India had converging interests as early as the Reza Shah Pehlavi era. In the 1970s, Iran acquired the status of a regional power in the Persian Gulf, while India emerged as a pre-eminent power in South Asia, following the 1971 military defeat of Pakistan. At that juncture, Iran tried to bring home to Pakistan the fact that, if Islamabad could diversify its relations with the Gulf countries, Tehran, too, could widen its contacts in South Asia by cultivating links with India.³⁰

Under the circumstances, Iran stands to gain by its inclination towards democratic India. The fact that India has the second largest Shia population after Iran is not lost on the Iranian leadership. For India, Iran is an important country, bordering the Middle East; as the gateway to India’s friends in the Islamic world, it could serve as a counterfoil to Pakistan’s influence in the region. However, the India factor should not be accorded undue importance as it could lose salience if US hostility against Iran gains intensity in the days ahead.

An Evaluation

President Khatami’s January 2003 visit to India provided some insights into the evolving relationship, though one should not read too much strategic content and import into this relationship. The emerging “strategic consensus” between India and Iran is a move by the latter to break out of isolation and befriend important countries—such as India—which would enable it to secure its eastern flank.

Though there was never much love lost between Iran and Iraq, the two having fought a long drawn-out war (1980-1988), the US-led attack on the latter in March-April 2003 put Iran’s policy managers in a

³⁰ Shahram Chubin, “Iran between the Arab West and the Asian East”, *Survival*, vol. 16, no. 4 (London: July-August 1974), p. 177.

very problematic situation. However, it also provided Iran with an opportunity to break out of long international isolation, step up its visibility and be counted as an important actor in the region. Hence, from early February 2003, it pursued active “bridge-building diplomacy” with some of the Gulf states and with its immediate neighbours and the Arab countries to forestall the war in Iraq. Iran also actively forged links with the European Union (EU), trying its best to exercise “damage control” through a policy of “active neutrality”.

Iran has suffered under sanctions and is keen to end its isolation and join the mainstream of international politics. That is why, during his visit to Pakistan, President Khatami spoke of a “dialogue among civilizations.” In fact, over the last decade, the Iranian Revolution has lost its messianic quality and lustre as an ideological revolution; the revolutionary spirit is now tempered with pragmatism.

The possibility of an energy link-up between India and Iran is another strong incentive for future Pakistan–Iran co-operation. In this context, President Khatami called for building gas and oil “pipelines for peace” when he addressed a gathering of businessmen in Lahore.

The Iran–Pakistan–India pipeline plan will come to fruition only if and when normalcy prevails in the region. At present, relations between India and Pakistan are far from normal, though talk of economic co-operation is rife since Prime Minister Vajpayee’s overtures and the Pakistan government’s positive response. The process of normalizing Indo–Pakistan ties cannot be delayed much longer, as there are overriding economic compulsions on both sides that will eventually force regional co-operation.

On the whole, expanding Indo–Iranian collaboration should not create undue concern in Pakistan. Nor should it perceive the relationship between its two neighbours as “collusion”, nor as a move directed against it. In fact, the Indo–Iranian link is geared to defence co-operation only and that too of a technical and advisory nature. Rumours of Indian bases in Iran have already been dismissed. Iran has formed neither a pact nor an alliance with India, as made out in certain sensationalist Indian writings.³¹ In forging close relations with India,

³¹ “Iran dumps Pakistan in favour of India”, *Safy News* (New Delhi), 2 March 2003.

President Khatami noted that Iranian foreign policy is “to safeguard Indian and Pakistani national interests.”

It should be kept in mind that Pakistan had signed similar defence agreements with many Middle Eastern countries in the 1970s and 1980s. Today, Iran needs military assistance, technical expertise and skills from India. It needs to break out of its decades-old status of a pariah state. The destabilization of its western neighbour, Iraq, as a result of the US-led attack, is worrisome for its policy-makers; it is, therefore, natural for Iran to seek new alignments.

India, on its part, is keen to export military equipment to the Middle East and to share the latter’s energy resources; to open transit routes from Iran to the other Gulf countries, Central Asia and the Caucasus; and to assist in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Of course, it would also like to see a dilution of the traditional friendship between Pakistan and Iran.

Other Gulf states have no need to be concerned about the strengthening of Indo–Iranian ties, as they have themselves maintained steady economic and political links with India. Indo–Iranian defence co-operation is certainly in the offing and could possibly increase further. But to call it an “alliance” or a “pact”, as some journalists have done, would be misleading. An Iran–India alliance would indeed have a serious impact on Pak–Iran relations.

As it is, co-operation of any sort between India and Iran is not going to be an easy undertaking as certain elements could hamper the relationship. For one thing, it suffers from inherent limitations: US and Israeli reactions to a close Indo–Iran nexus will almost definitely be strongly unfavourable and, in the course of time, also more vocal, should the linkage be well-established. Iran cannot afford to totally ignore Pakistani sensitivities any more than India can ignore those of Israel, a country with which it has much stronger links than its ties with Iran.

Iran will have to work hard to make the new relationship with India both functional and durable, on the pattern of India’s strategic partnership with the US and Israel, a nexus which has become more robust over the last few years.

Conclusion

What is going to be the nature of Indo–Iranian relations in the immediate future, particularly after the US-led war against Iraq? Historically, India has had better relations with the Ba’athist regime in Iraq than with any other Islamic country; the two countries also had considerable commercial and trade relations. After the January 2002 State of the Union Address made by President Bush, the Indian government remarked that that it did not consider Iraq as part of the “axis of evil”;³² it also opposed the US intention of attacking Iraq and expressed the hope that the US would choose to act in accordance with UN resolutions. Indian opposition parties accused the Vajpayee government of “passivity and inaction” in the pre-war scenario; but then many other countries in the world were caught in a similar dilemma and followed discreet policies of not openly criticizing the US in their perceived national interests. India would like to rebuild good relations with Iraq in the post-Saddam era. In fact, its “strategic partnership” with the US may prove to be a factor of acceptability in the “new” Iraq.

It may be a cliché, but it is nonetheless true that, in the world of *realpolitik*, there are no permanent friends or foes—merely permanent interests. Should some modicum of stability return to Iraq, many Arab countries will be willing to recognize the new regime and to establish diplomatic and trade ties with it.

India hopes that Iran and post-Saddam Iraq will be able to make some meaningful contribution to the future security of the Persian Gulf.³³ However, should Iran come under increased pressure from the US as the next target on the “axis of evil”, India may well distance itself from Iran. Chances are that Iran will follow a pragmatic course and avoid this dire eventuality. After all, Iran is not as isolated as Iraq, nor have the lessons of the recent American and British attack on Iraq been lost on it.³⁴

³² “India says Iran not part of ‘evil axis’,” *News* (Rawalpindi), 13 February 2002.

³³ C. Raja Mohan, “Rethinking India’s Gulf strategy,” *Hindu* (Delhi), 12 February 2003.

³⁴ See e.g., Maqsd U. Nuri, “Iran is no cakewalk,” *News* (Rawalpindi) 10 June 2003.

In the early 1990s, an Iran–China–Russia axis was being talked about.³⁵ The recent fissures in the EU, and the opposition to US policy on Iraq voiced by major powers such as Russia, Germany and France, are encouraging trends for the Iranian leadership. Much will depend on how the US campaign against Iraq shapes up in months ahead: will it end quickly or become a protracted affair?

Should the US military problems in Iraq increase in the days and months ahead, the chances of the US striking at other targets of “evil” will become increasingly remote. Some observers are of the opinion that the US military preoccupation in Iraq will considerably divert its attention from maintaining peace in and rebuilding Afghanistan. Reports suggest that stabilizing Iraq is going to be a long, tough haul, although ultimately the allied forces—given their size and hi-tech weaponry—will be able to control, if not effectively govern Iraq for the foreseeable future.

To sum up, Indo–Iranian relations have the potential to grow, if conditions are favourable in south and southwest Asia. The reality is that the US and Israel still view Iran as an inimical state, a major roadblock to a settlement of the Palestinian issue, and, given its Islamic character, a staunch opponent of Israel and Zionism. Besides, if and when Pakistan decides to recognize the state of Israel, the latter’s hostility towards Pakistan will be diminished to a great extent. This, in turn, could dilute the “burgeoning” Indo–Israel axis, if any.

What turn and shape Pakistani diplomacy—adept or maladroit—takes and how it fares in the process—will have a crucial bearing on Indo–Iranian level cooperation. As of this time, the Indo–Iranian connection is neither as substantial nor as durable as some sections of the media in India and Pakistan have depicted it to be. As mentioned above, there are limitations to this evolving relationship, especially in view of the stepped up US hostility against Iran in the wake of the recent Iraq war. Be that as it may, Indo–Iranian ties need constant monitoring in view of the rapidly unfolding developments in the Gulf as well as in South Asia. ■

³⁵ “Iran wants India to fight US meddling”, *Statesman* (Delhi), 13 April 2001.

INDIA'S INCREASED INVOLVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN AND CENTRAL ASIA Implications for Pakistan

Aly Zaman*

Introduction

In November 2001, the US launched a massive bombing campaign against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which had been exercising control over a major portion of the country for the preceding five years. In spite of being the predominant political force in the country, however, the Taliban had been ostracized by almost the entire world community due to their rigid interpretation and implementation of Shari'a law and their apparent intention of exporting their obscurantist brand of Islam beyond the borders of Afghanistan. But the American campaign against the Taliban was not motivated by concern for the latter's violations of human rights in Afghanistan; instead, the Americans were incensed by the refusal of the Taliban to hand over Osama bin Laden, whom they believed to have masterminded the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001. Soon after, President Bush issued a curt ultimatum to the nations of the world that they were either with the US or against it in its "war on terrorism".

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were the only countries that had recognized the Taliban regime. Following the American ultimatum, the latter two nations immediately withdrew their recognition. Pakistan took slightly longer to do so, mainly because it had been the principal sponsor of the Taliban and stood to lose the most from their ouster from power. Ever since the ignominious exit of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, Pakistan had striven to fill the power vacuum left behind, motivated primarily by the desire to install a malleable government in Kabul that would provide invaluable strategic

* Aly Zaman is Assistant Research Officer at the Islamabad Policy Research Institute. He possesses a Master's degree in Defence and Strategic Studies from the Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad.

depth against its arch-rival, India. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the subsequent independence of the energy-rich Muslim republics of Central Asia, Afghanistan, the gateway to that region, assumed even greater importance for policy-makers in Pakistan. Concerted attempts were made to cultivate relations with the newly independent republics, but the incessant internecine fighting in Afghanistan prevented Pakistan from making any real headway in Central Asia, particularly with regard to energy resources and trade. Islamabad's covert assistance to the extremist Taliban also angered traditional allies like Iran and China, and provided India a chance to insinuate itself into the region by forming an axis with Iran and Russia against Pakistan and the Taliban. India actively supported the opposition Northern Alliance in its struggle against the Taliban, fearing that an Afghanistan under total Taliban control could be exploited by Pakistan to assist the struggle for self-determination in Indian-held Kashmir.

With the Taliban having now been removed from power, and with a government in Kabul manned heavily by members of the Northern Alliance, India has dramatically increased its involvement in Afghanistan and is seeking to marginalize Pakistan's role in the political and economic reconstruction of the latter's war-ravaged neighbour. At the same time, India has taken a determined stride into Central Asia by establishing a military base in Tajikistan and extending its economic and diplomatic activities throughout the region.

The aim of this paper is to examine the evolving nature of India's role in Afghanistan and Central Asia, particularly over the course of the last decade. It is an attempt to analyse not only the extent to which India's involvement in the region has increased following the ouster of the Taliban regime, but also to assess the motives that have compelled India to adopt a proactive policy in Afghanistan and Central Asia. Finally, the paper identifies the implications for Pakistan of increased Indian involvement in a region that is vital to Pakistan's own security, and suggests the possible counter-measures that Pakistan can take in this regard.

India's Evolving Role in Afghanistan

Afghanistan's ties with the Indian subcontinent go a long way back in history, mainly because it lies astride the route taken by invaders from Europe and Central Asia to India. Great conquerors of yore, from Alexander the Great to Tamerlane to Babur, all passed through Afghanistan en route to India. Several Afghan rulers also made forays into India, the most prominent among them being Sultan Mahmud Ghazni (AD 971–1030), founder of the Turkic Ghaznavid dynasty, who is believed to have invaded the subcontinent seventeen times.¹ His empire originally comprised present-day Afghanistan alone but was eventually expanded to include northwestern India and most of Iran.² The Mughals in India, who too were of Turkic origin, ruled over Afghanistan until their empire began to decay. The Persian ruler, Nadir Shah (AD 1688–1747), generally considered the last of the great Asian conquerors, invaded India in 1738 and sacked the key Mughal strongholds of Delhi and Lahore.³ One of Nadir Shah's foremost generals, Ahmed Shah Abdali (AD 1722–1773), founded the Kingdom of Afghanistan in 1747 and led his Pashtun subjects on no fewer than nine expeditions to India, in the process annexing most of present-day Pakistan. At the apogee of his reign, Abdali's empire extended from eastern Persia to northern India, and from the Amu Darya in Central Asia to the Indian Ocean.⁴

During the nineteenth century, Afghanistan became the chessboard upon which the "Great Game" was played out between the British in India and the rapidly expanding Russian empire. British concerns about Russian advances in Central Asia and Iran led to increased interference in Afghanistan and precipitated three Anglo-Afghan wars, the last of which, fought in 1919, resulted in the total relinquishment of British control over Afghan affairs.⁵ However, although direct Indian involvement in Afghanistan ceased from that

¹ <<http://www.afghan-network.net/Rulers/mahmud-ghazni.html>> (23 October 2002).

² <<http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/people/A0834704.html>> (23 October 2002).

³ <<http://www.ku.edu/~libsites/hughes/2002/01/msg00131.html>> (23 October 2002).

⁴ <<http://www.luptravel.com/international/asia/afghanistan/>> (23 October 2002).

⁵ <http://www.institute-for-afghanstudies.org/Foreign%20Affairs/overview_0.html> (23 October 2002).

time, the destinies of Afghanistan and north-west India, bound together by centuries of religious, ethnic, cultural and linguistic affiliations, remained inextricably intertwined.

When the subcontinent was partitioned in 1947, it appeared likely that the newly created state of Pakistan—half of which comprised the entire Muslim north-western portion of the erstwhile British India—would continue to play an important role in Afghanistan, whereas India, without any geographical contiguity with Afghanistan, would be reduced to a peripheral position. However, relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan were initially marred by the latter's refusal to accept the Durand Line, the boundary drawn by the British to divide Pashtun and Baluch areas in Pakistan from Afghanistan. In fact, relations between the two neighbours were seldom cordial and there came a particularly low point, lasting from 1961 to 1963, during which diplomatic, trade, transit and consular relations were suspended. It was from this time on that the Afghans turned increasingly to the Soviet Union for trade and transit.⁶

Pakistan did, however, become critically important to Afghanistan once the Soviet Union invaded the latter in 1979. For almost ten years, it was the primary conduit for logistical support for the Afghan resistance, besides giving shelter to 3.2 million Afghan refugees.⁷ During this period, India did not exactly endear itself to the Afghan freedom fighters as it received numerous arms shipments from the Soviets in exchange for its silence regarding the invasion.⁸ This decision to provide implicit support to the Soviets in what was clearly an act of aggression against a sovereign country undermined India's much touted non-aligned credentials and ensured that its role in Afghanistan would be a marginal one, once the Soviets left the country.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ <<http://www.dallasnews.com/graphics/05-02/indiapakistan/timeline.html>> (23 October 2002).

⁸ Aabha Dixit, "Conflict Resolution in Afghanistan: Does India have a role to play?" *ACDIS Occasional Paper*, Program in Arms Control, Disarmament, and International Security, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (December 1997)
<http://www.acdis.uiuc.edu/homepage_docs/pubs_docs/PDF_Files/AqilOP.pdf> (22 October 2002).

In 1982, under the auspices of a joint commission, India launched a range of developmental activities in Afghanistan, including the setting up of a small industries estate on the outskirts of Kabul, collaboration in irrigation and hydro-electric projects near Herat, and other micro-hydel projects in Bamyan, Samangam, and Faizabad.⁹ Although the scale of economic assistance was nowhere near that being provided by the Soviets, India's attempts to bolster the Afghan economy gave rise to a perception amongst those countries opposed to the Soviet invasion that New Delhi was firmly in the Soviet camp as far as Afghanistan was concerned. This perception was further strengthened by India's pointed abstention on a UN resolution condemning the Soviet Union.¹⁰ By forming a triple axis with the Soviets and their puppet regime in Kabul, India wanted to contain Pakistan in the west as well as the east; however, by providing tacit support to the Soviets, it deprived itself of maintaining meaningful relations with the *mujahiddin*. This proved a costly error, because once the Geneva process had been initiated in 1981, there had been an ever-increasing realization in New Delhi itself that a Soviet withdrawal was inevitable.¹¹

The invasion of Afghanistan turned out to be one of the Soviet Union's costliest blunders. After almost a decade of conflict, approximately 15000 Soviet servicemen had been killed and tens of thousands left permanently disabled. The economic losses sustained were even more formidable and put immense stress on an economy already creaking beneath the combined weight of over-centralization and excessive military spending. Within two years after the last Soviet tank rolled out of Afghanistan in February 1989, the Soviet empire had evaporated.

On account of its pro-Soviet stance during the war, India's role in post-Soviet Afghanistan was always going to be a marginal one. It was not allowed to attend the Geneva talks that finally bailed the Soviets out of Afghanistan, while its initiatives within the Non-Aligned Movement to resolve the Afghan problem also resulted in failure. Even

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

after the Soviets had departed, India continued to support the Soviet-installed Najibullah regime, not realizing that its days were numbered. After its collapse in 1992, the provisional government of Sibghatullah Mujadidi was formed with the support of seven parties, none of them partial to India.¹² To avoid complete isolation, India began to woo the same *mujahiddin* groups that it had ignored during the Soviet invasion. Initial contacts were established with the non-Pashtun ethnic groups, such as the Uzbeks and Ismailis in the north and the Shi'a Hizb-e-Wahdat faction in central Afghanistan.¹³ But much to its consternation, India could not reduce Pakistan's influence in the region: the immensely important role played by the latter during the war against the Soviets ensured that it would be the dominant external player in post-Soviet Afghanistan, particularly considering the fact that, once the Soviets had been defeated, Afghanistan was relegated to the distant backwaters of America's foreign policy.

Mujadidi's government remained in charge for only a couple of months before power was handed over to Burhanuddin Rabbani, leader of the predominantly non-Pashtun Jamiat-e-Islami. From 1992 until the emergence of the Taliban in 1995, there was a state of almost ceaseless conflict between two major factions: the Jamiat-e-Islami led by Rabbani and his foremost general, Ahmed Shah Masoud—both of whom were Tajiks—and the Hizb-e-Islami of Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, who was a Pashtun and was widely believed to be the candidate most favoured by Pakistan. Other players, such as Ismail Khan, the Shi'a strongman of Herat, and Abdul Rashid Dostum, the Uzbek warlord in Mazar-e-Sharif, regularly switched allegiances, thereby prolonging the violence and instability. External interference exacerbated an already volatile situation, with Pakistan generally supporting Hikmatyar and Iran assisting the Rabbani government as well as the Shi'a Hazaras.¹⁴ During this period, India, still desperate to have an anti-Pakistan government in Kabul, provided technical and financial support to Rabbani and

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Tahir Amin, "Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Central Asian States" in Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner, eds., *The New Geopolitics of Central Asia and its Borderlands* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 1994), p.227.

Masoud, albeit on a modest scale.¹⁵ However, its involvement in Afghan affairs increased dramatically during the Taliban era.

The Rise of the Taliban

The meteoric rise of the Taliban—a group of war veterans and religious students based in Pakistani seminaries—from virtual obscurity to a position of predominance over all the other more established factions—owed much to the internecine fighting between the rival Afghan factions, which had dashed all hopes of a secure and independent post-Soviet Afghanistan and created a state of political anarchy and ethnic fragmentation. Increasingly disillusioned by the seemingly endless cycle of violence, Pakistan began to view the Taliban as the only force in the country capable of restoring the tranquility that it so desperately required after over a decade and a half of war.¹⁶ Besides, a friendly Pashtun-dominated government in Kabul would provide Pakistan the strategic depth that it required to buttress its defence against India, as well as facilitate its moves to extend its influence in the energy-rich Central Asian Republics (CARs).

The dramatic ascent of the Taliban began in 1994, when they freed a 30-truck convoy from Pakistan that had been captured by a warlord in southern Afghanistan. The Pakistan government of the time considered the fierce fighting qualities and fanatical religious zeal of the Taliban the ideal combination required to gain ascendancy over the other Afghan factions. What made the situation even better was that the Taliban were Pashtuns and already had intimate ties with Pakistan, thereby giving rise to an expectation amongst Pakistan's decision-makers that, should the Taliban gain control over Afghanistan, strategic depth against India would finally be achieved.

¹⁵ Sudha Ramachandaran, "In Afghanistan, Pakistan's Loss is India's Gain", *Asia Times Online* (February 2002)
<http://www.atimes.com/atimes/archive/2_1_2002.html> (24 October 2002).

¹⁶ Larry P. Goodson, *Afghanistan's Endless War: State Failure, Regional Politics and the Rise of the Taliban* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2002), p.74.

Thanks to the support from Pakistan, the Taliban had, by June 1997, brought two-thirds of the country under their control.¹⁷ But for the other main regional players, this was a most unwelcome development. Iran, in particular, bitterly opposed the Taliban on account of their rigidly orthodox implementation of the Shari'a, their doctrinal opposition to the Shi'a minority in Afghanistan, and their threat of exporting their brand of Islam to the CARs. Russia too was worried that the Taliban would export radicalism to the CARs and actively assist in the separatist struggle being waged in its breakaway Muslim republic of Chechnya. India was fearful that Pakistan would use Afghan territory to set up training camps for *jihadis*, who would then be sent to fuel the liberation movement in Indian-held Kashmir. The conflicting interests of the regional powers led to another proxy war in Afghanistan, with Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE supporting the Taliban, and Iran, Russia and India supporting the Northern Alliance, a loose grouping formed by Masoud, Dostum and Karim Khalili of the Shi'a Hizb-e-Wahdat to check the relentless advance of the Taliban.¹⁸

India's assistance to the Northern Alliance was substantial, reflecting its belief that the situation in Afghanistan had a direct bearing on Kashmir and that the elimination of the Northern Alliance would be "disastrous for India".¹⁹ In 1997–8, it provided \$70 million in aid to the Northern Alliance, which included two Mi-17 helicopters.²⁰ Another three helicopters were provided in 2000.²¹ By 2001, India was supplying high-altitude military equipment to Masoud worth around \$8 million, its defence advisers were providing tactical advice in anti-Taliban operations, and 25 Indian army doctors and male nurses were treating Northern Alliance troops at a 20-bed hospital at Farkhor in Tajikistan,

¹⁷ *Taliban ('the Seekers')* <<http://www.swi.net/documents/taliban.html>> (25 October 2002).

¹⁸ Goodson, *Endless War*, p.78.

¹⁹ Rahul Bedi, "India joins Anti-Taliban Coalition" in *Jane's International Security News* (15 March 2001) <http://www.janes.com/security/international_security/news/jir/jir010315_1_n.shtml> (23 October 2002).

²⁰ Posted by Gaurang Desai, "India sends three choppers to anti-Taliban forces" <<http://www.media-watch.org/articles/1000/27.html>> (24 October 2002).

²¹ *Ibid.*

close to the Afghan-Tajik border.²² Some military sources indicated that Tajikistan and Uzbekistan were being used as bases by India and Russia to launch operations against the Taliban.²³

In spite of receiving generous support from Iran, India and Russia, the Northern Alliance could not make any real headway against the Taliban. On 9 September 2001, Masoud was assassinated, leaving the Alliance bereft of its ablest general. Two days later, however, came the terrorist attacks in America, which eventually led to a total turnaround in Afghanistan's power equation. The US laid the blame for the attacks squarely on Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden, who had taken refuge with the Taliban; they, however, refused to turn him over without adequate proof of his involvement in the attacks. This demand effectively sealed the fate of the Taliban. Afghanistan was subjected to a relentless American bombing campaign that routed the Taliban and eventually paved the way for an interim administration to take over. This interim government has a Pashtun, Hamid Karzai, as the President, but the cabinet is dominated by members of the Northern Alliance, most of whom are openly hostile towards Pakistan and clearly desirous of improving ties with India at Pakistan's expense.

India's Increasing Involvement in post-Taliban Afghanistan

Hamid Karzai's interim administration took charge on 22 December 2001 for a period of six months, after which a *loya jirga*, a traditional Afghan decision-making body of tribal elders, was to be convened to determine Afghanistan's future political dispensation. As early as November, however, India sent a high-level diplomatic mission to Kabul to resurrect an Afghan policy that had been in the doldrums ever since the Taliban ejected the pro-India Rabbani regime from Kabul in 1996. Apart from a couple of senior diplomatic officials, the delegation included eight doctors and security personnel who were to remain in Afghanistan.²⁴ During the visit, an Indian liaison office was set up as a

²² Rahul Bedi, "India and Central Asia", *Frontline*, vol. 19, issue 19 (14-27 September 2002) <<http://www.flonnet.com/f11919/19190600.htm>> (27 October 2002).

²³ Bedi, 'Anti-Taliban Coalition.

²⁴ *Dawn* (Islamabad), 22 November 2001.

prelude to the reopening of the Indian embassy, which had been evacuated only hours before the Taliban made their triumphant entry into Kabul in September 1996, and had remained closed ever since.²⁵ The embassy's formal reopening took place in December with Jaswant Singh, then India's Minister for External Affairs, performing the honours, and terming the period of its closure "a painful gap of more than five years."²⁶ The "pain" he referred to had been inflicted mainly by Pakistan. For over two decades, Pakistan had managed to keep India out of Afghanistan, particularly while the Taliban were in charge. For India, the speedy reopening of its embassy in Kabul symbolized the beginning of a new era in its relations with Afghanistan. With the Northern Alliance expected to play a dominant role in the future administration, India could look forward to getting even with Pakistan for having compelled it to remain on the sidelines in Afghan matters for such a long time.

To demonstrate its support for the new government in Kabul, India immediately earmarked \$100 million towards the reconstruction of Afghanistan, whilst also offering assistance in the development of infrastructure, health facilities, educational institutions and information technology.²⁷ Even before the interim administration formally assumed control on 22 December 2001, planeloads of relief material from New Delhi had been dispatched to Kabul. Along with tea, blankets and medicines, the relief cargo also contained Hindi music and film cassettes, demonstrating India's desire to use its cultural weapons in the battle for influence in post-Taliban Afghanistan.²⁸

Several members of the Northern Alliance who were part of the interim administration were quick to respond to the Indian overtures. Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah, Interior Minister Younus Qanooni, and Minister for Labour and Local Affairs Mirwaiz Sadiq, all paid visits to New Delhi prior to 22 December. Abdullah met Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on 13 December and held

²⁵ *The Tribune Online Edition*, 23 December 2001.

<<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2001/20011223/world.htm#1>> (28 November 2002).

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Sudha Ramachandaran, "India's Gain".

²⁸ *Ibid.*

constructive discussions on a wide range of topics, including Afghanistan's reconstruction needs, internal security and the conduct of elections.²⁹ Sadiq solicited India's assistance in setting up medical services and reopening schools and colleges in the country. Qanooni's visit was probably the most significant of all and reflected the pro-India inclinations of the new regime. Just a day after the 5 December signing of the Bonn accords that were to establish the interim administration, Qanooni flew into India for a six-day visit.³⁰ During his stay, he examined India's judicial and law enforcement system and requested India's assistance in establishing a national security force in Afghanistan.³¹ On 12 December 2001, India announced that senior police officials would be sent to Afghanistan to serve as advisers on the establishment of law-enforcement institutions.³² While in India, Qanooni was openly critical of Pakistan, accusing it of having contributed to Afghanistan's devastation through its "interference".³³ He also claimed that there were still 5000 foreign fighters in Afghanistan, including an unspecified number of Pakistani army irregulars.³⁴ But what must have been of particular satisfaction to India was Qanooni's warning to Pakistan to desist from any further interference in Afghanistan or Indian-held Kashmir.³⁵

Indo-Afghan relations continued to improve after the interim administration assumed formal control. India promised to supply a million tons of wheat by the end of 2001 and Indian airlines resumed flights to Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif.³⁶ Ariana, the Afghan national carrier, reciprocated by starting flights to New Delhi in the three planes

²⁹ Agam Shah, "New Afghan Leadership Team Turns to India for Assistance", *Eurasia Insight* (12 November 2002) <<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav121401.shtml>> (12 November 2002).

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Iffat Malik, "Vying for clout", *Al-Ahram Weekly Online* (20-26 December 2001), Issue no.565.

<<http://www.ahram.org.eg/weekly/2001/565/9war1.htm>> (5 November 2002).

³⁴ *Dawn* (Islamabad), 11 December 2001.

³⁵ Malik, "Vying for clout".

³⁶ Ibid.

that it possessed, all gifts from India itself.³⁷ Several Indian training programmes for the Afghans were initiated, including courses in journalism, accounting, and policing.³⁸ There were also proposals for a cold chain to be established in Kandahar and for improving the road from Bandar Abbas in Iran to Kabul, so that Indian goods could transit the country more rapidly.³⁹

In February 2002, Hamid Karzai paid his first visit to India where he was accorded a red-carpet welcome, an indication of New Delhi's desire to cultivate Karzai, an ethnic Pashtun, and to win him over to its side at Pakistan's expense. Karzai was thought not to be as favourably disposed towards India as the powerful Northern Alliance troika of Qanooni, Abdullah, and Muhammad Qasim Fahim, and had chosen to visit Pakistan before coming to India.⁴⁰ Indian analysts, however, justified his decision on the basis that Karzai wished to press upon Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf the need to keep pro-Taliban elements in his government under control.⁴¹ Karzai's visit to India was a success: in addition to the substantial assistance it had already provided to the interim administration, New Delhi announced a grant of \$10 million for immediate utilization by Afghanistan.⁴² It also promised to assist Kabul in the fields of education, health, agriculture and information technology.⁴³

On 10 June 2002, as stipulated in the Bonn Accords, a *loya jirga* was convened; the 1500 delegates present elected Hamid Karzai to preside over the transitional government. Defence Minister Fahim was confirmed in his cabinet post and was given an additional responsibility as one of the new government's three vice-presidents. His confirmation was openly welcomed by India as, after Masoud's assassination, Fahim

³⁷ Ashwini Bhatnagar, "Back from the Past", *Tribune Online Edition* (5 October 2002) <<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2002/20021005/windows/main1.htm>> (28 October 2002).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Sudha Ramachandran, "Karzai negotiates diplomatic minefield" in *Asia Times Online* (2 March 2002) <<http://www.atimes.com/c-asia/DC02Ag01.html>> (8 November 2002).

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

had become the main conduit for India's overt and covert assistance to the Northern Alliance in its struggle against the Taliban.⁴⁴ He was considered one of India's "staunchest friends" and had been a frequent visitor to New Delhi.⁴⁵ During his most recent trip there in May 2002, he met the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, and the services chiefs, and sought their assistance in training Afghan's new national army.⁴⁶ He was assured of all possible support, including the supply of material assistance as well as the provision of instructors.⁴⁷ Another of India's friends in the interim administration, Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah, also retained his position, but the Interior Minister, Younus Qanooni, had to make way for the ethnic Pashtun governor of Paktia province, Taj Muhammad Wardak. Qanooni was, however, appointed as special presidential adviser for internal security and education minister.⁴⁸

Military assistance and humanitarian relief were by no means the only points on India's Afghan agenda: fostering greater economic ties was equally important. In September 2002, the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) held the biggest ever four-day fair that Kabul had witnessed since 1977, with India becoming the first country to market its wares in post-Taliban Afghanistan.⁴⁹ The response to the Made-in-India show was enthusiastic; over 25000 people visited it, out of which 8700 were business visitors.⁵⁰ All the exhibits, from tractors, generators and ambulances to tea and implements for everyday use, were sold out. The total business transactions added up to an impressive Rs 250 million.⁵¹ Of the 170 exhibitors from top Indian companies, almost 60 per cent managed to appoint dealers in Afghanistan, while another 10 per cent initiated the setting up of their own offices in Kabul.⁵² Two agreements with Afghan partners were also signed, one for the

⁴⁴ Shyam Bhatia, "Karzai entrusts defence portfolio to pro-India Fahim" (20 June 2002) <<http://www.rediff.com/us/2002/jun/20ny1.htm>> (12 November 2002).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Bhatnagar, "Back from the Past".

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

production of industrial and medical gas and the other for the establishment of a mineral water plant. Both these products had previously been imported from Pakistan.⁵³

Encouraged by the success of the trade fair, India has drafted a Preferential Trading Agreement (PTA) with Afghanistan to promote the export of Afghan goods to India and to facilitate the Indian private sector's efforts to participate in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Under the terms of the PTA, India plans to build a 130-200 km road from Chabahar in Iran to Kabul, which will not only accelerate the transit of Indian goods to Afghanistan but also solve India's current problem of having to transport its goods via Pakistan. This was recently announced by the Afghan Minister for Commerce, Sayed Mustafa Kazmi, while addressing a seminar in New Delhi arranged by the CII.⁵⁴ According to Kazmi, the PTA would cover the export of three items from Afghanistan: dry fruits, fresh fruits, and medicines and herbs. A joint working group has been set up between the Ministers of Commerce of the two countries to work out the finer details of the agreement and examine the possibility of removing some of the duties imposed on the aforementioned items.⁵⁵ Arun Singh, Joint Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, said that by March 2003, the Indian government would have provided \$31.5 million towards Afghanistan's reconstruction. In the second phase, starting from April 2003 and continuing over the next two financial years, India would provide another \$68.5 million.⁵⁶ It seems fairly evident that, in the economic sphere too, India's star in Afghanistan is no less on the ascendant than it is in the political one.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ *Asia Times Online* (20 November 2002)
<http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/DK20Df10.html> (22 November 2002).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

India in Central Asia: The Latest Entrant to the ‘New Great Game’

Central Asia, or Turkestan as it was formerly known, has been of considerable geopolitical importance for many centuries. It constituted part of the historic silk route from China to Byzantium, and then onwards to Rome.⁵⁷ Scores of invaders, including the Turks, the Mongols, and the Chinese, swept through the region into Afghanistan on their way to seizing the riches of lands that lay beyond such as India, Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt.⁵⁸ After the discovery of the maritime route to the Far East and China, Central Asia’s importance waned considerably. However, it rose to prominence once again in the nineteenth century, owing to the intense competition for regional supremacy between imperial Britain and the rapidly expanding Russian empire. Britain was seriously concerned that the rampaging Russian forces, unless checked, would not stop at Central Asia but would move on into India, the British empire’s most cherished overseas possession. The ensuing struggle for political ascendancy took place over a vast expanse of territory, stretching from the snow-capped peaks of the Caucasus, across the imposing deserts and mountain ranges of Central Asia, to Chinese Turkestan and Tibet in the east.⁵⁹ It was called the “Great Game”, an appellation not coined, as is widely presumed, by the renowned English novelist Rudyard Kipling, but nevertheless immortalized by him in his epic novel *Kim*.⁶⁰

In 1917, the Communist deluge swept away the Russian empire and brought all its territories under the hammer and sickle of the Soviet Union. The republics of Central Asia, namely, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan—all predominantly Muslim and non-Russian—were transformed into Soviet socialist republics and remained so until the Soviet empire disintegrated in 1991. The consequent independence of the Central Asian Republics (CARs) saw

⁵⁷ Martin McCauley, *Afghanistan and Central Asia* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2002), p.20.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.21.

⁵⁹ Peter Hopkirk, *The Great Game: On Secret Service in High Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 2.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.1.

another frantic struggle for influence in the region, one that is presently in progress and shows no signs of abatement, at least in the foreseeable future. While the foremost objective of the original “Great Game” was to control the mountain passes into India, the “New Great Game” is fuelled by a totally different factor: access to the potentially enormous energy resources of the CARs. The current tussle involves the USA, Russia, China, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey, each one of them driven in the main by tantalizing prospects of oil pipelines and cheap markets for their exports. Another actor has, however, also entered the fray. Following the removal of the Taliban and the installation of a pro-India regime in Afghanistan, India too has stepped up efforts to increase its involvement in Central Asia, motivated not just by the need to address its pressing energy needs but also by the desire to further erode Pakistan’s concept of strategic depth by encircling it from the west. In pursuance of this objective, it opened a military base in Tajikistan in May 2002, the first such facility outside its own territorial confines. This move unambiguously heralded India’s entry into the “New Great Game”.

Owing to its nexus with the Soviet Union during the Cold War, India managed to maintain fairly strong links with the Central Asian region at a time when it was completely isolated from its more immediate neighbours, including Iran and Pakistan. Those links allowed it to maintain friendly relations with the CARs, even after they became independent. New Delhi regards Afghanistan and the CARs as parts of its “extended neighbourhood”⁶¹ and is keen to promote its interests in the region, preferably at Pakistan’s expense.⁶² While the Taliban were in control of Afghanistan, India strove to form a common front with Iran, Russia, and the CARs against the religiously inspired “terrorism” purportedly being propagated by Pakistan and the Taliban. All these countries banded together against the hard-line policies and seemingly expansionist agenda of the Taliban, and supported the Northern Alliance against them. India was deeply concerned about the presence

⁶¹ V. P. Malik, “Of pragmatic and sustained policies” *Tribune* (26 August 2002) <<http://www.meadev.nic.in/opn/2002aug/26trib.htm>> (4 November 2002).

⁶² Meena Singh Roy, “India’s Interests in Central Asia” *Strategic Analysis*, vol. XXIV, no.12 (March 2001) <<http://www.idsa-india.org/>> (28 October 2002).

of a pro-Pakistani government in Kabul, and tried to counter a thoroughly unwelcome development by accusing Pakistan of running training camps in Afghanistan for militants who were then sent to fuel the struggle for self-determination being waged in Indian-held Kashmir. It also raised the bogey of Pakistan-sponsored “militant Islam” sweeping through Central Asia to sufficiently frighten the leaders of the CARs into distancing themselves from Pakistan.

With the Taliban ousted and a pro-India government installed in Kabul, India can gaze upon the present state of affairs with a degree of equanimity denied to it as long as the Taliban ruled. It realizes that the present is the most auspicious time for it to adopt a more dynamic and forward-looking policy in one of the most resource-rich and politically critical regions of the world. Not only can it then address some of its pressing energy concerns but greater involvement on its part can undermine the interests of its two greatest rivals, Pakistan and China, in a region of tremendous importance to both countries, and one that both visualize as their own backyard.

The setting up of the military base in Tajikistan is an unambiguous indication of India’s desire to have a greater say in Central Asian affairs. Located at Farkhor, an area close to the border with Afghanistan, the base has been operational since May 2002 and is presently being used to transport the relief assistance that India had pledged to Afghanistan following the ouster of the Taliban.⁶³ The base was set up under a bilateral agreement signed by India’s Minister for Defence, George Fernandes, during a visit to Dushanbe in April 2002.⁶⁴ It was also agreed that India would train Tajik defence personnel, service and repair their Soviet-era military equipment, and even teach some of the Tajik officers the English language.⁶⁵ The two sides also agreed to make joint efforts to curb drug-trafficking.⁶⁶

Tajikistan’s decision to allow India the use of its territory for military purposes demonstrates the close ties between the two countries, and also emphasizes India’s desire to have a physical presence in the

⁶³ Bedi, “India and Central Asia”.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

region, not only to safeguard its economic interests but also to keep a close eye on Pakistan and China. While Tajikistan is being used for security purposes, India, in pursuit of the energy resources that it so desperately requires, is also assiduously wooing Kazakhstan, which, in terms of oil and gas, is the most liberally endowed of all the five republics. And its efforts seem to be paying off. In February 2002, the Kazakh President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, paid a five-day state visit to India. During his stay, he signed a joint declaration with the Indian Prime Minister stating that India's membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)—an important regional grouping comprising Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, besides China and Russia—would “add to the strength of the organization.”⁶⁷ In exchange for this support, Kazakhstan sought India's expertise in information technology for the development of software parks and the initiation of collective efforts in other software-related ventures.⁶⁸ It also evinced keen interest in boosting trade with New Delhi and gave sufficient proof of that interest at a subsequent Indian industrial fair held in Almaty in April, with Indian companies securing orders for civilian goods worth \$28 million.⁶⁹ In the sphere of security, the two countries agreed to set up a forum to counter terrorism and decided in favour of “early action” whilst finalizing agreements on military and technical co-operation.⁷⁰ This “co-operation” includes upgrading Kazakhstan's military hardware, which, like most of India's own equipment, is of Soviet and Russian origin.⁷¹ Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee in turn visited Almaty in June to take part in the Conference for Co-operation and Trust-building Measures in Asia. Following talks with Mr Nazarbayev, he expressed India's willingness to invest in Kazakhstan's oil and gas industry.⁷² The Kazakh President

⁶⁷ Antoine Blau, “Nazarbayev Concludes India Tour”, *Radio Free Europe* (18 February 2002)
<<http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/2002/02/18022002085303.asp>> (20 November 2002).

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Bedi, “India and Central Asia”.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² “Indian Premier Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Kazakhstan” (3 June 2002)
<<http://english.pravda.ru/cis/2002/10/03/29611.html>> (20 November 2002).

identified four areas where the two countries could co-operate: military-technical, oil and gas, pharmaceuticals and information technology.⁷³

Kazakhstan was not the only CAR to voice its support for India's entry to the SCO. In August 2002, Kyrgyz President Askar Akaev echoed the sentiments of his Kazakh counterpart, saying that the SCO would be better off with India in it; moreover, he backed India's claim to a seat as a permanent member of the UN Security Council.⁷⁴ The two countries also expressed their determination to set up a Kyrgyz-Indian Inter-Government Joint Working Group on international terrorism and other types of crimes.⁷⁵ As far as trade and economic ties were concerned, India conveyed its willingness to set up a software training and development centre in Kyrgyzstan.⁷⁶ Later that month, a highly successful "Enterprise India" show was staged in Bishkek, where thirty Indian companies, representing sectors such as electronics, textiles, garments, light engineering, food processing and pharmaceuticals, displayed their wares before enthusiastic customers.⁷⁷

There is no doubt that, to all the present competitors in the "New Great Game", the CARs present a veritable economic bonanza. Kazakhstan has huge amounts of oil, iron ore and other minerals.⁷⁸ As recently as May 2002, yet another oilfield was discovered in the northern Caspian Sea just off Kazakhstan, possibly ranging in size from 7 billion to 9 billion barrels.⁷⁹ Uzbekistan, although not abundant in terms of energy resources, nevertheless possesses large gold deposits and is a major producer of cotton.⁸⁰ Turkmenistan contains

⁷³ "India, Kazakhstan Agree on Military-Technical Cooperation", (3 June 2002) <<http://english.pravda.ru/cis/2002/06/03/29591.html>> (20 November 2002).

⁷⁴ Press Release, Ministry of External Affairs, External Publicity Division, New Delhi (7 August 2002) <<http://www.meadev.nic.in/news/official/20020807/official.htm>> (26 November 2002).

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ "India to set up IT centre in Kyrgyzstan" (29 August 2002) <<http://www.indiaonline.com/news/news.asp?dat=7667>> (28 November 2002).

⁷⁸ K. M. Pari Velan, "Geopolitical Importance of Central Asia to India", *International Peace and Conflict Studies* (21 October 1999), Article no. 274. <<http://www.ipcs.org/issues/articles/274-ifp-parivelan.html>> (24 October 2002).

⁷⁹ <<http://english.pravda.ru/comp/2002/07/02/31625.html>> (18 November 2002).

⁸⁰ Pari Velan, "Geopolitical Importance".

considerable amounts of natural gas, while Tajikistan boasts substantial aluminum reserves.⁸¹

India is making serious efforts to increase trade with the CARs and tap the region's extensive energy resources. However, its adoption of a more aggressive Central Asian policy has not been dictated solely by economic imperatives; it also has definite political interests, such as preventing any major strategic gains to Pakistan and keeping a check on its influence in the region. For instance, in June 2002, the leaders of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkmenistan agreed to revive interest in the construction of the 890-mile long, \$2 billion gas pipeline, originally initiated by Unocal, the US energy giant.⁸² Unocal had been forced to abandon its plans in 1998, as the unending civil strife in Afghanistan made progress almost impossible. The pipeline was designed to connect the gas fields of Eastern Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to Pakistan, and then extended onwards to India.⁸³ Immediately after the agreement was signed, however, India announced a counter-proposal for a Russia–China–India (RCI) pipeline stretching from Russia through Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, and onwards to Kashgar in Chinese Xinjiang.⁸⁴ It would then enter Indian-held Kashmir via Ladakh to supply gas to northern India. The pipeline could cost as much as \$15 billion and would have to cover a vast expanse of diverse and difficult terrain.⁸⁵ Despite its apparent lack of feasibility, and in spite of the security guarantees given by a number of Pakistani leaders over the past ten years about any pipeline passing through Pakistan into India, the present Indian leadership seems keen to pursue the RCI option.⁸⁶ India evidently wishes to avoid placing itself in a situation where it becomes dependent on Pakistan for the uninterrupted supply of desperately needed energy resources. It is also afraid that if the Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan pipeline becomes a reality, the revenues accruing

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Aftab Kazi, "Is the Proposed Russia-China-India Pipeline Feasible?", *Central Asia Caucasus Analyst* (3 July 2002) <http://www.cacianalyst.org/2002-07-03/20020703_RUSSIA_CHINA_INDIA.htm> (10 November 2002).

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

from it to Pakistan would shore up its impoverished economy, which would result in strengthening its military even further and allow it to resurrect its fortunes in Afghanistan and the CARs.

Another move designed to reduce Pakistan's role in Central Asia is the North-South Corridor Agreement, signed between India, Iran and Russia in September 2000. The Corridor aims to connect Mumbai with St Petersburg, via Tehran and Moscow. First linking the Indian commercial heartland of Mumbai with the bustling Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas by maritime transport, the Corridor will then rely on road and rail networks to connect Bandar Abbas with the Caspian Sea ports of Bandar Anzali and Bandar Amirabad, via Tehran.⁸⁷ From there, cargo will be shipped across the Caspian Sea to the Russian port of Astrakhan.⁸⁸ The Corridor will culminate in a long stretch of road and rail leading to St Petersburg.⁸⁹ Through the Corridor, India hopes to shore up relations with Central Asia and tap its energy reserves without having to use the Afghanistan–Pakistan route, thereby killing two birds with one stone.

Undermining Pakistan's interests in the region, however, is not the sole reason for India's accelerated push into Central Asia: containing China is almost as important a concern. Both India and China are major regional competitors, locked in a frequently acrimonious contest for leadership of the Asian continent. However, where China's booming economy and military potential have already ensured for it a powerful voice in world affairs, India's acute poverty and other internal problems have compelled it to lag behind. Driven by its own rapidly growing demand for energy, the Chinese government has made securing access to the untapped energy reserves of Central Asia a cornerstone of its economic policy for the next two decades.⁹⁰ As far back as 1997, the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) had acquired the right

⁸⁷ Sudha Ramachandran, "India, Iran, Russia map out trade route", *Asia Times Online* (29 June 2002) <<http://www.atimes.com/ind-pak/DF29Df02.html>> (13 November 2002).

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ John Chan, "China pushes into Central Asia for oil and gas", *World Socialist Website* (3 January 2001) <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2001/jan2001/oil-j03_prn.shtml> (27 November 2002).

to develop two potentially lucrative oilfields in Kazakhstan, outbidding more resourceful US and European oil conglomerates.⁹¹ In exchange for development rights, it undertook to build pipelines to Xinjiang to make possible the export of up to 50 million tonnes of Kazakh oil to China each year.⁹² China is also a major supplier of arms to the CARs and has even offered its own forces under the aegis of the SCO Treaty of 2001 to assist in the defence of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states against terrorist and secessionist movements.⁹³ India is wary of increased Chinese penetration into Central Asia, particularly at a time when it is in desperate need of the region's energy resources. Its eagerness to obtain membership of the SCO is indicative of its desire to closely monitor Chinese activities in Central Asia. At the same time, India also wishes to enter the burgeoning regional arms export market in order to dilute China's influence on the one hand, and to increase the market for its rapidly growing indigenous arms industry on the other.⁹⁴ In pursuance of these aims, India has recently signed deals with Kazakhstan and Tajikistan under which it will sell Ilyshuhin-76 military transports to the former and helicopters to the latter.⁹⁵ It also considers it vital to its own interests that the Central Asian governments be provided the means to protect themselves against radical Islamic movements such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the Hizb-e-Tahrir.

There can be little doubt that India's involvement in Central Asia, a region not geographically contiguous to it but nevertheless of considerable strategic importance, will continue to increase, particularly as long as the present government in Kabul remains in power. New Delhi is acutely aware of the need to have some alternative to the supply of oil from the volatile Middle East, particularly now that the US has invaded Iraq. Apart from oil and gas, India's other main economic interest would be to increase trade with the CARs, particularly in

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Stephen Blank, "The arming of Central Asia", *Asia Times Online* (24 August 2002) <http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/DH24Df02.html> (19 November 2002).

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

relation to the lucrative arms-export market. From a strategic point of view, India will try to undermine Pakistan's interests in the region, not just through the use of its base in Tajikistan but also by continuing its campaign to malign Pakistan as a sponsor of extremist Islamist organizations. It will also try to reduce Chinese influence in the region, a task that will be very difficult to accomplish as China not only has land borders with three CARs—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan—but also has extensive economic and strategic interests in the whole Central Asian region.

Implications for Pakistan

The duration of India's currently increased level of involvement in Afghanistan and Central Asia is primarily contingent upon the continued existence of the Northern Alliance-dominated government in Kabul. With Afghanistan being the gateway to the CARs, any country with influence in Afghanistan will be strongly placed to make inroads into Central Asia. As long as key ministries like foreign affairs and defence remain in the hands of known Indian sympathizers such as Abdullah Abdullah and Qasim Fahim, Pakistan will be hard-pressed to regain even a modicum of the ground that it has lost in Afghanistan since the removal of the Taliban. Even before the announcement of the Bonn Accords that created Karzai's interim administration, Pakistan's diminished role in the new Afghanistan was evident: "Three months ago, Kabul was Islamabad's backyard; it called all the shots there. In just a fortnight of Kabul's fall, Pakistan is the only one of Afghanistan's six neighbours that doesn't have a presence there."⁹⁶ And no less troubling for Pakistan than its overnight marginalization was its dramatic reversal of fortunes with India: "Nothing illustrates the fact that New Delhi has been able to inveigle itself successfully into the diplomatic matrix that surrounds Afghanistan's politics better than a post-midnight meeting, the day before the declaration on Afghanistan was signed in Bonn on December 5, after twelve days of protracted wrangling. Those who attended the meeting had to make a last-minute decision on whether or not there was going to be a declaration. The list of the countries that

⁹⁶ Ramachandaran, "India's Gain".

participated in that last-minute meeting indicated the new strategic confluence on Afghanistan: the US, Russia, Germany, Iran and India. Not Pakistan.”⁹⁷

The fact that several members of the present Afghan government, including Hamid Karzai himself, studied at Indian universities has also gone in India's favour, as has the fact that some of them, including Abdullah Abdullah and Younus Qanooni, still have their families living in India.⁹⁸ It is hardly surprising, therefore, that India's standing in Afghanistan has improved immeasurably since the departure of the Taliban. Pakistan should consider this an extremely worrying development; with defence and foreign affairs in the firm grip of the Northern Alliance, it cannot possibly hope for any diplomatic or material support in case war breaks out with India. In fact, there is every likelihood that, at best, the government in Kabul will maintain an uneasy neutrality, but at worst, it could actively assist the Indians against Pakistan. As long as the Northern Alliance remains in control of vital ministries, India's influence in the country will increase, while Pakistan's interests will remain unfulfilled.

Another disquieting development for Pakistan is the nexus forged between India and Iran over Afghanistan. The two countries collaborated closely in propping up the Northern Alliance against the Taliban, and both now seem determined to continue their co-operation in post-Taliban Afghanistan. The secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran Hassan Rouhani, visited India in June 2002 and emphasized that India, Iran, and Afghanistan had to work together to deal with Al Qaeda.⁹⁹ He also expressed Iran's willingness to sign a document with India for bilateral security co-operation, and suggested that the North-South Corridor could be extended to include Afghanistan. The implication was that India could gain access to Afghanistan and the CARs through Iran by making Kabul a partner in the Corridor project.¹⁰⁰ A year earlier, during a trip to Pakistan, Rouhani

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ C. Raja Mohan, "India, Iran to combat extremism", *Hindu* (New Delhi) 26 June 2002.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

had told Islamabad in no uncertain terms that there was a need for India's involvement in future efforts to resolve the Afghan imbroglio. He had also emphatically declared that the Kashmir dispute could not be equated with the Palestinian problem.¹⁰¹ It is evident that Iran and India, and Russia as the third member of the axis, have formally banded together to counter Pakistan's attempts to regain influence in Afghanistan.¹⁰²

In the CARs, India's decision to play a more intrusive role has serious implications for Pakistan. The base at Farkhor will allow a permanent Indian military presence in a country that not only borders Afghanistan but also shares a short border with Pakistan. From a strategic point of view, India could not have found itself in a better situation. In case Afghanistan slides back into civil war at some point in the future and external competitors are again compelled to take sides, India will now be in a far better logistical position to influence the course of events than it was during the Taliban era. India will also continue to use the bogey of religiously-inspired "terrorism" emanating from Pakistan to mar the latter's relations with the CARs and hinder it from making progress on oil and gas pipelines and export markets.

As mentioned before, Pakistan is not India's sole competitor in the region; China too has to be dealt with. India's desire to contain both countries might compel it to adopt a two-pronged approach: teaming up with Iran and Russia against Pakistan and allying with the USA against China.

As far as Pakistan is concerned, it cannot view India's presence in its strategic backyard with complacency. For the last two decades, Pakistan has sought effective control over Afghanistan, or at least a strong friendship with it, in order to secure strategic depth against India and obviate the possibility of a two-front military situation. In pursuit of this ambitious plan, it facilitated the dramatic rise of the Taliban and continued supporting them, despite their blatantly obscurantist policies.

¹⁰¹ "Iran firm on India's involvement in resolving Afghan crisis" (28 April 2001) <http://www.pcpafg.org/.../Iran_firm_on_Indias_involvement_in_resolving_Afghan_crisis.shtm> (25 October 2002).

¹⁰² "India, Russia, Iran to counter Pak in Afghanistan" (16 October 2002) <<http://www.eariana.com/ariana/eariana.nsf/allArticles/0904B54C3AFFEA9687256C54006C7962?OpenDocument>> (27 October 2002).

For its pains in Afghanistan, all Pakistan received were the rebukes of almost the entire world community. Nevertheless, its policy remained unchanged. Pakistan's generals—the framers and sustainers of the country's Afghan policy—felt sure that, in the end, strategic depth would be secured. Unfortunately for Pakistan, that has not happened. When confronted by the “with us or against us” ultimatum given by President Bush, Pakistan found itself with no choice but to renounce its policy of the previous two decades within a matter of days, if not hours. The Taliban were disowned virtually overnight and unstinted assistance was provided to the USA in its Afghan campaign.

If Pakistan had hoped that its alacrity in ditching the Taliban would be rewarded with an opportunity for it to be involved in the formation of the new government, it was in for a rude shock. The government of Afghanistan, as it stands today, is admittedly headed by a Pashtun, but is actually dominated by mainly Tajik members of the Northern Alliance, all of whom hold Pakistan responsible for fomenting civil strife in Afghanistan, and even allege that that it was involved in the assassination of their inspirational general, Ahmed Shah Masoud. Having supported the Northern Alliance, both materially and diplomatically, against the Taliban, India's influence in Afghanistan is now greater than it has been for several decades. And considering the frequently elevated level of animosity between India and Pakistan, the former would be very keen to keep the latter's role in Afghanistan to the barest minimum and to ensure that its concept of strategic depth remains buried somewhere beneath the rubble that Afghanistan has become.

Policy Recommendations for Pakistan

- Thanks mainly to its own misdirected policies, Pakistan today finds itself in an extremely precarious position in a region of critical importance to its security. There are only two options available to it: it can either desist from any unnecessary interference in Afghanistan while biding its time until a friendlier government comes to power in Kabul, or it can take

active steps to destabilize the present Afghan regime. There is much to be said for a policy of complete non-interference, particularly considering Pakistan's disastrous attempts at installing a pliant government in Afghanistan over the last decade. But keeping in view India's increased involvement in the region, Pakistan cannot afford to be a totally silent spectator of whatever transpires there. It should not actively support any single party in Afghanistan, but it also must realize that its best chance of regaining its position of influence lies in the establishment of a Pashtun-dominated government. Therefore, it must keep open the lines of communication with the Pashtuns and simultaneously launch a vigorous diplomatic campaign to convince the world community, and particularly the Americans, of the need for a broad-based government in Kabul that provides representation to the Pashtuns on the basis of their numerical strength. It must highlight the dangers inherent in keeping Afghanistan's most populous ethnic group deprived of its lawful share of political power.

- Pakistan must be extremely wary of Indian attempts to mend ties with the Pashtuns in Afghanistan. There are clear signs that this time round, New Delhi intends to avoid putting all its eggs in one basket, as it did during the Soviet invasion and during the Taliban era. Pakistan must nip these reconciliatory efforts in their incipiency by reminding the Pashtuns not only of India's support for the Soviet Union during its invasion of Afghanistan but also of its intimate relations with the non-Pashtun Northern Alliance.
- Pakistan must try to increase its economic ties with the CARs, ensuring that all deals are fair and transparent.
- It must counter Indian propaganda tactics designed to portray it as a sponsor of Islamic "terrorism".
- It must continue to pursue the Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan gas pipeline plan and try to convince the Americans of its viability, particularly as an alternative to the Iran–India pipeline.

- It must closely co-operate with China in Central Asia, in order to counter India's growing presence in the region.
- It must make every effort to keep India out of any political or economic grouping of Afghanistan and Central Asia, such as the SCO and the "Six Plus Two" arrangement. At the same time, it is vital for Pakistan's security to gain membership of the SCO. Not only would this allow Pakistan to end its regional isolation, it would also make India's attempts to demonize Pakistan as an instigator of terrorist movements increasingly ineffectual.
- Pakistan must stop its attempts to play the Islamic card in Central Asia. Although the CARs are independent, Russia continues to wield extensive influence in the region and strongly opposes any attempts to desecularize it. The leaders of the CARs are all hardened ex-Communists, presiding over repressive and undemocratic governments and paying no more than lip-service to Islam. Central Asia is generally considered to be the most secular part of the Islamic world. It will be very difficult for Pakistan to make any inroads into Central Asia if it persists with the delusion of spearheading an Islamic "crescent", particularly as long as the present regime continues to control Kabul. It would be far more profitable for it to confine itself to improving economic relations, which can only be possible if the CARs are convinced that Pakistan no longer harbours ambitions of creating a regional Islamic bloc and that it is not supporting radical elements in Afghanistan.

Conclusion

There can be little doubt that India has benefited enormously from the removal of the Taliban and has managed to resuscitate its fortunes in a region where they had been virtually moribund for over two decades. The presence of a friendly government in Kabul has allowed New Delhi to achieve a position of considerable influence in Afghanistan, while the establishment of a military base in Tajikistan has enabled it to secure a vital foothold in Central Asia. Following the ouster of the Taliban, Pakistan's direct involvement in the region has diminished and the

current ground realities in Afghanistan have compelled it to adopt a far more circumspect approach towards its western neighbour than it had during the previous two decades. Although the present dispensation in Afghanistan—as far as Pakistan is concerned—may not be “a consummation devoutly to be wished (for)”, there is no reason to be too despondent about the existing state of affairs. Admittedly, the Karzai government does contain elements that are hostile towards Pakistan, but even they cannot remain impervious to the compulsions of geography. Pakistan still remains Afghanistan’s closest route to the sea. With its road links and established transport routes, it enjoys a clear advantage over India, whose lack of geographical contiguity will impede its efforts to increase its influence in the region. But if Pakistan is to optimize the benefits accruing to it through geography, it must be careful not to repeat the mistakes of the past. For the past ten years, it wielded an enormous amount of influence in Afghanistan; instead of using that influence for the establishment of a truly representative government, it proceeded to take sides in a conflict that eventually facilitated the Talibanization of Afghanistan, at great cost not only to the Afghan people but also to Pakistan’s own security interests. Pakistan must realize that strategic depth will not last very long if its foundations rest on intervention and intrigue; it can only be made enduring by earning the gratitude and goodwill of the people of Afghanistan. And once that happens, the markets and energy resources of Central Asia will also become more attainable.■

SINO–PAKISTAN RELATIONS: THE INDIAN FACTOR

Ghulam Ali*

China, Pakistan and India form a triangle with convoluted relationships. Security in the region is shaped by the intertwining policies of all three powers. The policies adopted by one country have an immediate impact on and response from the other two. A review of the history of these turbulent relations reveals that, in the period following the establishment of diplomatic ties, China and India were on friendly terms. The first decade of their relations was based on the myth of *Hindi Chini bhai bhai* (Indians and Chinese are brothers), while Pakistan, with its pro-West orientation, tilted towards the US-led capitalist bloc. There was, therefore, limited co-operation between China and Pakistan during the 1950s. This pattern of relations changed drastically with the advent of the 1960s. The heydays of Sino–Indian friendship turned into open rivalry, which led to severe border clashes in November 1962. Pakistan, whose relations with India had never been cordial, was disappointed when its Western allies began arming India on a scale it thought was unjustified. However, it found in China, with its new anti-Indian sentiments, a potential ally. Thus, in the wake of the Sino–Indian border clashes, relations between China and Pakistan improved remarkably.

In the post-Mao era (i.e., since 1978), the new Chinese leadership of Deng Xiaoping wrought drastic changes in the country's economic and foreign policies. These changes had a considerable effect on the nature of the triangular relations.¹ China paid due attention to improving its relations with India, relations that had been frozen for the last two decades. At the same time, Beijing moderated its stance on the Kashmir issue, abandoning its erstwhile support for the right of self-determination

* Ghulam Ali has completed his Master's degree from Punjab University and M. Phil from Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad. Currently he is doing his internship at Islamabad Policy Research Institute.

¹ The term "triangular" is used in the subsequent part of this paper and refers to the tripartite relations between China, Pakistan and India.

in the disputed territory, and instead emphasized the need for a peaceful solution of the issue. This attitude was further reflected in China's response to the Kargil crisis and to the Indo-Pakistan stand-off in mid-2002.

Some scholars view these changes as a significant development in the triangular relationship and argue that the friendship between China and Pakistan developed in the backdrop of their common enmity towards India. Once Sino-Indian relations started improving, the traditional warmth between China and Pakistan began to cool somewhat. This paper is an attempt to study how far the Indian factor played a role in bringing China and Pakistan closer, and whether it led to a strengthening of ties between the two; and what the future impact might be. A brief historical background is given, highlighting the Sino-Indian border clashes which proved to be a turning point in the triangular relations. The latter part of the paper focuses on major political and strategic issues.

The Context

The links between China and India go back a long way. Even prior to independence, Jawaharlal Nehru, the founding father of Indian foreign policy, was an ardent admirer of the socialist system prevalent in the USSR and in China; this led to India's early recognition of China and the launching of an enthusiastic struggle to place China in the UN. Thus, in the early days of their diplomatic relations, China, India and the Soviet Union were closely allied. This pattern of relations lasted till the late 1950s, when it took a hostile turn. The heady days of *Hindi Chini bhai bhai* changed to open rivalry, the causes being the Tibetan issue, boundary disputes and a claim to a leadership role for the Third World countries.²

The US, with its own enduring interests in the region, kept a watchful eye on the rapidly deteriorating Sino-Indian relations. Immediately in the wake of the border skirmishes of November 1959 in Ladakh, President Eisenhower undertook a tour of Asia and discussed regional problems with Nehru against the background of the Sino-Indian controversy. The magnitude of US concern at the souring of relations

² Gurnam Singh, *Sino-Pakistan Relations: The Ayub Era* (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University Press, 1987), p. 67.

between the two giants of Asia can be measured in economic terms: up until 30 June 1959, the total American economic aid to India in the twelve years since its independence was officially valued at somewhat over \$ 1,705 million, which included \$ 931 million in agricultural commodities. Against this amount, in a short period of less than four years, from 1959 to 1963, India received \$ 4 billion from the US, many times more than the amount which it had received in the earlier 11-year period.³ This tilted the regional balance of power decisively in favour of India. The then Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, lodged a strongly worded protest against the precipitate Western action in favour of India. He stated, "In their own global interests, these countries have taken a stand and offered arms assistance to India despite our protest." According to Bhutto, these supplies augmented Indian armed forces by no less than 40 per cent.⁴ When there were ample possibilities for resolving the crisis, why was India doubling the size of its standing army to 22 divisions? President Ayub Khan commented on the situation in these words:

The fact of the matter is that, taking advantages of the favourable western response to her demands for arms, India is planning to raise two armies, one with which to face China and the other to use against Pakistan and her other smaller neighbours in pursuance of her expansionist objectives. Any army meant for China would by the nature of things be so positioned as to be able to wheel round swiftly to attack East Pakistan. Thus both the armies pose a grave threat to Pakistan.⁵

Most scholars agree that US benevolence towards India emanated largely from its deep-rooted enmity towards China. Pakistan was a US ally in SEATO and CENTO and also a signatory of the Mutual Defence Agreement of 1959. Pakistan joined these alliances to enhance its defence capability *vis-à-vis* India. The US policy of arming India disillusioned Pakistan, which had been relying solely on the West for its defence. Following these developments, inter-state relations of the regional

³ Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, *Myth of Independence* (Karachi: Oxford, 1969), pp. 48-50.

⁴ Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, *Foreign Policy of Pakistan: A Compendium of speeches made in the National Assembly of Pakistan 1962-64* (Karachi: Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, 1964), p. 55.

⁵ Muhammad Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters: A Political Autobiography* (Islamabad: Mr. Books, 2001), p. 136.

countries underwent drastic changes. The Sino–Indian and Sino–Soviet rifts contributed to the forging of close military, political and economic links between India and the Soviet Union on the one hand, and ushered in a new era in friendly relations between China and Pakistan on the other. China accused India of becoming part of the Soviet “strategy of encircling and containing China.”⁶ To counter this nexus, China encouraged anti-Indian sentiments in neighbouring countries such as Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan, and paid special attention to promoting relations with Pakistan. Consequently, China and Pakistan signed a Boundary Agreement in March 1963, followed by an Air Service agreement, which had the effect of ending China’s isolation through the extension of the services of Pakistan International Airlines to its territory. China also became a reliable source of military hardware during a period that saw growing Western restrictions and embargoes on Pakistan.⁷

The US was unhappy about Pakistan’s improving relations with China. Later, the American stance during the war of September 1965 and its overt inclination towards India provided added justification for Pakistan’s closer ties with China, a country that extended moral support and material support to Pakistan to help it counter Indian aggression.⁸ Thenceforth, Sino–Pakistan relations improved steadily.

Relations between China and the USSR were low-profile during the 1960s. Thus, when the US signalled its desire for normalization of ties with China, it received a positive response. Since Pakistan played a role in the Sino–US rapprochement,⁹ India perceived it as a US–Pakistan–China axis and correspondingly strengthened its relations with the USSR. The two countries signed a mutual defence agreement in August 1971, which effectively prevented China from providing other than diplomatic support to Pakistan in the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971.¹⁰

⁶ Samina Ahmad, “Sino-Indian Relations in a Changing World”, *Regional Studies* (Islamabad), vol. XI, no. 3 (Summer 1993), p. 6.

⁷ Maqbool Ahmad Bhatti, “Pak-China Relations in the 21st Century”, *Regional Studies* (Islamabad), vol. XVIII, no. 1 (Winter 1999-2000), p. 82.

⁸ Mushtaq Ahmad, *Pakistan’s Foreign Policy* (Karachi: Space Publishers, 1968), pp. 63-4.

⁹ For a detailed study regarding Pakistan’s role in normalizing relations between China and the United States, see the compiled documents with commentary of F. S. Aijazuddin, *From a Head, Through a Head, to a Head: The Secret Channel between the US and China through Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁰ Ahmed, “Sino-Indian Relations”, p. 7.

China, Pakistan and the Afghan War

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 opened a new chapter of consultation and collaboration between China and Pakistan. The two countries were in total agreement on the threat that the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan posed to the security of the entire region and prepared to co-ordinate their policies to face the challenge. According to an analyst, “Support to Pakistan’s security was the major feature of China’s Afghan policy because they wanted to honour their often repeated commitments.”¹¹

During his visit to China in May 1980, President Ziaul Haq stated that the two countries had a “perfect understanding in all fields.”¹² China, through Pakistan, provided covert military supplies worth US \$ 200 million to the Afghan resistance and agreed to provide the US with facilities to monitor Soviet activities in its Xinjiang province, while India’s Afghan policy was based on maintaining its traditional cordial relations with the Soviet Union. In the face of international opinion, India did not condemn the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; as a reward, the flow of sophisticated Soviet arms to India increased many times.¹³ Regarding recent developments in Afghanistan, China and Pakistan have a close understanding of each other’s point of view. China made it clear that US military strikes in Afghanistan should be target-specific, to avoid civilian casualties.¹⁴ President Jiang Zemin was quoted as saying that peace and stability in Afghanistan meant a great deal to China and Pakistan, as both shared borders with Afghanistan. Pakistan and China have consulted with each other and co-operated closely since the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States; both have played a constructive role in promoting a just and reasonable solution to the Afghan issue.¹⁵ China hopes that peace in Afghanistan will be achieved as soon as possible, a desire shared equally by Pakistan.

¹¹ Fazal-ur-Rehman, “Pakistan’s Relations with China”, *Strategic Studies* (Islamabad), vol. XIX & XX, no. 14, 1 (Winter & Spring 1998), p. 72.

¹² *Pakistan Times* (Lahore), 20 May 1980.

¹³ Rehman, “Pakistan’s Relations with China”, p. 72.

¹⁴ <<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/18768.html>> (3 January 2003).

¹⁵ “Jiang Affirms Ties with Pakistan”, <<http://www.china.org.cn/english/2001/Dec/23904.htm>> (17 January 2003).

Indian Missile Programme: Implications for China and Pakistan

Despite a thaw in Sino–Indian relations, New Delhi covertly considers Beijing its enemy number one. To quote a recent example, General K. V. Krishna Rao, a former Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army, stated, “China is the real enemy not Pakistan. We are capable of finishing Pakistan with ease.”¹⁶ According to analysts, the Indian Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles—*Agni* II, for instance—would primarily target China, though these missiles are also capable of attacking sites in Southeast Asia, Afghanistan, Central Asia as well as American bases in the Indian Ocean. Joseph Cirincione concludes: “India’s nuclear tests and current deployment plans have much more to do with China than Pakistan.” The deployment of the *Agni* series would make it possible for India to hit virtually all industrial, cultural and politico-administrative targets in mainland China. In fact, China is the yardstick against which India measures itself. India recognizes that China is the stronger power, especially at the strategic level.¹⁷

Naturally, the Indian missile and nuclear build-up has alarmed China. Pakistan likewise lives in fear of Indian missiles, most of which were deployed along the Pakistani border during the Indo–Pakistan stand-off in mid-2002. The ultimate Indian aspiration is to emerge on the world stage as China’s strategic equal by developing sufficient military capability, especially in nuclear and missile forces.

Indian Ambitions for Naval Hegemony in the Indian Ocean

The Indian Ocean is of strategic importance in international politics. Its extensive raw material and geographical proximity to the oil-rich Gulf region are the key factors which have led India to strengthen and expand its navy.¹⁸ New Delhi adheres to the flawed perception that it is the custodian of the Indian Ocean. According to an analyst, perhaps this

¹⁶ “China is the real danger: Krishna”, *Hindu* (New Delhi), 2 January 2003.

¹⁷ Joseph Cirincione, “The Asian Nuclear Reaction Chain”, *Foreign Policy* (Washington) no. 118 (Spring 2000), p. 127.

¹⁸ Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, “India’s Look-East Policy: New Challenges for Pakistan”, *IPRI Journal* (Islamabad), vol. III, no. 1 (Winter 2003), pp. 54-5.

erratic notion emanates from the name of the ocean.¹⁹ This self-assumed domination syndrome in the Indian mindset can breed conflict with China and Pakistan, as both those countries have enduring interests in the region too. One of Beijing's primary aims is to maintain stability in the Indian Ocean for the unimpeded flow of maritime traffic: freedom of navigation, security of sea-lanes of communications as well as normal business activities, free from problems and interference.²⁰ To attain these objectives, China emphasizes regional co-operation and considers it one of the ways to reach the goal of economic advancement in South Asia. This is why Beijing lauded the inauguration of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) in Mauritius on 5 March 1997, while India opposed Pakistan's membership tooth and nail.²¹ Indian ambitions of supremacy in the Indian Ocean are no secret: its naval officers have spoken openly of their intent to check the expansion of Chinese naval power in the Indian Ocean by controlling the Malacca Straits.²² India is expanding its naval forces to match its hegemonic designs. In this context, a clash of interests among the triangular states is likely.

Nuclearization of South Asia

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's justification that the perceived nuclear threat from China in particular and from China's ally, Pakistan, compelled the Indian government to conduct nuclear tests in May 1998, shocked Beijing as well as Islamabad and many other countries. The remarks unambiguously reflected Indian enmity towards its neighbours. The roots of the Indian nuclear programme can be traced back to its border clashes with China in 1962; the programme gained momentum after Beijing's first nuclear test in 1964.²³ Since then, the Indian nuclear programme has been developing continuously and has become an

¹⁹ Fasahat H. Syed, ed., *Regional Cooperation Among Indian Ocean Countries* (Islamabad: Friends, 1999), pp. 16-20.

²⁰ Ye Zhengjia, "China's Interests in the Indian Ocean Region and Prospects of Peace", *ibid.*, p. 179.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

²² Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, "India's Missile Capabilities: Regional Implications", *Pakistan Horizon* (Karachi), vol. 54, no. 1 (January 2001), p. 54.

²³ <www.fas.org/irp/threat/wind.htm> (6 March 2003).

important element of India's foreign policy. Currently, New Delhi's nuclear doctrine amply reflects its nuclear ambitions. It defies the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), terming it "discriminatory". Its objection is to the clauses which block India from going all out to develop its nuclear technology.²⁴ The formation of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government in India in March 1998 brought about a significant change in the country's perceptions of its nuclear programme, which has now been given the highest priority.²⁵ In May 1998, shortly before the Indian nuclear tests, *The New York Times* published a letter from Prime Minister Vajpayee to President Clinton in which Vajpayee all but named China as the rationale behind the decision to test. The letter read:

I have been deeply concerned at the deteriorating security environment, especially the nuclear environment, faced by India for some years past. We have an overt nuclear weapon state on our borders, a state, which committed armed aggression against India in 1962. Although our relations with that country have improved in the last decade or so, an atmosphere of distrust persists mainly due to the unresolved border problem. To add to the distrust that country has materially helped another neighbor of ours to become a covert nuclear weapons state. At the hands of this bitter neighbor we have suffered three aggressions in the last 50 years.²⁶

The Indian justification for its nuclear detonations was a grave development. Besides other repercussions, the irresponsible Indian posture blocked the steady development in Sino-Indian relations which had progressed substantially during the previous decade. China's response to the first day's tests was low-key. A Foreign Ministry spokesperson commented on these developments by saying that, "The Chinese government expresses its grave concern", and that the tests were "detrimental to peace and stability in the South Asian region." When the

²⁴ Zaglul Haider, "The US Policy towards Nuclear S. Asia at the Dawn of the 21st Century", *Regional Studies* (Islamabad), vol. XX, no. 2 (Spring 2002), p. 83.

²⁵ Bhatta, "Pak-China Relations", p. 84.

²⁶ Mark W. Frazier, "China-India relations since Pokhran II: Assessing sources of conflict and cooperation", <<http://www.nbr.org/publications/review/vol3no2/essay.html>> (14 January 2003).

contents of Mr Vajpayee's letter came to light, Beijing reacted strongly.²⁷ After the second explosion, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson stated: "The Chinese government is deeply shocked by this and hereby expresses its strong condemnation." The spokesperson noted that New Delhi had "maliciously accused China of posing a nuclear threat to India".²⁸

After the tests, the Indian leaders issued a tirade of irresponsible and threatening statements, targeting both China and Pakistan. The Indian Minister for External Affairs, Jaswant Singh, expressed India's nervousness about the rising power of China; he said India considered itself a victim of "nuclear apartheid". He further remarked that China was the source of all Indian troubles, as Pakistan could be handled easily.²⁹ On another occasion, Singh stated that the Indian tests had changed the strategic world order put in place by the "Permanent Five", and that India found the situation untenable as it was based on the security interests of the few as opposed to the security interests of the world as a whole.³⁰ Other Indian leaders made similar remarks, stating that India's development of nuclear weapons was not focused solely on Pakistan. Rather, India was more concerned about its rivalry with China, its desire to be seen as China's equal in Asia and its aspirations to become a great power on the world stage.³¹ These statements amply conveyed Indian perceptions of China and Pakistan as enemies of India. The Indian remarks were particularly disappointing for China, as it had expressed its sincere desire to sort out differences to restore peace and tranquility in the region.

The situation demanded close collaboration between China and Pakistan. Pakistan's Foreign Secretary flew to China where he held an extensive exchange of views with the Chinese Foreign Minister, Tang Jiaxuan, on the developments, which threatened regional security.³² The

²⁷ Bhatta, "Pak-China Relations", pp. 84-5.

²⁸ Frazier, "China-Indian relations".

²⁹ Haider, "The US Policy", p. 83.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Anatol Lieven, "The Pressures on Pakistan", *Foreign Affairs*, (Washington), vol. 81, no. 1 (January/ February 2002), p. 117.

³² "China Pakistan discuss India's nuclear tests"

<<http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Lab/5926/headline130.htm>>

Sino–Pakistan synergy could be assessed from the press conference, which the Foreign Secretary addressed on his return from a successful visit:

There is a complete identity of views between Pakistan and China on the gravity of the situation, which has resulted from India's reckless actions, and China agreed that Indian nuclear explosions were a threat to Pakistan's security. He further said that China has promised not to retaliate with economic sanctions against Pakistan should it explode a nuclear device and the Chinese leadership reaffirmed that the all-weather friendship between the two countries was above any political expediencies.³³

China rendered significant political and moral support to Pakistan in helping it to arrive at a decision to conduct six underground nuclear tests on 28 and 30 May 1998. These tests re-established the strategic balance in South Asia. After the Indian tests and before those conducted by Pakistan, some countries attempted to move a Pakistan-specific resolution in the Security Council, calling for Iraq-like sanctions against any country testing a nuclear device in future. This was thwarted only by the threat of a Chinese veto. Had this move succeeded, an expert notes, "Pakistan, on testing a nuclear device, would have been subjected to sanctions altogether of a different category than those imposed on India."³⁴ Had fear of such sanctions prevented Pakistan from testing its nuclear devices, it might have fallen victim to permanent Indian pressure.

Growing Indo–US Relations

The reforms introduced by Deng Xiaoping brought phenomenal economic development, improved patterns and volumes of manufacturing and trade, personal income levels, state revenues, foreign exchange and higher levels of technology. China also started modernizing its armed forces.³⁵ Externally, this led to an enhanced Chinese role and active Chinese participation in international politics. The US perceived China's new role as a potential threat to its interest in the region. Some

(20 March 2003)

³³ *News* (Rawalpindi), 21 May 1998.

³⁴ Rehman, "Pakistan's Relations with China", p. 79.

³⁵ Michael D. Swaine and Ashley J. Tellis, *Interpreting China's Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future* (Washington: RAND, 2000), pp. 98-9.

Western writers termed it the beginning of a new “Cold War” between China and the US.³⁶ RAND scholars, in a recent study, reached similar conclusions and stated that managing the rise of China would be the most pressing challenge for the US in the twenty-first century.³⁷ This perception was the moving force behind US manoeuvring to further expand its sphere of influence in Asia; and it found in India an ideal ally, with a track record of confrontational relations with China. This shared perception revived the old Indo–US nexus, which had first emerged in the early 1960s in the backdrop of hostility between China and India, and has added a new dimension to the security issues in regional politics.³⁸ In this regard, President Clinton’s visit to South Asia in March 2000 proved a major US initiative for expanding co-operation with New Delhi across a broad spectrum of issues, including economic ties, regional stability, nuclear proliferation, security concerns and combating terrorism.³⁹

While the situation was conducive to the establishment of an Indo–US nexus, a number of Indian authors took on themselves the task of projecting China as a threat to the shared interests of India and the US in the region. Take the example of an analyst who noted: “India and the United States must ensure that Chinese assertiveness does not threaten the common values and interest of two of the world’s largest democracies”, and emphasized the importance of a substantive strategic dialogue between India and the United States.⁴⁰ He further suggested, “It is in the interests of the United States to acquire the strategic space and flexibility that may be needed to deal with a hegemonic China. New Delhi can play an important role as part of a trilateral US–Japan–India partnership.”⁴¹ He also pointed towards Chinese military modernization,

³⁶ Maqbool Ahmad Bhatti, “China and South Asia”, *Strategic Studies* (Islamabad), vol. XXIII, no. 1 (Spring 2003), p. 91.

³⁷ Swaine, “China’s Strategy”, p. 1.

³⁸ Haider, “The US Policy”, pp. 89-90.

³⁹ The US State Department, CRS Issue Brief for Congress on India-US Relations, 8 March 2002, p. 5 <<http://www.fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/9052.pdf>> (18 March 2003).

⁴⁰ Amitabh Mattoo, “Shadow of the Dragon: Indo-US Relations and China”, in Gary K. Bertsch, Seema Gahlant, and Anupam Sriastava, eds., *Engaging India: US Strategic Relations with the World’s Largest Democracy* (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 221.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

its aggressiveness on Taiwan and its intransigence over disputes in the South China Sea, involving the Spratley, Senkaku and Paracel Islands.⁴²

President George W. Bush has been influenced by the strategic importance of India for the protection of US interests to a greater extent than his predecessor, Bill Clinton. During his campaign for the presidency, Bush nominated Robert Black, one of his senior policy advisers, as his ambassador to India. After coming to power, the Bush administration significantly shifted away from Clinton's nuclear policy towards South Asia and decided not to persuade India or Pakistan to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) or to give up their nuclear programmes.⁴³ The new US policy directly supported Indian nuclear doctrine, which was in defiance of both the CTBT and the NPT. The remarks made by Richard Armitage, Deputy US Secretary of State, explained the importance that the Bush Administration attached to its relations with India. He stated that, "When it comes to our own relations with India, it took the Clinton administration seven years to get to the point that Mr. Bush has got to in two months."⁴⁴ In response, India pledged public support for America's National Missile Defense programme (NMD). New Delhi believes that NMD can help shield India from nuclear missile attacks launched by either Pakistan or China.⁴⁵ China and Pakistan unanimously rejected Indian claims and both believe that NMD might initiate a new missile race. Additionally, Pakistan has emphasized the need for Beijing to play a greater role in world politics, in order to maintain a strategic balance. The Bush administration assumes that Islamabad's stand is against the interests of the US-India partnership in the region.⁴⁶

In the pre-9/11 scenario, one writer painted the picture of Indo-US relations in these words: "It was almost like a love affair between the US and India. It was a fundamental shift and recognition of India as a

⁴² Ibid., p. 220.

⁴³ Haider, "The US Policy", p. 90.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Edward Luce, "China-Pakistan alleged nuclear ties troubled India", <<http://www.news.ft.com/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=FT.com/StoryFT/FullStory&c=StoryFT&cid=10424912491249637&p=1012571727169>> (30 January 2003).

⁴⁶ Haider, "The US Policy", p. 91.

power in South Asia. CTBT was dead and there was talk of more trade and lifting of economic sanctions . . . India responded in kind by its total support of missile defense. A presidential visit, so soon in the Bush Presidency was in making and even talk of military bases in India.”⁴⁷

The events of 9/11 changed the regional and international scenario. It became indispensable for the US to address frozen Pak–US relations in order to get the latter’s strategic support, so vital for its war against the Taliban in Afghanistan. It revived the “cupboard love” between Islamabad and Washington, which had previously lasted through the Soviet–Afghan war. While analysing the situation in the context of the uneven history of Pak–US relations, experts do not consider it a long-lasting partnership.⁴⁸ No sooner than US interests are met, it will no longer treat Pakistan in the same preferential way.⁴⁹

India also responded to the new developments in a befitting manner. Immediately after 11 September 2001, it offered to the United States all possible co-operation and the use of its bases for the war on terrorism.⁵⁰ Soon after, in January 2002, the two countries established a Joint Working Group on counter-terrorism.⁵¹ An Indian newspaper reported that one of the recent issues of concern for China was the coming together of India and the US for the patrolling of the Malacca Straits (due to which the proposed visit of the Indian Army Chief to China was delayed).⁵² An Indian expert predicted that: ‘NATO, the United States and India will be on one side and China and rogue states including Pakistan, Burma and North Korea on the other side’.⁵³ China thoroughly understood the prevalent circumstances in which Pakistan

⁴⁷ Raj Bothra, ed., “India-US Relations in the Aftermath of September 11, 2001” <<http://www.ccsindia.org/indous.pdf>>, p. 2 (18 March 2003).

⁴⁸ Haider, “The US Policy”, p. 89.

⁴⁹ The US has started treating Pakistan in the same manner. In a recent example, Washington imposed sanctions on Pakistan’s Kahuta Research Laboratories (KRL) for a period of two years. Pakistan had to face the same fate soon after the Afghan War. See “KRL curbs”, *Frontier Post* (Peshawar), 31 March 2003.

⁵⁰ Bothra, “India-US Relations”, pp. 3-4.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁵² “Army Chief’s China visit doubtful”, *Tribune* (Chandigarh), 24 August 2002.

⁵³ Haider, “The US Policy”, p. 90.

decided to join the international coalition against terrorism and it continued to abide by its traditional friendship with Pakistan.⁵⁴

As a result of their shared perceptions, Indo–US co-operation has expanded in many ways. The latter has become one of the largest trade partners of the former. Bilateral trade in 2001 exceeded US \$ 14 billion—double the amount of a decade ago. America is also the largest cumulative investor in India, both in direct and foreign investment. Approximately 1000 US companies are currently doing business in India—a more than 14-fold increase over 1991. 500 companies now meet their software needs from Indian companies.⁵⁵ The Bush Administration believes that, as China’s power grows, a strong India will provide stability and balance in the region.

In the shadows of Indo–US collaboration, Israel is also expanding defence co-operation with India, adding a new security dimension to Pakistan’s defence policy. Recently, India and Israel have engaged in negotiations for the sale of Arrow-2 anti-tactical ballistic missile. Negotiations are also underway regarding the proposed sale of three Phalcon Airborne Early-Warning (AEW) aircraft for approximately \$ 1 billion. India has already taken delivery of the Israeli Green Pine radar for installation at a ground site for use as an early warning platform. Israel has reportedly also sold the Harpy Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) to India.⁵⁶ Naturally, India’s increasing co-operation with Israel and the US is a matter of deep concern for Pakistan.

China on the Kashmir Issue

Kashmir has vital importance for Pakistan. Its unresolved status and continued occupation by Indian forces are the root cause of conflict in South Asia. Its strategic location makes Kashmir an important part of Pakistan’s foreign policy. In the initial phase of the conflict, China took a non-partisan stance on the issue, as it followed a policy of Afro-Asian

⁵⁴ “Pakistan stand against terror is clear: China”, *Frontier Post* (Peshawar), 2 August 2002.

⁵⁵ Haider, “The US Policy”, p. 91.

⁵⁶ Federation of American Scientists (FAS), “Unclassified Report to Congress on the Acquisition of Technology Relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction and Advanced Conventional Munitions 1 July through 31 December 2001” <www.fas.org/irp/threat/bian_jan_2003.htm#9> (6 March 2003).

unity. Since both the contenders, i.e., Pakistan and India, were Asian states and neighbours, Beijing emphasized the need for a bilateral solution of the problem and advised both countries to avoid UN and Western involvement.⁵⁷ It maintained this policy even when Pakistan joined the Western defence pacts. As a result of the improvement in Sino–Pakistan relations, China shifted its stance on Kashmir and voiced support for the right of self-determination of the Kashmir people. The Sino–Pakistan Border Agreement was the first occasion where China raised its deep concern at the unresolved status of the Kashmir problem. In the joint communiqué issued on that occasion, China expressed its appreciation of Pakistan’s stand in seeking a peaceful settlement of the issue.⁵⁸ From 1964 to 1980, China sided with Pakistan in the United Nations voting and resolutely pressed for the right of self-determination for the Kashmiri people. However, in the post-Mao period, with the normalization of Sino–Indian relations, China, without any caveat, moderated its support for the Pakistani point of view on the issue.⁵⁹ Since then, China has been advocating a peaceful solution of the Kashmir issue through bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan.

During his visit to Pakistan in May 2001, the Chinese Prime Minister stated, “Kashmir is a problem left over by history. China appreciates and agrees with the position taken by Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir. We will try our utmost and spare no efforts for peaceful resolution of this issue.”⁶⁰ The change in its stance can be understood in the context of China’s post-Mao policies of forsaking the path of leftist revolution in the interest of greater economic development.

A number of observers and diplomats in Pakistan are of the view that, despite a shift in China’s Kashmir policy, it is still inclined towards Pakistan. Their opinion is based on the fact that Kashmir remains on the agenda of most bilateral talks between the two countries. For instance,

⁵⁷ Hasan Askari Rizvi, “China and Kashmir”, in K. F. Yusuf, ed., *Perspective on Kashmir: Pakistan Forum*, Series no. 4 (Islamabad: Pakistan Forum, 1994), p. 215.

⁵⁸ K. Arif, ed., *China Pakistan Relations: Documents 1947-1980* (Lahore: Vanguard, 1984), p. 39.

⁵⁹ Panel discussion on China-India-Pakistan relations <<http://www.newsindia-times.com/2002/04/19/intl-panel.html>> (30 January 2003).

⁶⁰ Pakistan’s Foreign Policy: Quarterly Survey: April-June 2001”, *Pakistan Horizon*, (Karachi), vol. 54, no. 3 (July 2001), p. 7-8.

during the recent visit of Pakistani Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali to Beijing, Chinese officials once again appreciated Pakistan's efforts for the peaceful solution of the dispute.⁶¹

China and the Kargil Conflict

China's stand on the Kargil conflict—the first serious encounter between the military forces of nuclear-armed India and Pakistan, which started in mid-1999—is termed a neutral posture.⁶² Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif went to Beijing in June 1999 at the height of the crisis and discussed the matter with his Chinese counterpart, Zhu Rongji, as well as with President Jiang Zemin and Foreign Minister Li Peng. The official statement issued by the Chinese Foreign Ministry urged both India and Pakistan to negotiate a settlement of the issue.⁶³ In a departure from its usual tilt towards Pakistan, an analyst commented, Beijing not only followed a scrupulously neutral path but also played the role of informal mediator by hosting separate visits of the Pakistani and Indian Foreign Ministers. The official Chinese statement neither blamed Pakistan for the crisis—a view projected by India and held by a number of other countries—nor did it support Pakistan, as many in Pakistan had expected. This neutrality was perceived by India as a significant change in China's stance on the Kashmir issue and its recognition of India as a big power. An Indian scholar commented, 'All indications are that China regards India as a major power and a potentially important player in a putative multi-polar world.'⁶⁴ In spite of the neutral stance taken by the Chinese government, the coverage of the Kargil conflict in the Chinese media was generally in favour of Pakistan. The Chinese daily, *The Liberation Army*,

⁶¹ "Pakistan, China share identical views: Jamali", *Dawn* (Islamabad), 25 March 2003.

⁶² Michael Yahuda, "China and the Kashmir crisis"

http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/world/sotuh_asia/2020788.stm (6 February 2003).

⁶³ Anil Joseph Chandy, "India, China and Pakistan", in Kanti Bajpai and Amitabh Mattoo, eds., *Peacock and the Dragon: India-China Relations in the 21st Century* (New Delhi: Har-Anand, 2000), pp. 328-9.

⁶⁴ To understand Indian perception of China's Kashmir policy see Swaran Singh, "The Kargil Conflict: Why and How of China's Neutrality", *Strategic Analysis* (New Delhi), vol. 23, no. 7 (October 1999), pp. 1083-94.

was the most strident in lashing out at India: it termed India's Kargil operation an act of expansionism.⁶⁵

China and the Indo-Pakistan Stand-off

The events of 9/11 changed the regional security environment. Pakistan took the difficult decision of supporting the US-led coalition in its war against terrorism. This revived Pakistan's geo-strategic importance in international politics, which India found unpalatable. It employed every method to isolate or at least marginalize Pakistan's role in international politics.

As part of its marginalization strategy, India attempted to link the freedom struggle in Kashmir to terrorism, employing the term "cross-border terrorism", allegedly sponsored by Pakistan. It also stepped up its policy of placing the blame for all untoward incidents within its borders on Pakistan-based extremist groups.⁶⁶ After failing to discredit Pakistan by these tactics, India staged two episodes to establish Pakistan's link with the terrorists. The first was a bomb blast in Srinagar on 30 September 2001; the second a terrorist attack on the Indian parliament on 13 December 2001.⁶⁷ Additionally, an attack on the US Cultural Centre in Delhi and a bomb blast in an army camp in Jammu on 14 May 2002 were also used in attempts to tarnish Pakistan's international image.

The attack on the Indian Parliament—a strange incident in which no one was hurt, and not even the building damaged—was especially blown out of proportion and, in January 2002, was used as a pretext for India to move its armed forces into a confrontational position along the entire stretch of the Indo-Pakistan border and the Line of Control (LOC) in the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir. It reportedly kept its Air Force and Navy on high alert.⁶⁸ More than 800,000 troops remained eyeball-to-eyeball for several months. This massive mobilization of

⁶⁵ Raviprasad Narayanan, "Kargil and Chinese Media", section CR, Article no 275, 24 October 1999 <<http://www.ipcs.org/issues/articles/275-cr-ravi.html>> (13 February 2003).

⁶⁶ Ikram Ali Ghumro, "Evaluation of India-Pakistan Military Stand-off", *National Development and Security* (Rawalpindi), vol. XI, no. 1, serial no. 41 (Autumn 2002), p. 91.

⁶⁷ Fazal-ur-Rehman, "Pakistan China Relations in a Changing Geo-strategic Environment", *Strategic Studies* (Islamabad), vol. XXII, no. 2 (Summer 2002), p. 37. p. 37.

troops and India's jingoistic attitude aggravated the security environment in the region, bringing the two nuclear rivals to the brink of war.⁶⁹ In this critical situation, Pakistan consulted with its close ally, China. President Musharraf made an overnight stay in Beijing on 3 January 2002, en-route to Kathmandu; he met the Chinese Premier, Zhu Rongji and the two leaders held in-depth discussions on the situation in Afghanistan and the Indian military build-up on Pakistan's border.⁷⁰

China adopted multi-channel diplomacy to defuse the tension in South Asia and stressed the need for the international community to take a more balanced and unprejudiced approach to the problem. When the situation reached critical level, China expanded its diplomatic efforts and discussed the situation with other leading powers, including the US and Britain.⁷¹ It also raised the issue at the summit of Central Asian leaders in Russia's northern city of St Petersburg and expressed its deep concern at the highly volatile situation in the subcontinent. A spokesperson of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Kuong Qihuan, stated on the occasion: "This question must be settled through a direct dialogue between India and Pakistan," and declared that, "China and Pakistan have friendly relations, and China and India have friendly relations too." He added that, "China has always called on these countries to exert restraint and solve their conflict through peaceful means."⁷² At the height of the tension, a section of the press in Pakistan and India reported that Chinese President Jiang Zemin, during a meeting with a US delegation, stated that his country would not side with Pakistan in case of a war with India. However, Beijing denied the report and stated that Jiang Zemin had only expressed his hope that Pakistan and India would settle their dispute and take steps to reduce the tension.⁷³ Chinese neutrality during the India-Pakistan

⁶⁸ Ghumro, "India-Pakistan Military Stand-off", pp. 91-2.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁷⁰ *Dawn* (Islamabad), 4 January 2003.

⁷¹ "China asks US to encourage direct Pak-India negotiations", *News* (Islamabad), 29 May 2002.

⁷² "China calls for end to Pakistan-India stand-off", *Dawn* (Islamabad), 9 June 2002. <<http://www.dawn.com/2002/06/09/top6.htm>> (30 January 2003).

⁷³ "Chinese FO denies report", *Nation* (Islamabad), 31 May 2002.

military stand-off gave added flexibility to Chinese diplomacy in helping to avert a war in South Asia.⁷⁴

Changing Pattern of Sino–Pakistan Relations

Despite the close understanding between the two countries of each other's points of view and their mutual stand on various regional and international issues, the pattern of Sino–Pakistan relations has been undergoing changes since the post-Mao period, when China took the initiative in improving its relations with India. As a result of this rapprochement, the then Indian Foreign Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee visited China in 1979: the visit proved a major step towards normalization of ties between the two countries. It was at this point that China changed its stance on the Kashmir issue, stopped supporting Pakistan in its dispute with India and emphasized the need for the peaceful solution of all outstanding issues between the two archrivals.

China's neutrality was amply evident during the Kargil crisis and the Indo-Pakistan stand-off in 2002. Several scholars noted the shift in China's policy and termed it an important development in the triangular relations.⁷⁵ When the troops of the two countries were positioned on their borders, China advised Pakistan and India to defuse tensions, remarking, "China is a friend of both Pakistan and India."⁷⁶ This phrasing—'friend of both'—was new in Beijing's position on Indo-Pakistan conflicts. It signified that India was no longer a common enemy, and that Beijing and Islamabad now had different perceptions of New Delhi. Sultan M. Khan, formerly Pakistan's ambassador to China, commented on the changing pattern of Sino–Pakistan relations in the following words:

There is however a very different China now on the international scene. It has to take positions on a number of issues. With the disappearance of the Soviet Union, the economic and political confusion can be global. The emergence of the US as the sole superpower, the economic and political confusion in Russia, the future of Taiwan, world trade and other issues on that scale, now engage China's main interests.

⁷⁴ Rehman, "Pakistan China Relations", p. 2.

⁷⁵ Anil Joseph Chandy, "India, China and Pakistan", p. 298.

⁷⁶ "Beijing working for Pakistan, India peace", *Dawn* (Islamabad), 31 August 2002.

Regionally, China will continue to support Pakistan but much depends upon how Pakistan itself manages to come out of its current problems. The old intimacy and warmth, which once were the hallmark of Sino–Pakistan friendship, is a part of history.⁷⁷

Another scholar with a similar point of view stated that the post-Mao Chinese policy towards Pakistan had changed considerably and the warmth that prevailed during the 1960s and the 1970s has started to recede.⁷⁸ Beijing had traditionally supported Pakistan against India, but in the post-Cold War era, the Chinese have distanced themselves somewhat from Pakistan in order to cultivate better relations with India, states a UK-based scholar.⁷⁹

Correlation between Sino–Pak and Sino–Indian Ties

In the early 1950s, China and India were closer to each other than were China and Pakistan. This pattern of relations existed till the late 1950s when palpable differences emerged in Sino–Indian relations, leading to severe border clashes in November 1962. China’s relations with the USA and the USSR were already hostile; the addition of India as a new enemy increased its trepidation, as Beijing felt more isolated and encircled.⁸⁰ In these conditions, both China and Pakistan realized the need for close co-operation to protect their mutual relations in the region. Negotiations to demarcate the undefined Sino–Pakistan boundary were progressing very slowly, mainly due to China’s cautious attitude; these were accelerated after the Sino–India border conflict and, soon after, the two countries signed a border agreement.⁸¹ Thus, along with the Indian threat faced by both China and Pakistan, the other factors like China’s fear of isolation and encirclement and Pakistan’s disappointment in its Western allies, equally played a role in bringing the two countries closer to each other.

Links between the two countries remained strong throughout the Mao era. The post-Mao leadership, as mentioned earlier, embarked upon

⁷⁷ Sultan Mohammad Khan, “The Warmth Cools”

<<http://www.dawn.com/events/century/for3.htm>> (10 January 2003).

⁷⁸ Ayesha Siddiqi Agha, *Pakistan’s Arms Procurement and Military Buildup, 1979-1999: In Search of a Policy* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), p. 105.

⁷⁹ Yahuda, “China and the Kashmir crisis”.

⁸⁰ Ayub Khan, “Friends Not Master”, p. 139.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

drastic changes in its internal and external policies, aiming at comprehensive economic development and diversification in the realm of foreign policy. China opened up towards the West and concentrated on normalizing its relations with all countries, including India, and the two countries reached a considerable level of understanding. After Vajpayee's visit to Beijing in 1979, China took a modified stand on the Kashmir issue, exhorting Pakistan and India to resolve the problem peacefully. Some analysts link China's moderated stance on the Kashmir issue to the thaw in Sino-Indian relations and argue that the improvement in Beijing-New Delhi ties could affect the traditional friendship between China and Pakistan. To further strengthen their argument, they cite China's neutrality during the Kargil crisis and the Indo-Pakistan stand-off in mid-2002. Certain political circles in Pakistan were—rather optimistically—expecting China to intervene directly in support of Pakistan. However, this author reaches a different conclusion and does not find the Indian factor responsible for the change in China's policy. The following arguments are presented in support of a different viewpoint:

- The normalization of Sino-Indian relations was the sequel of a restructuring of China's policy that started under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping and was not an independent move towards India. Beijing improved its relations not just with New Delhi but also with a number of other countries, the most important among them being the United States.⁸²
- The reduction in Beijing's support is not confined to the freedom struggle in Kashmir. China's post-Mao policy has considerably reduced support to revolutionary movements around the world.⁸³
- China has uncoupled its relations with Pakistan from those with India. As one writer aptly comments: "Better relations between India and China have not led to a weakening of the

⁸² Sino-US relations were established on 1 January 1979. See Qin Shi, comp., *China 1998* (Beijing: New Stars Publications, 1998), p. 63.

⁸³ To cite another example, China terminated its support to the revolutionaries of the Communist Party of Burma. See John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), pp. 261-6.

Sino–Pakistan entente. China has been fairly effective in pursuing these two relationships simultaneously.” China therefore encourages moves for improvement in the relationship between Pakistan and India, this being a new element in its policy towards the subcontinent.⁸⁴

- In the contemporary international context, it is dangerously unwise if Pakistan expects China’s direct involvement in any dispute that might erupt between Pakistan and India, particularly when Islamabad partly responsible for such “misadventures”.

A number of complicated issues bedevil relations between China and India: the boundary dispute, the Tibetan issue and continued Indian hospitality to the Dalai Lama, and the rivalry between the two countries for regional supremacy. These are problems that cannot be resolved in a short span of time. However, even if Sino–Indian relations improve, Sino–Pakistan relations will continue to flourish. First, China has reiterated, time and again, that the improvement in its ties with India would not in any way affect the traditional friendship between China and Pakistan, a friendship that has withstood the vicissitudes and vagaries of time. Second, China will be in a better position to exhort India to moderate its policy towards Pakistan. Third, the non-existence of any political or territorial dispute and the strict adherence by China and Pakistan to the five principles of peaceful coexistence has cemented their friendship.⁸⁵ Fourth, besides many other factors contributing towards the sustainability in their relations, the identical perception of the obtaining regional and international milieu is an important binding force between them. Fifth, there has been continuity in the military structures of the two countries; which has a direct bearing on the continuity in their bilateral relations.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 240.

⁸⁵ Mr Lin Shanglin, Consul General of the People’s Republic of China, stated that both countries adhered to the five principles of mutual respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence. It is due to the observance of these five principles that both sides have remained long-term friends. See Lin Shanglin, “Pakistan-China Relations”, *Pakistan Horizon* (Karachi), vol. 54, no. 3 (July 2001), p. 14.

⁸⁶ Rehman, “Pakistan’s Relations with China”, pp. 59-60.

It seems logical to conclude that the India factor might well have played a role in strengthening Sino–Pakistan relations, though other forces were also of immense importance in bringing the two countries closer to each other. In future as well, their relations are likely to continue to progress, independent of the Indian factor. And that is the reason why, despite their divergent socio-political systems and ideologies, Sino–Pakistan relations are considered a “unique example in modern history”.

Future Scenario

In the light of this study, the likely policy behaviour of the triangular countries in relation to one another can be determined to a certain degree. It is expected that India’s China policy will be based on contradictions. India might engage with China and resume negotiations on the border issue as well as in the Joint Working Group (JWG). Economic co-operation and the exchange of official visits between Beijing and New Delhi are likely to increase. India will probably ask China to demonstrate its sincerity by ending its support to Pakistan in the field of defence technology, particularly nuclear and missile technology.⁸⁷ India might also press China to endorse Indian occupation of Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. Parallel to these moves for thawing relations, India will continue to project China as an undesirable emerging power, one that poses a serious threat to its security, thus seeking justification for advancing its nuclear and missile programmes. This could trigger an arms race in the region as Pakistan naturally feels insecure if it lags behind India in arms procurement. India is well aware of the US obsession with the great-power potential of China, and it could cajole Washington into a strategic understanding to counter the Chinese threat. In this context, Indo–US co-operation is likely to expand further, while the Indo–Israel nexus has already acquired considerable strength.⁸⁸

India’s Pakistan policy will continue to be based on threats and intimidation. New Delhi may even resort to military harassment of Pakistan by deploying its armed forces on its border with Pakistan, as it did in 2002. To cover its atrocities in Occupied Kashmir, India will

⁸⁷ Ahmed Ijaz Malik, “Indo-Russian Defence Cooperation: Implications for South Asian Region”, *IPRI Journal* (Islamabad), vol. III, no. 1 (Winter 2003), p. 177.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

continue to dub Pakistan the hub of terrorist activities and to call on the international community to pressurize Pakistan to stop “cross-border terrorism”—a term India has coined. The purpose behind this malicious propaganda would be to suppress the Kashmiri struggle. This volatile situation might prove unfavourable to the Chinese desire to maintain peace to boost the economic activities.

The traditional friendship between China and Pakistan will probably continue to exist in the same spirit seen now. Bilateral economic co-operation and cultural exchanges are likely to increase. China, under heavy US pressure, may reduce its assistance to Pakistan in key areas, such as development of its missile and nuclear programmes.⁸⁹ Beijing will most likely pursue its policy of peaceful co-existence, reduction of tension, and peaceful resolutions of all disputes, including the thorny issue of Kashmir, for greater economic co-operation. Chinese intervention in any confrontation between India and Pakistan is, therefore, unlikely.

It also seems reasonable to conclude that in its relations with China, Pakistan is living in the past, cherishing memories of the 1960s and 1970s, whereas the regional and international environment has changed drastically. It must reorient its China policy in the light of Beijing’s new outlook on world affairs, if it wishes to maintain the traditional warmth, which has been the hallmark of Sino–Pakistan relations. Both countries should further the spirit of seeking common ground, while shelving differences and promoting frankness and mutual trust. There are several areas where Pakistan can avail Chinese knowledge and expertise, such as agriculture, infrastructure development and information technology. Both countries should also work towards expansion of mutual trade and cementing ties based on people-to-people contact.⁹⁰ ■

⁸⁹ From 1997 onwards, China, under US pressure, has been consistently trying to distance itself from Pakistan’s weapons programme. See Chandy, “India, China and Pakistan”, pp. 316-26.

⁹⁰ Lin Shanglin, “Pakistan-China Relations”, p. 14.

PAKISTAN AND INDIA: CAN NRRCS HELP TO STRENGTHEN THE PEACE?

Rafi uz Zaman Khan*

Pakistan and India are currently experiencing the worst phase of their relations since 1971. While their armed forces have recently demobilized, none of the underlying disputes have been resolved and the risk of adventurism remains. Any conflict has the potential to escalate into a full-scale war. Following the nuclearization of South Asia, the potential for renewed escalation between these two traditional enemies has assumed horrific significance. Conflict remains unpredictable and may not necessarily remain conventional. The concepts of “limited war” and “preemption” are fraught with danger and may no longer be applicable in South Asia. General Musharraf has said, “Let there be no doubt that the doctrine of pre-emptive strike does not apply in the context of India and Pakistan—at least not in the foreseeable future.”³⁵⁸ Admiral L. Ramdas, former Indian Chief of Naval Staff, and Dr Arjun Makhijani, a US-based nuclear scientist, have argued that “by going nuclear India has lost its conventional superiority over Pakistan.” Consequently, both Ramdas and Makhijani have “advocated a conventional and nuclear ceasefire plan for the two countries.”³⁵⁹ A number of military analysts have thus ruled out the option of a conventional war between India and Pakistan as a method of conflict resolution.³⁶⁰

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³⁵⁸ “Musharraf says India-Pakistan conflict unlike U.S.-Iraq”, Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 19 September 2002.

² “India Loses Conventional Superiority”, *Dawn*, 18 September 2002, <http://www.dawn.com/2002/09/18/top13.htm>.

³⁶⁰ Indian plans to attack Pakistan’s nuclear facilities were thrice deterred/dropped in the 1980s and in the early 1990s due to recessed deterrence. Indira Gandhi’s last plan was dropped after her assassination and Rajiv Gandhi eventually signed an

Since the partition of the subcontinent, the Kashmir dispute has been the *raison d'être* for hostility between India and Pakistan. The two countries have fought three conventional wars and one limited war in the past, and the level of animosity remains high. Numerous bilateral efforts, in the form of various confidence-building measures (CBMs) and nuclear risk reduction measures (NRRMs), have failed to bring lasting peace to South Asia. These measures, in addition to lacking certain key elements, have not addressed future conflict resolution or avoidance, nor have they dealt with the prime irritants. Kashmir is considered to be the “nuclear flashpoint” in the region. Following the nuclearization of South Asia, President Clinton described Kashmir as “the most dangerous place in the world.”³⁶¹ India and Pakistan continue to teeter on the precipice of war.

In the subcontinent, CBMs and NRRMs have failed due to a lack of trust and of strong political will, as well as the marked absence of a dispute resolution mechanism and the means to enforce it. The possession³⁶² of nuclear weapons makes a resolution by force of the Kashmir dispute unlikely. As long as Pakistan can “flatten” India five times over, does it matter if India can “flatten” Pakistan twenty times?³⁶³ The longer India and Pakistan remain estranged, the more distrust builds and the more both sides expect the worst from each other. Conditions for stable deterrence are absent, and an accident or miscalculation during a crisis has become increasingly possible. As both nations struggle to adapt to the “stability-instability paradox”, should they be left alone at the nuclear brink to deliberately or inadvertently let out the nuclear genie, causing both nations to suffer the consequences?

agreement not to attack on nuclear facilities. Since Brasstacks, and Pakistani implicit threats for first use, there were no attempts for a conventional war. The Kargil Conflict was also deliberately confined to that sector only due to the “Nuclear Deterrent”. Please see *From Surprise to Reckoning: The Kargil Review Committee Report* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2000), pp. 178-212.

³⁶¹ Michael Krepon and Chris Gagné (eds), *The Stability-Instability Paradox: Nuclear Weapons and Brinkmanship in South Asia* (Washington, DC: The Henry L. Stimson Center, June 2001), p. 41.

³⁶² This line of analysis was presented in a *Times of India* opinion reprinted in, “India can no longer beat Pakistan in War”, *The Nation* (Islamabad) (June 4, 1998).

³⁶³ See Krepon and Gagné (eds.), *The Stability-Instability Paradox*.

CBMs and NRRMs assume great significance in such situations, but in the aftermath of South Asian nuclearization, and given the pathetic history of past CBMs in South Asia, a greater need exists for a concrete arrangement for building trust and preventing misperceptions. Besides introducing measures to resolve the Kashmir issue politically—without which no confidence-building or nuclear-risk reduction measures are likely to succeed—it is imperative for the two nations to develop a renewed mechanism to consolidate and expand the current CBMs and NRRMs for uninterrupted and lasting implementation. The establishment of Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers (NRRCs) in India and Pakistan might help to realize these objectives.

NRRCs, serving as central message centers for all CBM/NRRM notifications, would be effective, exclusive, and dedicated technical means of official communication for the rapid exchange of accurate and factual information. This could prevent unintended signals from leading to a crisis or inadvertent nuclear escalation. The centers could also facilitate the identification, negotiation and implementation of additional institutional and procedural arrangements, as well as technical measures intended to reduce nuclear risks. The NRRCs could thus provide technical experts with the means for instantaneous communication in the event of a tragic incident or unusual event. While taking concurrent measures for conflict resolution at the political level to reassure the people, both countries can begin immediately to negotiate the establishment of NRRCs, symbolizing a change of heart within the two governments. The verification and implementation mechanisms built into the NRRCs could help not only to consolidate measures for the implementation of existing CBMs and NRRMs, but also to build the trust and confidence that is essential to strengthening peace. Functioning under an already negotiated, preformatted system to exchange notifications, the NRRCs would not involve any kind of voice communication for crisis resolution, as that might transmit misleading or unintended signals. Also, the NRRCs would never function as a substitute for the political and diplomatic means of communication between the two countries.

The US has played a key role in introducing CBMs between the two countries since the administrations of Ronald Reagan and George

H. W. Bush.³⁶⁴ Given its active role in crisis prevention in South Asia, the US is still in a position to persuade the two leaderships to establish trust and to stabilize their relations, abandoning nuclear brinkmanship in the interest of their citizens and all of humanity.

In addressing the question of establishing NRRCs between Pakistan and India, one first needs to describe the existing CBMs and NRRMs. Then one needs to ask why these centers are needed, and why NRRCs would work when other CBMs have failed. Would NRRCs have any relation to the Kashmir issue? If so, how much progress on a settlement is required before NRRCs can be established? Or could the two occur simultaneously? Would the establishment of NRRCs help prevent dangerous military activities? Finally, are the NRRCs useful in preventing unintended escalation?

Another important issue relates to the US-Soviet Cold War experience with and arguments for NRRMs and NRRCs. Is that narrative still valid and is it relevant to the subcontinent's security paradigms? Further, what would be the goals of Indian and Pakistani NRRCs and how would they differ from their Cold War counterparts? Successful functioning of the NRRCs requires trust in the given communications. How can trust and confidence be established in this instance?

What are the merits and demerits of establishing NRRCs for South Asia and what could be the likely apprehensions of the citizens? Would NRRCs have a role in crisis management along with the existing political and diplomatic channels of communications? What purpose would the NRRCs not serve? Would they help to improve the poor record of CBM implementation? Given the dissolution of previous Indo-Pak security agreements, how can NRRCs be successfully operationalized? Would the NRRC become the central message center for all the CBMs and NRRMs notifications to ensure their implementation? How would Pakistan's NRRC function and be organized? Where would it be located? This paper is an attempt to examine and address these questions.

³⁶⁴ Michael Krepon and Mishi Faruqee (eds.), *Conflict Prevention and Confidence Building Measures in South Asia: The 1990 Crisis*, Occasional Paper No.17 (Washington, DC: The Henry L. Stimson Center, April 1994), pp. 11-12.

What are CBMs?

CBMs can be broadly divided into three categories: political, military, and socio-economic. In the military realm they have been subdivided into conventional and nuclear CBMs. The latter are commonly known as NRRMs. Following the nuclearization of South Asia, NRRMs have attained greater significance. It is necessary here to define CBMs before making any further deliberations on their evolution and effectiveness in South Asia. According to Johan Jørgen Holst:

Confidence-building measures (CBMs) may be defined as arrangements designed to enhance assurance of mind and belief in the trust-worthiness of states—confidence is the product of much broader patterns of relations than those which relate to military security. In fact, the latter have to be woven into a complex texture of economic, cultural, technical and social relationships.³⁶⁵

The concept of CBMs is generally believed to have originated in the 1970s in the backdrop of East-West confrontation. There is, however, sufficient evidence that the concept and process had already existed in various parts of the world, albeit undefined. The most comprehensive, elaborate, and successful model of CBMs to date is found in the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 that was essentially designed for conventional armed forces in Europe.³⁶⁶ The introduction of transparency and verification elements increased the efficiency of CBMs. CBM terminology was first applied to India-Pakistan relations after the 1987 Brasstacks crisis. The process of CBMs, however, had already existed between India and Pakistan. The 1949 Karachi Agreement, the Liaquat-Nehru Pact of 1950, the India-Pakistan Border Ground Rules Agreement of 1960, the Indus Water Treaty of 1962, the Tashkent Agreement of 1966, and the Simla Agreement of 1972 are cases in point.³⁶⁷

The principal CBMs of the last 40 years are:

- Hotline between Military Operation Directorates (1965);

³⁶⁵ Holst quoted in Naeem Ahmad Salik, “CBMs – Past, Present and Future,” *Pakistan Defense Review* (Winter 1998), p. 70.

³⁶⁶ Michael Krepon, Michael Newbill, Khurshid Khoja, and Jenny S. Drezin (eds), *Global Confidence Building, New Tools for Troubled Regions* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1999), pp. 277–284.

³⁶⁷ Naeem Ahmad Salik, “CBMs – Past, Present, and Future,” p.69.

- Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities (1988, ratified and implemented in 1992);
- Hotline between Prime Ministers Benazir Bhutto and Rajiv Gandhi (1989);
- Agreement on Advance Notice of Military Exercises, Maneuvers and Troops Movements (1991);
- Measures to Prevent Air Space Violations and to Permit Over Flights and Landing by Military Aircrafts (1992).³⁶⁸

In the Lahore Declaration, the two prime ministers recognized that the nuclear reality of the subcontinent gives each nation the responsibility to avoid conflict. The document indicates that they were convinced of the need for mutually agreed CBMs to improve the security environment.³⁶⁹ Seven of the eight points in the MOU signed by the foreign secretaries of India and Pakistan on that occasion concerned nuclear risk reduction, an issue that was being addressed for the first time.³⁷⁰ An item alluding to the prevention of incidents at sea has added significance since India has announced intentions to nuclearize its navy³⁷¹ and Pakistan has established the Naval Strategic Force Command.³⁷²

Why Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers Are Needed

Tension and animosity between India and Pakistan has been increased by lack of trust, perpetual suspicion of each other's actions, non-acceptance of co-existence from the day of Partition and, more importantly, a reluctance to solve and deliberate attempts to postpone a resolution of the Kashmir issue. The lack of compliance or

³⁶⁸ Swati Pandey and Teresita C. Schaffer, "Building Confidence in India and Pakistan," *South Asia Monitor*, No. 49 (Washington, D.C: Center for Strategic and International Studies), p. 1. See Annexes A and B for additional CBMs.

³⁶⁹ Chris Gagné, "Nuclear Risk Reduction in South Asia; Building on Common Ground", in Krepon and Gagne, *The Stability-Instability Paradox*, p. 51.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 52. The Lahore MOU was signed on February 21, 1999. For the text of the agreement see Annex B.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

³⁷² *Ibid.*; Naeem Ahmad Salik, "False Warnings and Accidents" in CISAC Workshop on *Preventing Nuclear War in South Asia* held at Bangkok (August 4–7, 2001), p.73.

implementation mechanisms, the lack of transparency and verification measures, and the lack of dispute resolution forums are the key reasons why the existing CBMs and NRRMs have failed to achieve the desired objectives. Michael Krepon has observed that India and Pakistan have used CBMs more as “competition building measures than as confidence building measures.”³⁷³ He continued, “Most of the CBM proposals have instead been designed to capture the political high ground, not to solve problems.”³⁷⁴ He points out another important reason “the juridical status of CBMs as ‘politically binding’—rather than legally binding—documents helps afford India and Pakistan the latitude to skirt proper implementation.”³⁷⁵

During the critical periods of heightened tensions between India and Pakistan, CBMs have been either ineffective or absent. In fact, Pakistan and India have not yet moved beyond the first stage of the CBM process. Michael Krepon describes the three stages of the CBM process as “conflict avoidance measures, confidence building measures and strengthening the peace.”³⁷⁶ Dr. Maleeha Lodhi notes that:

... CBMs cannot stand-alone and can only work in a broader context. The presumption of priority for CBMs is that underlying problems are not resolvable, and therefore, by freezing the status quo, CBMs can somehow reduce tension and avert the danger of war.... Meant to be a step towards conflict resolution, they can often be used as a substitute. They have frequently been pursued in South Asia under external prodding or pressure and at the expense of problem solving.³⁷⁷

The twin processes of confidence building and nuclear risk reduction between India and Pakistan stopped soon after the Lahore MOU, which did not explicitly address the core issue of Kashmir. In the drive to postpone the resolution of conflicts, we denied our people reassurance. Pakistanis perceive that Indian ideological chauvinism and

³⁷³ Krepon, et al., *Global Confidence Building*, p.178.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

³⁷⁶ Michael Krepon, “Conflict Avoidance, Confidence Building and Peacemaking” in *A Handbook of Confidence Building Measures for Regional Security*, 3rd Ed. (Washington, DC: The Henry L. Stimson Center, 1998), p. 2.

³⁷⁷ Dr Maleeha Lodhi, “Nuclear Risk Reduction and Conflict Resolution in South Asia,” *The News* (Islamabad), November 28, 1998.

jingoistic behavior in Kashmir, and its coercive strategy of compellence has furthered mistrust and misperceptions by weaker neighbors.³⁷⁸ President Pervez Musharraf has very explicitly conveyed to India, “We [in Pakistan] can not [sic] be frightened into compromising on our principled position on Kashmir.”³⁷⁹ Bilateral initiatives in the absence of conflict resolution are no longer workable in South Asia. CBMs and NRRMs have, thus far, failed to bridge the gap of mistrust and animosity between the two countries and therefore have a poor record in the subcontinent. The remedy for both India and Pakistan is to follow a principle of sovereign equality and mutual respect during their interstate relations, to abandon belligerency, and also to follow a civilized method to resolve differences through political means. Pakistan has already proffered a genuine, sustained, and purpose-oriented dialogue in this regard several times. Pakistan has offered India a “triad of peace”: “Resolution of disputes, a no-war pact, mutual reduction of forces and de-nuclearization and economic cooperation.”³⁸⁰ Almost every world leader today, including Mr. Vajpayee himself, concedes, “there seems to be no rational alternative to dialogue.”³⁸¹

In any prospective dialogue, the establishment of NRRCs could be considered. They are genuinely needed, especially to alleviate the environment of mistrust and misperception between the two nations. Functioning as a central message center for all CBM and NRRM notifications, they would help to serve as an effective, exclusive and a dedicated technical means of official communications for rapid and accurate exchange of factual information. Besides serving as a measure

³⁷⁸ For more on compellence, see Gaurav Kampani, “India’s Compellence Strategy: Calling Pakistan’s Nuclear Bluff over Kashmir” (Monterey, CA: Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, June 10, 2002).

³⁷⁹ President Pervez Musharraf, “President of Pakistan’s Address to the United Nations General Assembly on 12-09-2002,” Internet: http://www.infopak.gov.pk/President_Addresses/president-UNGA.htm.

³⁸⁰ “India Piling Up Arms,” *Dawn* (September 12, 2002).

³⁸¹ Major General Mahmud Ali Durrani, retired, “India and Pakistan: The Cost of Conflict and the Benefits of Peace” (Washington, DC: The Johns Hopkins University Foreign Policy Institute, School of Advanced International Studies, 2000), p. 52.

to consolidate and implement the existing CBMs through renewed consultation, dispute resolution, and legally binding implementation mechanisms, the NRRCs are expected to facilitate identification, negotiation and implementation of additional institutional and procedural arrangements. They should also possess the technical means to reduce or prevent misperceptions or actions that could lead to an unintended or accidental nuclear escalation. The conflict resolution measures, if addressed concurrently at the political levels, would help reassure and assuage the frustrations of the citizenry, and would help build confidence to ensure the success of the NRRCs.

Kashmir and the Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers

India and Pakistan are experiencing the most turbulent period of their relations since early 1999. Today, peace in South Asia has become hostage to one incident, one act of terrorism and one strategic miscalculation. Most analysts now opine that India and Pakistan have failed to resolve the Kashmir issue bilaterally. In fact the Kashmiris, on both sides, have experienced the worst kind of human suffering in their struggle for self-determination. However, many political figures, statesmen, and academics are still vibrantly optimistic about a political resolution of the issues and the viability of CBMs and NRRMs between India and Pakistan. Michael Krepon, Karl Inderfurth, Ambassador Teresita Schaffer, Bruce Blair, Robert Einhorn, Dr. Zafar Iqbal Cheema, Dr. Pervez Iqbal Cheema, Dr. Rifaat Hussain, General (retired) Jehangir Karamat, Major General (retired) William Burns and Rear Admiral (retired) John Sigler, all recognize the significance of these types of measures during the current situation between India and Pakistan.³⁸²

There is almost a general consensus on the importance of the resolving the Kashmir issue, without which peace may remain distant from South Asia. Stephen P. Cohen argues:

Kashmir is the most important single conflict in the subcontinent, not just because its territory and its population are contested, but because larger issues of national identity and regional power balances are

³⁸² Interviews with the author, July and August 2002.

imbedded in it. ‘Solving’ the Kashmir dispute means addressing these larger concerns and they cannot be addressed without new thinking on Kashmir and Kashmiris.³⁸³

Given the fact that neither India nor Pakistan is in a position to resolve the issue through the use of force, it is difficult to understand why they do not pursue a pragmatic, political approach. The need for serious and sustained dialogue along with concrete measures to reduce nuclear dangers has never been greater. Therefore, until positive measures for conflict resolution and new initiatives for the prevention of escalation and nuclear risk reduction are worked out and implemented, nuclear risk reduction in South Asia will remain rhetoric, just as the proposals for conflict avoidance have been for decades.³⁸⁴

It is therefore proposed that besides establishing an “India-Pakistan Joint Commission on Kashmir” and other measures for socio-economic and scientific cooperation, we should seriously consider the proposal for establishing NRRCs between the two countries. The commission would be composed of special envoys determined by the respective heads of state and may later integrate representatives from Kashmir.³⁸⁵ To ensure transparency in this process, it may be worthwhile to include a group of facilitators, which could be composed of widely respected world figures (Jimmy Carter or Nelson Mandela, for instance), along with regional representatives from Asia (from Japan, for instance) and the European Union. The people of India and Pakistan would be strongly reassured if their governments decided to commence a meaningful and sustained dialogue with an expressed determination to resolve the Kashmir issue, along with establishing NRRCs for a lasting

³⁸³ Stephen P. Cohen, “Draft Case Study: The Compound Crisis of 2002,” mimeo, p. 31.

³⁸⁴ Mr. Inam ul Haq, former foreign secretary of Pakistan, in a statement at the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva on January 25, 2001 has proffered a three-tiered comprehensive peace and security framework that includes simultaneous conflict resolution dialogue, a regional strategic restraint regime, and regional cooperation in economic, trade and social revival between the two neighbors. See Feroz Hassan Khan, “Navigating the Crossroads”, *The Monitor* [Center for International Trade and Security, University of Georgia] Vol. 7, No. 3 (Fall 2001), pp. 10–14.

³⁸⁵ Major General Durrani, “India and Pakistan,” p. 59. General Durrani suggests appointing an emissary from the heads of state.

peace. Any preconditions to commence this process may not produce a positive outcome.

Following the commencement of a dialogue between India and Pakistan, the proposal for establishing NRRCs may be promptly negotiated and immediately activated. As the Kashmir issue may take several years to resolve, the establishment of NRRCs should not be delayed until a settlement is reached. The successful functioning of the NRRCs depends on concurrent measures being taken towards a resolution of the Kashmir issue. NRRC success may also help build the trust and confidence that is essential for strengthening peace in the region. If the people of India, Pakistan, and Kashmir are convinced of the sincerity of the two governments and reassured by the progress of their dialogue on Kashmir, dangerous practices and the conviction for armed struggle are likely to wane. As violence decreased, Pakistan would expect India to reduce the number of security forces in Jammu and Kashmir. However, it should be expected that the Kashmiris will continue to struggle indigenously for their self-determination until an ultimate resolution can be reached. The purpose of the NRRCs would be to avert mistrust and misperceptions—and the consequences they could bring—while the conflict resolution process occurred.

The U.S. Cold War Experience and Nuclear Risk Reduction Measures

Before discussing the objectives and merits or demerits of establishing NRRCs between India and Pakistan, it may be appropriate to analyze the U.S.-Soviet Cold War experience with nuclear risk reduction measures to determine their applicability and adaptability to South Asian security environments.

Michael Krepon and P. R. Chari have both argued that despite differences in the environments, the key elements of nuclear risk reduction during the Cold War are still applicable in southern Asia. To comment and enumerate them briefly:³⁸⁶

³⁸⁶ Michael Krepon, “Nuclear Risk Reduction: Is Cold War Experience Applicable to South Asia?” in Krepon and Gagné, *The Stability-Instability Paradox*, pp. 1–14 and P. R. Chari, “Nuclear Restraint, Nuclear Risk Reduction, and the Security-Insecurity Paradox in South Asia,” in Krepon and Gagné, *The Stability-Instability Paradox*, pp.

- “A formal agreement not to change the territorial status quo by military means”: We need to pursue the provisions embodied in the Simla agreement and other CBMs and NRRMs seriously.
- “A tacit agreement to avoid nuclear brinkmanship”: The rhetoric and threatening statements from the political and military leadership in both countries must be arrested. Jingoistic statements made by the leadership of both countries, particularly during crises, are fraught with danger. This trend must be avoided.
- “A formal agreement to minimize or avoid dangerous military practices/exercises”: It is widely believed that the people of India and Pakistan now understand the significance of this provision.
- “Special reassurance measures for ballistic missiles and nuclear weapon systems”: Exchange of information on storage or deployment sites of their respective limited nuclear arsenals may be currently considered a security hazard by India and Pakistan. However, prior notifications for missile tests (presently being followed) and a non-deployment posture of nuclear weapons systems or notification of their movement during training and exercises may be formally agreed upon and implemented with some verification mechanism to add transparency.
- “Trust in the faithful implementation of treaty obligations and CBMs”: This needs to be addressed deliberately through conflict resolution and legally binding implementation mechanisms.
- “Verification”: India has rudimentary capabilities while Pakistan currently does not possess national technical means for verification. However, military attachés and/or a few inspectors could subsequently be incorporated to verify the military exercises or to confirm non-deployment of nuclear weapons on suspected sites after transparency measures had been established. A means to lessen misperceptions could be

32-33. The author has added certain comments and suggestions to assert the application of these elements in South Asia.

achieved by establishing Indian and Pakistani NRRCs that already integrate an element of verification.

- “Establishing reliable lines of communication across borders for both political and military leaders”: The hotlines between the DGMOs are now functioning well and have remained intact even during the recent military standoff, which is a positive sign.³⁸⁷ However, despite Pakistan’s best efforts during the hijacking of a plane from Nepal, the Indian DGMO did not respond on the hotline and the Indian foreign secretary broke the communication immediately after the plane took off from Amritsar despite repeated Pakistani requests for this not to happen. The Indian media fueled further misperceptions. According to Brigadier Feroz Khan, this demonstrates “Indian intentions to utilize the hotline/CBMs only when it suits their requirements.”³⁸⁸ Pakistani use of the hotline leaves much to be desired as well. The significance of the hotline channel between the heads of states needs no more evidence.
- “Establishment of reliable and redundant command and control systems as well as intelligence capabilities”: Pakistan has already declared its command and control arrangement through the establishment of its National Command Authority in February 2000.³⁸⁹ However, a senior Indian defense official reportedly stated on June 6, 2002 that “India is in no haste to establish a nuclear command and control structure,”³⁹⁰ an issue that should be addressed immediately.
- “Upgrade and strengthen existing risk reduction measures”: This is a continuous process applicable both in crisis situations as well as in peacetime. This provides the context in which Indian and Pakistani NRRCs would operate.

³⁸⁷ The author’s personal experience during a visit to GHQ in early July 2002 as well as confirmation of the fact by Brigadier Naeem Salik, Director of Arms Control and Disarmament Affairs, Strategic Plans Division, Pakistan on September 5, 2002.

³⁸⁸ Author’s interview with Brigadier Feroz H. Khan, Washington, DC, September 1, 2002.

³⁸⁹ Naeem Salik, “False Warning and Accidents,” p. 73.

³⁹⁰ “India in No Haste to form N-Command Structure,” *The News* (Islamabad), June 7, 2002.

The following measures are recommended for consideration by both countries as soon as government-to-government interaction and the process of dialogue are resumed. The U.S. may help to monitor, facilitate, and render necessary assistance as considered appropriate to make the CBMs and NRRMs workable:

- Revival of old CBMs and NRRMs with special reference to incorporating a “India-Pakistan Dispute Resolution Forum” and a “Legally Binding and Implementing Mechanism” as a policy instrument to support all CBMs and NRRMs. The forum may have annual or semiannual meetings.³⁹¹
- Bilateral channels of communication and revival of hotlines to stipulate expanded levels including the Navy and Air Force, directions and frequency of communication, and face-to-face meetings if stipulations are violated.³⁹²
- Reducing the danger from false alarms through prior notifications of certain activities, possibly including major military exercises, large troop movements, changes in the deployment of air forces or other strategic elements, and cooperative aerial monitoring efforts.
- Establishment of an “India-Pakistan Joint Commission on Kashmir”.
- A comprehensive nuclear restraint regime, which may include the following:
 - Prior notification of missile tests including the direction of fire.
 - Agreement not to conduct missile tests, even those that were pre-planned, during a crisis or while major exercises are being conducted.
 - Notification of all exercises that involve troop movement out of garrisons at division or above levels.
 - Notification of strategic force and/or equipment movement for training.

³⁹¹ Pandey and Schaffer, “Building Confidence in India and Pakistan.”

³⁹² *Ibid.*

- Agreement not to deploy nuclear tipped weapon systems. A “zero alert policy” could also be explored and discussed.³⁹³
- Agreement for non-mating and separate storage of nuclear warheads and delivery vehicles.
- Negotiation for the establishment of “Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers” (NRRCs) between India and Pakistan.³⁹⁴
An agreement to this effect may include and emphasize the centrality of these institutions for the communication and implementation of the confidence building and risk reduction regimes.
- A mechanism for cooperation while confronting a nuclear accident or an incident of nuclear terrorism.

The U.S. Nuclear Risk Reduction Center

The U.S. Nuclear Risk Reduction Center (NRRC) is a unique government entity located in and staffed by the State Department. The concept of the NRRC originated in a working group organized by Senators Sam Nunn and John Warner. The U.S.’s NRRC and its Russian (then-Soviet) counterpart were formally established at a signing ceremony in Washington, DC on September 15, 1987. The two centers provided the first direct communication link between the two capitals since the presidential “hotline” was instituted in 1963.

Although used primarily for the exchange of notifications under existing bilateral and multilateral treaties, the NRRC has periodically proved its use in other areas as well. In January 1991, “goodwill” notifications were used to exchange information on the re-entry of the Salyut 7 space station. Later that same year the NRRCs served as a means of emergency communications during a major fire in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. In the last twelve years, eleven such “goodwill” messages have been exchanged.

³⁹³ See Bruce Blair, *Global Zero Alert of Nuclear Forces* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1995), pp. 78–108.

³⁹⁴ See Feroz Hassan Khan, “Navigating the Crossroads,” p. 14. He has made a fleeting reference for establishing a ‘Crisis Prevention Center’ in his recommendations at the end of his paper.

From the first message sent in April 1988 to the most recent stage of multilateral arms control notifications, the NRRC has served as a dependable means of exchanging information. It is an integral player in arms control implementation, and meets communications requirements for almost twenty arms control treaties and agreements with over fifty countries in six different languages. Presently, 153 different types of notifications are being exchanged annually in accordance with various treaties.³⁹⁵

Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers for India and Pakistan

As stated earlier, the establishment of NRRCs between nuclear India and Pakistan would facilitate official communication for exchanging information to prevent misperception or unintended reactions leading to a crisis or escalation. It would be an additional but separate high-level technical means of official communication between the two governments. The hotline monitors and other electronic communication systems placed in the NRRCs would be used for advance notifications of various strategic and military training maneuvers to prevent misinterpretation or miscalculation. Though exchanging information on the exact location of their nuclear missiles or storage sites may not be in the security interest of the two countries, the NRRC could greatly aid in the implementation of various arms control and force reduction measures through inspection and verification elements.

The existing hotline between the DGMOs, the heads of states, and other diplomatic channels of communication would continue to function as they have their own specific military, political, and diplomatic roles. The NRRCs, under a senior diplomat or a political figure directly appointed by the head of state and with sufficient experience in handling security issues would coordinate with all relevant military, intelligence and diplomatic circles to perform its functions for

³⁹⁵ Barry M. Blechman and Michael Krepon, *Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers* (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1986), pp. 1-26, *Brochure on The U.S. NRRC: 1988-2002* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 2002), and author's interviews with NRRC Director Harold Kowalski, Jr. and NRRC staff (August 22, 2002). See Annex C for more information.

the timely exchange of accurate information and notifications under various agreements. The NRRCs may thus become the highest central coordinating institution in the country for the exchange of information and notifications and for the implementation of various agreements. The director general, besides having his own reporting channel, would have direct communication access to the senior armed and strategic force commanders, senior bureaucrats and the heads of intelligence agencies.

NRRCs could help clarify an intended message or information with greater accuracy by using already agreed upon formats or through a goodwill message extended in an emergency. The NRRCs would, therefore, become an appropriate official channel for the exchange of information during crises to prevent misperceptions, which in a local conflict could prevent accidental or inadvertent escalation. The second element of the NRRCs may be a verification mechanism, essentially to build trust. It may consist of observers and inspectors to verify the authenticity of intelligence in case either country expresses doubt. These details are covered in the operational aspects discussed below. Thus, the NRRCs would work hard to establish the trust and confidence necessary to strengthening peace. They should not, however, be a substitute for the political and diplomatic channels of communication.

Objectives of the NRRCs

Much like the NRRCs established for the U.S. and Russia, Michael Krepon believes that an agreement between India and Pakistan to establish NRRCs would indicate that they recognize the need for a separate channel of high-level communication and autonomous institutional arrangements dedicated to reducing the risks of conflict escalation. It is believed that most of the Indian political leadership generally agrees and is interested in the creation of NRRCs in principle, though Pakistan's leadership, while also believing in the merits of the idea, currently considers it difficult to pursue at the official level.³⁹⁶ The centers would operate under the policy guidelines of their respective

³⁹⁶ Author's interview with Robert J. Einhorn at Washington, DC, August 2002.

leaderships and in collaboration with various civil and military instruments of their governments.

The same spirit is relevant to the objectives of NRRCs in South Asia as was present during the Cold War. The U.S.-Soviet objectives were:

- To facilitate negotiation and implementation of additional institutional and procedural arrangements, as well as technical measures intended to reduce nuclear risks;
- To create a buffer around nuclear risk prevention measures and to protect them from the vicissitudes of U.S.-Soviet relations;
- To provide more latitude to national leaders during crises;
- To provide a means of instantaneous communications among technical experts in the event of unusual contingencies;
- To provide a mechanism for training skilled interagency crisis teams;
- To reassure the publics in both nations, and in third countries, that the two great powers were acting to reduce the risk of nuclear war.³⁹⁷

These objectives are pertinent to India and Pakistan as well and are discussed in the following paragraphs. The additional objectives for NRRCs could include:

- *To institutionalize the implementation of unilateral, bilateral or multilateral measures for nuclear risk reduction, arms control, and/or force reduction in the region.* Various proposals for a comprehensive restraint regime are already in the offing. The NRRCs may subsequently help to effect arms control and mutual force reduction measures.
- *To provide a mechanism to build trust and confidence through an instrument of consultation to address disputes and a system of verifications to nullify misperceptions.* The elements of trust and confidence have been lacking in the security environments of South Asia. Mutual consultations, joint planning, and analysis to handle various contingencies, along with a verification mechanism

³⁹⁷ Barry M. Blechman and Krepon, *Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers*, pp. 6–8.

would fill the existing vacuum to ensure the credibility of this institution. Incorporating technical experts into the NRRCs' staff to verify the information or notifications would help ensuring the same.

- *A mechanism to consolidate and ensure implementation of the existing agreements through legally binding arrangements instead of politically binding systems.* The NRRCs functioning as a central institution for the exchange of information and notifications in coordination with various segments of the government may automatically serve to consolidate and implement the existing CBMs and NRRMs. The verification and implementation mechanisms and the dispute resolution forum developed to make the NRRCs workable would renew the credibility of existing CBMs.

For effective functioning of the NRRCs, as established under the supervision of a senior government functionary selected by the heads of state, the two governments would be expected to spare adequate resources for its operation. Besides seeking guidance and technical assistance from the government and intelligence agencies, the center's director general would also have direct communication and access to the Foreign Minister and the President/PM.

The NRRCs, through their legal and institutional procedural arrangements and through a separate channel of communication between government officials would serve as a good buffer during crises. The staff of the respective NRRCs, having developed good working relations during peacetime, would be more likely to communicate positively during crises. By exchanging preliminary information and assessments of mutual intentions and implementing procedural arrangements, NRRCs may prove more successful than existing hotlines between the DGMOs and the head of states.

Troop movement, military exercises, and intelligence-gathering systems are means of sending important signals. However, even at the diplomatic level it becomes difficult to convey an intended message with precision. The messages transmitted or conveyed may appear to be muted or overdrawn and could be entirely misinterpreted by the other side. The establishment of NRRCs would permit the rapid

exchange of detailed and accurate messages between officials and experts well before communication between political leaders and bureaucrats occurred, which is essential during critical periods. The NRRCs, during periods of deep crisis, would be able to evaluate and analyze the facts before the governments/political leaders decided to take a specific course of action. The benefits of real-time communications through NRRCs would provide more intelligence and latitude to the national leadership to make better-informed analyses during crises well before they decide to take action.

Instantaneous means of communication among technical experts could be very useful during air and naval operations or in a crisis situation through cooperative monitoring. The shooting of Pakistan's naval aircraft "Atlantic" by India and similar incidents could have been more easily defused or perhaps prevented if an NRRC-like system was in place and the director and staff had established good working relations. The NRRCs would be a good method of exchanging information following an accident. Goodwill messages between the U.S. and Russian NRRCs are a testament to this observation.

The NRRCs would be staffed by a selective group of interagency experts and technically skilled personnel. The procedural functions would help train skilled interagency crisis prevention teams. The staff of both centers would have to discuss and coordinate measures to handle crisis situations during negotiations for the NRRCs, and also during their regular meetings and consultations. The need for cooperation is particularly important for defusing potential crises involving nuclear terrorism. The interactions between the multidisciplinary NRRC staff would have great potential to handle situations the moment crises arise. Given a well developed understanding of each other's concerns, prior planning, analysis, and training to handle such incidents, NRRCs would not only help to prevent potential crises, but may also be a step forward towards cooperation for a joint action to fight nuclear terrorism.

Building Trust and Confidence

The establishment of NRRCs would help clear the clouds of mistrust and reduce the chances of conflict and nuclear war in the region. Their

goal would be to introduce measures of trust and confidence between the two nations by incorporating consultation and dispute resolution mechanisms along with verification and legally binding implementation mechanisms. Besides reactivating the existing CBMs/NRRMs with renewed resolve to address conflict resolution through political means, the introduction of NRRCs would establish a rainbow of peace and reassurance for the people of the two countries as well as for the region as a whole.

By institutionalizing an additional, official means for exchanging accurate and factual information under already agreed procedural arrangements, the previously poor record of CBMs and NRRMs would see a radical improvement. The establishment of *détente* in South Asia is, however, essential and critical to commence the official process, while the establishment and successful functioning of the NRRCs depends upon concurrent measures taken for conflict resolution. Kashmir is now unanimously considered to be the core issue and a nuclear flash point. But the process to negotiate, establish, or activate the NRRCs should not be delayed until a resolution of the Kashmir issue, which could take considerable time given its own internal dynamics and complexity. However, positive measures taken to resolve the dispute through a sustained dialogue would serve as the fuel to operate the NRRCs effectively, and would form the basis of trust and reassurance for the people of the two countries including the Kashmiris. In the absence of these measures peace and cooperation would remain distant from South Asia. The economic dividends that could be achieved from consequent socioeconomic cooperation are self-explanatory and are expected to kick start the economy of the whole region. The U.S., therefore, has a definite role to play.

Risks, Likely Apprehensions, Merits and Demerits

There may be significant doubts and concerns in the minds of the South Asian leadership for the establishment of Indian and Pakistani NRRCs. Some of these are similar to U.S. and Soviet concerns during the Cold War. It is appropriate to list their concerns first and then discuss their application to South Asia in this regard:

- Creation of centers may increase Soviet opportunities for spreading misleading information and deception leading up to and during crises;
- The centers could offer opportunities for the Soviets to gain important intelligence information, including sensitive information on sources and methods;
- By providing an additional channel of communications, creation of the centers could lead to confusion and mixed signals regarding U.S. policy as well as interpretations of Soviet actions;
- Creation of the centers could prompt concerns by allies, friends, or third parties that the great powers would discuss problems in which they had a stake without adequately considering their interests.³⁹⁸

The first three arguments listed above are equally applicable to current Indo-Pak relations. The arguments in support of or against establishing NRRCs for India and Pakistan are discussed below:

- *The opponent's abuse of the NRRC for misleading or false information for deception.* The NRRCs are designed to serve as a separate, additional channel of official communication among technical expert officials. They would have to follow a specific method of exchanging notifications and information according to an already negotiated mechanism. In the prevailing security environment, the interest of both countries to resolve the dispute may override their conflicting positions on several issues. In some situations, however, instead of taking measures to defuse the crisis, the NRRCs might be used to convey misleading or false information, further exacerbating tension in an already strained political environment. The important thing to note here is that a decision to misuse this official channel for nuclear risk reduction would itself convey the myth of the opponent's dubious intentions. The opponent's ability to misuse the NRRC is directly proportional to the intelligence and capabilities of its own staff to identify the same. The staff may, therefore, be trained in such a manner to identify the disinformation techniques

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

of the opponent and have additional training to practice their skills. These staff members would be expected to advise the senior government officials and the political leaders when the information received through the NRRC channel appear to be disingenuous or misleading. The ability and shrewdness of the NRRC officials and the real purpose and potentials of the NRRC would, therefore, help to prevent the potential misuse of the centers.

- *Threat to national security.* This is considered to be the principal concern for anyone who understands the importance of establishing NRRCs between India and Pakistan. Many might say that it would neutralize Pakistan's deterrent against India and is just another Indian strategy to counter our first use strategy. It must therefore be understood that the centers are being created to prevent misperceptions of intentions or of actions that could initiate conflict or lead to an unintended or an accidental nuclear exchange. It would be possible through a mechanism provided by these centers for an accurate and rapid exchange of factual information between the two countries. Secondly, there was no perceptible change in the nuclear strategies of the U.S. or Russia following the establishment of their NRRCs. Likewise the NRRCs would not affect our strategy at all. This aspect is related to the apprehensions for leakage of sensitive information or intelligence through the use of advanced technical systems or verification through inspections. This risk is strictly within the exclusive powers of the authorities to control as the government would decide which information the NRRC may communicate or verify in a particular event, just as it controls any other official communication system. The measures taken at the NRRCs in pursuit of national policy must also help prepare a highly trained coterie of multidisciplinary personnel with considerable technical experience to handle the security and strategic environments of South Asia. A trained group of special staff under the specific guidance of the respective government is expected to provide a further check in this regard, as they would exchange the required information under an already agreed upon mechanism and on a pre-formatted system. Intelligence agency officials may be asked to provide guidance on all related matters as deemed

necessary. The functioning of the NRRC would therefore encompass an in-built mechanism to guard against unauthorized disclosure of potentially sensitive or damaging information.

- *The NRRCs may not prevent a crisis from potential or actual nuclear terrorism.* Some analysts might have doubts about the difficulties that may arise in cases of nuclear terrorism. While it is true that prevention of the incident itself may not always be possible, NRRCs could still avoid the escalation of an ensuing conflict. The quick exchange of information in such situations could lead to cooperation in nuclear safety measures to prevent and control nuclear radiation that could result from an accident or as a result of an attack on a nuclear installation. Both India and Pakistan may be willing to cooperate in such situations instead of creating a conflict, with the potential for inadvertent or accidental escalation to the nuclear level. Non-government experts are already in the process of addressing this issue.³⁹⁹ If deemed appropriate, the two governments may later consider an agreement for dealing with these situations. The institutionalization of the NRRCs, by offering it an opportunity to act in such situations, may gradually make the South Asian security environment amiable.
- *The establishment of NRRCs could generate countervailing forces harmful to regional security.* Actors within both governments may be ideologically opposed to an improvement in India-Pakistan relations. Further, there are many that financially benefit from the continuing hostile environment and conflict. It is not difficult to imagine that these actors would attempt to disrupt or impair the successful functioning of the NRRCs. Further, the Kashmir issue may also be exploited to pressurize the authorities. Given this countervailing pressure, it is still hoped that the leaders at both ends, in considering this proposal, would demonstrate pragmatism for the larger interest of their people and the region. They may have to simultaneously address outstanding conflicts with flexibility to make

³⁹⁹ Rajesh Basrur and Hasan Askari Rizvi, "The Nuclear Terrorism in South Asia" (Washington, DC: Presented at the Brookings Institution, September 13, 2002).

headway towards the eventual elimination of conflict and to bring a lasting peace and prosperity to India and Pakistan.

The Functioning of the NRRCs

- The NRRCs would be legally bound to remain open continuously. The centers shall, therefore, be manned around the clock.
- No malfunctions or breakage in the technical equipment or hotline monitors will be tolerated at any time. The redundancy may either be ensured through duplications or other technically feasible measures.
- It must be understood that the NRRCs are not a substitute to the diplomatic and political channels of communication. The center's hotline is also no substitute to that of the military commander. Thus, the NRRC staff does not have to perform the functions directly concerned with these personnel. Key staff members from both centers will meet once or twice a year to resolve problems and to seek improvements in the efficiency of the centers.
- The staff will not exchange any voice or telephone communications, because of the potential this mode of communication has for misperception. The centers shall exchange only written and preformatted notifications, the text and details of which shall be mutually decided and agreed upon by both countries during their meetings.
- "Goodwill" messages may be used only in cases of an emergency to prevent a potential crisis. No deviations will be accepted in this regard. The U.S. and Russia have exchanged only eleven "goodwill" messages in the last 14 years.
- Any message other than the preformatted notifications could send a wrong signal and would be tantamount to a violation of the agreements. The multidisciplinary staff must use its skill to identify any institutional or procedural anomaly and prevent its recurrence.
- The staff must always rapidly submit notification to their counterparts and effect prior coordination with various departments accordingly. In case of any delay or lapse, the notification should

still be forwarded with regrets on the failure to retain trust and confidence in the institution.

It must be noted that the “NRRCs are not the panacea for crisis management” and should not become involved in substantive negotiations during crises. The purpose of the center is to prevent misperceptions or miscalculations leading to an unintended or accidental nuclear exchange. Crisis management is the job of trained diplomats and the burden will continue to fall on political leaders. Therefore, it should be conducted through normal diplomatic channels or between heads of state. The “NRRCs could compliment diplomatic channels during crises only when political authorities believe that technical exchanges about military activities could be useful supplements to the main diplomatic discourse.”⁴⁰⁰

Operationalization of the NRRCs

The NRRCs could be operationalized after well-planned negotiations led to an agreement between the two governments in this regard. The agreement would only be possible when the two governments decide to sit down for a dialogue. Keeping in view the current stand off between the two governments and the absence of official interaction, this proposal cannot currently be considered at the official level.

The “Track Two” efforts, however, cannot be neglected as a means of discussing this proposal. The U.S., having already attempted to persuade the two leaderships to sit down together, could play a significant role in asking the parties to consider establishing the NRRCs. Meanwhile, a trilateral working group consisting of senior civil and retired military officials from Pakistan, India and the U.S. could be formed to study the feasibility of establishing NRRCs between India and Pakistan. The working group could meet anywhere outside of India and Pakistan to analyze the broad contours and policy directions in this regard. A short report with recommendations from the group may be presented to the political leadership for consideration upon the establishment of *détente* and the resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan.

⁴⁰⁰ Blechman and Krepon, *Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers*, pp. 12–13.

The working group may start its work as soon as possible and may publish a report by the end of 2003 at latest. The two governments may then discuss the feasibility for establishing NRRCs and may negotiate an agreement accordingly. The U.S. would have a critical and challenging role to facilitate a dialogue, to render necessary assistance in the negotiations, and to establish the NRRCs.

Smooth operation would be ensured by clear organizational concepts and avoidance of “the don’ts.” The consultative and verification mechanisms along with joint planning and procedural arrangements to handle various contingencies under the supervision of a senior director general and a highly trained interagency staff would help to ensure their eventual success to prevent crises and inadvertent escalation in South Asia. It is important to stress again that the fuel to run these NRRCs will be provided by simultaneously addressing conflict resolution measures. This is a reassurance mechanism exclusively in the hands of the leadership of the two countries. Once the core issues are resolved, it would add impetus to the functioning of the NRRCs. Thereafter, the NRRCs may run automatically.

The Organization and Function of the NRRCs

The nuclear risk reduction centers would be established in Islamabad and New Delhi and would run constantly for 24 hours during any event with the potential to cause a nuclear crisis. These centers could be equipped with the latest computers and hotlines with high-speed data facsimile transmission links as agreed by the two governments. Double or dual monitoring devices for both conventional, nuclear and hotline systems may be established to assure reliable and redundant technical means of communication. Both countries can acquire separate channels on the same or different satellites to further ensure the redundancy. Developing ciphers would enhance the communication security between the two countries. A group of diplomatic, military, and intelligence personnel along with a few civil and technical experts would be required to work in the NRRC on both a temporary and permanent basis.

The staff should operate under previously agreed upon instructions and may be taken from various government departments

and agencies. The President/PM, as considered appropriate, may nominate the director general of the NRRC who would report to the President/PM's Advisor or to the Foreign Minister. He could be a civilian with prior experience in security negotiations. The proposed organization for Pakistan's NRRC and a suggested diagram for its technical equipment is attached as Annex D.

The second important element of the NRRCs would be the "Group of Inspectors or Observers" consisting of technical personnel only. This is essentially designed to compliment trust and confidence through a "verification element". The inspectors or observers would be used, under the provisions of the NRRCs, in case the other country desires verification of any information, e.g. large-scale military exercises or movement of strategic forces/assets for training etc. Considering security issues, especially on nuclear and strategic assets, it may initially be practiced at a limited level to oversee large scale military moves and exercises such as Brasstacks or Zarb-e Momin, or to aid civil authorities during emergencies, and may later be expanded to confirm the training moves of strategic forces or other activities. It would set a precedent by adding the element of verification to build trust and confidence, and to alleviate misperceptions. The officials may work out the details during negotiations. The list of the visiting inspectors of the other country may, however, be processed by the government and intelligence agencies to verify their credentials, including the pilots by the civil aviation authorities to accord the necessary clearances.

The NRRC staff may be required to perform a wide range of functions in peacetime as well as during periods of tension and crisis. Despite the development of standard operating procedures, the centers may not initially be able to perform all the functions of the U.S. and Russian NRRCs. However, these may be worked out on modest requirements or task-oriented functions acceptable to the two governments. Once inventories are in place, additional functions can be worked out and improved at a later date. Initially, the staff might face certain difficulties in view of some of the anomalies and irregularities in the CBMs and NRRMs. Through political will and concerted efforts the hurdles are likely to be eliminated progressively. Annual or semiannual meetings between the staff are essential to enhance the

scope and functioning of the NRRCs. The U.S. support in this regard could be critical. The U.S. NRRC officials and non-governmental experts were all optimistic about the merits of NRRCs for South Asia and were willing to render necessary assistance in the light of their experiences.⁴⁰¹

An important aspect for the smooth and successful functioning of the NRRCs is the need for certain agreements that warrant compliance through exchange of information, notifications, and verifications. Without such agreed arrangements, the advanced technical means of communication may not produce the desired results. NRRCs in the Middle East failed due to the absence of such agreements.⁴⁰²

Location of Pakistan's NRRC

Both the staff and inspection elements of the Russian NRRC are functioning quite smoothly in the MoD. The U.S. debate on the issue in 1986 considered four locations: the NSC apparatus at the White House, the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and a new setting separate from existing bureaucratic institutions.⁴⁰³ However, then-Secretary of State George Shultz's argument prevailed. He argued that since the new channel of communication was being created as an additional link between the two governments and that function of the government is overseen by the State Department, the NRRC should function under the direct support and direction of the U.S. Department of State.⁴⁰⁴ The U.S. on-site inspection expertise, however, functions under the Pentagon. Certain bureaucratic hurdles and vested interests were reportedly cited as reasons for preventing their integration.

Pakistan may decide either to keep the NRRC under the Principal Secretary/Advisor to the President/PM or under the Foreign Minister. Keeping in view the channel of reporting, the NRRC may be housed accordingly. The GHQ has its own hotline channel and reports to the MoD, therefore, the NRRC could work as a separate channel

⁴⁰¹ Interview with U.S. NRRC Director Harold Kowalski, Jr., August 22, 2002.

⁴⁰² Interviews with NRRC director and staff, August 22, 2002.

⁴⁰³ Blechman and Krepon, *Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers*, pp. 22–25.

⁴⁰⁴ Interviews with NRRC director and staff, August 22, 2002.

exclusively under civilian control. Military-related information and notification may be sent to NRRCs by routing through their official channels and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or External Affairs as applicable to both countries. The final authority to exchange the notification would be the NRRCs under intimation to respective ministries or headquarters. The military and the intelligence agencies, however, may be needed to render necessary assistance and for interaction with the Operations Section as per the organization of the NRRC (See Annex D).

Conclusion

An agreement to refrain from the use of force and for the peaceful settlement of disputes already exists between India and Pakistan. They have also reached an understanding for taking NRRMs and the creation of an appropriate consultative mechanism as well as a periodical review of existing CBMs. Therefore, besides observance of a ceasefire along the LoC and immediate cessation of human rights violations against Kashmiris, a dialogue must be resumed between India and Pakistan. Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Musharraf already agreed to a structure for talks in Agra. Only a sustained and meaningful dialogue between the two countries could lead us towards conflict resolution. The incremental approaches suggested by General Mahmud Durrani and General Talat Masood to achieve this objective, point towards commencing a dialogue and subsequently improve it through sustained consultation and conflict resolution measures.⁴⁰⁵

The proposal for creating NRRCs, though quite optimistic at this stage, might serve as a cornerstone towards a radical shift in the current security environments of Southern Asia. The concept of the NRRCs may thus form part of an agenda for dialogue between the two countries. It should be negotiated and implemented promptly without waiting for the outcome of the Kashmir dispute. However, the positive measures simultaneously taken to resolve disputes through a sustained dialogue would serve as the fuel to operate the NRRCs effectively and

⁴⁰⁵ Major General Durrani, "India and Pakistan," pp. 53-54, and Talat Masood, "Military CBMs in South Asia" in *CBMs in South Asia: Potential and Possibilities* (Colombo, Sri Lanka: Regional Center for Strategic Studies, 2000), p. 46.

would form the basis for a rainbow of hope, trust and reassurance for the people of the two countries, including Kashmiris. In the absence of these measures, peace and cooperation will remain distant from South Asia.

The NRRCs, due to an inbuilt mechanism, would not only help to consolidate and enhance the scope of current CBMs/NRRMs between the two countries, but would also accelerate the conflict resolution track. The NRRCs, through formation of consultation and dispute resolving forums and implementation mechanisms would also lay the foundation for generating transparency, reassurance, and trust in Indo-Pakistani relations besides building confidence, tolerance and reconciliation, and strengthening peace in the region. ■

Annex A: List of India-Pakistan Confidence-Building Measures

Communication Measures

- Hotline between DG MOs since December 1971.
- Direct Communication Lines between Sector Commanders across the LOC since 1991.
- Hotline between Prime Ministers since 1997.

Measures Notification

- Agreement for prior Notification of Military Exercises involving ten thousand or more troops is in place since April 1991. It stipulates that at Corps level exercises must be held forty five kilometres from the border while at Division level exercises must be held twenty five kilometres away from the border. No military activity is permitted within five kilometres of the border.

Transparency Measures

- Invitation to military observers to attend major exercises to confirm non-hostile intent. Indian and other military attaches were invited to attend Zarb-e-Momin in 1989.
- To defuse tensions resulting from its spring 1990 exercises India invited U.S. observers to monitor the exercises and to confirm their non-hostile intent.

Border Security Measures

- Karachi Agreement of 1949 which established an 800 mile CFL which obligated the troops to keep a distance of 500 yards from the line and froze the force levels along the CFL.
- The 1960 Indo-Pak Agreement on Border Disputes established “Ground Rules” to regulate the activities along the West Pakistan-India border.
- The Rann of Kutch Tribunal Award of 1966. It, however, left the demarcation of boundary in Sir Creek area which is still disputed.
- Air Space Violations Agreement signed in April 1991 and ratified in August 1992, which stipulates that no combat aircraft shall fly within ten kilometres of each other’s airspace.

Consultation Measures

- India-Pakistan Joint Commission established in 1982 to facilitate discussions at ministerial level.

- Since 1990 the Joint Commission has been superseded by a series of foreign secretary–level talks.

Water Rights

- The 1962 Indus Waters Treaty brokered by the World Bank helped resolve problems regarding distribution of water resources.

Declaratory Measures

- The Tashkent Declaration of 1966.
- The Simla Accord of 1972.
- Agreement on ‘Non-Attack’ on each others nuclear facilities signed in 1988 and ratified in 1991.
- Joint Declaration on the prohibition of Chemical Weapons concluded in 1992 in which both countries agreed not to develop, produce, acquire or use Chemical Weapons. India however, declared having stocks as well as production and storage facilities as a consequence of its ratification of the CWC in 1997.

Source: *A Handbook of Confidence Building Measures for Regional Security*, 3rd Ed. (Washington, DC: The Henry L. Stimson Center, 1998),

Annex B: Lahore Memorandum of Understanding

The following is the text of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Indian Foreign Secretary, Mr. K. Raghunath, and the Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Mr. Shamshad Ahmad, in Lahore on February 21, 1999.

The Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan:

Reaffirming the continued commitment of their respective governments to the principles and purposes of the U.N. Charter;

Reiterating the determination of both countries to implementing the Shimla Agreement in letter and spirit;

Guided by the agreement between their Prime Ministers of 23rd September 1998 that an environment of peace and security is in the supreme national interest of both sides and that resolution of all outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, is essential for this purpose;

Pursuant to the directive given by their respective Prime Ministers in Lahore, to adopt measures for promoting a stable environment of peace, and security between the two countries;

Have on this day, agreed to the following:-

1. The two sides shall engage in bilateral consultations on security concepts, and nuclear doctrines, with a view to developing measures for confidence building in the nuclear and conventional fields, aimed at avoidance of conflict.
2. The two sides undertake to provide each other with advance notification in respect of ballistic missile flight tests, and shall conclude a bilateral agreement in this regard.
3. The two sides are fully committed to undertaking national measures to reducing the risks of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons under their respective control. The two sides further undertake to notify each, other immediately in the event of any accidental, unauthorised or unexplained incident that could create the risk of a fallout with adverse consequences for both sides, or an outbreak of a nuclear war between the two countries, as well as to adopt measures aimed at diminishing the possibility of such actions, or such incidents being misinterpreted by the other. The two side shall

identify/establish the appropriate communication mechanism for this purpose.

4. The two sides shall continue to abide by their respective unilateral moratorium on conducting further nuclear test explosions unless either side, in exercise of its national sovereignty decides that extraordinary events have jeopardised its supreme interests.
5. The two sides shall conclude an agreement on prevention of incidents at sea in order to ensure safety of navigation by naval vessels, and aircraft belonging to the two sides.
6. The two sides shall periodically review the implementation of existing Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and where necessary, set up appropriate consultative mechanisms to monitor and ensure effective implementation of these CBMs.
7. The two sides shall undertake a review of the existing communication links (e.g. between the respective Directors- General, Military Operations) with a view to upgrading and improving these links, and to provide for fail-safe and secure communications.
8. The two sides shall engage in bilateral consultations on security, disarmament and non-proliferation issues within the context of negotiations on these issues in multilateral fora.
9. Where required, the technical details of the above measures will be worked out by experts of the two sides in meetings to be held on mutually agreed dates, before mid 1999, with a view to reaching bilateral agreements.

Done at Lahore on 21st February 1999 in the presence of Prime Minister of India, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, and Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

(K. Raghunath)

Foreign Secretary of the Republic of India

(Shamshad Ahmad)

Foreign Secretary of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Source:

[http://www.indianembassy.org/South_Asia/Pakistan/mou\(lahore01211999\).html](http://www.indianembassy.org/South_Asia/Pakistan/mou(lahore01211999).html)

Annex C: The U.S. Nuclear Risk Reduction Center

The principal function of the Centers is to exchange information and notifications as required under various arms control treaties and other confidence-building agreements.

Brief History

As the result of a U.S. initiative, President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev agreed at the November 1985 Geneva Summit to have experts explore the possibility of establishing centers to reduce the risk of nuclear war. The impetus for this initiative grew out of consultations between the Executive Branch and Congress, particularly Senators Sam Nunn and John Warner. U.S. and Soviet experts held informal meetings in Geneva on May 5-6 and August 25, 1986. In October 1986, at their meeting in Reykjavik, President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev indicated satisfaction with the progress made at the experts meetings and agreed to begin formal negotiations to establish Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers. Those negotiations were held in Geneva on January 13 and May 3-4, 1987. The negotiations resulted in the Agreement that was signed in Washington September 15, 1987, by Secretary of State Shultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze.

Under the Agreement, which is of unlimited duration, each party agreed to establish a Nuclear Risk Reduction Center in its capital and to establish a special facsimile communications link between these Centers. These Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers became operational on April 1, 1988. The American National Center (known as the NRRC) is located in Washington, D.C. in the Department of State. The Soviet National Center became the Russian National Center with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and is located in Moscow in the Russian Federation Ministry of Defense. Consequent to the breakup of the former Soviet Union the four START Treaty successor states of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan have become involved in the notification process, and the NRRC has established direct communications links with each of those republics.

Scope of NRRC

The Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers do not replace normal diplomatic channels of communication or the "Hot Line," nor are they intended to have a crisis management role. The principal function of the Centers is to exchange information and notifications as required under various arms control treaties and other confidence-building agreements.

There are two protocols to the NRRC Agreement. Protocol I identifies the notifications the parties agreed to exchange. These include:

- Ballistic missile launches required under Article 4 of the 1971 Agreement on Measures to Reduce the Risk of Outbreak of Nuclear War.
- Ballistic missile launches required under paragraph 1 of Article VI of the 1972 Agreement on the Prevention of Incidents on and over the High Seas.

Since the Agreement was signed, the Parties have additionally agreed to exchange through the Centers inspection and compliance notifications, as well as other information, required under the INF Treaty, notifications called for under the Ballistic Missile Launch Notification Agreement, Vienna Document of 1999, the CFE Treaty, the Open-Skies Treaty and the CWC.

The Centers may also be used for the transmission by either side of additional communications as a display of "good-will" and with a view to building confidence. For example, in January 1991, goodwill notifications were used to exchange information on the re-entry of the Salyut 7 space station. Later that same year, the NRRC served as means of emergency communications during a major fire in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. There has been an exchange of 11 "goodwill" messages in the last 12 years.

Organization

There are two major components of the NRRC; the Notifications and the Verification. Russia holds integrated units of the two components under MoD while the U.S. hold them separately under the Department of State and the MoD respectively. Though an

integrated unit may help in smooth functioning of the center, however, certain political and bureaucratic intricacies are stated to prevent its integration in the U.S..

An Assistant Secretary of State is appointed by the President to serve as the Director of the U.S. NRRC. The NRRC is divided into two units: a staff component and a watch operations component. Staff members represent the NRRC at interagency meetings, prepare and clear NRRC policy positions, and assist in planning for future activities. The watch officers staff the 24-hour operations center providing communications over six distinct international communications systems. Watch personnel are both Foreign Service and Civil Service officers, including those with proficiencies in Russian and other Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) languages.

Miscellaneous

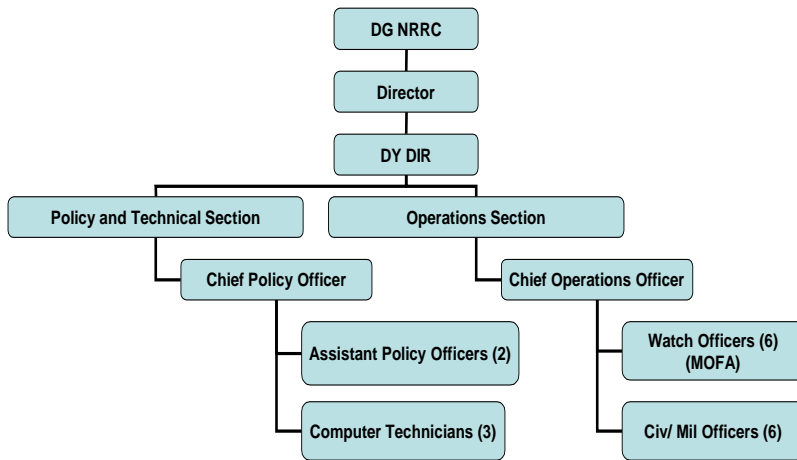
Existence of an agreement that clearly stipulates the requirement of what to communicate through the NRRC is a prerequisite for its successful functioning. The Middle East process was an example of failure as there was no agreement related to it.

No voice communication circuit was embodied into the NRRC deliberately as voice communication could lead to misinterpretation by voice modulation. Crypto and ciphers are used for communication security to prevent interception of messages by any other state.

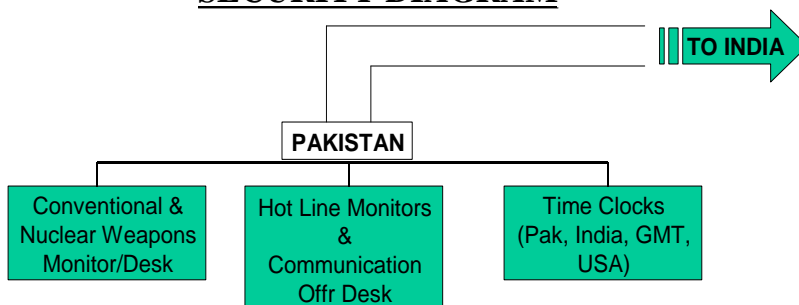
Annual consultative meetings are held to revise the standard formats for conveying notifications and to seek other improvements.

Source: Author's interviews with NRRC Director Harold Kowalski, Jr. and NRRC staff (August 22, 2002); Barry M. Blechman and Michael Krepon, *Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers* (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1986), pp. 1-26; and *Brochure on The U.S. NRRC: 1988–2002* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 2002).

Annex D:

PAKISTAN's NRRC

COMMUNICATION & EQUIPMENT SECURITY DIAGRAM



- Double monitor and receiver systems for redundancy.
- Initially a single separate channel could be used by either country through one or two different commercial satellites as appropriate. However, for communication security, cyphers may need to be exchanged mutually to prevent interception by any other country.
- DG NRRC may have direct priority links with the following: -

-Secretary MOFA	- Secretary NSC/Security Advisor to President	- DG Operations (Army, Navy, AF)
-Secretary MOD	- DG SPD	- DG ISI