



South Asia's Precarious Rivalry

- India, Pakistan and Nuclear Weapons -

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Abstract

Highlighting global nuclear threats in public discourse and the deteriorated relations between India and Pakistan since 2016, this paper explores the role of nuclear weapons in staving off conflict and promoting regional security. It considers that the traditional theoretical models of nuclear relations borne out of Cold War ideology are incomplete and that the Indian-Pakistani case demonstrates that a significant and real threat is posed by nuclear weapons. Since nuclear weapons are central within the wider thesis of nuclear deterrence and the associated dilemmas, and the Indian-Pakistani motivations to 'go nuclear' should be simultaneously evaluated along with their nuclear doctrine/policy. Through a study of the conflict between India and Pakistan over seven decades, this paper not only details how nuclear weapons have modified the frame for the conflict but also argues that they have not reduced potential conflicts and have even raised the risks.

Key words: South Asia, India, Pakistan, nuclear weapons, security

1. Introduction

Home to over one-fifth of the world's population including the largest portion of the world's poor, the Indian sub-continent has long been in a vicious circle of conflict. However since 1971, there has not been state-on-state war between the two (Sagan & Waltz, 2002: 115). In this sense, Indo-Pakistani relations have improved. This period represents a time when Indian and Pakistani nuclearization process was in the offing. The two

states displayed restrained conflict behaviour in crisis both before and after May 1998 nuclear tests. Superficially, the activity appears to show a significant thawing in relations; however deeper analysis of the situation is not so optimistic. 19 years since nuclearization, the triggers of conflict between them still remain. Importantly, the introduction of nuclear weapons has further complicated those triggers. Severn decades since their independence from the British in 1947, enduring hostile relations have institutionalized

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mutual animosity at every level. War rhetoric continually threatens security and stability of the region. Ganguly and Kapur acknowledging the criticality of Indo-Pakistani conflict relations assert: “Such a violent relationship, when combined with nuclear weapons, could prove to be a combustible mix (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 2).”

Despite this, the sustained economic growth of India and Pakistan’s pivotal role in the US-led ‘War on Terror’ in Afghanistan in recent decades have made the South Asian security framework a subset of the global security complex. Nonetheless, Indian and Pakistani nuclear behaviour does not fit with the traditional models of nuclear weapons in international relations that are based on the Cold War nuclear rivalry; thus the two states are continuously threatening to disprove the very essence of nuclear deterrence. Furthermore, the security dilemma in South Asia is continuing to deepen. India’s sustained economic growth and its strategic considerations are augmenting its military modernization; thereby further increasing Indo-Pakistani conventional asymmetry in favour of India. Accordingly, Pakistan increasingly considers its reliance to be more on its nuclear deterrence for maintaining the regional balance of power.

The 19 years of nuclear experience offers a puzzling picture about future South Asian security and stability. Optimists argue that both India and Pakistan “will be deterred from starting any military conflict in which there is a serious possibility of escalation to the use of nuclear weapons (Sagan, 2001: 1).” Therefore, they claim that nuclear weapons have ended the probability of another Indo-Pakistani war, despite their

antagonistic past. On the other hand pessimists caution that nuclear weapons will destabilize South Asia. Sagan argues, “India and Pakistan face a dangerous nuclear future. ...Imperfect humans inside imperfect organizations...will someday fail to produce secure nuclear deterrence (Sagan & Waltz, 2002: 106–107).” Furthermore, the absence of direct state-on-state war in the past also does not completely negate the possibility of war between India and Pakistan in the future. The Kashmir issue and dangerous deployments on the either side of the Line of Control (LoC) are some of the ongoing alarming potential triggers between the two states. Beyond these direct triggers, both states exist within a mosaic of regional interstate and intrastate conflict. Aside from the fearful Indo-Pakistani rivalry, intrastate conflicts continuously threaten to bring them to confrontation.

South Asia as a region is a recent phenomenon and its definition varies. For the purposes of this paper, South Asia will be considered to be comprised of the eight member states of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC): Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Maldives, and Sri Lanka (SAARC Secretariat, n.d.).

Following a brief introduction of the historical rivalry between India and Pakistan, this paper will evaluate the security situation spanning from 1980s through to 2017. In doing so, the evolving strategic context will be put into perspective and nuclear weapons will be central within the wider thesis of nuclear deterrence and the associated dilemmas. The section will then conclude establishing Indo-Pakistani motivations to ‘go nuclear’, simultaneously evaluating their nuclear doctrine/policy.

II. The Nuclearization of South Asia

As will be explored in a later part of this section, the nuclear aspirations of India and Pakistan were not a 1990s evolution and instead date back to the 1950s and 1960s respectively. It is widely believed that by the late 1980s both had acquired a de facto nuclear capability though it was not until 1998 that confirmation was made available (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 37). Therefore, Indo-Pakistani nuclear relationships can be accounted in two distinct periods: pre-1998 and post-1998 periods. The former period is characterized by a relatively peaceful relationship, while the latter again constituted two distinct sub-periods: the immediate post-1998 period characterized by two near-war situations and a period of improved relations that continued for most of the last two decades.

The absence of a hot war from 1971 to 1998 could be argued to have taken place within the logic of nuclear deterrence in the South Asian context. It is also true that the asymmetric power relations, evident after the 1971 war prevented Pakistan from resorting to direct war with India. Therefore it provided Pakistan an alternative motivation to engage in asymmetric warfare with India; instances being Pakistani proxies in Punjab and Kashmir.

In the mid-1980s while Pakistan was a frontline state in the US-backed Mujahedeen's campaign against Soviet forces in Afghanistan, the Indian government was dealing with the secessionists' movement for an independent 'Khalistan.' India claims that Pakistan took the advantage of the circumstance and supported insurgency in Punjab (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 38). Highlighting the

Pakistani policy, Ganguly asserts, "Indeed it was India's growing frustrations with Pakistani involvement in the Punjab that in part, led India to embark on the Operation Brasstacks military exercise in 1987 (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 38)." In response fearing that it would end in an all-out war against Pakistan in the guise of exercise, Pakistan also mobilized its armed forces on the frontiers. Extensive diplomatic manoeuvre finally de-escalated the conflict.

However, the alleged Pakistani support to Jammu and Kashmir insurgency resulted in another round of military crises between India and Pakistan, officially known as the '1990 crisis.' Ganguly cites Chari, Cheema and Cohen who claimed that, "The 1990 crisis arose primarily out of an Indian attempt to intimidate Pakistan and coerce it into ceasing its support for the Kashmir insurgency (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 40)." The crisis kept alive the chance of war between the two with reciprocated mobilization and counter mobilization along the Line of Control. The Pakistani military conducted its large Zarb-i-Momim military exercise in December 1989 and did not demobilize after the end of the exercise. India on the other hand deployed three military divisions into Kashmir and one division in Punjab (Hersh, 1993: 56-73). At the height of the tension approximately two hundred thousand Indian forces were fielded against roughly a hundred thousand troops across the Line of Control in Kashmir. Finally, American diplomatic manoeuvres, including that of US foreign Secretary 'Robert Gates mission', deescalated the crisis (Basrur, 2008: 57). For nuclear analysts, the crisis holds importance because it was at this time that both were believed

to have acquired incipient nuclear capability.

Many believed that Indo-Pakistani nuclear capability will bring about harmony and tranquillity in the subcontinent. However, Pakistani support to Kashmir insurgency continued even after 1990s. At the height of Pakistani support in the immediate wake of Indo-Pakistani nuclear tests in May 1998, Pakistani intruders penetrated up to twelve kilometres into Indian Territory and occupied key heights on the Indian side of the LOC (Basrur, 2008: 57-58). Essentially, this ended the longest period of tranquillity in the sub-continent since independence from Great Britain in 1947 (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 47). The Indian military counter attacked the intruders to maintain the sanctity of LOC. Despite greater possibility of the confrontation escalating into full fledged war and potentially the nuclear war, Indian counter offensive was largely restricted to the Indian side of the border. Finally, Pakistan withdrew following American pressure (Basrur, 2008: 58).

India's two prong strategy to compel Pakistan helped to de-escalate the conflict temporarily. India directly threatened Pakistan with war if Pakistan did not concede to Indian demands. On the diplomatic front, India put American pressure on Pakistan (Basrur, 2008: 62). Responding to the pressure, the Pakistani President publicly denounced terrorism, outlawed several Jihadist groups and arrested several members of the terrorist groups, and pledged to prevent Pakistani territory from being used to encourage terrorism in Kashmir. On top of that, the diplomatic tour of the US Secretary of State Colin Powell in January 2002 assured both India and Pakistan toward normalization of the relations (Sood & Sawhney,

2003: 80). However this did not encourage Indian de-mobilization from the Jammu and Kashmir sector. With the killings of 32 people at the Indian Army camp at Kaluchak Kashmir on May 14, 2002, the crisis re-erupted. War rhetoric on the Indian side indicated intent to strike Pakistan. At the height of the tensions, another American diplomatic intervention forced Musharraf to promise a permanent end to infiltration. This brought to the end of the Indian Operation Parakram and subsequent withdrawal of the forces to the peacetime locations (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 56-57).

In the decade that followed the 2001-02 crisis, there was not any major militarized crisis between India and Pakistan; Indo-Pakistani relations witnessed a notable improvement (Swami, 2011). In arguing for improvements in relations Basrur points out that,

With each episode (crisis) it was becoming clearer that the use of force was not a viable option ... These attempts heightened the risk of unintended war breaking out. With each crisis, the experience of interdependence became sharper, bringing into question existing ways of approaching the larger political conflict (Kashmir) between the two countries (Basrur, 2008: 63).

However, it should not be understood that the period since 2002 was tension-free. There was a significant number of terrorist activities in India supported by Pakistan. Most threatening aspect of the newest development was that the Pakistan-backed terrorist activities expanded

beyond Kashmir. Notable examples include the 2005 Diwali bombing in Delhi, the 2006 railway station bombing in Mumbai, and the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack. In all the cases, terrorists were linked to Pakistan. However quite distinctively from its strategic culture, India did not initiate any provocative military measures like on similar previous occasions. Instead, India embarked on a diplomatic campaign against Pakistan (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 72–73). India who resorted to military measures during the Kargil War and the 2001–02 crisis despite a nuclear background surprisingly chose to avoid war rhetoric despite tremendous popular pressure on the leadership to act (Ramesh, 2008).

Analysis of the post 2001–02 crisis suggests a major strategic development as being the reason for improvement on Indo–Pakistani relations: since 2003 Pakistan became the most important non–NATO ally in the US–led war on terror in Afghanistan. The Pakistani military became involved in counter terrorist operations in Pakistan but not to the US satisfaction, while simultaneously Pakistan became dissatisfied with American drone attacks in Pakistani territory and incursions such as to acquire Osama Bin Laden. This change in the US–Pakistani relationship would influence how India could most effectively engage Pakistan knowing that the US has consistently acted as the balancing force. Both India and the US would now apply diplomatic pressure to seek Pakistani support in dismantling sources international terrorism.

The prospect of improving Indo–Pakistani relationships was evident up until the 2016 Pathankot attack. Terror attacks had significantly dropped. Since the 2016 attack, subsequent attacks

have significantly increased in frequency and contributed to a major deterioration in relations. Nonetheless, the most important attribute of their present relationship is the absence of war rhetoric even in the event of provoking incidents. With nuclear issues far from the centre of discourse and military operations being conducted despite their presence, the present relations between India and Pakistan are linked to strategic considerations more than to nuclear deterrence. Arguably, Pakistani policy in Kashmir is proactive to which Indian strategy has been responsive thus far. Therefore, one can argue that whether the present relations continue to endure depends on Pakistani foreign policy towards India and many other complicated Pakistani domestic considerations. On the other hand the deeper analysis of their motives to go nuclear also suggests a link to their conflict behaviour in the past, at present as well as in the foreseeable future.

Confirming to the realist model, both India and Pakistan claimed security imperatives of their nuclear tests. India's first Atomic Energy Act was enacted in 1948 (two years after that of the US) leading to the establishment of Indian Atomic Energy Commission. Later in the year 1954 Indian Department of Atomic Energy was established (Weiss, 2010: 256). Despite nuclear test in 1974, Indian Nuclear Program was claimed as peaceful until 1998. Ganguly argues that, "India's crushing defeat in the 1962 Sino–Indian War, China's 1964 nuclear test, Chinese threats to intervene in the 1965 Indo–Pakistani War, and the existing nuclear powers refusal to grant security guarantee" ultimately led the Indians to adopt the nuclear option openly. Similarly, Pakistani nuclear desire

was first seen in 1957 with the establishment of Atomic Energy Commission in 1957. On the Pakistani motives, the Pakistani nuclear program was basically driven by the stalemated 1965 Indo-Pakistani War, US refusal to supply arms to Pakistan, the crushing defeat to India in the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War, India's growing conventional superiority and Indian nuclear test in 1974 (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 18).

India has often cited the Chinese threat as the main rationale for their nuclear aspirations. Indian Defence Minister George Fernandez claimed that, "China, not Pakistan was India's potential threat No. 1 (Carranza, 2009: 46)." Though India decided to remain non-nuclear during 1960s, the government decided to keep the nuclear option open in 1970s. India cited the Chinese threat being central in its decision not to become a party to Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996 (Carranza, 2009: 46-47). However, the notable improvement in the conflict-ridden Sino-Indian relations in the 1990s did not harmonize with such Indian claims. Carranza notes that,

After Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China in December 1988 both countries agreed to refrain from the use of 'military capabilities' in bilateral relations and signed four significant confidence-building border agreements in September 1993, including mutual troops withdrawals from the border. A final settlement of a of the border dispute was a real possibility after Chinese President Jiang Zemin's visit to New Delhi in late 1996, when a fifth border agreement was signed (Carranza, 2009: 47-48).

Furthermore it is also evident that, "unresolved Indo-Pakistani conflict over Kashmir was more likely to result in war than the Sino-Indian border dispute (Carranza, 2009: 48)." Therefore, the realist security model does not fully satisfy India's decision to 'go nuclear'. Had this been the case, India would have tested nuclear weapons after the Chinese test of 1964 instead of waiting until May 1998. This proposition has further support from Frey who raised the following questions: "Why did India develop a nuclear-weapons-capable infrastructure before 1964 in the absence of any nuclear threat? Why did India wait 34 years before it responded to the Chinese nuclear threat that emerged in 1964? Why did India develop the bomb first and only afterwards contemplate how to deploy it? Why did India accept the equalizing effects of nuclear weapons vis-à-vis Pakistan which, in doing so, voided much of its conventional superiority? (Carranza, 2009: 46; Frey, 2006: 17)" This suggests status and prestige models as more convincing than the security model of their nuclear motivations.

For Pakistan, the Indian threat has always been clear in strategic thinking. As Carranza notes, "Pakistan has a strong security rationale for openly 'going nuclear': to deter a conventional Indian attack and to achieve nuclear parity with India (Carranza, 2009: 51)." The lack of American support to Pakistan in the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965, Indian refusal to sign the NPT in 1968, the humiliating defeat in the Bangladesh War in 1971, and the Indian nuclear test in 1974 clearly incentivized Pakistani nuclear aspirations (Carranza, 2009: 16-21). (See Chakma 9-38 for detail analysis of Pakistani nuclear motivations) Here the realist security model largely amplifies

President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's public statement, "If India developed an atomic bomb, we too develop one even if we have to eat grass ... because there is no alternative to (the) atomic bomb (Jalal & Hasan, 1970: 20)" and that Pakistani nuclear motivation is solely Indo-centric.

Apart from sub-continental dynamics of nuclear proliferation, the nuclear motivations of India and Pakistan are to a larger extent a consequence of the security dilemma that is in play in the region. According to Hagerty, a "Security dilemma arises when a state's mechanisms for increasing its security negatively impact the security and threat perceptions of the other state (Hagerty, 1998: 67)." The historical dimension of Indo-Pakistani rivalry coupled with their geographic contiguity complicates security dilemmas of both India and Pakistan. While China's primary threat perception stems from the United States role in the Asia Pacific region (Chari, 2003: 16). The Chinese security dilemma at the higher end instigates the South Asian security dilemma. In this context, Hersh asserts,

China's desire to catch up with the United States would oblige India to prevent an adverse strategic balance. India's need for a secure nuclear deterrent against China involves expanding Indian nuclear weapons and delivery capabilities (Hersh, 1993: 65).

The relentless Indian pursuit of nuclear development was in part to bridge the strategic balance as a consequence of Indian security dilemma. Hersh further asserts India's China specific nuclear direction that naturally impacts

the Indo-Pakistani equation because it increases Indian capability vis-à-vis Pakistan (Hersh, 1993: 65). Therefore the Indo-Pakistani nuclear dynamic is inherently linked with Sino-Indian nuclear dynamic. From this perspective, Pakistani nuclear policy can be clearly understood as a response to the perceived threat from India (Cohen, Chari & Cheema, 2000). Therefore, in order to maintain the strategic balance Pakistan will further seeks to advance its nuclear capability.

In reality, this poses a serious challenge in establishing stable deterrence in South Asia. Khan and Lavoy assert that,

The conventional wisdom that nuclear weapon capabilities raise caution in bilateral relations is proved wrong in South Asian nuclear regime. India blames Pakistan for raising nuclear dangers by harbouring asymmetric strategies against India, while Pakistan counters it saying Indian nuclear doctrine and increasing military capability has left Pakistan with no other option. This illuminates the locus of instability in the region (Khan & Lavoy, 2008: 234-237).

On top of that the historical animosity between India and China and India and Pakistan, and the longstanding alliance between Pakistan and China reinforces the 'enemy's enemy is my friend' analogy for China and Pakistan in the South Asian security framework. This adds to Indian security dilemma. On the other hand, this underscores significance of 'China factor' in South Asian security.

III. Doctrinal Approaches in a Nuclear Context

Given the asymmetric Indian military superiority over Pakistan, Indian motivation is more of status and prestige than security, while Pakistan's motivation is solely based on Kenneth Waltz's 'military logic of self-help systems (Sagan & Waltz, 1995: 2).' As noted above, Indian content and Pakistani discontent on the status quo of Kashmir suggests the possibility of Pakistan initiating war with India is more likely than vice versa. Therefore, the security and stability of the region depends on how Pakistan uses its nuclear arsenal. Apart from that advancement of Pakistan's foreign policy toward India and to what extent Pakistan will link its nuclear weapons in Kashmir issue largely configures Pakistani strategic behaviour.

In February 2000, Pakistan declared the setting up of a National Command Authority (NCA). Thus far Pakistan has pursued a policy of ambiguity in its nuclear strategy. Chakma asserts that, "nuclear ambiguity could be a part of Pakistan's nuclear strategy as long as it serves their strategic objectives (Chakma, 2011: 76-77)." As discerned from policy and application, Pakistani nuclear strategy has remained consistent since the inception of its nuclear weapons program in 1970s. According to Chakma, "Pakistan's nuclear doctrine seeks to deter both nuclear and conventional threats from India (Chakma, 2009: 48)." This necessitates Pakistan's nuclear 'first use policy' given Pakistan's conventional inferiority. Pakistan's decision to decline India's 'no first use' offer made that first use policy even more definite (Izuyama & Ogawa, 2003: 79). Indian strategic reluctance to

use force against Pakistan in the wake of Mumbai terror attack 2008 and subsequent improvement in Indo-Pakistani nuclear relationship can also be argued to be a result of nuclear stability. This until 2016 evidently had reinforced Pakistan's Low Intensity Conflict strategy in Kashmir because of the absence of Indian military strikes against Pakistan.

The scope of the Kargil War gave India a strategic position which evolved as a Pakistan specific Indian 'Cold Start Strategy.' Arguing that 'Indian nuclear doctrine retains the scope for conventional war-fighting' Khursid Khan claims that the "Indian aim to fight and win a conventional war with Pakistan exploiting the strategic space beneath the nuclear threshold, is highly risky, given the geographical contiguity (Khan, 2012)." From this doctrinal perspective therefore, there is every reason to believe that despite having the intention to establish credible nuclear deterrence, there are inherently dangerous prospects for an arms race with the escalation of crises to much larger conflicts.

The Pakistani conception that the nuclear capability gave them a 'strategic equalizer' to Indian conventional superiority significantly dictates Pakistani strategic behaviour toward India. When extra regional alliances in favour of Pakistan are not possible due to other global considerations, and when keeping alive the arms race is impossible due to Pakistan's lesser economic capacity; proxies remain, the only alternative.

The Kargil conflict and 2001-02 military stand-off are two ideal examples of as to how the acquisition of nuclear capability in 1998 aggravated the underlying tensions between them. In the mean

time the context in which these crises were resolved illuminates caution that nuclear weapons were developed to limit the crisis from turning into a full scale war. Arguing that the 'Soviet-Chinese clashes of 1969, the US-North Korean confrontation in 1990s and Indo-Pakistani crisis in 1999 and 2001-02 did not end in a full scale war is the demonstration of the nuclear power,' Basrur claims "nuclear rivals avoid not only nuclear war, but conventional war as well (Khan, 2012)." The credible nuclear deterrence that the US and the USSR established in global nuclear regime engendered caution during crisis situations, thereby establishing nuclear peace theory by avoiding war. Scott D. Sagan argues that the 'Indo-Pakistani nuclear rivalry differs from the US-Soviet rivalry in three main ways: first, the South Asian nuclear arsenal is much smaller in size and less sophisticated; second, civil-military relations in Pakistan where the military has complete control over nuclear weapons, this is in contrast to assertive civilian control in both the US and Soviet Union; and third, the differences in mutual understanding, proximity, and hostility between the two nuclear rivals. India and Pakistan share a common history, territorial dispute, geographical proximity and more than six decades of enduring hostility which was entirely absent in the US-Soviet nuclear rivalry (Sagan & Waltz, 2002: 91-92).' This is where the problem lies in establishing credible nuclear deterrence in Indo-Pakistani nuclear relations and that is what the security and stability of the region depends on.

Both Indian and Pakistani nuclear doctrine aspires to achieve minimum credible deterrence. Deterrence becomes credible when "threat of

punishment is believed by the aggressor and left at him (Kilgour & Zagare, 1991: 305)," and minimum deterrence is defined as "assured survivability against attacks (Rais, 2007: 111-25).' Pakistani nuclear 'first use policy' in policy terms enhances the credibility of their deterrence. Since the inception of the nuclear program, Pakistan has consistently maintained ambiguity in its nuclear policy. Non-declaration of formal nuclear policy also forms a part of the policy. This keeps India guessing about Pakistani nuclear threshold and hence makes Pakistan's nuclear deterrence more credible. The Pakistani proxy war is the result of Pakistani understanding that it will avert Indian conventional aggression. The counter strategy to Pakistani proxy war is Indian 'Cold Start Strategy' which envisages the possibility of 'limited war' under the nuclear umbrella. Indian reluctance to escalate crises during the Kargil War and the 2001-02 crisis proves the robustness of nuclear credibility in South Asia. Nonetheless the irrationality of the decision-makers is often considered a cause for potential nuclear danger. Therefore, the sub-continental nuclear deterrence remains problematic because of the possibility of escalation of conflict into nuclear war between the nuclear powers.

In the mean time, the moratorium of further nuclear testing is a positive sign. In addition, Basrur argues: "the most remarkable feature of the Indo-Pakistani nuclear relationship is the non-deployment of nuclear forces which have provided a measure of stability to an otherwise fractious and unsteady relationship (Basrur, 2008: 68-69)." These efforts indicate that India and Pakistan understand the 'nuclear weapon' and will

act rationally. In reality, the recent escalations in tensions since 2016 have been characterized by heated discourse but the threat of nuclear weapons has not been a major feature. Accordingly, it can be argued that the existing nuclear doctrine and posture makes South Asian nuclear regime essentially stable and secure.

IV. Brasstacks and the Application of Nuclear Thinking

In regard to the Brasstacks crisis, the pessimists argue nuclear weapons played a part in erupting the 1987 and 1990 crisis. They argue the 'Brasstacks Exercise' was an Indian military manoeuvre designed to provoke Pakistani aggression, in a guise of which to launch preventive strike against Pakistani nuclear facilities so as to cap the incipient Pakistani nuclear program (Sagan & Waltz, 2002: 93-94), whereas the 1990 crisis is the result of Pakistani asymmetric warfare against India, emboldened by the potential acquisition of a nuclear capability. In addition, it is the Pakistani conclusion that it could cause catastrophic damage to India without huge political and material costs (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 38-39). In addition, the Pakistani thought process that this could provide an opportunity to attract international attention to the Kashmir issue and gave impetus to the Pakistani asymmetric strategy. Further analysis suggests that the crises did not escalate to full-scale war because of an awareness of both the parties to the dangers of nuclear escalation. Ganguly argues "this can be attributed to the mutual possession of nuclear weapons (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 42)." Although optimists challenge

the pessimists view on role of nuclear weapons in the escalation of the crises, they maintain that in overall it had stabilizing effects in Indo-Pakistani relations. To further reinforce, Ganguly quotes K. Subhramanyam's argument on the stabilizing role of the nuclear weapons,

In 1965 when Pakistan carried out operation Gibraltar and sent in infiltrators, India sent its army across the cease fire line ... escalated into a full-scale war. In 1990 when Pakistan once again carried out a massive infiltration of terrorists trained in Pakistan, India chose not to resort to military action against Pakistan during 1990 crisis, ... stemmed from India's knowledge of the existence of an incipient Pakistani nuclear weapons program (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 42).

Both the arguments are equally true. The Brasstacks crisis and 1990 crisis is the impact of nuclear weapons, in the mean time it is also true that possession of nuclear capability prevented them from going to full-scale war unlike in previous occasions. Therefore, evidently nuclear weapons can have dual stabilizing and destabilizing effects on South Asian security.

The post-May 1998 unfolding made the pessimists argument more powerful as a consequence of Kargil War and the 2001-02 military stand-off. South Asian security analysts are strongly divided on the impact of overt nuclearisation for the outbreak and resolution of Kargil War. The nuclear optimists argue that Kargil War was a consequence of shift in Pakistani strategic thinking and not necessarily an outcome of nuclear weapons. Rather it erupted

more due to structural causes than any more immediate cause. Ganguly asserts that the Kargil War had its origin in “Pakistan’s interest in jump-starting the Kashmir insurgency (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 47).” India’s extraordinarily restraint behaviour in the conflict supports this. Waltz draws a lesson from Kargil that “the presence of nuclear weapons prevented escalation ... to a full-scale war. This contrasts with the 1965 war, in which both were armed only with conventional weapons (Sagan & Waltz, 2002: 115).” In support of Waltz’s position, arguing that India would not have limited the scope of their operations in the absence of nuclear weapons Ganguly asserts,

Despite the hostility of the BJP government toward Pakistan, its profound sense of betrayal about the Lahore peace process, the significant reserve forces at hand, and electoral pressures, the regime kept the entire conflict limited in scope and dimensions. It refused to open a second front [unlike in earlier circumstances] to alleviate pressures in Kashmir; it instructed the Indian Air Force (IAF) not to carry out sorties across the line of control; and it sought to terminate the conflict as soon as the last intruders had been evicted from the Indian side of LOC (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 49).

Nonetheless, the timing means that pessimists maintain that the Kargil War essentially is the confirmation of the destabilizing effects of nuclear weapons. Even if this was to be the case, while the Indian government considered escalation of the conflict, it did not do so to the point of deploying

the nuclear capability (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 98–99). Former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s statement supports this assessment:

... Nothing was ruled out. If ground realities had had required military operations beyond the LoC, we would have seriously considered it. We never thought atomic weapons would be used, even if we had decided to cross the LoC (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 52).

Nuclear weapons therefore facilitated Pakistani conflict behaviour in precipitating the conflict and then prevented the same conflict from escalation as a result of Indian fear of nuclear war. This confirms the continuous relevance of Glenn Snyder’s stability/instability paradox: “the greater the stability of the ‘strategic’ balance of terror, the lower the stability of the overall balance at its lower levels of violence (Snyder, 1961: 198–99)” in South Asian nuclear regime.

As a consequence another much dangerous crisis was erupted only two years after the Kargil War when Pakistan backed terrorists attacked Indian Parliament in 2001. The 2001–02 military stand-off further supported the pessimists’ view point that there would be a real danger of a nuclear Armageddon in South Asia (Sagan & Waltz, 2002). The Indian adoption of ‘Cold Start Doctrine’ on 28 April 2004 to counter Pakistani asymmetric strategy in Kashmir underpins Sagan’s fright of nuclear fall out in South Asia (Chakma, 2011: 67). In actuality, this doctrine allows India “to mobilize quickly and undertake multiple retaliatory attacks in response to specific challenges posed by Pakistan’s proxy wars in Kashmir (Ladwig III,

2007/08: 158).” Such a shift in Indian strategy is most threatening of all. Even if the leaders act rationally there remains a possible escalation of conflict into nuclear war in the Indo-Pakistani realm. The deep-rooted mutual animosity, geographic contiguity, and enduring security dilemma amongst others challenge nuclear optimism.

As a part of the international system, the South Asian sub-system always had impacts on the international system. Following the 9/11 terror attacks, the global strategic environment hugely altered. Accordingly, the regional strategic context also changed when the United States undertook the Global War on Terror in Afghanistan. This put Pakistani asymmetric strategy towards India (that had become an established foreign policy tool for more than a decade) in peril. President Bush’s warning post 9/11 to Pakistan that ‘Pakistan would either side with the United States in the (new) war against terrorism or else be treated as a terrorist state … forced President Musharraf to abandon support for the Taliban regime in Afghanistan (Ladwig III, 2007/08: 99).’ India, on the other hand as the victim from state sponsored terrorism from Pakistan enjoyed diplomatic high ground not only in the region but also in the wider international system.

In reality, this meant that ‘Indian military action against terrorist threats became completely justified after terrorist attacks on the Jammu and Kashmir legislature on 1 October 2001, and a similar attack on the Indian parliament on 13 December (Basrur, 2008: 60–61).’ Primarily, it was the Indian fear that by opening up the Indo-Pakistani war, it could anger its newly-made strategic ally, the

United States (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 58). In addition, India’s failure to quickly mobilize forces prevented conflict escalation in the immediate wake of Parliament terror attack and subsequently the American intervention facilitated end of Operation Parakram (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 55–58). Another argument is that, ‘President Musharraf’s public assertion not to allow Pakistani territory to be used for any terrorist activities’ satisfied, at least on paper, the Indian objective of operation Parakram to curb terrorism emanating from Pakistan (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 58).’ Nonetheless, there exists also the argument that America intervened during the crisis precisely because of the nuclear showdown (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 58).

Therefore, analysis of the 2001–02 crisis provides a mixed picture of the role of nuclear weapons in security and stability in the region. At this point of time, Carranza’s argument holds value:

Nuclear weapons are great equalizer. India can only ignore this basic fact of international relations at its own peril. India’s …May 1998 nuclear tests pushed Pakistan further into nuclear club. By testing three nuclear-capable ballistic missiles at the peak of the May–June 2002 crisis, Pakistan made the point that India’s comparative advantage in conventional weapons has been nullified since the May 1998 nuclear tests (Carranza, 2009: 89).

The relative decline of terrorist incidents in the immediate aftermath of 2001–02 crisis invited arguments and counter arguments as to what extent

nuclear deterrence has played a part to improve Indo-Pakistani relations. Ganguly argues that,

The post crisis cold peace in South Asia was because of the three non-nuclear factors: first, fear of the Pakistani military regime of undermining the invaluable US-Pakistani relationships; second, Indian coercive diplomacy that exacted a significant material price on Pakistan and third, reconciliatory approach of the Congress-led government of India (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 65).

Kapur further argues that the improvement is primarily the result of Pakistani policy shift towards Kashmir and not necessarily from nuclear deterrence. Arguably, this is a consequence of the shifting regional strategic environment and domestic security situation in Pakistan in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, that thereby impeded Pakistan's ability to pursue its asymmetric strategy. Pakistani involvement in counter insurgency/ counter terrorism campaign at home diverted Pakistani attention and resources from Kashmir conflict (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 68). Notably, after the American pivot away from the Middle East and the drawdown of forces in Afghanistan the American pressure on Pakistan has subsided and conflict has remerged between the two regional rivals.

From the Indian perspective, India's cost-benefit analysis prompted India to avoid conflict with Pakistan. Ganguly's assessment provides sufficient evidence on the same. Evidence of this is the Indian restraint to militant attacks from Pakistan in the Indian Territory: the Diwali bombing in New Delhi in October 2005, the railway station bombing in

Mumbai in July 2006, the Mumbai terror attack 2008, and the Pathankot attack in 2016. Under other circumstances, each of these could have easily led to Indo-Pakistani confrontation. Nevertheless, India took no rhetorical or military steps to threaten Pakistan as they have done in the past (Ganguly & Kapur, 2010: 72-73).

V. Precedents for the Future

The above assessment of the implications of nuclear weapons on the South Asian security environment in the past and at present offers to some degree a prospect to extrapolate their likely effects on the region's future. The nuclear weapons have motivated new strategic developments in South Asia by facilitating the outbreak of Indo-Pakistani crises. Growing conventional asymmetry between India and Pakistan and the Indian pursuit of 'Cold Start Doctrine' against any Pakistan-backed militant activities in India fundamentally decreased Pakistani nuclear threshold. Such a disorder in the regional balance of power increases the possibility of arms race, thereby increasing the likelihood of a serious Indo-Pakistani conflict in the years to come.

The ending of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan in 2014 meant a decrease in strategic significance for Pakistan. The unpredictability of its internal politics is likely to affect the regional security dynamics along with its increasing international alienation. Threats from the Trump administration to withhold aid to Pakistan further jeopardise this position even if they have not manifested to date. Global concern will continue to restrain Indian and Pakistani decision makers

from taking irrational decisions. Therefore extrapolating from the decade of Indo-Pakistani relations, it can be argued that in the near short term - Indo-Pakistani relation is likely to be stable, even though unfriendly, and that the two would not likely resort to major war. The evaluation of their past nuclear behaviour, suggests that future Indo-Pakistani conflict behaviour will be continuously dictated by the developing of the strategic environment in the region in which they operate.

The strategic environment hugely changed after nuclearisation: first, prospects for Indian economic growth have underlined increases in Indian military spending; the introduction of Indian 'Cold start Doctrine' facilitated by the post-nuclearization crises; Pakistan's domestic problems, the US war on terror in Afghanistan and Pakistan's strategic significance to the US.

The terrorist attacks against the United States and the following US-led war on terrorism significantly affected Indo-Pakistani strategic interactions. Pakistan's opportunity to 'mend fences' with its erstwhile (often unreliable) ally, the United States by abandoning its support to the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and conducting anti-militant operations in Pakistan dramatically altered the strategic landscape in South Asia. However, siding with the US in the war on terrorism cost Pakistan the domestic support gained from opposition to pro-US policy from fundamental Islamic groups, and potentially the loss of Afghanistan as the strategic buffer in any future military confrontation with India (Carranza, 2009: 164-165).

The nuclear factor has added a new dimension

to the persisting irritants between India and Pakistan. They are engaged in a nuclear arms race to modernize update and strengthen their nuclear-deterrent capabilities (Jain, 2010: 76). Accordingly, traditional theories are inapplicable to India and Pakistan, including for instance Kenneth Waltz's argument that there is 'zero probability' of a major war among nuclear weapons states.

The Indo-Pakistan peace process hinges on the ability of Pakistan's political establishment to control terrorist groups from wreaking havoc in India. It is doubtful how much control the civilian government in Islamabad can exert, given that various terrorist outfits have vowed to continue their jihad in Kashmir (Jain, 2010: 78). Deterioration since 2016 has created a situation that now appears heavily entrenched and will likely persevere for several years even if major diplomatic successes are achieved.

VI. Conclusion

South Asian security, albeit complex to define, depends more on the Indo-Pakistani relationships than any other single factor. Arguably, since their independence, India and Pakistan have shared a hostile past; a legacy that cripples any possibility of conflict resolution underpinning the intractability of the conflict. The territorial dispute over Kashmir amongst others has kept the prospects for conflict active in their bilateral relationship.

Evidently, the South Asian conflict dynamics are situation-dependent. That said, any unfolding strategic environment in the regional security framework contributes toward a development of a

new policy and strategy on the part of the major stakeholders, either India or Pakistan. Pakistan the weaker of the two, in particular attempted to achieve regional balance of power through equipping with qualitatively superior weapon systems, alliance with the extra-regional actors, proxy war tactics, and finally the nuclear weapons and its strategic application to outwit the asymmetric power disadvantage vis-à-vis India. The deep entrenched mutual animosity continues to revolve around the Kashmir issue. Sagan and Waltz argues, "The Indian government never accepted the United Nations mandate calling for a plebiscite to determine the fate of Kashmir. ... Pakistan, in turn, has never accepted Indian control over Kashmir (Sagan & Waltz, 2002: 89-90)."

In the decade that followed the 2001-02 crisis relatively calm Indo-Pakistani relations were observed despite the continuation of minor and occasional incidents. If we consider the length of Indo-Pakistani relations starting from 1947 (independence), in the first 24 years until 1971 they fought three wars, in the 46 years since then, they have fought only one war in 1999 (the Kargil War) (Sagan & Waltz, 2002: 115). This highlights the state of relative security and stability in the region. By 1971, India had already embarked into the nuclear program and conducted peaceful nuclear tests in 1974. Pakistan on its part decided to embark upon a nuclear path in 1972. By the late 1980s both had reportedly achieved the nuclear capability before they demonstrated in May 1998. Therefore the question 'Is south Asia more or less secured with nuclear weapons?' becomes relevant. It is because of the hostile past of the two with triggers of conflict remaining in place and the experience

of Cold War nuclear peace.

However, during the nuclearization process and post-nuclearization period the frequent crisis situations developed between the two. The assessment of the eruption of crises and their resolution has been linked to the nuclear weapons in one way or other. The 1988 Brasstacks crisis was a result of Indian motive to launch preventive strike against Pakistani nuclear facilities, while the 1990 crisis was the result of the Pakistani proxy war in Kashmir emboldened by the newly acquired nuclear capability. The role played by nuclear weapons cannot therefore only be attributed to conflict resolution.

The post May-1998 crises; the Kargil War and the 2001-02 military stand-off, like in earlier crises had roots connected to nuclear weapons. Most importantly, the declared nuclear capability for Pakistan was an incentive to strike India using its proxy war tactic in Kashmir and wider India without fearing the retaliatory counter attacks from powerful India. Despite the potential to escalate into full-scale wars, both crises ended on a limited note. Indian strategic patience during the Kashmir episode and the 2001-02 crisis, and the global concerns of escalation of crises into a nuclear war all point toward implications of the nuclear weapons for conflict resolution. Be it the fear demonstrated by either of the parties to conflict during crisis and the US diplomatic manoeuvres. These clearly demonstrate the role of nuclear weapons as both the stimulus of insecurity and instability as well as the sponsor of security and stability in the world's most volatile zone of conflict.

Devin Hagerty argues that "Nuclear states do not fight wars with each other (Hagerty, 1998: 184),"

a logic that is based upon the Cold War nuclear experience. The thesis has been challenged by India and Pakistan who after acquiring nuclear capabilities in 1999 immediately resorted to war. Despite that, the South Asian unfolding nuclear dynamics added another theory of possibility of limited conventional wars between the nuclear rivals, reasons being the Kargil War and the evolution of Indian Cold Start doctrine. However, this inherently possesses the nuclear dangers. The changes in the nuclear thinking in South Asian security have had clear implications on the nuclear behaviour of India and Pakistan; the acceptance of nuclear dangers by both during the two post May–1998 crises.

The elemental causes related to the national integrity such as fear for survival, self–interest and values/ideologies will continue dominating the Indo–Pakistani relationship. The religious imperatives in their relations as well as the political of the leadership intensify the momentum for conflict. Augmenting that, the structural causes such as the status/hold of the government in Pakistan, poor governance, inequality and social exclusion would continue to act as triggers. The Indo–Pakistani relationship embeds conflict as primary element of their interactions. Therefore possibility of war is real between the two.

The growing asymmetry of conventional forces leads many observers to focus on Pakistan as the regional source of nuclear threat but nuclear weapons are no longer the main asymmetrical strategy of Pakistan, this is demonstrated most clearly by its approaches to disrupting the Kashmir status quo. The major risks in going nuclear have, for better or worse, been overcome and the reality

of an international rivalry in a nuclear context is the primary concern. The role of nuclear weapons is here most clearly defined as modifying the frame in which the conflict interaction takes place. The presence of nuclear weapons is limiting some sources of conflict but it is not muting them. The conflict between the states remains incredibly intense and thus serious escalation despite the nuclear context could lead rational leaders into irrational situations. Nuclear weapons ultimately are instruments of war, and there is no guarantee that they will not be used in a future Indo–Pakistani conflict.

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남아시아의 불안정한 경쟁

– 인도, 파키스탄 그리고 핵무기의 정치학 –

국문초록 공적 영역에서 국제적 핵위협과 2016년부터 더더욱 악화되기 시작한 인도-파키스탄 관계를 중점으로, 본 논문은 파괴적 분쟁을 방지하고 지역안보 환경을 획기적으로 진전시키는 데 있어 핵무기가 어떠한 함의를 갖는지를 분석해 보려고 한다. 남아시아 문제에 있어 핵무기는 가장 중심적이면서도 군축과 연관된 문제들의 가장 핵심에 놓여있다. 따라서 인도와 파키스탄의 핵 정책과 독트린은 반드시 함께 분석되어야 할 부분이다. 본 논문은 냉전적 이념으로부터 파생된 전통적 핵전략 이론의 모델들은 불완전하며, 인도-파키스탄 사례가 그 뚜렷한 사례를 보여주고 있다는 점을 지적 하고자 한다. 인도와 파키스탄 사이의 지난 70년 분쟁사의 과정을 압축적으로 살펴봄으로써, 본 논문은 어떻게 핵무기가 그 분쟁의 구도를 형성해왔는지를 분석하고, 또한 핵무기가 분쟁 위협의 완화, 또는 종식의 가능성에 결코 긍정적인 역할을 할 수 없다는 점을 논할 것이다.

주제어 : 남아시아, 인도, 파키스탄, 핵무기, 안보

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