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# Deterrence Stability in Nuclear South Asia

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**A Study of Post-1998 India-Pakistan Conflict and the  
US Role**

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*A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The University of Auckland, 2011.*

## **Abstract**

The mainstream view regarding India-Pakistan relations holds that the acquisition of nuclear weapons by the two adversaries has established a stable deterrence relationship between them, thus making a war between them out of question. This study questions such wisdom regarding the two key players in South Asia and argues that developments in the India-Pakistan relationship since their overt nuclearization in 1998 provide little room for such optimism.

It contends that although no all-out conventional war has erupted in the region since 1998, the Kargil Crisis of 1999, the India-Pakistan Crisis of 2001-02, and the dynamics inherent in the relations between the two countries following these two crises amply demonstrate that the acquisition of nuclear weapons has not led to any stable deterrence between the two states.

This study argues that although nuclear weapons may lead to some degree of strategic restraint in the region, and may not be a source of instability by themselves, it is however over-deterministic to say that the mere presence of these weapons is a guarantee of deterrence stability in South Asia. It argues that since 1998 it has only been with the active involvement of international actors, chiefly led by the United States, that the two countries were able to escape all-out war, and a possible nuclear catastrophe.

The study thus concludes that despite the presence of nuclear weapons in the region, there exists a reasonable possibility that deterrence in the region may fail under certain conditions. This makes the India-Pakistan conflict extremely dangerous as there is a reasonable chance that nuclear weapons may be used if there is a breakdown of deterrence in the region.

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## Introduction

South Asia, or 'the Subcontinent,' is an important region of the world, both for its rich history and cultural diversity, as well as its human and natural resources. Occupying a large part of the Asian landmass, it contains almost one-sixth of humanity in terms of population. Unfortunately peace in the contemporary era has been elusive for the region. The region has continually suffered from violent conflict, including major wars, secessionist movements, ethnic conflicts and terrorist incidents.

This has been especially true for the two principal states in the region, India and Pakistan, whose long-standing rivalry has been an important factor inhibiting the development of the Subcontinent. The two countries came into being in 1947 as a result of the Indian independence movement against the colonial rule of the British. Pakistan was carved out of British India when the Muslims of the Subcontinent decided to pursue a destiny separate from the Hindu majority. British India was divided on the idea of their being contiguous Muslim-majority areas to the East and West of an Indian state, who could be united under the new singular state of Pakistan. Whereas Pakistan was much smaller than India at the time of independence in terms of population and area, it was still the fifth largest country of the world in terms of population at the time of the partition.

India's own singular importance to world affairs cannot be overstated. It is the second largest country in the world in terms of population and occupies a huge landmass. The post-Cold War period has witnessed tremendous development of the Indian economy making it one of the leading players in the international economy with plenty of potential still to realise. Coupled with that, the period has also seen a considerable rise in its political clout at the world stage.

On the other hand, Pakistan is relatively a much smaller country. When seen in absolute terms however, it is one of the largest states in the world in terms of population, being the sixth largest state. Starting from scratch at the time of its birth it has also made important progress in the economic domain.

Pakistan also has an important geographical location and has been attractive to the great powers in this regard since its creation. It is located on the cross-roads of Asia, joining the eastern, western, central and southern parts of Asia. Pakistan's coastal areas are the shortest access to sea for the land-locked but energy rich states of

Central Asia. Its coastal areas are also located at the aperture of the Persian Gulf which is regarded as the life-line of the world economy as it is the main export route for oil and gas from the countries within the Gulf region.

The two countries however have a chronic history of conflict starting right from the time of their creation. The tense beginnings of the relations between the two countries was highlighted by a number of disputes including conflicting territorial claims, problems regarding distribution of the assets of British India, refugee issues, and serious differences on water-sharing. Recent interactions between the two countries have been equally troublesome.

Since independence, the two countries have fought three major wars with each other. Apart from these, a number of 'crises' between the two countries over the course of history have erupted, each time leading to genuine fears of these crises escalating into full-fledged wars. Of all the disputes that have plagued the relations between the two countries, conflict over the territories of Kashmir has proved to be the most intractable between the two countries. The insurgency in Kashmir, that has persisted since 1989-90, has further complicated the relationship between the two states.

A new dangerous addition to the conflict-ridden relationship between the two countries has been the introduction of the nuclear capabilities to the defences of the two states. The introduction of nuclear weapons in the region has been characterized by a long, secretive and gradual process. The nuclear credentials of the two states had been debated since mid-1980s. Although nothing can be said with certainty about when actual acquisition of nuclear capability took place by the two states, it was established beyond any doubt that they had both acquired weapons when in the summer of 1998 the two countries conducted tit-for-tat nuclear tests.

## **The Study**

The nuclearization of India and Pakistan's military capabilities is an important turning point in the history of the already chequered relationship between the two countries. Ever since the nuclearization of the region questions have been raised in academic circles regarding the likely implications of the acquisition of these weapons would have on India-Pakistan relations. The debate about the likely implications of the spread of nuclear weapons is largely clustered around two views. 'Proliferation optimism,' which is based on rationalist understanding of state behavior and draws

largely from the US-USSR experience during the Cold War, holds that nuclear weapons lead to stable deterrence relationship between the adversaries. The other view is 'proliferation pessimism.' Proliferation pessimists are doubtful about the constructive impact of nuclear weapons on state behavior and believe the development as being a dangerous one because of the likely use of nuclear weapons during any violent encounter between nuclear-armed adversaries.

In short, the mainstream view about the India-Pakistan nuclear dyad in this regards is characterized by 'proliferation optimism.' In this case the argument is that the introduction of nuclear weapons in the region, because of their potential for inflicting unacceptable levels of damage, will lead to a stable deterrence relationship between the two countries. Such wisdom in the existing literature on the India-Pakistan relations holds that the acquisition of nuclear weapons by the two adversaries has established 'stable deterrence' between them and that a war between them is now out of question. In the post-nuclearization period, the two countries have consciously avoided war with each other because of the fear of use of nuclear weapons in such an eventuality.

This study however questions such wisdom regarding South Asia and argues that India-Pakistan relations in the post-1998 period provide little room for such optimism. It contends that the repeated occurrence of crises, their intensity, the instability that these have caused at the strategic level, and the way these were resolved, shows that the introduction of nuclear weapons cannot be thought of as a guarantee of deterrence stability in the region.

It contends that although no war has erupted in the region since 1998, the Kargil Crisis of 1999, the 2001-02 India-Pakistan Crisis and the developments in the region thereon, amply show that the acquisition of nuclear weapons has not led to the development of stable deterrence between the two states. It argues that during these crises, the two countries barely escaped an all-out war and a possible nuclear catastrophe only when tensions were resolved with the active involvement of international actors, chiefly led by the United States.

This study thus takes a minority pessimist view of the post-nuclear South Asia. It however differs from the existing pessimist accounts on key grounds. Firstly, it argues that any pessimistic analysis of the regional situation based on a purely rationalist understanding of state behavior is theoretically flawed. This study stresses the utility of using a cultural and historical framework for understanding security

conceptions instead. Secondly, it questions views in the pessimist camp which regard nuclear weapons themselves as a source of strategic instability in the region. Finally, it also argues that insights from organizational theory, which focuses on the aggressive tendencies of militaries, are neither suitable for application to the India-Pakistan nuclear or help to adequately capture the underlying essence of instability in the region.

This study thus contends that although nuclear weapons may act as force of strategic restraint in the region, and may not be a source of instability in of themselves, it is however over-deterministic to say that the mere presence of such weapons is a guarantee of deterrence stability in South Asia. Such a situation thus makes the India-Pakistan conflict extremely dangerous as there are reasonable chances of the use of nuclear weapons in the region if there was to be a failure in mutual deterrence.

In concrete terms, the study undertakes a detailed analysis of post-1998 India-Pakistan relations and shows that nuclear weapons have not necessarily contributed to the development of a stable deterrence relationship between the two regional rivals. It also contends that there exists a reasonable possibility that under certain conditions deterrence in the region might fail despite the presence of nuclear weapons. In this regard, it will finally attempt to lay down the particular circumstances under which deterrence in the region can fail with the possible use of nuclear weapons in such an eventuality.

## **Methodology and Sources of Information**

The research methodology adopted for this study is based on the classical approach. The classical approach to the study of international politics is derived 'from philosophy, history and law, and... is characterised above all by explicit reliance upon judgement.'<sup>1</sup> A classical approach to the study of India-Pakistan relations is of great value as the relationship between the two states is deeply enmeshed in historical, geopolitical and security relations in the region, and cannot be fully comprehended without discussion of the historical and cultural dimensions of the conflict. This is opposed to the strict scientific method, or the related rational actor method, which aspires to develop logical propositions for, and models of, international relations which are based upon mathematical proofs which demand strict empirical procedures for verification. This approach tends to de-emphasise history and culture, or deny that

it has any explanatory value at all for understanding security relations in international politics.

The classical approach however does not totally reject the scientific method and does not regard it as worthless, only incomplete. Indeed, 'what is of value in [the scientific approach]... can be accommodated readily enough within the classical approach.'<sup>2</sup> Thus, such an accommodative approach can help in identifying the patterns in the evolution of political events which in turn is helpful for studying international relations between states. John Lewis Gaddis claims that such a method of investigation provides a bridge between the scientific and historical approach.<sup>3</sup> An approach that is rooted in the history is important because as noted by Hedley Bull it also helps the researcher to understand the particular characteristics of a state which are essential for a complete understanding of the foreign relations of any state, or between individual states.<sup>4</sup>

Obtaining reliable information on the foreign relations of India and Pakistan can be difficult as there is no tradition of thoroughly documenting information on the processes of foreign policy decision-making in these countries. Although applicable to both India, the situation is more acute in the case of Pakistan. Any study undertaken on the region thus must keep in view these limitations. In this regard, the key sources for this research mainly include available government documents, first-hand accounts of the rulers, foreign ministers and ambassadors of the countries, press reports, and the other secondary works relating to the subject.

## **The Structure of the Study**

This study is divided into six chapters and is followed by a summary of the important conclusions. It is quite logical that any study of the implications of the nuclearization of the region should be preceded by an account of history of the conflict between India and Pakistan and the process of the attainment of nuclear capability by the two players. Chapter One thus focuses on the historical background of the traditionally tense relations between India and Pakistan. It will lay down how hostility between the two countries started soon after their independence. This has been due to the numerous disputes of which the dispute over the territory of Kashmir proved to be of greatest significance. The regional conflict gained increased complexity due to post-independence attempts by the two countries to solve their disputes through coercive and violent means, and the Indian role in the

dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971. The chapter will then provide detail on the process on the process of nuclearization of the region which occurred against the backdrop of already hostile relations between the two countries.

Chapter Two provides a thorough review of existing debates regarding the implications of the nuclearization of the region for the India-Pakistan conflict and lays down the argument and the theoretical perspective of this study. It first outlines the general debate about the consequences of the spread of nuclear weapons on inter-state relations. This debate is broadly divided into two camps, with one being the proliferation optimists, and the other being the proliferation pessimists. As discussed previously, proliferation optimists contend that the spread of nuclear weapons will have a soothing effect on the regional rivalries and stabilize the relationship between any two nuclear rivals. Proliferation pessimists on the other hand take the view that nuclear proliferation is likely to make regional rivalries and conflict more dangerous due to the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons.

The chapter will then survey the existing literature on the issue in the case of South Asia and will lay down the argument regarding the implications of the spread of nuclear weapons in the region. It argues that the dominant view pervading the literature on the India-Pakistan relations is characterized by a deductively drawn 'proliferation optimist' view of nuclear weapons capability balance and proliferation, which draws largely from the US-USSR experience during the Cold War. This chapter will go on to critically analyze the key arguments of these proliferation optimists in the context of South Asia. This chapter then argues that developments in India-Pakistan relations following their overt nuclearization in 1998 do not provide sufficient justification for such an optimist slant in the literature. The chapter will instead offer a view that nuclear weapons may not have created much needed caution in the behavior of the regional rivals, and that the breakdown of deterrence in the region is still a reasonable possibility. It argues that the post-1998 stability in the region has rather been a function of the role played by the United States which intervened timely and forcefully in order to prevent the escalation of regional crises.

As this study suggests that the proliferation pessimist view of India-Pakistan relations is more appropriate, the chapter will take a critical look at existing pessimist works. It highlights the weaknesses of the existing pessimist work on South Asia and shows that existing research is unable to grasp the essence of the existing instability in South Asia, especially in the post-1998 period. It argues that any pessimistic account

based on a rationalist understanding of state behavior is theoretically flawed. It also argues that organizational theory is also inappropriate to explain regional instability. In order to acquire a better understanding of regional geopolitics in the post-nuclear period this chapter ultimately argues that as the general precepts of neo-realism cannot sufficiently explain the instability in the region in the post-tests' period, rationalist insights about the balance of power, state behavior and deterrence must be supplemented by a deeper understanding of the cultural and historical variables in play in South Asia.

The next chapters are devoted to show that the post-1998 developments in the India-Pakistan relations hardly provide any room for an optimist view of the nuclearization of the region. In this regard, Chapter Three deals with the Kargil Crisis and discusses the potential for escalation that was seen during the Crisis. Unfolding in the summer of 1999 soon after the overt nuclearization of India and Pakistan in 1998, the Crisis not only attracted huge international attention but also generated strong fears of escalation and concern over whether regional tensions would develop into a full-blown war with the possibility for the use of nuclear weapons. The Crisis put to test long-held assumptions regarding stability and nuclear deterrence, and suggested the need to revisit the implications of nuclear proliferation in South Asia. The chapter will argue that the Kargil episode is not a case for optimism and that the Crisis was only resolved without a major war between the players chiefly due to the fact that Washington coerced Islamabad to withdraw its forces from the Kargil heights.

Chapter Four deals with the second case study, the 2001-02 India-Pakistan Crisis, which was the second major crisis between the two countries that put to the test proliferation optimist views about nuclear deterrence in the region. The Crisis developed at a time when there had been significant readjustments in the regional and international environment as a result of the September 11 attacks in the United States. The Crisis unfolded as India escalated regional tensions on the lingering Kashmir dispute in the wake of the events of October 1, 2001, December, 13 2001, and May 14, 2002. This led to an unprecedentedly long military and diplomatic standoff between India and Pakistan. For almost a year the armies of the two countries stood almost eyeball to eyeball, and on more than one occasion the two countries came dangerously close to the brink of an all-out war during the Crisis. This chapter argues that the 2001-02 Crisis brought into question the expectations and predictions of the nuclear deterrence model. Namely, the chapter argues that this crisis was again only

resolved due to the intense engagement by international actors, chiefly led by the United States. The international community intervened forcefully by threatening India and Pakistan with strategic isolation at the international level, coupled with other moves like punitive economic measures.

Chapter Five is concerned with the precarious nature of strategic restraint in the region following the 2001-02 Crisis. It provides greater discussion of important developments in India-Pakistan relations in the post-2001-02 Crisis period, including the stalled peace process in the wake of the Mumbai attacks of 2008, and also the changes in the regional nuclear and military doctrines. It will first focus on the shaky dynamics of the peace process that followed the 2001-02 Crisis. It shows that the two players are still not ready to normalize their relations through compromise on the key security and diplomatic issues they have with each other. It will argue that changes in the two nations' nuclear and military doctrines in the post-Crisis period only add to the pessimist outlook for regional stability and peace.

After demonstrating in the previous chapters that nuclear weapons have not created much needed caution in the behavior of regional players as predicted by the proliferation optimists, Chapter Six will undertake a comprehensive analysis of the regional situation to show how South Asian conditions differ from those of the Cold War, and why nuclear weapons have not contributed to the stabilization of deterrence in the region. It will also discuss how deterrence in the region can fail under certain conditions. This will be then followed by a discussion of how the goal of a stable deterrence relationship between India and Pakistan might be achieved given the deadly nature of their rivalry, and the dangerous presence of nuclear weapons in the region. Finally I will discuss the important conclusions of the study.



## **Chapter 1**

# **The India-Pakistan Conflict and the Advent of the Nuclear Age**

### ***Introduction***

The nuclearization of India and Pakistan occurred against the backdrop of traditionally hostile relations between the two countries. As this study deals with the implications of the introduction of nuclear weapons for the India-Pakistan relationship, it is important to first describe the historical evolution of their relationship and the process of nuclearization in the region. The hostility between the two countries started soon after their independence and ever since then the relations between them have been marred by a number of disputes.

This chapter thus presents a brief account of the historical evolution of the India-Pakistan conflict and its subsequent nuclearization. It will first discuss the development of various disputes between the two countries, especially the one over Kashmir, and the subsequent efforts of the two countries to solve these disputes through various means. This will then be followed by a brief overview of the process of nuclearization by the two countries and regional politico-military dynamics during the 1980s and 1990s. Lastly, the chapter will discuss the culmination of the India-Pakistan nuclear programs and the tit-for-tat nuclear tests in the summer of 1998.

### ***The India and Pakistan Rivalry***

The roots of the India-Pakistan conflict are embedded deep into the history of the Subcontinent. This history includes the British colonial rule over the region, the nature of the independence movement that led to the establishment of the two countries, and the problematic process and events of partition. Amongst these the dispute over the territory of Kashmir has proved to be of greatest significance. The regional conflict gained increased complexity due to subsequent attempts by the two countries to solve their disputes through coercive and violent means, and the Indian role in the dismemberment of East Pakistan from 'West' Pakistan in 1971.

The de-colonization process in South Asia culminated in the establishment of two independent states, India and Pakistan, in 1947. The freedom movement in the

region was spearheaded by the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League. The Muslims of South Asia opted for a separate state of their own, Pakistan, under the banner of the All India Muslim League. However since their inception, relations between these two states have been marred by serious enmity and distrust leading to a number of wars and crises.

Interestingly the top leadership of the All India Muslim League had hoped for a cordial relationship between an independent India and an independent Pakistan. As early as 1930, while proposing the idea of a Muslim state in India during his Presidential address to the annual meeting of the All India Muslim League, Dr. Muhammad Iqbal said that the establishment of a consolidated Muslim state meant peace and security for India resulting from an internal balance of power.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, in the early 1940s, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, maintained that a separate Muslim state would ensure security in the north-western zone, with India guarding southern and western India. He said, 'We join together as good friends and neighbors and say to the world, Hands off India.' Similarly, in October 1944 and November 1946, Jinnah said that India and Pakistan would proclaim a Monroe Doctrine of their own for the defense of the Subcontinent against all outsiders.<sup>2</sup> Such thoughts of seeking unity were also expressed after independence in August 1947, and the leaders of India and Pakistan even put forward the idea of common defense.<sup>3</sup>

However, the relations between the two states did not continue in this fashion. The Hindu-Muslim divide in the pre-partition period transformed into an India-Pakistan rivalry after the partition and the two countries struggled to remain friendly after the partition. The post-partition disputes added fuel to pre-existing animosities. The hasty process of partition by the British was viewed as unjust by the leadership of Pakistan and set the tone for post-independence disputes between the two countries.

The major problems between the two countries included the territorial issue revolving around the accession of the semi-independent princely states, the division of financial and military assets of British India, the issue of access to rivers and water, and refugee issues. Amongst all these the dispute over the accession of the 'princely state' of Kashmir proved to be most intractable.

## **The Kashmir Dispute**

The history of Kashmir can be traced as far back as 4000 years BC. Several dynasties of Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Zoroastrians ruled over its land until the 14<sup>th</sup> century. After that the Muslims ruled over the state for about 479 years. In 1579 AD the Mughal King Akbar annexed Kashmir and brought it into his empire. With the decline of the Mughal Empire independent Muslim rule emerged in Kashmir. Then the area was conquered by the Sikhs who ruled the area for about 27 years with extreme ruthlessness. As Sikh rule based in Punjab weakened and became marked by factional fighting and intrigues, the British seized the opportunity and conquered the Sikh Empire in 1846.

The British colonial conquest of India was a complex process that included a variety of political adjustments with the local power players. As a result the British did not rule over India in a uniformly administrative way and different parts of India had different political-administrative arrangements. British India was mainly divided into two parts: the directly ruled, and the indirectly ruled areas. The directly ruled areas were known as ‘provinces,’ and also evolved through unique political-administrative arrangements. On the other hand the indirectly ruled areas consisted of nearly 550 ‘princely states,’ a number of frontier agencies, and tribal administrative structures.

In 1822, Gulab Singh, a Hindu Dogra, was appointed Raja of Jammu by the Sikh Maharaja Ranjit Singh. With the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Gulab Singh started thinking of carving out a kingdom for himself. During the Anglo-Sikh war, he watched the developments cleverly and sided with the British, providing vital intelligence on the Sikh Army. As a reward for his ‘services’ the British recognized his sovereignty in Jammu. The British not only retained Gulab Singh within the politico-administrative structure of their colonial empire but also expanded his domains in the vicinity. The Treaty of Amritsar was concluded by the British on March 16, 1846, and the British sold Gulab Singh the province of Kashmir for the sum of seven and a half million rupees. They also recognised him as the Maharaja of the Jammu and Kashmir State.

This resulted not only in the creation of the largest of the princely states in India in terms of land area, but this ‘iniquitous arrangement’ was made more complex by the fact that the area had a clear Muslim majority. Muslims constituted about 77%

of the population when it was put under the rule of Gulab Singh. Singh and his ancestors' rule in the area proved to be despotic, reactionary and oppressive. In the course of almost hundred years of Dogra rule, out of the seventy eight Prime Ministers (PMs) appointed by the Dogra Hindu Maharaja, not one was Muslim. Similarly, there was only one Muslim battalion in the State army out of a total of thirteen.

The British initially adopted the policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the state which in practice allowed for many misdeeds and in effect became of a guarantee of misrule.<sup>4</sup> The situation led to several uprisings against the tyrannical Dogra rule, the most well known of these taking place in 1931. The British also received many complaints about the Maharaja's 'oppression of the people' and eventually reversed the early policy of non-interference when they instituted the famous 'Glancy Commission' to investigate the situation in response to the events of 1931.<sup>5</sup>

A new phase in the history of the freedom movement in Kashmir unfolded with the arrival of Sheikh Abdullah and Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas on the political scene in 1932. Around this time Kashmiri Muslims established a political party named 'All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference (MC).' Abdullah and Abbas were elected its President and General Secretary respectively. The MC also adopted the flag of the All India Muslim League, the representative party of Indian Muslims, and became determined to safeguard Kashmiri Muslims' wellbeing. While the MC was a purely Muslim party, Abdullah later on became heavily influenced by the ideology of Indian National Congress. Abdullah thus parted with the MC in 1938 and founded the National Conference (NC) and himself became its President.

While in the subsequent period Kashmir remained politically divided, the British also adopted a vague policy regarding the future of the princely states at the time of independence and the provisions of the Indian Independence Act 1947 regarding these states were not very clear. The act only provided for the lapse of the British Government over the princely state and the termination of all arrangements, treaties and obligations. Thus, at the time of the partition, the princely states became technically independent with the lapse of the 'paramount power.' Nevertheless, the British made it clear to the princes that Britain would not recognize the independence of any princely state and that they would have to join either India or Pakistan.<sup>6</sup>

Another instance of vagueness related to the choice of the princes to join either India or Pakistan. Technically, the princes could independently decide to join either without any conditions being imposed upon them. No formal arrangement was made for the princes to consult the wishes of their subjects before making up their minds. However at the same time the princes were asked to keep in mind the geographical and religious factors when deciding the future of the state. Lord Mountbatten, the last British Viceroy put it clearly that ‘geographic situation and Communal interests’ were the main factors to be considered in the accession decision the rulers of the princely state had to make.<sup>7</sup> In such a scenario, the story of accession of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir proved to be the most unfortunate one as it suffered the most due to strategic calculations by the various power interests at the time of partition.

Apart from being biggest in size, Kashmir was of great strategic significance. Its borders adjoined the Xinjiang and Tibetan areas of China and also the narrow strip of Wakhan (Afghanistan), which separated it from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Kashmir’s importance was thus well-appreciated by Gandhi and the leaders of the Congress. While expressing his interest in Kashmir, Nehru wrote later that we were ‘vitaly interested’ in the decision that the state would take regarding accession. He said that ‘Kashmir because of her geographical position with her frontiers with Pakistan, the Soviet Union, China and Afghanistan is ultimately connected with the security and international contacts of India.’<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Gandhi while realizing the importance of the state remarked that Kashmir ‘had the greatest strategic value, perhaps in all India.’<sup>9</sup>

At the time of the independence, the leaders of the Indian National Congress, with the help of Lord Mountbatten (who later became the first Governor General of India as he finished his job as the last British Viceroy) took a number of steps to ensure that Kashmir was incorporated into India. To provide road access to Kashmir for India, many Muslim majority areas in Punjab, including a major portion of Muslim majority district of Gurdaspur, were handed over to India in the Redcliffe Award. In this regard Lord Mountbatten played a major role in convincing Sir Cyril Radcliffe, Chairman of the Boundary Commission, to alter the original Award which had identified the whole district of Gurdaspur as being part of Pakistan. Similarly, the Maharaja was influenced personally by Mountbatten to make his decision in favour of India.<sup>10</sup> In early August 1947, Gandhi also visited Kashmir to apply pressure on the

Maharaja to accede to India, which would prove to be successful.<sup>11</sup> Maharaja finally decided in favour of the accession of Kashmir with India and his request in this regard was accepted formally by New Delhi on October 27, 1947.

From the Pakistani perspective, Kashmir was not just a strategically important region but a matter of survival for the new-born country. It was a geographic extension of the areas that were to form its western wing. All the transit trade of Kashmir was routed through the areas of Pakistan. Most of Kashmir's exports passed through the Karachi port at the time of partition, which was the only normal outlet for Pakistani products. Similarly, all rivers, which are the lifeline of the economy of Pakistan, originate from the mountains of Kashmir. Moreover, militarily the highlands of Kashmir were highly important for the defense of the areas of Pakistan. India's occupation of Kashmir would give them control over the flow of water into Pakistan and make Pakistan extremely vulnerable.

Pakistan refused to accept Kashmir's accession to India thus laying the foundation of first India-Pakistan war over the territory. Pakistan declared the decision to be 'fraudulent' and took the position that the accession was against the well known will of an overwhelming majority of the population. Pakistan believed that it could not be justified on any grounds, whether moral, constitutional, geographical, economic, cultural or religious. The legality of Maharaja's accession was also questioned by the Kashmiri leadership and Pakistan, as at the time of the announcement of the decision, the Maharaja had lost effective control of most of the areas of his state and Kashmiris had already cleared out most of the Maharaja forces from the state. Labelling India's actions in Kashmir as part of a 'pre-arranged' policy, Pakistan stated clearly that the accession of Kashmir to India was based on fraud and violence, and thus unacceptable.

### **The India-Pakistan War 1948-49**

As the future of Kashmir was being decided, an internal rebellion in the state paved the way for the first violent encounter between India and Pakistan soon after their independence from British rule. The pro-Pakistan Kashmiri political party, Muslim Conference, passed a resolution on July 19, 1947 for the accession of the state to Pakistan, long before Maharaja's decision, and rose up against the rule of Maharaja. The widespread resistance in the Valley and Poonch areas of the state forced the Maharaja to flee from Srinagar to Jammu along with his valuables. He still

exercised control in Jammu due to its substantial Hindu and Sikh population. In their resistance against the Maharaja forces, the movement was also helped by the Kashmiris serving in the ranks of the still ill-organized Pakistani armed forces who left their posts to fight beside their kinsmen.<sup>12</sup>

Kashmiris also announced the formation of the Azad (Free) Kashmir government on 24<sup>th</sup> of October, 1947, in the liberated areas of Kashmir. Hearing the news of killings and atrocities being carried out by the Maharaja forces along with the forces of the princely states of Kapurthala and Patiala, religious sentiments were also provoked in the tribal areas of Pakistan. The result was the entrance of the tribal 'lashkars' (armed groups) into Kashmir to help their co-religionists. Subsequently, the Azad Kashmir forces backed by the tribal 'lashkars' reached the outskirts of Srinagar.

The day India secured the letter of accession from the Maharaja, October 27, 1947, its military forces arrived in Srinagar. Later on India installed Sheikh Abdullah, the leader of the pro-Congress National Conference, as the head of the Kashmir government at Srinagar. On hearing the news of the dispatch of Indian troops to Srinagar, the immediate reaction of Jinnah, the first Governor General of Pakistan, was to order a counter-invasion in Kashmir. He ordered General Sir Douglas Gracy, who was then acting as the Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army, to move Pakistani forces into Kashmir. Gracy ignored the order of immediate operation and under the directive from Mountbatten expressed his inability to do it without permission from Field Marshal Auchinlek, the Supreme Commander of Indian and Pakistani Forces.<sup>13</sup>

Auchinlek reached Lahore at once where he threatened and demanded that Jinnah withdraw his orders, saying that an act of invasion would result in an automatic and immediate withdrawal of every British officer serving in Pakistan.<sup>14</sup> British officers still formed the top nucleus of the Indian Army which was fully engaged in Kashmir. But Auchinlek never extended such a threat to India. Seeing that withdrawal of British officers from the Pakistan army at that stage would cause an irreparable loss to the defence forces, Jinnah withdrew the orders and suggested a meeting in Lahore between himself and Nehru to discuss the Kashmir problem and to find a speedy and judicious solution. But negotiations and mediation efforts did not bear fruit.

Amongst the earliest attempts at the resolution of the dispute, Pakistan welcomed the British proposal of a tripartite meeting including India, Pakistan and

Britain to discuss the problem of Kashmir. In this regard, Jinnah invited Mountbatten and Nehru to Lahore to discuss the matter. However, on the occasion Nehru 'fell ill' and India decided to send Mountbatten alone. Mountbatten was accompanied by Lord Ismay in his visit to Lahore. The parleys held in early November 1947 between Mountbatten, the Governor General of India, and Jinnah, however, would not produce any results as there were vast differences between the Indian and Pakistani proposals regarding the settlement of the dispute.

As Pakistan did not consider Indian proposals to be acceptable for the purposes of settlement, it suggested on November 17, 1947 that the whole dispute should be presented before the United Nations (UN). In a statement issued to the press, the Prime Minister (PM) of Pakistan said that the Kashmir dispute 'should be brought before the bar of international opinion.' The statement suggested that Pakistan was 'ready to request the United Nations immediately to appoint its representative in Jammu and Kashmir State in order to put a stop to fighting and to repression of Muslims in the state, to arrange the programme of withdrawal of outside forces and to set up and impartial administration of the state till a plebiscite is held and to undertake the plebiscite under its direction and control for the purpose of ascertaining the free and unfettered will of the people of the state.'<sup>15</sup>

India rejected these suggestions as impracticable and claimed that Sheikh Abdullah's administration in Kashmir was impartial. India said that because the UN had no power to enforce the cessation of fighting and a plebiscite could not be held unless law and order were restored, the UN was not in a position to bring about the desired results.<sup>16</sup> However the opinions changed at New Delhi later when having failed to enforce any quick military solution to the uprising of the Kashmiris, it decided to take matters to the United Nations' Security Council (UNSC) on January 1, 1948, and accused Pakistan of assisting the tribesmen and other invaders to violate her sovereignty.<sup>17</sup> Pakistan submitted a counter complaint accusing India of the organised 'genocide of Muslims in East Punjab, Delhi and other places in India, the forcible occupation of Junagarh, whose prince had acceded to Pakistan, and the action taken by India to secure the accession of Kashmir by fraud and violence.'<sup>18</sup> As the issue lingered on in the UN, the Indian army was able to consolidate its position in Kashmir.

While Pakistan's earlier intervention in Kashmir was largely either unofficial or clandestine, it formally and openly entered into war with India on Kashmir when



with the arrival of the summer in 1948 and restoration of the communication links due to the melting of snow, India started its 'much expected' summer offensive to move into the areas that were still not under its control. Pakistan sent its army into Kashmir in May 1948 when General Gracey, now giving a depressing report to the Pakistani Government, warned of 'the grave consequences for Pakistan' if the Indian Army pursued its objectives unhindered. He recommended that it was 'imperative that the Indian Army is not allowed to advance beyond the general line Uri-Poonch-Naoshera.'<sup>19</sup>

The situation thus led to first direct clash between the two countries on Kashmir.<sup>20</sup> The war ended with the intervention of UN. The UNSC, after hearing both the parties, passed its first resolution on January 17, 1948, asking both India and Pakistan 'not to aggravate the situation but to do everything to improve it.' On January 20, 1948, it passed another resolution through which a mediatory commission that later came to be known as the United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan (UNCIP) was established. The Commission arrived in the area and after detailed discussions with Indian and Pakistani leadership passed two resolutions on August 13, 1948, and January 5, 1949. These were accepted both by India and Pakistan and were also endorsed by the UNSC. These resolutions asked for the cease-fire, demarcation of the cease-fire line (CFL), demilitarisation of the state, and a free and impartial plebiscite to be conducted by UN.

Although the cease-fire came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1949 and was followed by the demarcation of the CFL later on, the issue of demilitarisation and the holding of free and impartial plebiscite remains a question up until to the present times. All subsequent efforts by UN in this regard could not be successful as these were rejected by either India or Pakistan. India never agreed to demilitarise the area completely and the conditions that it proposed for the holding of the plebiscite were rejected by Pakistan on the basis of fairness and impartiality.

One of the earliest proposals in this regard was that of the President of the UNSC, A. G. L. Mcnaughton, who worked out a feasible plan for demilitarisation in December 1949, after negotiations with India and Pakistan. He proposed a plan 'whereby both sides would simultaneously and progressively demilitarise to the point where the remaining force would not cause fear at any point of time to people on either side of the ceasefire line.' Pakistan accepted it while India rejected these

proposals saying that the proposals completely ignored the 'legal and moral aspects' of the question.<sup>21</sup>

Later on UN appointed Sir Owen Dixon as its Special Representative to bring about cooperation between India and Pakistan on the issue of demilitarisation and plebiscite. After detailed consultations with India and Pakistan, Sir Owen Dixon presented a comprehensive report to UN in September 1950. Dixon refused to accept Indian assertions that Pakistan should be declared the 'aggressor' and took the position that the UNSC had never branded Pakistan as an 'aggressor'. However, in an effort to appease India, Dixon's plan recommended that Pakistan should start the withdrawal of her forces first and after a significant number of days India should begin her process of withdrawal. Despite these concessions India rejected the plan while Pakistan accepted it.

Despite these failures, the UNSC took up the issue again in 1951. It passed a resolution on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1951 and appointed another UN Representative to deal with the issue of demilitarisation within three months. In case of failure the representative was not only to report to the Council the points of differences but the parties were also required to accept arbitration on all outstanding points of differences.<sup>22</sup> Pakistan accepted the resolution but India rejected it but agreed to the appointment of another UN representative to mediate between the two countries. As a result Dr. Frank Graham was appointed as the UN representative. His efforts in this regard however were also futile.

During the next few years, some direct negotiations were held between India and Pakistan. However no progress could be achieved on the issue. In November 1956, India managed to gain the passage of a resolution by the Constituent Assembly of Kashmir that 'the state of Jammu and Kashmir is and shall be an integral part of the Union of India.' Pakistan protested at the development in front of the UNSC. The Council met in January, 1957 and declared the Indian moves in 'clear conflict with the accepted principle of plebiscite.' The Council asked its President Mr. Gunner Jarrings to investigate and mediate between India and Pakistan, but his efforts however also failed like earlier ones. Jarrings suggested that not only the main problem of demilitarisation be submitted to arbitration but also other Indian procedural complaints be referred to the arbitrators. Pakistan accepted whereas India again refused to accept these proposals.<sup>23</sup>

After the failure of the efforts of Jarrings in April 1957, Pakistani Prime Minister Sir Feroz Khan Noon announced in September 1957 that Pakistan was prepared to withdraw each and every soldier from Kashmir in order to meet all Indian objections regarding demilitarisation and plebiscite.<sup>24</sup> Sensing some new opportunity, the UN sent Dr. Graham to the area to seek fresh mediation once again. He presented some new proposals but his efforts would not succeed.

Since then the UN has never adopted any ambitious attempt to address the problem. The issue did not resurface at the UN until 1962 when Pakistan drew the attention of the UNSC to the war-mongering speeches of the Indian leaders calling for the 'liberation' of the Pakistan-controlled parts of Kashmir and asked for UN mediation on Kashmir. However this time the UN did not even pass a resolution in this regard mainly due to the Soviet veto. After that the Soviet veto was firmly in place on the Kashmir issue and the UN ceased to have any constructive role in this regard permanently.

Whereas after the 1948-49 war, the two countries fought their battle over Kashmir mainly in the corridors of UN, in 1962 India and Pakistan had a detailed dialogue over the issue of Kashmir mainly due to a strong push from the United States and the UK. A series of meetings was held between the two countries over a period of six months with the first one held at Rawalpindi from 27 to 29 December 1962. The talks however failed to break the deadlock over the issue.

### **The 1965 India-Pakistan War**

Meanwhile, a chain of actions and reactions that started from the disappearance of a Muslim Holy Relic from a mosque in Srinagar in December 1963 eventually culminated in the outbreak of a full scale war between India and Pakistan in September 1965. The disappearance of the Holy Relic led to a large scale protest in Kashmir that later-on developed into a renewed movement for self determination. To appease the rising Kashmiri sentiments, Nehru released Sheikh Abdullah who had been languishing in prison since 1953 and allowed him to go overseas, including to Pakistan. Sheikh Abdullah came to Pakistan and had a meeting with Ayub. He managed to convince Nehru and Ayub to hold fresh parleys on Kashmir but before any initiative could be taken in this regard, Nehru died.

In another development, India took further steps to curtail the special autonomy of the state of Kashmir and thus to integrate it more into the Indian Union.

Instead of listening to the demands of the Kashmiris, the Indian government announced that Articles 356 and 357 of the Indian constitution would be applicable to Kashmir. Similarly, in April 1965, India secured the approval of a bill by the Kashmir Assembly that further eroded Kashmir's constitutional individuality. According to this bill, the titles of the Head of state (Sadr-i-Riasat) and Prime Minister of the state were changed to that of Governor and the Chief Minister respectively.

Meanwhile, during April 1965, a major border clash between India and Pakistan occurred in the area of Kutch in which 'the Indian forces were badly mauled by the Pakistan army' thus raising the morale of the Pakistani leadership.<sup>25</sup> In retaliation, the Indian Prime Minister Shastri threatened military action against Pakistan on a battleground of India's own choice.<sup>26</sup> During the battle of Kutch, Indian forces crossed the ceasefire line also and occupied some posts in the Kargil area. In a related development, in May 1965, Sheikh Abdullah was again arrested which led to further unrest and a popular uprising by the Kashmiris against the Indian occupation.

Fearing complete integration of Kashmir with India like other states, the political leadership in Pakistan felt an urgency to 'defreeze' the dispute, and trained Kashmiri guerrillas from Azad Kashmir were launched and supported by Pakistan inside Indian occupied Kashmir for the start of an anti-Indian guerrilla movement to start the war of liberation. The factors that contributed to this major undertaking by Pakistan included the total disenchantment with the UN, frustration over the massive military aid to India by the United States following the India-China war of 1962, the growing Sino-Pak entente which would restraint the Soviet conduct in this confrontation, possible Chinese support if the situation escalated into some sort of massive Indian military response, and finally, Indian assertions that Kashmir has become an integral part of India, on the back of the morale boosting victory by the Pakistan Army in the battle of Kutch.

As Pakistan's military advances in Kashmir could not be halted by India, it responded by attacking along the international boundary on 6<sup>th</sup> of September 1965, thus initiating a full-fledged Indo-Pak war. The war however ended in a stalemate. Pakistan accepted the Soviet offer in making post-war settlement between the two countries. Peace talks were facilitated by the Soviets in the Uzbek city of Tashkent and after a series of meetings a peace accord, generally known as Tashkent Declaration, was signed between India and Pakistan, formally ending the war.

## **The 1971 India-Pakistan War and the Dismemberment of Pakistan**

Whereas Kashmir continued to mar India-Pakistan relationship in the post-1965 period, Indian military intervention during the internal strife in the eastern wing of Pakistan added another dimension to the rivalry between the two countries. 1971 was a fateful year in the history of Pakistan. India managed to exploit the internal crisis of Pakistan and succeeded in dismembering its eastern part which became the independent state of Bangladesh.

The dismemberment of East Pakistan was a result to some degree of the dissatisfaction of the Bengalis with the economic and political structure of the country which they considered to be highly dominated by the West Pakistan. This perceived injustice by the Bengalis developed into a large-scale political movement for greater autonomy and later on developed into a secessionist movement massively aided by India. Indian intervention in East Pakistan resulted in another Indo-Pak war, thus further complicating the relations between two countries. It would inflict a lasting scar which would have a significant impact upon Pakistan's future security calculations.

The surrender of its army in the Eastern wing put Pakistan in its most difficult situation since its creation. The defeat of Pakistan led to over 90,000 POWs in Indian custody, a situation which India used as a leverage to extract maximum concessions from Pakistan especially in case of Kashmir. During the peace talks that followed the ceasefire, India tried to pressure Pakistan to accept the new ceasefire line as at December 17 as the international boundary. Pakistan refused to accept but India managed to convert the nomenclature of the new ceasefire line as the Line of Control (LoC) in an effort to gain more legitimacy for the division of Kashmir.<sup>27</sup>

The peace talks resulted in what is known as Simla (Shimla) Agreement. The implications of the Agreement on Kashmir have been interpreted differently by India and Pakistan. The Indian interpretation is that by virtue of the agreement Pakistan now has no right to raise the issue at UN and if there is any dispute on Kashmir, it would be settled bilaterally. Pakistan maintains that the agreement explicitly contains the wording, 'without prejudice to the recognised position of either side', thus does not bar Pakistan from involving UN and the relevant resolutions of the UNSC are not redundant.

## ***Nuclearization of the Region and India-Pakistan Military Dynamics until 1998***

It was amidst the strained history of India-Pakistan relations that the nuclear weapons were introduced in the region during the 1970s when India tested its first nuclear device in 1974. India's nuclear path in turn convinced Pakistan to pursue its own nuclear program. The nuclearization of the two countries was a slow process which occurred in an opaque manner. The exact time when the two countries developed or were able to deploy nuclear weapons is still a matter of debate.

### **India's Nuclear Program**

India's nuclear weapons evolved after a long national debate on the utility and legitimacy of nuclear weapons. Soon after its independence, India emerged as a leading advocate of the movement for universal nuclear disarmament. Writing in the *Harijan* in September 1948, India's political and spiritual leader Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi said, 'I regard the employment of the atom bomb for the wholesale destruction of men, women and children as the most diabolical use of science.'<sup>28</sup> However India's nuclear ambitions were revealed as early as in 1946 when Nehru 'stated his hope that India would develop atomic power for peaceful uses but warned that, so long as the world was constituted as it was, every country would have to develop and use the latest scientific devices for its protection.'<sup>29</sup>

New Delhi showed keen interest in acquiring nuclear technology soon after independence and embarked on a 'peaceful nuclear program' in the 1950s for 'long-term civilian needs.'<sup>30</sup> India's nuclear program, started at the Bhabha Atomic Research Center in Trombay, and its foundation was laid by the US Atoms for Peace program, which aimed to encourage the civil use of nuclear technologies in exchange for assurances that they would not be used for military purposes. India's first reactor, the 1 Megawatt (MWt) Aspara Research Reactor was built with British assistance in 1955. The following year, India acquired a CIRUS 40 MWt heavy-water-moderated research reactor from Canada whereas the United States agreed to supply heavy water for the project. Similarly, more than 1,000 Indian scientists participated in US nuclear energy research projects from 1955-1974.<sup>31</sup>

However a consensus started forming by the mid-1950s among the Indian leadership around the idea that New Delhi should develop nuclear weapons. By the

mid-1960s its aversion to nuclear weapons was quite evident in the wake of Chinese nuclear tests. India refused to be a signatory to the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which it argued entrenched the status quo of possession for the existing nuclear weapons states, thus preventing general nuclear disarmament.

India's earlier ground work to develop a complete nuclear fuel cycle facilitated its acquisition of the technical capability to build nuclear weapons. In November 1964, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri authorized work on the Subterranean Nuclear Explosion for Peaceful Purposes (SNEPP) thus 'giving official sanction to the development of an Indian nuclear weapons option.'<sup>32</sup> India commissioned a reprocessing facility at Trombay, which was used to separate out the weapon-grade plutonium produced by the CIRUS research reactor.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi gave her approval to proceed with the nuclear test in 1972 and later on authorized India's first nuclear test on May 18, 1974, described by the Indian government as a 'peaceful nuclear explosion.' The explosion demonstrated India's capability to produce nuclear weapons. Her decision could be justified based on both external security calculations after 1971 and domestic political needs. India's security planning regarding China had been complicated by the US President Nixon's opening to China in 1971 with the help of a clandestine role by Islamabad. On the other hand the US tilt towards Pakistan during the 1971 war may have created a perception in India about the development of a US-China-Pakistan axis when Nixon despatched an aircraft carrier towards the Bay of Bengal during the war. It could also be owing to Gandhi's domestic political compulsion which had even led to imposition of 'state of emergency' in India in 1975-77. The test thus might have also been aimed at bolstering Gandhi's domestic image.

India's nuclear test was a major blow to international nonproliferation efforts. The United States imposed restrictions to limit India's access to nuclear material and technology, which was followed by some other western countries as well. The Nuclear Nonproliferation Act of 1978 prohibited US transfers of fissionable materials and technology unless the recipient countries agreed to complete safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In accordance with the new law, Washington stopped the supply of low-enriched nuclear fuel to two Indian power reactors. The impasse in the US-India nuclear cooperation was however resolved in 1983. The relations between India and the United States further improved with the Rajiv Gandhi becoming the prime minister after the assassination of Indira Gandhi in

1984. A Memorandum of Understanding in science and technology took India off the US list of 'diversion-risk' countries, paving the way for increased investment and technology transfer.

During the brief tenure of the Janata Party government (1977-79), the nuclear weapons program was put on hold. However, the work on the nuclear weapons and its delivery systems was resumed after Indira Gandhi returned to power in 1980. In 1983, India started developing an Integrated Guided Missile Program (IGMP), and by 1989 it tested short- and medium-range missiles. By May 1994, the country acquired the capability to deliver nuclear weapons using combat aircraft. By 1996, Indian scientists succeeded in developing a nuclear warhead that could be mounted on to the Army's Prithvi-1 ballistic missile.

### **Pakistan's Nuclear Program**

Pakistan also started its nuclear program with the aims of developing nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. An Atomic Energy Commission was established in 1956. Until the early 1960s, its nuclear program was mainly driven by civilian motivations. The thinking in Pakistan started changing towards mid-1960s when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, then Foreign Minister of Pakistan, argued for Pakistan's own nuclear option in the wake of India's advances in the nuclear field.

The 1965 war also raised questions about Pakistan's security environment because of its lack of strategic depth. Bhutto's emphasis on the nuclear option could also be motivated by his domestic political needs. Bhutto had started challenging Ayub politically in the wake of Pakistan's defeat in the 1965 war and might have calculated that such emphasis would be an effective way to gather domestic political support for him. Bhutto's views however remained a minority opinion in Pakistan until his rise to the leadership of Pakistan after the 1971 war, when he finally gave an official nod to the nuclear option for Pakistan in 1972.

Pakistan's decision in 1972 to pursue the nuclear option for defense purposes was thus a result of its defeat in the 1971 war with India and a direct response to the Indian nuclear ambitions which were strengthened later on by India's nuclear test in 1974. Reacting to India's nuclear test, Pakistan's Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto declared that the test is a 'fateful development' and that Pakistan was 'determined not to be intimidated' and would never fall prey to 'nuclear blackmail' by India.<sup>33</sup>



Pakistan might have calculated that nuclear weapons would enable it to nullify India's superiority in conventional terms and bridge the gap in the power base of the two countries that had risen markedly in the wake of the dismemberment of Pakistan. Bhutto may have also calculated that nuclear capability would increase its own domestic political standing. He may have also thought that such a capability would raise Pakistan's stature in the Islamic world, especially among the wealthy oil-producing Middle Eastern countries.

US nonproliferation efforts in the wake of the 1978 law severely crippled Pakistan's nuclear program. Intense pressure from the Carter administration led to the collapse of a plutonium reprocessing agreement between France and Pakistan in 1978. In 1979, Washington suspended all economic and military aid to Pakistan under a new law called as Symington Amendment. The law prohibited US aid to countries that acquired uranium enrichment capabilities without putting it under IAEA safeguards, unless the US President could certify that termination of US assistance would seriously harm vital US interests, and that he had got 'reliable assurances' from the recipient country that it would not acquire or develop nuclear weapons.

During 1979, there were reports that an inter-agency task force in Washington debated various options for inhibiting Islamabad's acquisition of nuclear weapon that even included a covert operation to destroy the Kahuta uranium enrichment facility near Islamabad.<sup>34</sup> An American analyst writes that 'there was a great deal of anxiety in Islamabad in August 1979 that, having failed to influence Pakistani nuclear policy, Washington would shortly undertake covert military action' against Kahuta and other Pakistani nuclear facilities. She says that 'This move was expected either through direct US action or as a commando raid by either the Israelis or the Indians. These rumours were taken seriously enough for PAF Mirages to overfly the facility and air defenses to be set up on an alert basis.'<sup>35</sup> It was however reported later on that the Carter Administration abandoned the idea of sabotaging Kahuta militarily because it was considered 'too dangerous and politically provocative.'<sup>36</sup>

## **The Acceleration of the Regional Nuclear Programs**

Soviet invasion of Afghanistan however proved to be a boon for Pakistan's nuclear program when the United States, while putting its non-proliferation efforts vis-à-vis Pakistan on the backburner, moved forward to build a strategic partnership with Pakistan to counter Soviet moves in the region. In the words of an American

official, 'President Carter and others saw this as a qualitative change in Soviet behavior, calling for a global response. Pakistan, now a frontline state, became an essential line of defense and an indispensable element of any strategy that sought to punish the Soviets for their action.'<sup>37</sup>

In the process of the finalization of the new terms of engagement between the two countries, President Zia-ul-Haq initially rejected Carter's proposal as insufficient for Islamabad's security needs. Things were finally settled with the arrival of the Reagan administration which was able to conclude a \$3.2 billion agreement in 1981. The deal included both military as well as economic components. Military hardware to be sold to Pakistan included forty F-16 fighter jets, tanks, helicopters, howitzers and anti-tank missiles.

The improved conventional capabilities strengthened Pakistan's security environment both on the western front where it confronted the new Soviet threat, as well as on the eastern front where it still faced its traditional rival. As a result of the new deal with Washington, Pakistan became a conduit for the transfer of weapons to the Afghan Mujahideen. The deal also brought billions of dollars in economic aid to Pakistan during the 1980s. By the middle of the 1980s when the nuclear programs of both India and Pakistan were probably at their peak developmental phase the US relations with both the countries were at their best historically.

Pakistan's nuclear program however continued to create concerns in Washington during the 1980s when the US policy in the region was chiefly guided by its ambitions to roll back the Soviet onslaught in Afghanistan. Some powerful US Congressmen however did express their concerns regarding the long-term impact of such a policy on nonproliferation objectives. Congress was eventually persuaded by the administration and it passed a provision in December 1981 that allowed the President to waive the Symington Amendment for six years if he determined that aid to Pakistan was in the national interest. Congress also amended another section of the nonproliferation law to cut-off US aid to Pakistan or any other non-nuclear country that exploded a nuclear device. Thus as long as Islamabad refrained from testing its nuclear device, it was eligible for US assistance.

The US policy towards the region during the period was thus driven by tensions between a staunchly anti-communist administration and minority opinions regarding the impact of such policy on the nonproliferation objectives. Islamabad however did try to alleviate such concerns in Washington during this period. President

Zia-ul-Haq said in February 1980 that ‘We are not making any bomb.... It is a modest experiment that we are carrying on.... We are only trying to acquire technology. It takes particularly long when you have to acquire this technology through backdoor, clandestine method (sic).’<sup>38</sup>

In September 1981, Indira Gandhi ‘claimed that India and ‘the rest of the world’ knew that Pakistan was developing the capacity to build nuclear weapons and would soon explode a nuclear device. She said this might prompt India ... to explode another nuclear device of its own.’<sup>39</sup>

Meanwhile important developments occurred in the Indian nuclear program. Indian prime ministers authorized and then cancelled a proposed nuclear test in 1982, sanctioned the development of a series of land-based missiles delivery systems in 1983, and ordered work on the development of more advanced weapons designs.<sup>40</sup>

As Pakistan’s nuclear program progressed, reports started emerging that New Delhi was seriously contemplating destroying Islamabad’s nuclear installations. Such threats were taken seriously in Islamabad and the PAF was seen regularly in the air over Kahuta throughout the early 1980s. An official in Washington also reported that the Zia government had ringed Kahuta with surface-to-air missiles to counter such air attacks.<sup>41</sup>

In 1982, media reports, quoting some US intelligence officials revealed that Indian military planners had presented Indira Gandhi a plan to destroy Pakistani nuclear facilities. However it was also reported that Gandhi rejected the plan but ‘did not foreclose the option of striking if Pakistan appeared on the verge of acquiring a nuclear weapons capability.’<sup>42</sup>

Fears in Pakistan regarding possible Indian preventive war plans to deny Islamabad an opportunity to develop nuclear weapons resurfaced more seriously in 1984. In September, media leaks from a CIA briefing to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence suggested that Indian military planners were again urging the political leadership to order the destruction of Kahuta.<sup>43</sup> The cause of the US concern was that the US intelligence agencies failed to locate two squadrons of India’s most advanced fighter jets, the Jaguars, which some analysts feared had been moved in preparation for a possible raid across the borders.<sup>44</sup>

President Zia, who was already conveying Islamabad’s concerns in this regard, was assured by the US ambassador to Pakistan, Deane Hinton on September 16 that ‘if the United States were to see signs of an imminent Indian attack, Pakistan would

be notified immediately.<sup>45</sup> Hinton also remarked in a Pakistani public-lecture that ‘the United States would be “responsive” if India attacked Pakistan.’ Other US senior officials repeated such assertions, ‘which led to Indira Gandhi’s seeking verbal reassurances from the Soviet Union, and the latter agreeing that American actions were a threat to India and the Soviet Union.’<sup>46</sup>

Islamabad regarded the possibility of Indian attacks as a ‘serious threat’ and took ‘appropriate defensive measures.’<sup>47</sup> In press interviews, Pakistani officials emphasised the point that it would view Indian strikes as ‘naked aggression’ that would leave Pakistan ‘no alternative but to retaliate.’<sup>48</sup> According to Perkovich ‘the intelligence focussed on satellite photographs of the Ambala air base in Haryana (roughly three hundred miles from Kahuta)... appeared to show the Jaguars missing....’<sup>49</sup> Fears of an Indian preventive attack on Pakistani nuclear installations however subsided to some extent in December 1985 when the two sides agreed verbally not to attack each other’s nuclear facilities.<sup>50</sup>

Pakistani advances in the nuclear technology were revealed incrementally during the 1980s. In February 1984, Dr. A. Q. Khan, the head of Pakistan’s uranium enrichment program and also known as the father of Pakistan’s nuclear program declared that ‘by the grace of God, Pakistan is now among the few countries in the world that can efficiently enrich uranium.’ However soon after President Zia, while confirming the breakthrough, played down A. Q. Khan’s comments by saying that ‘Pakistan has acquired a very modest research and development capacity of uranium enrichment ... for peaceful purposes.’<sup>51</sup>

Pakistan thus tried to walk a tightrope between conveying its nuclear credentials to India and ameliorating US concerns regarding proliferation during the 1980s. However concerns in Washington regarding Pakistan’s nuclear program grew in 1984. In September 1984, Reagan wrote a letter to Zia warning of ‘grave consequences’ if Islamabad proceeded to enrich uranium beyond 5% level (93% enrichment is required for nuclear weapons). In return Pakistani officials assured US officials that they would respect such limitations.<sup>52</sup>

In March 1984, a Pakistan-specific nonproliferation amendment was passed unanimously in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. It required that US aid to Pakistan be terminated unless the president could certify annually that Islamabad did not possess a nuclear device, and was not acquiring technology, equipment, or material for manufacturing or detonating one. The administration however responded

that it could not meet the latter requirement and that aid to Islamabad would have to be cut-off if the proposed amendment became a law. In a compromise so as not to hinder the Afghan war, a softer amendment was adopted in 1985 that came to be known as the Pressler Amendment.

The Amendment required that before aid could be released to Pakistan for each next fiscal year, the president would have to certify annually that Islamabad does not possess nuclear explosive device. It was claimed that ‘the proposed United States assistance program will reduce significantly the risk that Pakistan will possess a nuclear explosive device.’ The changes thus shifted the emphasis of the standard for terminating assistance from detonation to possession of a nuclear device but laid down no punishment for Pakistan’s nuclear research and development.

Pakistani advances in the nuclear field during the 1980s were highlighted when Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi remarked in June 1985 that Pakistan was ‘very close’ to building a nuclear bomb and said that ‘In principle we are opposed to the idea of becoming a nuclear power. We could have done so for the past 10 or 11 years, but we have not.’ While revealing India’s nuclear advancements, he said that ‘If we decided to become a nuclear power, it would take a few weeks or a few months.’<sup>53</sup>

A few months later, Rajiv Gandhi said that ‘Pakistan has either already got the bomb or will get one in matter of months and may not even need to test it.’<sup>54</sup> Later in 1985, a high-level US delegation could not convince New Delhi that Islamabad’s nuclear program was not as advanced as feared and Rajiv said that ‘The US seems to believe that Pakistan has not got the enriched uranium yet. We believe they have.’<sup>55</sup>

### **The Impact of the Brasstacks Crisis 1986-87**

The Brasstacks Crisis between India and Pakistan took place between November 1986 and March 1987. The Crisis occurred when the Indian Army engaged in a partial but significant mobilization of its available ground forces to war-fighting levels near the Pakistani borders, ostensibly for military exercises named ‘Brasstacks.’ A force mobilization of that scale in the vicinity of Pakistan was viewed with great alarm by Islamabad which responded with defensive mobilizations of its own military. These in turn were seen as threatening by New Delhi.

With the Crisis peaking in January 1987, India had deployed a large number of troops within 100 miles of Pakistan. The Crisis took place in a complicated political

and military environment. It occurred against the backdrop of Pakistan's rising concerns regarding Indian designs to destroy its nuclear facilities before it could become a de facto nuclear power. The Crisis also came on the heels of Indian occupation of the Siachen Glacier in 1984 in the disputed region of Kashmir, where the two armies were involved in daily clashes.

The context of the Crisis also included a rising secessionist movement in Indian Punjab, growing discomfort in Indian-controlled Kashmir, and political unrest in the Pakistani province of Sindh, where each side suspected the other to be involved in providing insurgents with material support. Pakistan was alleged to be supporting the Sikh movement and the Kashmiris, while India was accused of aiding the Sindhi separatists in Pakistan.

The Brasstacks was the brainchild of India's new ambitious military chief General Sundarji and Arun Singh, the de facto Indian Minister of Defense. As the exercise started, Arun Singh remarked that not only were the Indian armed forces going to develop new strategies and test new weapons, but that the nuclear aspects of Indian strategy were also being reconsidered at the highest level.<sup>56</sup> The exercise turned out to be bigger than any NATO exercise - and the biggest since World War II. The exercise took place in the desert area of Rajasthan which by Pakistani estimates was an ideal location from which to launch a cross border operation into the then troubled Pakistani province of Sindh, cutting Pakistan in half.

The exercises involved about a quarter of a million Indian Army personnel, and was comprised of the nine infantry, three mechanised, three armored, and one air assault divisions, as well as three armored brigades. It also involved around 1300 tanks. These units were all concentrated on Pakistan's sensitive border areas with all the paraphernalia for a real war deployed and at a cost of around a quarter of a billion dollars. The exercise also included the naval component whereby an ambitious amphibious operation by the Indian Navy in the Korangi area of Karachi was envisioned.

The exercise took place in four phases: Brasstacks I, in May-June 1986, was essentially a mapping exercise by the Southern, Western and Northern Army commands of India; Brasstacks II, in November 1986, was a computerised war-game-cum-sand-model exercise in which the Indian navy and air force held their exercises separately; Brasstacks III, in November to December 1986, was envisaged as being comprised of segmented exercises by different arms and services to support divisional

and corps-level offensive operations in battleground environments; while Brasstacks IV was scheduled for February-March 1987. The exercise designated Blueland (India) the northern force, Redland (Pakistan) the southern force, with Greenland (China) to the west.

According to the Indian position, Brasstacks was aimed at evaluating new military concepts in battle conditions. The most important of these included the Reorganized Army Plains Infantry Division (RAPID) formations, which included two infantry and one mechanized brigade, designed to be partly mobile but capable of holding territory. This would be a new Indian concept in the context of a war with Pakistan. The other concept was Plan AREN (Area Radio Engineered Network) which was a new Indian communication grid which could provide secure links with voice, telex, facsimile, video, and computer terminals. It also aimed to test command, control, communication, and information systems (C3I), based on modern computer equipments, to provide field commanders with real-time information during war.<sup>57</sup>

Pakistan was alarmed by the scale and scope of the exercise and its military analysts saw Brasstacks as a threatening exhibition of overwhelming conventional force. During the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit in Bangalore later in November 1986, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi assured his Pakistani counterpart Mohammad Khan Junejo, that the exercise would be reviewed in order to cater for Pakistani concerns. Humayun Khan, Pakistan's former ambassador to India notes that Prime Minister Junejo talked to Rajiv Gandhi about the exercise since 'Pakistan was apprehensive about the scale of these manoeuvres and the purpose behind them. Rajiv replied that his army wanted a 'big tamasha' (a grand show) but that he himself was not in favour of spending so much money and wanted to cut down on the expenditure. He assured Junejo that it was nothing more than a training exercise and he hoped the hotline between the two military headquarters would be used to remove any doubts or suspicions.'<sup>58</sup> However Rajiv Gandhi's weak reassurances and the fact the scale and contours of the exercise remained intact heightened Pakistan's fears.

The military reality for Pakistan was that with Indian troops on the borders, its armed forces would have to move the troops and armor from interior locations of the country with greater speed.<sup>59</sup> The situation for Pakistan was thus inherently dangerous and demanded precautionary measures. Pakistan also raised the issue with the visiting

US Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger in October 1986 and Prime Minister Junejo asked him to let Pakistan know 'if the balloon is going up.'

In December 1986, Pakistan responded with manoeuvres of its own. It increased the vigilance along the border especially in the Brasstacks exercise area. At the time when the various phases of the Brasstacks exercise were unfolding Pakistan also started conducting its own military exercises. The first, code-named Saf-Shikan, involved Pakistan's strike corps Army Reserve South (ARS), consisting of the First Armored Division and the Thirty-Seventh Infantry Division which was exercising in the Bahawalpur-Marot area across the Rajasthan border. The second, code-named Flying Horse, was undertaken by the Army Reserve North (ARN), consisting of the Sixth Armored Division and the Seventeenth Infantry Division which was exercising in the Ravi-Chenab corridor. The ARS exercise was completed by the first week of November while the ARN exercise was completed by the middle of December. Because of its apprehensions, Pakistan prolonged the stay of its forces in the fields. This was accompanied by the necessary administrative measures such as the cancelation of leaves that had already been granted.

Later on Pakistan moved ARN to a new exercise area, the Shakargarh salient and the exercise was renamed as 'sledgehammer.' On the other hand, ARS crossed the Sutlej River from its southern to northern side in the second week of January 1987 stationing itself facing the Indian cities of Bhatinda and Ferozepur. India became seriously alarmed at the new developments. It calculated that Pakistan could launch a pincer movement to either detach a part of Punjab or could disrupt communications between India and the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan's show of force could also have a morale boosting effect on the Sikh separatist movement. This resulted in countermoves by India which launched Operation Trident aimed at strengthening its borders through a massive airlift.

The new positioning of the Pakistani strike corps however exposed Pakistan's entire flank to Indian armour in the Rajasthan sector. It appears that in a calculated risk, Pakistan left Sindh exposed to 'slicing' by the Indian forces involved in Brasstacks, hoping that the Indian army would divert the exercise from its original purposes.

Late in January, the Crisis reached its peak through each other's offensive moves with increased war hysteria. However at the same time, increased regional diplomatic activity started to defuse the Crisis. On January 24, Pakistan mooted a



proposal for urgent talks with India to resolve the problem. Meanwhile in a widely reported remark to the Pakistani ambassador at New Delhi airport, Rajiv Gandhi hinted the need for an expeditious de-escalation of the border tensions. At the same time, Arun Singh was removed from the Ministry of Defense and replaced by V. P. Singh from the Finance Ministry. Although the move had mixed motives, it did convey a message of conciliation to Islamabad. Also a press conference by Humayun Khan in New Delhi, in which he openly discussed the assurances he had received from Rajiv Gandhi, had a soothing effect by building up confidence on both sides.

Later on the prime ministers of the two countries spoke to each other on telephone and reaffirmed their desire for de-escalation, agreeing to hold immediate talks. Also the hotline between the militaries of the two countries was also activated as it had gone dormant with the rise in the tensions. On January 26, Pakistan announced that its Foreign Secretary Abdul Sattar would visit India for talks with the Indian Secretary, Alfred Gonsalves, to defuse tensions. The Pakistani delegation proceeded to New Delhi on January 30. Meanwhile India's Cricket Control Board invited President Zia-ul-Haq to watch the forthcoming India-Pakistan cricket match to be played in India on February 21.

Secretary-level talks between the two countries were held from January 31 to February 4 with a positive tone. The two sides agreed on the need for more transparency and regular contacts between the DGMOs of the two countries. India agreed to consider Pakistan's twelve-point agenda for normalization of the situation. Among other things this included halting any further forward movement of troops, prohibiting the laying of minefields and digging of trenches, pulling forces back to a distance of 10 miles from the border, bringing the air forces of the two countries to a lower state of alert, and then subsequent disengagement, and proposed measures to prevent a recurrence of such situations. Pakistan however did not ask for the cancellation of Brasstacks which was scheduled until March.

On the other hand, India tabled an eight point proposal that sought withdrawal of the Pakistani armored divisions but offered no withdrawal on its side. In the course of talks, common ground was finally explored and an agreement was reached on February 4. It called for a gradual disengagement and sector-by-sector withdrawal of forces starting from the Ravi-Chenab corridor. The agreement provided for the withdrawal of one Pakistani armored division and one infantry division while India was to pull back one mountain division to peacetime locations. All mines were to be

cleared while forward airbases were to be de-activated. However Pakistan was allowed to retain one independent armored brigade and an infantry brigade in the Ravi-Chenab corridor. The other military placements of the two countries however remained intact. The two sides also committed not to attack each other during the Crisis.

After the two countries completed the agreed upon phased fifteen-day withdrawal from the Ravi-Chenab corridor, President Zia-ul-Haq visited India apparently to watch India-Pakistan cricket match in Jaipur. This cricket diplomacy may not have been directly related to the de-escalation of the Crisis which already begun. The visit however did contribute to consolidation of the shaky peace just established and thus accelerated the process of normalization.

The Crisis also attained some nuclear coloring during its concluding phase when Pakistan's key nuclear scientist, A. Q. Khan was quoted in a press report by a prominent Indian journalist, Kuldip Nayar, which appeared in the London *Observer* on March 1, 1987. In Nayar's interview with A. Q. Khan on January 28, Khan suggested that Pakistan, if pressed hard, would not hesitate in developing a nuclear bomb.

The Crisis however remained essentially non-nuclear as much of the material in the story might have been drawn from the earlier statements by A. Q. Khan. Nuclear weapons did not affect the course of the Crisis also because the story did not appear until after the Crisis had effectively been de-escalated thus not being in time to have any impact on any key decision. Also the source of this nuclear signalling and the means were not serious enough for the Indian decision-makers. A. Q. Khan had already signalling Pakistan's nuclear ambitions as early as 1984. A. Q. Khan also later retracted his statement.

Further talks between the two countries in 1987-88 resulted in a number of new Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) between India and Pakistan being implemented. These were important and covered a number of areas. For example, the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities was signed on December 31, 1988, in Islamabad by the two foreign secretaries and witnessed by the Indian and Pakistani prime ministers, Rajiv Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto, respectively. Earlier fears of impending attack on facilities which would likely result in an all-out war, fed into the need for the agreement.

While Brasstacks was designed as a military exercise, the political and strategic motives behind it have been a matter of endless debate. Several explanations have been forwarded in this respect. Ravi Rikhye, an Indian strategic analyst having access to senior Indian military officials contends that Brasstacks was initially intended to lure Pakistan into a first move via deception and misdirection and then unleash a massive attack in response. He concludes that the Indian leadership however missed that chance of a lifetime because of its timidity.<sup>60</sup>

One of the Pakistan military's studies of Brasstacks viewed the exercise as 'a challenge to [the] Pakistan Army ... meant to test its credibility as a dynamic and reliable fighting force.'<sup>61</sup> It was also viewed in Pakistan as India acting at the behest of the Soviet Union which was then engaged in conflict in Afghanistan in order to pressurize Islamabad to stop its support for the Afghan Mujahideen. It might have been designed to counter the support Pakistan had given the Sikh separatist movement in Indian Punjab. It could also be aimed at Pakistan's weak point, the province of Sindh, where a low level insurgency was underway at that moment, and according to Pakistani claims was being aided and abetted by New Delhi.

The Crisis however did contribute to the acceleration of the nuclear programs of India and Pakistan. In response to A. Q. Khan's revelations, India stated that the disclosure was 'forcing us to review our option.' On the other hand in an interview with *Time* magazine, President Zia-ul-Haq declared that 'Pakistan has the capability of building the Bomb. You can write today that Pakistan can build a bomb whenever it wishes. Once you have acquired the technology, which Pakistan has, you can do whatever you like', adding that 'Pakistan still has no actual plan to make nuclear weapons.'<sup>62</sup>

### ***The Resurgence of the Kashmir Dispute and the India-Pakistan Crisis of 1990***

India had continued its policy of consolidating its hold over Kashmir after the 1971 war, while at the same time disturbances in Kashmir continued. After having some success on the external front in the wake of the Simla Agreement, India tried to focus on internal stability in Kashmir in order to gain some legitimacy for its control. Fresh disturbances however re-erupted in Kashmir in 1974 highlighting the tenuous hold of New Delhi over the area.

In response to new problems in Kashmir, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi released the jailed Kashmiri leader Sheikh Abdullah and concluded a new power-sharing agreement with him known as the 'Kashmir Accord.' According to this, Kashmir was given symbolic limited autonomy within the Indian Union and Abdullah managed to return to power. Pakistan however reacted strongly to these developments refusing to accept the legitimacy of such arrangements and protested these developments at the UN.

During the 1970s and 1980s, India continued to manage its control over the region with its strategy of appointing a leadership of its own choice through the manipulation of its politics and rigging of state elections. Elections were held in Indian Kashmir in 1977 and 1983 which were massively rigged and were 'accompanied by a great deal of brutality and intimidation.'<sup>63</sup>

On the other hand, Pakistan remained mired in internal political and economic crises during the 1970s. When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, Pakistan became busy on its western borders when it decided to join the US-supported Afghan war. Pakistan became the frontline state against communism receiving tremendous US aid both economic as well as military. The threat on the western borders shifted Pakistan's focus somewhat away from its traditional eastern rival and the Kashmir issue.

Although Kashmir remained relatively stable during the 1970s and 1980s however during the 1980s fundamental shifts were occurring within the local political landscape of Kashmir. This was the emergence of a new set of Kashmiri leadership dissatisfied with status quo in Kashmir both regarding the corrupt political management of the area, and also in terms of the political future of Kashmir. The developments led to an unprecedented mass uprising in Kashmir against the Indian rule.

Since 1947, India had been successful in imposing upon the Kashmiris the leaders of its own choosing through rigged and the manipulated elections. After waiting for a long time for progress on the resolution of the dispute that would satisfy their aspirations, the new Kashmiri leadership wanted to take matters into its own hands regarding the future settlement of Kashmir's political future. This triggered a qualitatively new phase in the history of the resistance movement in Kashmir.

The new Kashmiri leadership initially hoped to achieve this aim in a peaceful manner through electoral means. To express their ambitions through peaceful

democratic means, the new Kashmiri leadership formed a new political alliance, the United Muslim Front, in September 1986. It was formed to contest the then forthcoming elections. However much before that, anticipating the changing political scene and growing unrest among the Kashmiris, the Indian government decided to impose direct governor rule on Kashmir in March 1986.

The popularity of the new political force resulted in the massive unprecedented turnout of 75% in the elections held on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1987. Sensing the landslide victory of the United Front, India resorted to unprecedented rigging and manipulation. 'Widespread fraud and skulduggery characterized this election. Voters were intimidated, opposition politicians were harassed, and ballot boxes were tampered.'<sup>64</sup> At the end these elections also proved to be 'as unfree and unfair as any other' held in Kashmir.<sup>65</sup>

The rigged election in Kashmir in 1987 is generally seen as the starting point for the insurgency and by the summer of 1988, violence had begun, with incidents of assassinations and bombings increasing the following year.<sup>66</sup> There had been sporadic and ineffective acts of violence prior to this period too, but the nature and scale of the violence after 1988 clearly suggests that it was the start of a distinctly new and concerted uprising.<sup>67</sup>

As a result Kashmiris came out and participated in widespread protests and demonstrations against India. Shutdowns and peaceful anti-India protests of Kashmiris demanding right of self-determination became an everyday phenomenon in Kashmir.<sup>68</sup> International media was banned from entering Kashmir and Indian military was given free hand in adopting all sorts of tactics including arbitrary arrests, searches of houses, rape, looting and punitive destruction of houses. Massive human rights violations became order of the day and have been well-documented by almost all of the major international human rights watchdogs.<sup>69</sup>

The complete alienation of the Kashmiris was evident by the fact that only 5% turn-out was recorded in Kashmir during the 1989 Indian general elections. Instead of listening to the demands of the Kashmiris, India resorted to ruthless suppression of the movement. This resulted in violent backlash by the Kashmiri youth. They concluded that in absence of any peaceful democratic channel, they could achieve their right of self-determination, promised to them by UN, only through armed resistance.

A number of armed resistance groups developed in Kashmir during the mass uprising. The resistance was purely of indigenous nature and a large number of

Kashmiri youth started crossing the LoC into AJK to get arms and training. In the wake of these developments Pakistan decided to get actively involved in aiding and abetting the insurgency in Kashmir. These Kashmiri fighters were also later on joined by some Pakistani militant groups that were earlier active in Afghanistan against the Soviets.

The growing unrest in Kashmir, India's heavy-handed tactics against the Kashmiri populace, and Pakistan's decision to extend material support to the insurgency, led to a sharp deterioration of relations between Islamabad and New Delhi. India accused Pakistan of supporting the movement describing it as 'cross-border terrorism.'

Whereas India accused Pakistan of fomenting the uprising, Pakistan however denied any of its involvement officially. Islamabad maintained that it provides only diplomatic and moral support to the Kashmiri fighters and does not provide any material or military assistance. On March 13 as there were massive protests going on in Indian-held Kashmir, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto remarked that Kashmiris have the right to self-determination as given to them by the resolutions of the UN.<sup>70</sup> During her visit to AJK she vowed a 'thousand-year war' in support of Kashmiri struggle.<sup>71</sup>

The situation led to a sharp increase in tensions between the two countries leading to a fresh Crisis between the two countries during the winter and spring of 1990. There started a significant movement of troops and military hardware towards the international borders and the LoC by India and Pakistan. The tensions however did not escalate and the Crisis was finally resolved by the two countries with a crucial role being played by the United States. The 1990 Crisis witnessed the first unprecedentedly high profile engagement of the United States in managing the regional situation.

The Crisis developed in reaction to a mass uprising in Kashmir against Indian rule and New Delhi assigned the responsibility for this to Islamabad. During the Crisis, threatening rhetoric and military mobilization were undertaken by the two countries. Both sides sent repeated signals to one another warning of their readiness to resort to developing and/or deploying nuclear weapons if pushed to the wall. Such prospects also prompted the United States to become involved in active diplomacy in the region in order to stabilize of the situation.

The Kashmiri resistance developed into a sophisticated well-organized movement with the passage of time. It became active both on the military front as

well as on the political front.<sup>72</sup> Pakistan also became actively involved in aiding the movement both in terms of weapons and training of the Kashmiri insurgents. Despite a diversity of views along tactical and ideological lines, the movement has shown tremendous maturity in maintaining a coherent strategic front vis-à-vis Indian rule.

Among a number of militant groups active in Kashmir, Hezb-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) is considered to be the largest. Apart from that there exist a number of other militant groups and small splinter groups active in Kashmir. The militant groups have also formed an umbrella organization Muttahidda Jihad Council (MJC) based in AJK to coordinate their military activities. There are some groups that operate outside of the organizational structure of MJC, the most prominent of these being Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM).

On the political front the resistance is represented by the All Parties Hurriyyat Conference (APHC) whom Islamabad officially accepts as the representative of the Kashmiris. Islamabad maintains close contacts with the APHC through its ambassador in New Delhi. The APHC is an umbrella organization of different political parties of various shades and ideological leanings, but is opposed to Indian rule and is united in seeking the right of self-determination for the Kashmiris. On the other hand India's ally in Kashmir has remained the NC.

Throughout the 90's, India remained unable to control the insurgency in Kashmir. Even with the huge deployment of its army, unprecedented in the world in terms of civil-military personnel ratio in any conflict area, and with all sorts of human rights violations, India could not suppress the Kashmiri uprising. The protest demonstrations and armed resistance in Kashmir became an ongoing and persistent phenomenon. India accused Pakistan of aiding and abetting the Kashmir fighters, while Pakistan stuck to its stance that it only provided moral and diplomatic support to the resistance movement.

### ***Crossing the Nuclear Rubicon***

It is quite difficult to pinpoint when India and Pakistan were able to develop and deploy a reliable nuclear device at a short notice. Such assessment is more difficult in case of Pakistan which had not yet tested any of its nuclear devices. Some Pakistani officials suggest that they had acquired their 'bomb capability' by 1988.<sup>73</sup> The United States however concluded by the fall of 1990 that it could no longer

certify, as the Pressler Amendment required, that Pakistan did not possess nuclear weapons.<sup>74</sup>

Whereas it is hard to say that at what stage the nuclear weapons programs of the two countries stood till 1990, however most of the observers strongly believe that both India and Pakistan established the capability to employ nuclear weapons by the early 1990s. Pakistani officials claimed in early 1992 that Pakistan possessed the capacity to make nuclear weapons but denied the existence of nuclear weapons.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, nuclear tests were authorized and cancelled by New Delhi in 1995 after US detection and were again considered seriously in 1996.

The nuclear credentials of the region however became overt when the two countries conducted their tit-for-tat nuclear tests in the summer of 1998. These occurred in the backdrop of the rise of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in India in 1998, under the premiership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The party had strong anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistan leanings which resulted in the hardening and militarization of Indian policies towards various issues, especially the Kashmir dispute. This led to the further deterioration of relations between the two countries and ultimately the freezing of ongoing dialogue.

On May, 11 1998, India simultaneously detonated three separate nuclear devices. These included one thermonuclear device, one a roughly Hiroshima-sized fission device and the third one, a miniaturized, sub-kiloton device. Two days later, India tested two more sub-kiloton devices. One of these reportedly used a reactor-grade, rather than the pure weapons-grade, mix of plutonium.<sup>76</sup>

Vajpayee and other members of his government made considerable efforts to explain the tests as a response to deteriorating security environment. In a letter to President Clinton, and in the policy statements in the Lok Sabha, the Indian government explained the tests as a reaction to a strengthening China, Chinese nuclear cooperation with Pakistan, the increasing pressure of the non-proliferation regime, and the right to self-determination and security.<sup>77</sup> The official explanations for the Indian nuclear tests thus stressed extra-regional or international factors as justification, and mentioned Pakistan only in the context of Chinese missile and nuclear support to Islamabad.

However Pakistan was not convinced and perceived the tests as a direct threat to its own security. On May 28, despite intense international diplomatic activity to stop Islamabad from conducting its own nuclear tests, Pakistan responded to Indian



nuclear tests by conducting its own. Islamabad claimed to have conducted five nuclear tests.<sup>78</sup> Two days later Pakistan conducted another nuclear test. The yields of both Indian and Pakistani tests remain disputed, but seismic evidence unquestionably confirms that both India and Pakistan conducted several nuclear tests.<sup>79</sup>

India's nuclear tests received almost unanimous disapproval in the international community leading to economic sanctions on both countries. Fears of a nuclear war over Kashmir between India and Pakistan were expressed in all major capitals of the world. The US President Clinton called the nuclear tests by India as 'a terrible mistake' and said that 'I want to make it very, very clear that I am deeply disturbed.'<sup>80</sup> The P-5 communiqué, G-8 resolution, UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution 1172, Sino-American joint communiqué and Mandela's inaugural address at NAM summit, all spoke about the centrality of the resolution of Kashmir issue for any substantive normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan. In pursuance of the UNSC resolution, the UN Secretary General (UNSG) Kofi Annan offered to mediate on Kashmir and decided to send a special envoy to India and Pakistan to seek some consensus on the permanent resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

Similarly China also condemned Indian nuclear tests. A spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed the 'deep concern' of the Chinese government over the tests and remarked that these were contrary to international trends and not conducive to peace and stability in South Asia. China's reaction was even harsher when Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee justified his country's nuclear tests in a letter to Clinton by alluding to the 'China threat'. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement on May 14, after the second round of Indian tests on May 13, strongly condemning India's behaviour. It said that China was 'deeply shocked' by India's conducting two more tests' and 'hereby expresses its strong condemnation'. It further said that 'This act of India's is nothing but outrageous contempt for the common will of the international community' and this will 'entail serious consequences to the peace and stability in South Asia and the world at large'.<sup>81</sup>

The nuclear tests met with nearly universal approval in India where polls suggested over 90% of the public supported the decision. The Pakistani public also supported Islamabad's response to what was perceived as an Indian provocation. Pakistan also joined India as the target of international disapproval and economic sanctions. However world opinion generally sympathised with Pakistan's decision,

viewing it as a necessary response to India's tests, rather than as a destabilizing impact on the global nonproliferation regime.

Following their nuclear tests, India and Pakistan also tested their improved missile systems in 1998 and 1999. These missiles were capable of covering a broad range of targets throughout the Subcontinent. By early 1999, both India and Pakistan had operational nuclear forces with tested, deliverable warheads and a reliable delivery system.

### ***Conclusion***

This chapter has described the necessary historical context that needs to be understood before exploring the impact of nuclearization on the regional conflict. It has shown that the nuclearization of the region thus occurred against the backdrop of an already tense relationship between India and Pakistan characterized by a number of disputes leading to wars and crises. Indeed the two countries had three wars just within the first 25 years of their establishment. The chapter has also traced the evolution of the nuclear programs of India and Pakistan and has shown that the process of nuclearization itself has been marred by tensions and crises with continuous fears of preventive wars, especially in Pakistan. It has also shown that the nuclearization of the region occurred in an opaque manner with no definite answer as to when the two players had been actually able to field their nuclear devices for military use. It was only in the wake of their nuclear tests in the summer of 1998 that it was established that the two countries were indeed de facto nuclear powers. The next chapter will discuss the various debates about the implications of nuclearization for the India-Pakistan conflict and will lay down the argument and theoretical framework of this study.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Survey and Theoretical Perspectives

#### *Introduction*

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section outlines the general debate about the consequences of the spread of nuclear weapons on inter-state relations. The debate is divided into two broad camps, the proliferation optimists and the proliferation pessimists. The proliferation optimists contend that the spread of nuclear weapons will have a soothing effect on regional rivalries, thus stabilizing the relationship between two nuclear rivals. Proliferation pessimists however take the view that nuclear proliferation is likely to make regional rivalries and conflicts more dangerous due to the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons. This debate will serve as the conceptual background for the subsequent discussion about the implications of the nuclear proliferation for India-Pakistan relations.

The second section provides a survey of existing literature on the issue in case of South Asia, and literature applicable to the argument of this study. It shows that the dominant view in the existing literature on India-Pakistan relations is characterized by an optimist view of the spread of nuclear weapons in South Asia and implications for security and conflict. This view of the regional situation contends that nuclear weapons have stabilized India-Pakistan relations, and that the breakdown of deterrence in the region is out of question.

While analyzing the key arguments of proliferation optimists in the context of South Asia, this chapter will go on to argue that the developments in the India-Pakistan relations following their overt nuclearization in 1998 negate such an optimistic view. It will argue that nuclear weapons may not have created the much needed caution in the behavior of the regional rivals, and that the breakdown of deterrence in the region is actually a reasonable possibility.

As the study situates itself within the proliferation pessimist camp, the chapter also takes a critical look at existing pessimist work. By highlighting the weaknesses of the existing pessimist work on South Asia, it will argue that these works are unable to grasp the essence of existing instability in South Asia during the post-1998 period.

The third section of this chapter will discuss the broader theoretical perspectives of the study. It will contend that the framework of neo-realism alone is unable to explain instability in the region in the post-tests' period, and that these explanations have to be supplemented by an awareness of the 'cultural' variables that play an important role in security thinking in South Asia. It will argue that an appreciation of these variables will enable scholars to better understand the regional situation and provide a more convincing explanation for security policies and outcomes, and above all, propose more plausible and serious approaches to resolve existing tensions.

### ***The Proliferation Debate***

The debate about the spread of nuclear weapons, and the implications for security of this spread, is characterized by two contending approaches: proliferation optimism and proliferation pessimism. The following sections will outline the historical evolution and the key arguments of each side. This debate will serve as the conceptual framework for the critical analysis of the existing literature on India-Pakistan relations that deals with the issue of deterrence stability in a nuclearized regional environment. It will then also work as a foundation for further insights into theoretical aspects of the present study.

#### **Proliferation Optimism**

'Proliferation optimism' is the view that nuclear weapons are the ultimate source of stability between adversaries. Proliferation optimists believe that nuclear weapons make war between two nuclear-armed adversaries impossible due to the fear of unacceptable damage being caused by any nuclear exchange. In short, nuclear weapons have a soothing effect on military tensions and rivalry, thereby leading to the stabilization of relationships between warring states. Not only do nuclear weapons deter nuclear attacks being directed against you, but they also function as a deterrent against conventional attacks as well.

The optimistic view of nuclear weapons has been highlighted by a number of scholars. In one of its earliest incarnations, Arthur Lee Burns opined in a 1957 article that in the absence of a sudden technological breakthrough, the spread of nuclear weapons could stabilize international relations.<sup>1</sup> In the 1960s more observers expressed optimistic views about nuclear deterrence. In 1963, F. H. Hinsley argued

that nuclear weapons ‘constitute for the first time a true deterrent, one that will never have to be relied upon so long as it exists - and this is likely to be forever.’<sup>2</sup>

Arguing for an independent nuclear deterrent for France, General Pierre Gallois became the most prominent writer to assert that nuclear proliferation would result in greater peace and stability. He contended that ‘If every nuclear power held weapons truly invulnerable to the blows of the other, the resort to force by the one to the detriment of the other would be impossible.’<sup>3</sup> Later on Robert Sandoval put forward what he called a ‘porcupine theory’ of nuclear proliferation. According to this view, states with even modest nuclear capabilities would ‘walk like a porcupine through the forests of international affairs: no threat to its neighbors, [but] too prickly for predators to swallow.’<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, William Bader noted in 1968 that to ‘maintain the flexibility necessary to correct an arms imbalance in one region by providing nuclear weapons cooperation to one or more of the antagonists may be as stabilizing to the global system as denying all arms cooperation – nuclear and conventional – in another.’<sup>5</sup> In the same year Walter Wentz also advocated ‘stabilizing the present world political system in part by the discrete diffusion of atomic arms.’ He contended that the credibility problems affecting US extended deterrence could be solved by creating an ‘indigenous nuclear deterrent’ in certain regions. He wrote that ‘what is appropriate is the selective and conditional distribution of controlled atomic weapons to those states threatened by the Republic of China and Soviet Union and currently protected by the nuclear shield of the United States.’ Wentz considered India and Japan as strong candidates for such selective proliferation.<sup>6</sup>

A more forceful and detailed presentation of proliferation optimism can be seen in the work of Kenneth N. Waltz. Eventually, proliferation optimism came to be largely associated with Waltz writings. He writes that ‘In a conventional world, one is uncertain about winning or losing. In a nuclear world, one is uncertain about surviving or being annihilated.’<sup>7</sup> In a similar vein Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and William Riker argue that the ‘presence of an explicit or underlying nuclear threat constrains conflict by reducing its likelihood of escalating into war.’<sup>8</sup> Similar views were also expressed by a number of other scholars like John J. Weltman,<sup>9</sup> Steven J. Rosen<sup>10</sup> and John J. Mearsheimer.<sup>11</sup> For example, Weltman reasons that the spread of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction to new powers will tend over time to induce caution and to moderate conflict.

Proliferation optimism is based on a realist conception of state behavior. Realism, or its later more developed offshoot commonly called 'neorealism', says that states operate under conditions of anarchy in the international system. For the realists, the only guarantee of the existence of a state in the international system is 'power' because, in the absence of international authority, there are few rules or norms that restrain states. They contend that the survival of the state can never be guaranteed, because the threat or the use of force culminating in war is a legitimate instrument of statecraft.

For realists, although the units (states) of the anarchic international system are 'functionally undifferentiated,' they are 'distinguished primarily by their greater or lesser capabilities for performing similar tasks.'<sup>12</sup> The distribution of capabilities is a system-wide concept and not a unit attribute. Changes in the structure of the system occur when there are shifts in the distribution of capabilities among the units, and changes in structure change expectations about how the units of the system will behave, and about the outcomes their interactions will produce.

According to realism, states are deeply concerned about the balance of power and compete among themselves either to gain or preserve power. This competition for power sometimes leads to wars between the states also. Power 'may comprise anything that establishes and maintain[s] control of man over man [and it] covers all social relationships which serve that end, from physical violence to the most subtle psychological ties by which one mind controls another.'<sup>13</sup> Power is thus the currency of international politics. One aspect of power is the material capabilities that a state possesses. One aspect of this is the latent power derived from the 'socio-economic ingredients that go into building military power.'<sup>14</sup>

Thus, all states look for opportunities to shift the balance of power in their favour, particularly the balance of military power. They want to ensure that no other state is able to gain power at its expense leading to unending competition among states. Every state in the international arena thus, behaves like a revisionist state and assumes the worst about the motives of other states. This leads to a situation which is known as the 'security dilemma.' The dilemma posed here is that every step that a state takes to enhance its security reduces the security of another state. This results in a loss in terms of relative power vis-a-vis the other state, inviting a similar response in return.

According to realist frameworks the balance of power is mainly a function of the tangible military assets that a state has. However states may pursue other strategies to tilt the balance of power in their favour by pursuing international connections such as alliances, ententes, foreign economic and military aid, and the leasing or granting of strategic bases to well-disposed great powers. These factors, though intangible, do play an important role in balance of power calculations.

Whereas war is regarded as a legitimate instrument of state policy by realists, they however contend that the traditional utilitarian relationship between military force and the political behavior of states has been fundamentally altered by the development of nuclear weapons. Thus according to realist logic, nuclear-armed states behave with robust circumspection when confronted with even a modicum of nuclear risk.

States thus become so fearful of the prospect of nuclear engagement that they are strongly dissuaded from acts that raise this risk. Kenneth Waltz, for example, argues that ‘the presence of nuclear weapons makes states exceedingly cautious.... Why fight if you can’t win much and might lose everything?’ Since war between nuclear-armed adversaries involves the possibility of reciprocal destruction and even annihilation, the prospect for stable deterrent relationships to develop between states, and within an international system composed of numerous nuclear powers, is considered to be much greater than in a non-nuclear world. Waltz stresses that ‘whatever the number of nuclear states, a nuclear world is tolerable if those states are able to send convincing deterrent messages: It is useless to attempt to conquer because you will be severely punished.’<sup>15</sup>

Proliferation optimism is based on the experiences of the United States and the USSR during the Cold War period when the two superpowers were able to avoid a direct war between them. Gaddis notes that ‘the development of nuclear weapons has had, on balance, a stabilizing effect on the postwar international system. They have served to discourage the process of escalation that has, in other eras, too casually led to war. They have had a sobering effect upon a whole range of statesmen of varying degrees of responsibility and capability.’<sup>16</sup> Citing the example of Cold War era stability, the leading proliferation optimist, Waltz claims that ‘Nuclear weapons have reduced the chances of war between the United States and the Soviet Union and between the Soviet Union and China. One may expect them to have similar results elsewhere.’<sup>17</sup>

Although realists base their claims upon the US-USSR Cold War nuclear relationship, they don't accept any basic exception to the logic of nuclear deterrence. For them there is nothing intrinsic solely to the superpower experience and the nuclear 'balance of terror' is seen to be quite stable irrespective of the state or the level of system analysis. They expect nuclear-armed adversaries, regardless of context, to behave toward each other like the superpowers did during the Cold War's 'nuclear peace.'

The rational deterrence model based on such conceptions thus predicts that nuclear weapons will promote deterrence and decrease the probability of war to almost zero. It contends that since the destructive power of nuclear weapons is immense, their possessors thus have no doubt about the extreme consequences of any nuclear exchange. Nuclear weapons thus inhibit conflict, including conventional non-nuclear conflict due to the fear of escalation. As argued by Waltz, miscalculation causes wars, and 'nuclear weapons make military miscalculations difficult and politically pertinent prediction easy.'<sup>18</sup>

### **Proliferation Pessimism**

Despite the overwhelming acceptance of the views of proliferation optimists, some scholars of international relations however have opposed such contentions. Generally labelled 'proliferation pessimists,' they are deeply doubtful of inferring an auspicious nuclear future from the experiences of the Cold War. They worry instead that proliferation is likely to have pernicious consequences for South Asian regional security.<sup>19</sup> Nuclear pessimism contends that despite the fact that nuclear weapons make war extremely costly, they may fail to produce stability due to a number of political, technical and organizational factors.

Proliferation pessimism stresses that important contextual variables differentiate the nuclear relationship between the superpowers from other relationships. Rejecting claims for accepting the US-Soviet nuclear relationship during the Cold War period as an infallible model, pessimists warn against 'transposing the argument of the war-preventing function of nuclear weapons to regions outside the East-West system.' In their view, 'the stability of nuclear deterrence between East and West rest[ed] on a multitude of military and political factors which in other regions are either totally missing or are only partially present.'<sup>20</sup>



According to pessimists, the stability of US-Soviet nuclear deterrence was a function of the singular political and geostrategic character of the Cold War. The territorial separation of the two powers, the absence of a previous legacy of hostility, the status-quo orientation of the two states and the acceptance of spheres of influence, and the simplicity of bipolar rivalry made for a uniquely benign security environment that ultimately led to the development of a stable relationship between them.

According to pessimists, proliferation outside this context would not necessarily lead to similar outcomes as it would occur in regions of the world where politico-military conditions are more acutely prone to conflict. For them, as many Third World states are traditional enemies and in close geographical proximity, conflict is more endemic and quickly engages critical interests.

Proliferation pessimists also argue that nuclear proliferation is dangerous because emergent nuclear states probably will lack the financial resources and technical capabilities needed to develop safe and secure nuclear forces, and because they will face greater foreign and domestic threats to the reliable operation of their nuclear arsenals.

As one of the leading proponents of proliferation pessimism, Lewis A. Dunn argues that 'a proliferated world is likely to be a nasty and dangerous place, entailing threats to the security and domestic well-being of virtually all nations and posing a serious possibility of a longer-term decay of global political order.'<sup>21</sup>

Dunn argued that 'many of the political, technical, and situational roots of stable nuclear deterrence between the United States and the Soviet Union may be absent in South Asia, Middle East or other regions to which nuclear weapons are spreading. There is a high risk of nuclear weapons being used.'<sup>22</sup> He says that the 'heightened stakes and lessened room for manoeuvre in conflict-prone regions, the volatile leadership and political instability of many of the next nuclear powers, and the technical deficiencies of many new nuclear forces all threaten the first decades' nuclear peace.'<sup>23</sup>

Dunn contends that because proliferation would occur within existing chronic patterns of conflict 'leaders may be ready to risk nuclear confrontation, if not even to accept a surprisingly high level of nuclear damage, in pursuit of their objectives.'<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Evron concludes that in the presence of a tradition of inter-state conflict within these regions, states will consider military force, even nuclear weapons, when waging war, rather than as tools to uphold deterrence.<sup>25</sup>

Broadly speaking two major branches can be identified in the literature on proliferation pessimism. One branch argues that states under certain conditions may not behave along the lines of 'rational' deterrence expectations and will still engage in dangerous behavior that may put pressure on them to use nuclear weapons. The other branch focuses chiefly on the accidental, unauthorized or inadvertent use of nuclear weapons, rooting their analysis in organizational theory.

Proliferation pessimism based on insights of 'organizational theory' has moved on to undertake empirically based research on the technical, organizational, and doctrinal problems that seriously threatened the breakdown of nuclear stability even during the Cold War.<sup>26</sup> Organization theorists, chiefly led by Scott Sagan, argue whether emerging command and control structures in new nuclear powers increase or decrease the potential for inadvertent conflict or crisis. These works have shown that a number of challenges to deterrence stability existed and that the US and Soviet nuclear arsenals also posed high accidental-war dangers. These works have also shown that such problems would not only be replicated but magnified in a world of more nuclear powers.<sup>27</sup>

The work of organizational-level pessimists mainly focuses on the turbulent civil-military relations of Third World nuclear states. Sagan, for instance, contends that military establishments generally have strong professional and organizational biases toward preventive options.<sup>28</sup> He draws upon the work that applies organization theory to the behavior of military bureaucracies, and argues that professional socialization leads military officers to see war as inevitable and sometimes necessary, inclining them in turn to think in a 'better now than later' logic and to favor offensive doctrines.<sup>29</sup> Moving further they also contend that military establishments, like all large enterprises, also seek strong autonomy and that these organizational pathologies, will promote military action in new nuclear states where institutional civilian controls over the military are weak.

It is useful to mention here the optimistic perspective on such concerns. Optimists claim that the problems involved in creating situations of mutual deterrence are not beyond the capacity of many states. They dismiss the notion that stable civil-military relations are necessary for nuclear deterrence. They argue that the inextricable imperatives of the nuclear revolution operate equally upon civilians and military leaders alike. 'Although one may prefer civil control', according to Waltz,

‘preventing a highly destructive war does not require it’ because military leaders are as interested in avoiding self-destruction as civilians.<sup>30</sup>

Optimists also discount the possibility of preventive-war tensions whereby a nuclear power is tempted to destroy the nuclear facilities of a nuclearizing rival. For them the practical difficulties of ensuring a disarming strike to preclude any possibility of nuclear retaliation make preventive actions extremely unlikely. Waltz explains that ‘prevention and pre-emption are difficult games because the costs are so high if the games are not perfectly played.... Ultimately, the inhibitions [against such attacks] lie in the impossibility of knowing for sure that a disarming strike will totally destroy an opposing force and in the immense destruction even a few warheads can wreak.’<sup>31</sup> As an example, they point to the restraint the superpowers exercised on each other in the 1960s, when first the United States and then the Soviet Union contemplated military action against China's nascent nuclear weapon sites.

Proliferation pessimism thus maintains that nuclear conflict could be brought about intentionally as well as due to misperceptions, technical mishaps, and inadvertent actions that they may neither fully anticipate nor be able to cope with, and also because of certain internal dynamics of a state. The proliferation pessimists doubt the near-absolute capacity of nuclear weapons to bring about stability among other nuclear states in general.

### ***Proliferation Optimism and South Asia***

As it was generally believed that India and Pakistan both became de facto nuclear powers some time towards the end of the 1980s or the early 1990s, scholars of international relations started making assessments about the likely impact of nuclear weapons on the foreign policy behavior of the two countries. It was asked if the two countries would enter into a stable relationship after the acquisition of nuclear capability, as was witnessed in case of the United States and the USSR, or would they behave in a different way.

The mainstream view in this regard is based on proliferation optimist assumptions and argues that these weapons have stabilized the relationship between the two regional arch rivals. Such a view of the regional situation suggests that nuclear weapons have stabilized the India-Pakistan relations and therefore the breakdown of deterrence in the region is out of question.

Building upon the traditional arguments of proliferation optimism, a number of scholars have expressed views that India-Pakistan nuclear capabilities have made the all out war between the two countries impossible. Even before the overt nuclearization of the region analysts like Peter R. Lavoy<sup>32</sup> and George Perkovich<sup>33</sup> opined, during the early 1990s, that with nuclear weapons in hand a war between India and Pakistan was out of question. However, the first detailed empirical analysis of the impact of nuclear weapons on South Asia was done by Devin T. Hagerty in his landmark study on India-Pakistan relations from late 1986 to mid-1990 and presented an optimistic view of the spread of nuclear weapons in South Asia.<sup>34</sup>

Hagerty based his analysis of India-Pakistan relations on the concepts of existential deterrence and opaque proliferation (as India and Pakistan had not yet officially admitted to be nuclear power). The concept of existential deterrence is based on the ideas of Bundy. Basing his argument on the observed behavior of the United States and the USSR during the Cold War era, Bundy suggests that even the mere existence of nuclear weapons creates caution in the behavior of the adversaries and leads to a stabilization of relations between the states. He asserts that nuclear weapons deter aggression by virtue of the simple fact that they exist, and not because of 'strategic theories or declaratory policies or even international commitments.'<sup>35</sup>

Hagerty's study was done about two years before the 1998 India-Pakistan nuclear tests and focuses on two Indo-Pakistani crises, namely the Brasstacks Crisis of 1986-87, and the 1990 Kashmir Crisis. As discussed in the previous chapter, Pakistan was not known at the time of the Brasstacks crisis to have acquired nuclear capability but it was generally believed to be well along the development path. On the other hand, India, which had conducted a nuclear test in 1974, was believed to be well ahead of Pakistan's nuclear program. However it was not clear if India had any weapon-grade fissile material or any actual nuclear weapon at the time of the Crises. Hagerty himself accepts that, in any event, 'little evidence has yet come to light suggesting that nuclear weapons capabilities played any existential deterrent role in Indian and Pakistani crisis behavior in 1987.' On the contrary, he says, 'Brasstacks was essentially a prenuclear weaponization crisis,' occurring at a moment when India had not yet come to view 'Pakistan as a 'real' nuclear weapon state.'<sup>36</sup>

The 1990 Kashmir Crisis, the second case study of Hagerty's work, occurred at a time when the nuclear program of the two countries was well-advanced. While it was generally believed that Pakistan had acquired the necessary nuclear expertise to

make a bomb, Pakistan's nuclear credentials were still a matter of debate. Thus it is quite problematic for Hagerty to claim that the 1990 Crisis was truly a nuclear crisis, thus rendering Hagerty's optimistic claims questionable. It is in this context that while commenting on the validity of Hagerty's assertion in the context of the doubtful nuclear background of the 1990 Crisis, Wirsing notes that 'The heavy reliance of Hagerty's thesis on the 1990 episode focuses attention on the still unanswerable question of the actual state of nuclear readiness achieved by one or both of the two rivals by that time.'<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, India-Pakistan tensions during the 1990 Crisis were so complex that some analysts have even refused to accept the tensions at the time even as a genuine full-fledge 'crisis.'<sup>38</sup>

Whatever the case, Hagerty's analysis of the behavior of India and Pakistan is focused primarily on a single case, the 1990 Kashmir Crisis, and Hagerty himself concedes that the case for existential deterrence cannot be proven because of the paucity of substantial facts. He still asserts nevertheless that only the 1990 episode can be considered a legitimate test and concludes at the end that the '[presence of] existential deterrence was the most important cause of peace on the subcontinent.'<sup>39</sup>

Commenting on the behavior of India and Pakistan during the Crisis, Hagerty concluded that 'a strong case can be made that India and Pakistan were deterred from war in 1990 by the existence of nuclear weapon capabilities on both sides and the chance that, no matter what Indian and Pakistani decision-makers said or did, any military clash could ultimately escalate to the nuclear level.'<sup>40</sup> He also went on to predict that given the substantial economic and political costs of open proliferation, India and Pakistan, along with 'all future proliferants' will 'nuclearize in [an] opaque manner' and will not go overtly nuclear.<sup>41</sup>

Hagerty thus contended that nuclear capability was a factor of stability in the region and concluded that India and Pakistan did not go to war during the period because of a robust nuclear deterrence. He contended that nuclear weapons stabilized India-Pakistan relations and defused militarized crises that otherwise would have ended in outright conflict. Outlining his optimistic claims he argued that 'Indo-Pakistani nuclear dynamics lend further support to our cumulative evidence that the chief impact of nuclear weapons is to deter war between their possessors' and went on to say that 'There is no more ironclad law in international relations theory than this: nuclear weapon states do not fight wars with one another.'<sup>42</sup>

Hagerty's views are shared by a lot of other analysts and have acquired the status of a dogma among observers of the South Asian political landscape. For example, sharing the optimistic impact of the nuclear weapons on South Asia, Sumit Ganguly also notes that 'Despite this tension-ridden relationship ... it is unlikely that India and Pakistan are on the verge of another war, let alone a nuclear war. ... The possession of nuclear weapons on both sides has, in all likelihood, introduced elements of caution among strategic elites in the region.'<sup>43</sup>

In the same vein, Ashley J. Tellis also notes that 'A reasonably high degree of deterrence stability currently exists within the greater South Asia region. ... It is not unreasonable to expect that the acknowledged presence of nuclear weapons on all sides would inhibit any interactive sequences that could lead to serious forms of deterrence breakdown in the future.'<sup>44</sup>

Such views have been presented by a number of other analysts as well. For example, Shireen Mazari argues that 'nuclear deterrence is making an all-out war between India and Pakistan a receding reality.'<sup>45</sup> Rajesh Basrur also argues that 'a kind of 'non-traditional deterrence' has been in place for some time, starting with the opaque years of the 1980s and continuing today.'<sup>46</sup> Similar views have also been advanced by Rajesh Rajagopalan.<sup>47</sup>

A leading Indian strategist K. Subrahmanyam has also argued that 'the nuclear [deterrence] factor has been operating in Indo-Pak relations since 1987' and has often cited an article written by two former Pakistani foreign secretaries (Agha Shahi and Abdul Sattar) and a former Pakistani air force chief (Zulfikar Ali Khan) to illustrate that this belief is also held by Pakistan.<sup>48</sup> Saira Khan's analysis the impact of the nuclear weapons on the India-Pakistan relations also presents an optimistic picture when she claims that there is an 'absence of a traditional war possibility in the rivalry' between India and Pakistan.<sup>49</sup>

Similarly, almost all of the essays contributed by E. Sridharan, Rasul Bakhsh Rais, Basrur, Arvind Kumar, Rajesh Rajagopalan and Swaran Singh in the edited volume on India-Pakistan relationship by E. Sridharan are optimistic about the role of nuclear weapons.<sup>50</sup> They emphasise the deterring value of nuclear weapons in the India-Pakistan dyad. For example, Rasul Baksh Rais claims that 'Pakistan's first-use option does interfere with India's strategic thinking, and it will continue to do so as long as Pakistan keeps up a robust limited deterrence capability.'<sup>51</sup>

The recently published detailed study of the Kargil Crisis by the Center for Contemporary Conflict (of the US Naval Postgraduate School) also tries to paint an optimistic view of the nuclearized South Asia region despite finding reasonable evidence to the contrary. This is despite the fact that the authors of the study accept that ‘Neither the conventional nor the nuclear-force balance between India and Pakistan played a discernable role in the conduct and outcome of the conflict.’<sup>52</sup> Similarly, they also conclude that their findings of the theory of nuclear revolution are ‘nuanced, apparently contradictory, and cannot be expressed in simple statements.’<sup>53</sup>

However the study still stresses the optimist line of argument and in an effort to present a rosy picture of the region, the study had to be rather assertive that ‘Deterrence theory does explain much of Indian and Pakistani strategic behavior both during and after the Kargil conflict, but mainly in dialectical manner. That is, a nuclear revolution is taking place, but only gradually through risky moves, dangerous crises, and limited conflicts, all of which modify prevailing strategic structures and beliefs.’<sup>54</sup>

### **The Irrelevance of the Stability-Instability Paradox in South Asia**

The optimistic view of the regional scenario however came under serious stress in the wake of continued violence and repeated crises after the overt nuclearization of India and Pakistan in 1998. Pakistan not only continued its material support to Kashmiri insurgents after 1998, but a substantial increase in the insurgency related violence was witnessed in Kashmir. On the other hand, with the onset of the summer of 1999 Pakistan-backed forces crossed the Line of Control (LoC) in the Kargil area of Kashmir, occupying vast tracts of land and triggering a massive crisis during which the two countries also had an intensive violent encounter in the area of intrusion. This was then followed by the longest-ever military stand-off between the two countries during 2001-02, during which the two countries came to the brink of war a number of times. This was then followed by a mini-crisis in 2008 in the wake of violent attacks in Mumbai in 2008.

In an effort to accommodate the continued violence in South Asia after that the nuclear credentials of the two countries had been proven beyond any doubt with their nuclear tests in 1998, proliferation optimists have tried to apply the logic of stability-instability paradox to explain the regional situation. According to this logic,

Pakistan's material support to the Kashmiri insurgents and later on Pakistani moves in the Kargil area is due to the stability-instability paradox.

The logic of the stability-instability paradox was first articulated by Glenn Snyder.<sup>55</sup> According to this logic if the nuclear armed rivals believe that a nuclear war cannot be fought in a meaningful way, they could be tempted to initiate crises of relatively lower stakes on the assumption that the other side would not dare to escalate the situation over a relatively minor dispute between them due to the fear of ending up in a nuclear war.

Glaser has argued that the paradox lowers 'the probability that conventional war will escalate to a nuclear war' and therefore 'reduces the danger of starting a conventional war; thus, this low likelihood of escalation – referred to here as 'stability' – makes conventional war less dangerous, and possibly, as a result more likely.'<sup>56</sup> Similarly, Robert Jervis characterized the paradox as being one where 'to the extent that the military balance is stable at the level of all-out nuclear war, it will become less stable at lower level of violence.'<sup>57</sup>

The stability-instability paradox also takes an optimist view of the impact of nuclear weapons on the behavior of the nuclear adversaries as it is embedded in the enormity of the risks involved in crossing the nuclear threshold during a conflict. The second feature of the stability-instability paradox is that it considers nuclear capability as a factor behind the instability at the lower level of violence. This second feature of the stability-instability paradox does not change with Jervis' new formulation of the paradox that 'Strategic stability permits if not creates instability by making lower levels of violence relatively safe because escalation up the nuclear ladder is too dangerous.'<sup>58</sup> This new formulation also factors in the confidence created by the acquisition of the nuclear weapons in engaging in violent undertakings.

Such a view of the violent behavior of nuclear-armed states is also based on the behavior of the United States and the USSR during the Cold War era. It has been generally concluded that whereas the two powers were able to avoid direct warfare during the Cold War due to the presence of nuclear weapons, they still competed for advantage in a host of ways through proxy wars and a number of crises. Thus according to this logic, offsetting nuclear deterrents channelled the superpower rivalry into 'safer' pursuits in an effort to punish the adversary, but without fear of triggering a direct conflict that may have led to nuclear catastrophe.



The arguments based on the stability-instability paradox as applied to South Asian nuclear dyad suggest that Pakistan's support of the Kashmir insurgency and its operations in Kargil were encouraged by its nuclear capabilities to pursue its designs on Kashmir. These explanations argue that nuclear weapons have emboldened Pakistan to engage in low-intensity warfare with India, in order to challenge India's hold over Kashmir, as it would not fear any kind of large scale retribution being directed towards the Pakistani state and military. These explanations thus identify nuclear weapons as a factor which has encouraged Pakistan to raise the cost of Indian control of Kashmir by aiding the insurgency in Kashmir, and involving in conventional advances against India like the one in Kargil in 1999.

For example, P. R. Chari notes that it was the 'availability of the nuclear deterrent to Pakistan' that encouraged it to undertake the Kargil intrusions, while increasing its cross-border terrorism and proxy war in Kashmir.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, Hagerty remarks that 'Nuclear weapons constituted one of many factors in Islamabad's decision to undertake low-intensity operations in Kargil, but they were the main factor in containing the ensuing conflict within the Indian side of disputed Kashmir [and therefore prevented further escalation].'<sup>60</sup>

Elsewhere, leading proliferation optimists in the context of South Asia, Ganguly and Hagerty, in explaining Pakistani actions in Kargil underline the impact of nuclear weapons on Pakistan's decision to advance deep into the Indian side of Kashmir. They directly claim this to be the stability-instability paradox in action. They note that 'Pakistani decision-makers had convinced themselves that their achievement of rough nuclear parity with India now enabled them to probe along the LoC with impunity. In their view, the Indian leadership cognizant of Pakistan's nuclear capabilities, would desist from using overwhelming force and also avoid a dramatic escalation or expansion of the conflict. The Pakistani behavior in precipitating this conflict conformed closely to the expectations of the stability-instability paradox.'<sup>61</sup>

Similarly, Rajesh Basrur has also tried to explain post-nuclearization violence in South Asia by reference to the stability-instability paradox. He notes that Pakistan 'was able to use the protective shield of nuclear deterrence to put pressure on India at a level below that [which could be expected] of [a] conventional conflict.' While underlining Pakistan's nuclear capability as a factor behind Pakistan's moves in Kashmir, he emphasises that it was 'Nuclear weapons' that had 'increased its capacity

to exert such pressure by neutralizing India's advantage in conventional forces. One tack it successfully took was providing active support for *mujahideen* groups fighting Indian forces in Kashmir.' He states that 'Kargil was one more attempt to put India under pressure. It is best viewed as a creative exercise in compellence within the framework of the new stability/instability paradox.'<sup>62</sup>

In explaining Pakistani objectives behind its Kargil operations Basrur further writes that 'The occupation of the Kargil heights was designed to give Pakistan direct bargaining power over India vis-à-vis Kashmir. Simultaneously, the creation of a war scare was expected to arouse the concerns of the international community, especially the United States, over the potential of Kashmir to create instability in a freshly nuclearized environment. The United States, it was hoped, would bring pressure to bear on India to negotiate. Thus compellence, both bilateral and trilateral, sought to leverage Pakistan's nuclear capability for political advantage.'<sup>63</sup>

A similar explanation on the basis of the stability-instability paradox has been put forward by Michael Krepon. He notes that the concept 'is quite applicable to South Asia' and that 'the advent of the bomb can be perceived as an insurance policy against the most dangerous types of escalation, thereby abetting mischief making below the nuclear threshold.'<sup>64</sup> He remarks that 'One central tenet of the stability-instability paradox – that offsetting nuclear capabilities will increase tensions between adversaries – has already been amply demonstrated in South Asia' and notes that 'A nuclearized subcontinent has already produced a succession of nuclear-tinged crises and one conflict that was limited in time and space, as well as in the choice of weapons used.'<sup>65</sup>

The stability-instability paradox however does not capture the essence of troubled relationship in the region. As noticed by Rajagopalan, the concept has been used somewhat carelessly in much of the literature on the South Asian nuclear situation, with even the basic concepts and arguments misrepresented.<sup>66</sup> The paradox is a misrepresentation because it is a proposition that explains the crucial dimensions that affect behavior between nuclear and conventional military balances, not between nuclear and sub-conventional conflicts.

On the other hand, much of the literature on the operation of the stability-instability paradox in South Asia assumes, mistakenly, that the paradox refers to the relationship between the strategic (nuclear) level and the sub-conventional levels. Such explanations thus argue that the stability created by the probability of nuclear

escalation of conventional conflicts discourages conventional wars but encourages support for sub-national guerrilla forces. For example, Sumit Ganguly argues that ‘because conventional conflict is seen to be fraught with the dangers of escalation, both sides are instead trying to exploit internal conflicts; decision makers on both sides of the border see the risks of internal unrest as being both controllable and calculable.’<sup>67</sup>

A closer analysis of the stability-instability paradox as originally formulated by Snyder shows that it is a much more complex argument than is usually understood. He suggested that though stability at the strategic level could reduce stability at the lower levels, the threat of escalation can also deter lower levels of violence. Thus stability at the strategic level can have both effects: it may increase the risk of lower level instability, but – given the possibility of escalation – can also create stability at lower levels.

The application of the stability-instability paradox to explaining regional instability is also questionable on another ground. The application of the concept suggests that it was nuclear weapons that encouraged Pakistan to undertake sub-conventional warfare against India in Kashmir through its support of militants in the area. Similarly it suggests that nuclear capability was the crucial factor that encouraged Pakistan to undertake operations in the Kargil area. For example, Michael Krepon makes a direct link between the acquisition of Pakistani nuclear capabilities and its support for the rebellion in Kashmir in the 1990s: ‘Pakistan’s support for separatism and militancy in Kashmir has notably coincided with its acquisition of covert nuclear capabilities.’<sup>68</sup> Thus the stability-instability paradox, as conceived by Snyder, is inappropriate for considering the consequences of the interaction between sub-conventional war and nuclear escalation.

However, such causal linkage between Pakistan’s nuclearization and its support for the militancy in Kashmir is not convincing in the case of South Asia. To suggest that it was the attainment of the nuclear capability that led to such Pakistani behavior requires evidence about this linkage. In this regard the evidentiary basis for the stability-instability paradox is quite shallow. If such a proposition were to be valid, it will have to be proved by first identifying a clear chronological link between Pakistan’s nuclearization and its support for the Kashmir insurgency, and secondly by proving that subsequent Pakistani behaviour was qualitatively distinct from its previous, pre-nuclear behaviour in Kashmir.

Proof of such linkages are however hard to come by. The history of sub-conventional conflicts in India suggests that such conflicts and Pakistan's support for these predates the nuclearization of the region and there is nothing unique about Pakistan's involvement in Kashmir insurgency during the 1990s. Pakistan actively aided the Kashmiri uprisings during 1947-48 and in 1965. India has also accused Pakistan of being involved in the Indian insurgencies in its north-eastern areas and more recently in the Sikh insurgency during 1980s. The long history of such policies on part of Pakistan calls into question the arguments about the effect of nuclearization in encouraging Pakistan to undertake and/or support such ventures.

Thus, on both grounds, the evidence for the application of the stability-instability paradox fails. Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear weapons only roughly coincided with the beginnings of the insurgency in Kashmir in the late 1980s. It is difficult to place either of these developments with any precision. It is correct that Pakistan did attempt to loosen Indian hold over Kashmir when both sides had nuclear weapons during 1990s. But a historical perspective clearly suggests that this has been Pakistan's objective since the birth of the dispute both before and after Islamabad obtained nuclear capability.

There may be some overlap and general correlation between Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear weapons and the outbreak of the Kashmir rebellion, but correlation cannot be interpreted as causation. There is little to indicate that Pakistan began the Kashmir rebellion and much to indicate that it only took advantage of a development that had roots in the historical dissatisfaction of the Kashmiri populace with Indian rule, as well as with maladministration and interference by New Delhi in Srinagar.

This means that Pakistan would have supported the rebellion that broke out in Kashmir irrespective of whether it had nuclear weapons or not. It was the long tradition and practice of supporting insurgencies in Kashmir that paved the way for Pakistan's involvement in Kashmir in the 1990s, not the safety of its nuclear umbrella. Pakistan's support for the rebellion in Kashmir is thus neither unprecedented nor unique. Once Indian political and administrative measures rekindled the freedom movement in Kashmir, leading to a fresh insurgency in the area, Pakistan's support for the rebellion was a foregone conclusion whether it had nuclear capability or not.

The application of the stability-instability paradox to the Kargil Crisis is also inappropriate because such Pakistani activities were also not qualitatively different from prior activities in the area when Pakistan was not a nuclear power. If Pakistani actions in Kargil were motivated by its possession of nuclear weapons then there should be a clear difference between the behavior of India and Pakistan along the LoC in the pre-nuclearization and post-nuclearization period. On the other hand, there is little concrete evidence to indicate that Pakistani actions in Kargil were motivated by its acquisition of the nuclear weapons. Indeed, the authors of the detailed study of the Kargil Crisis carried out by Center for Contemporary Studies, having close access to the Indian and Pakistani decision-makers during the Crisis, also confirm that ‘Pakistani planners were not motivated by a calculation that the risk of nuclear escalation would deter India from counterattacking.’<sup>69</sup>

A comparison between Pakistani moves in the Kargil area in 1999 and previous Indian and Pakistani operations in Kashmir suggest that there was nothing new about Pakistani operations in Kargil. A look into the history of Indian and Pakistani activities along the LoC, as discussed in detail in the previous chapters, suggests that the Line has always remained a scene of military moves between the two countries. For example, the 1965 War was also caused by the incursions of the Pakistan Army into India-controlled Kashmir along the LoC. Thus it can be concluded that using stability-instability paradox to explain Pakistani operations in Kargil is quite problematic.

The application of the stability-instability paradox is thus inappropriate to explain the continued tensions in the South Asia in the post-nuclearization period. It fails to capture the essence of the India-Pakistan rivalry in a nuclear environment and also lacks a policy focus by portraying a militarily deterministic view of the regional situation. The insistence of proliferation optimists to explain the post-1998 violence along rationalist lines like the application of the stability-instability paradox, can be described, in the words of Stephen Walt, as something whereby ‘The empirical record is not being used to test the theory; it is being tailored to fit it.’<sup>70</sup>

### ***The Argument of the Study***

This study thus questions the optimistic view of regional deterrence stability subsequent to the acquisition of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan. It contends that such views are seriously debateable in the wake of the developments that

occurred following the overt nuclearization of the region in 1998. In the first instance, the India-Pakistan nuclear tests in 1998 repudiated the claim of proliferation optimists that all future proliferants would have such faith in the value of nuclear capability as a deterrent that they will forgo overt nuclearization. Later the development of a series of crises that included the Kargil Crisis in 1999, and the 2001-02 Kashmir Crisis, have also put a big question around the optimistic thesis in the case of South Asia.

The study shows that the repeated occurrence of crises in the post-1998 period, their intensity, the level of instability these crises caused at the strategic level, and the way these were resolved, make the stabilizing impact of the nuclear weapons in case of South Asia strongly doubtful. Coupled with that, the study argues that the developments in India-Pakistan relations following the 2001-02 Crisis also hardly conform to the expectations of the optimist view. It argues that instead of nuclear weapons, it is the US role that has been a factor for stability in the region.

Traditionally 'deterrence' means that a nation needs to credibly communicate the potential and intent to use deadly force in response to any attack, thereby raising the costs of such an attack to the extent that it stops an attack from occurring in the first place. Strictly speaking, such a conception of 'deterrence' involves only the key antagonists, however powerful third parties can shape the strategic calculations of the warring states. Such a role of third parties in deterring war has been described by Crawford as 'pivotal deterrence.'<sup>71</sup> The concept of 'pivotal deterrence' rests on a larger grand-strategic threat, for example the threat of isolation by the pivot state. Such a threat can be painful enough so as to become the key reason for stopping two possibly warring states from fighting. In the case of India and Pakistan, such a 'pivot' is the United States which has demonstrated that it has such ability in the South Asian region time and again, including in the post-nuclearization period.

This study thus ultimately argues that whereas nuclear weapons themselves may not be a destabilizing factor in the region, the conclusion drawn from the nuclearization of the region regarding deterrence stability along optimist lines is over-deterministic and that there is a reasonable chance of a deterrence failure in South Asia under certain conditions. This study will also attempt to describe the specific conditions under which deterrence in the region may fail. It will also try to demonstrate how nuclear weapons may be used in such an eventuality.

A small number of analysts have already painted a pessimistic picture of the regional situation. For example, Samina Ahmed maintains that it is 'increasingly

evident that a belief in the deterrent value of nuclear weapons has little basis in reality' in South Asia.<sup>72</sup> Scott Sagan maintains that 'India and Pakistan face a dangerous nuclear future' because 'imperfect humans inside imperfect organizations ... will someday fail to produce secure nuclear deterrence.'<sup>73</sup> Similarly other examples include Neil Joeck's<sup>74</sup> essay on the Kargil Crisis and Kanti Bajpai's<sup>75</sup> article on the 2001-02 Kashmir Crisis. Kanti Bajpai notes, 'Judging by the state of relations between India and Pakistan and the intermittent nature of crisis and conflict between the two countries since 1987, military confrontation is distinctly possible in the future, indeed quite likely.'<sup>76</sup>

However these works, while highlighting the precarious nature of deterrence in the region, suffer from important shortcomings. These works are either problematic on theoretical grounds or are more speculative in nature without any thorough investigation of the post-1998 regional situation. These works however do provide an interesting starting point for an extensive study of regional security dynamics in the nuclearized environment.<sup>77</sup>

Paul Kapur's work can be cited as an example of a detailed study of the region along pessimist lines.<sup>78</sup> He claims to base his pessimistic argument on rationalist lines and describes regional instability as deriving from the 'instability-instability paradox.' He asserts that unlike in Cold War Europe, in contemporary South Asia, nuclear weapons have facilitated rather than impeded conventional warfare. He contends that these are the nuclear weapons that encourage Pakistan to undertake sub-conventional warfare against India and induce revisionist behavior in Islamabad. Kapur thus asserts that nuclear weapons have made Pakistan more aggressive and have facilitated a revisionist strategy on the part of Islamabad. This insight was discussed previously in regards to the 'stability-instability' paradox.

Thus Kapur argues that "Pakistani leaders...came to believe that this danger of nuclear escalation, by insulating Pakistan from Indian conventional attack, would allow Pakistan not simply to ensure its own security, but also to pursue a strategy of limited conflict against Indian rule in Jammu and Kashmir."<sup>79</sup> Kapur only slightly modifies the central argument of the stability-instability paradox by suggesting that it is instability rather than stability at the strategic level – the higher risk of nuclear escalation – that allowed Pakistan to engage in aggressive behaviour in Kashmir.

The inherent complications for such line of argumentation are however numerous. Kapur's contention that Pakistan's Kashmir policy is the product of

country's nuclear weapons is questionable for the same reason that I have discussed previously regarding the suitability of the application of the stability-instability paradox to the South Asian conditions. Kapur is also unable to demonstrate how 'rational decision-makers' in the region use calculations regarding nuclear weapons in their decision making processes.

His hard-stretching of the rationalist argument to explain the instability in the region becomes too confused, and the academic distinction between the stability-instability paradox and Kapur's instability-instability paradox gets confusing when he notes that 'Pakistani leaders soon came to believe that this danger of nuclear escalation, by insulating Pakistan from Indian conventional attack, would allow Pakistan not simply to ensure its own security but also to pursue a strategy of limited conflict against Indian rule in Jammu and Kashmir.'<sup>80</sup>

Kapur's assertion that his pessimistic argument is based on the rationalist lines is thus unconvincing and he keeps his reader guessing about the theoretical foundations of his views. For example, Karsten Frey thinks that Kapur actually uses the insights from prospect theory 'without explicitly mentioning that in his strategic-pessimist approach, by considering the level of dissatisfaction with the existing territorial status quo as a crucial factor determining the level of risk-acceptance by revisionist states.'<sup>81</sup> Kapur's views are thus actually based on suboptimal decision-making of security instead of his claims of these being based on rationalist foundations.

Bajpai's analysis of the 2001-02 Crisis also follows Kapur's line of argumentation. Although he admits to the United States being a factor restraining New Delhi's calculations during the Crisis, his argument that the other reason for India's restraint was the presence of conventional deterrence is however not convincing in the face of gross inequalities in the conventional forces of the two countries.

### ***Theoretical Perspectives***

The optimist argument follows a deductive line of reasoning. However, such an abstract exercise in modelling may not be always helpful in solving concrete empirical puzzles. Social science thus should not be a mere intellectual exercise but it should rather aim at producing accurate and relevant knowledge about the human behavior as it has powerful effects on the fates of whole societies. Thus any insistence



on deductive precisions can be dangerous as this may itself contribute to outcomes which the practitioners themselves wish to avoid. As noticed by Stephen M. Walt, 'Formal techniques facilitate the construction of precise and deductively sound arguments, but recent efforts in security studies have generated comparatively few new hypotheses and have for the most part not been tested in a careful and systematic way. The growing technical complexity of recent formal work has not been matched by a corresponding increase in insight, and as a result, recent formal work has relatively little to say about contemporary security issues.'<sup>82</sup>

Thus in certain cases a deductive reasoning may itself become a liability. Induction and deduction are equally valid ways for creating a theory and the later is in no way superior to the former. Simple observation and largely atheoretical experimentation and subsequent efforts to devise a deductive structure to explain the observations are equally important contribution to knowledge. Such an approach might lead to somewhat imperfect theoretical formulations but these cannot be discarded on such ground because these can be of huge importance in real world situations. As noticed by Stephen Walt, 'A consistent, precise yet trivial argument is of less value than a bold new conjecture that helps us understand some important real-world problem, even if certain ambiguities and tensions remain. Similarly, a logically consistent but empirically false theory is of little value, whereas a roughly accurate but somewhat imprecise theory may be extremely useful even though it is still subject to further refinement.'<sup>83</sup>

It is in this context that while criticizing the optimistic views based on rationalist deterrence models, John Lewis Gaddis observes that 'the harsher criticism is that they show what happens when theory is pursued beyond common sense.'<sup>84</sup> Similar criticism has been offered by Georges Clemenceau who observes that the study of warfare is too important to be left solely to formal model makers.<sup>85</sup>

Similarly being critical of traditional approaches to understanding various security environments, Ken Booth argues that Realism 'has operated as...an iron cage in world politics; it has created a prison of categories and assumptions that have worked to create a world that does not work for most of its inhabitants.'<sup>86</sup> He emphasises further that the 'field of security studies, constructed out of this realism, continues to offer its students one image of reality, with predefined answers to key global questions. This makes it a serious liability in world politics, being an iron cage

seeking to contain liquid ecology. It is a text-book exemplar of a problem masquerading as the problem-solver.’<sup>87</sup>

This study however takes the view that the realist perspective can be a useful starting point to explain the mutual conduct of the two countries. India-Pakistan relations historically are characterized by a patterning of relations in terms of a zero-sum game. The confrontation between the two countries on Kashmir exhibits that the gain by one country is seen as an absolute loss by the other and the situation has prevented the two countries to go for any win-win settlement on the issue.

However realist assumptions, and by extension the rational deterrence model, are ill-equipped to *fully* explain the India-Pakistan relationship in the post-nuclearization period. The rational deterrence model based on the precepts of neorealism and drawing largely from the US-USSR experience during the Cold War period is quite deterministic and expects nuclear-armed rival states to behave cautiously in dealing with each other, and considers deterrence failure a very remote possibility in a nuclear environment.<sup>88</sup>

The realist insight should thus be supplemented by other theoretical perspectives in order to analyze the issue of deterrence stability in South Asia in post-nuclearization environment. In this regard the study will make use of the ‘Constructivist’ insight into the working of international relations. Constructivism tells us that the social world is a human construction. It emphasises that cultural-institutional factors determine the behavior of a state. It tells us that beliefs of the elite, collective norms and social identities are key factors that influence the behavior of a state. Constructivism thus looks at the internal characteristics of a state that compel it to behave in a certain way.

The importance of the constructivist insight regarding the India-Pakistan nuclear dyad also increases due to the fact that the relationship operates in a world that is not tightly structured. In such a scenario, Michel C. Desch points out rightly that ‘In indeterminate structural environments, where states have many optimal choices, realist theories ought to have little trouble according culture, or any other domestic variable, a greater independent role in explaining state behavior.’ He stresses that ‘there is no doubt that culture matters and that the return to thinking about cultural variables will make some contribution to our understanding of post-Cold War international security issues.’<sup>89</sup>

Arguing the case for utilizing the constructivist approach in the security studies, Stephen Walt also opines that ‘Just as natural sciences profit from the fruitful collaboration of theoreticians and experimentalists, security studies should welcome contributions from formal theory, large-*N* statistical analysis, historical case studies, and even the more rigorous forms of interpretive or constructivist analysis.’ He stresses further that ‘Although individual scholars will emphasize different techniques in their own work and place different values on the contributions made by each approach, the field as a whole will be far richer if such diversity is retained *and esteemed* (emphasis original).’<sup>90</sup>

In this regard the concept of ‘strategic culture’ can be helpful in analyzing the regional situation. The precise definition of ‘strategic culture’ has however been a matter of much debate among the scholars. One definition put forward by Stephen Rosen posits that ‘strategic culture’ is made up of the shared ‘beliefs and assumptions that frame ... choices about international military behavior, particularly those concerning decisions to go to war, preferences for offensive, expansionist or defensive modes of warfare, and level of wartime casualties that would be acceptable.’<sup>91</sup>

In another more recent conceptualization of the concept, Ian Johnston considers ‘strategic culture’ as ‘an ideational milieu which limits behavior choices.’ This milieu is influenced by ‘shared assumptions and decision rules that impose a degree of order on individual and group conceptions of their relationship to their social, organizational or political environment.’<sup>92</sup>

Colin S. Gray argues that ‘cultures comprise the persisting socially transmitted ideas, attitudes, traditions, habits of mind and preferred methods of operations that are more or less specific to a particular geographically based security community that had a unique historical experience.’<sup>93</sup>

Hasan-Askari Rizvi describes strategic culture as ‘a collectivity of beliefs, norms, values, and historical experiences of the dominant elite in a polity, that influences their understanding and interpretation of security issues and environment, and shapes their responses to these. It is a perceptual framework of orientations, values, and beliefs that serves as a screen through which the policymakers observe the dynamics of the external security environment, interpret the available information, and decide about the policy options in a given situation.’<sup>94</sup>

According to another definition, the strategic culture of a state can be understood as a set of ‘shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior, derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written), that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups, and which determine appropriate ends and means for achieving security objectives.’<sup>95</sup>

The strategic culture of a state thus alerts us to how decision-making on national security issues is shaped by the various cultural and institutional influences on policy makers. This is opposed to the rational calculation of interests solely by reference to the national security environment, or functional organizational interests. It suggests that the historical narratives created by the dominant elite, their notions of war and peace, the dynamics of power politics in a polity, and the patterns of decision-making, all have a deep impact on the defense and security-related behavior of a state. Information relating to security matters and related problems are interpreted through the prism of strategic culture, which in turn influences the selection of options to handle the situation. Rather than being formally logical, norms, beliefs, and perceptions of history are often self-justifying and do not easily change. Ideological factors, historical narratives, and perception of the self as well as identification with a cause thus have better explanatory potential.

It tells us that the pursuit of security is critically shaped by the security culture of the state which defines the ‘range of appropriate or acceptable behaviors; provides a corpus of widely shared but often tacit social conventions regarding approaches to security building; generates a set of inter-subjective constraints which limit consideration of alternative behaviors to less than the range of possible options; establishes norms of diplomacy and statecraft; and defines problems and their solutions in ways that might seem irrational, counter-productive or simply cynical to observers from other societies.’<sup>96</sup>

Strategic culture thus establishes persistent and long-lasting strategic preferences by formulating conceptualizations of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of actuality that the strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and efficacious.<sup>97</sup> It is comprised of certain assumptions about the strategic environment, especially the nature of the adversary and the threat it poses. It not only shapes the identity and self image of an actor but also offers definite ideas about the ways to deal with an adversary or to cope with an adverse environment.

Thus, in this regard, the strategic cultures of India and Pakistan can shed an important light on the nature of their relationship in the post-nuclearization period. The study will thus use an eclectic approach for explaining the nature of India-Pakistan conflict and the issue of deterrence stability between these two countries. As argued by Alagappa that 'rather than engaging in a sterile argument as to which theory is better, a more productive exercise will be to recognize and deploy the strength of contending theories to enhance the understanding of international politics.'<sup>98</sup> As noted by Peter J. Katzenstein and Rudra Sil, such eclectic approach is based on 'bracketing the investigator's own subjective perceptions and normative commitments; and accepting the uncertainty accompanying the analysis of a socially constructed world without giving up on either the systematic collection and interpretation of data or the task of seeking to persuade skeptical communities of scholars.'<sup>99</sup>

### **The Non-Utility of Organizational Perspective**

Organizational theory has been another perspective for explaining the post-nuclearization violence and the issue of deterrence stability in South Asia. This study however discounts its relevance in case of the South Asian nuclear dyad. This study takes the view that although the organizational perspective is quite suitable to assess the possibility of the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons, it does not throw light on the issue of deterrence stability in South Asia and does not reflect the more important issues of state policy and strategy. It also does not help in understanding the 'crises-ridden' nature of the South Asian nuclear dyad.

Organizational theorists like Scott Sagan mainly focus on the role of militaries in new nuclear powers. They are fearful that most new nuclear states will not be able to fulfil the operational requirements for stable nuclear deterrence because these states will not have sufficient civilian control to ensure that the country's military organizations are as competent in their role as deterrent force managers as they are in their capacity as war fighters.

They contend that because of the organizational biases common to all professional militaries and the expected predominance of the military in new nuclear nations as compared to the United States and the Soviet Union, future nuclear states will be more likely to fight preventive wars. Long before the overt nuclearization of South Asia, Scott Sagan feared that the traditional political strength of the Pakistani

armed forces would allow preventive war biases to come into play in its rivalry with India.<sup>100</sup> His fears however did not come true and interestingly if there preventive war thinking emerged in South Asia, it did so out of India. Peter D. Feaver observes that ‘The South Asian case ... is even more compelling for the absence of preventive war: India’s striking refusal to destroy Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal before it reached deterrent status.’<sup>101</sup>

Moreover it is also debateable, as assumed by organizational pessimists almost solely on the basis of the US civil-military experience, that the militaries of the new nuclear powers will necessarily tend toward offensive action and preventive war. It has been shown by a number of empirical works that the assumption that the behavior of military institutions is generic across all cases is unjustified. Traditional organizational theory does not consider that in certain cases military organizational culture informed by beliefs and norms about war-fighting may lead to instances of military restraint instead of any offensive posturing.<sup>102</sup> In this regard, this study agrees with Peter D. Feaver that:

It seems just as plausible that different military organizations will confront similar situations in different ways - a plausibility that is fed by what we know about the peculiar evolution of the US military establishment and Sagan’s own detailed accounts of American military organizational behavior. Just as similarly situated states may behave differently because of organizational factors ... similarly situated organizations will behave differently because of cultural factors.<sup>103</sup>

## ***Conclusion***

The chapter has basically argued that deductively drawn optimistic outlook is incapable to explain the India-Pakistan conflict in the post-1998 period. It has argued that any effort to draw pessimistic conclusions regarding India-Pakistan nuclear dyad on the basis of rationalist understanding of the inter-state relations is inherently flawed on theoretical grounds. It has also emphasised the inappropriateness of the applicability of the organizational perspective in explaining the India-Pakistan conflict. The chapter has finally contended that an eclectic approach based on both the realist argument and cultural variables should be employed to understand the nature of the India-Pakistan conflict in the post-1998 period.

The following chapters will first show that there is little room for drawing optimistic conclusions from the conduct of India-Pakistan in the post-1998 period. The chapters will show that regional stability in the post-1998 period has not been a function of nuclear weapons but is a result of the role played by the United States. This evidence will be analyzed with the help of an eclectic approach in the final chapter by drawing a comparison between the US-USSR experience during the Cold War and South Asian conditions. The chapter will then attempt to lay the specific conditions under which deterrence in the region may fail.

## Chapter 3

### The Kargil Crisis 1999

#### *Introduction*

The Kargil Crisis (the Crisis) was the first direct military clash between India and Pakistan since their war in 1971. Unfolding in the summer of 1999 soon after the overt nuclearization of India and Pakistan in 1998, the Crisis not only attracted huge international attention but also generated strong fears of it escalating regional tensions into a full-blown war, with the possible use of nuclear weapons. The Crisis put to test long-held assumptions regarding stability, nuclear deterrence and the implications of the nuclear proliferation in South Asia.

Occurring largely in the background of ongoing tensions of India-Pakistan over Kashmir, the Crisis erupted when Pakistan-backed forces crossed the Line of Control separating the Pakistani and Indian parts of Kashmir in the summer of 1999 to occupy large tracts of land on the Indian side of Kashmir. This resulted in a vigorous Indian campaign to undo Pakistani gains in the area. The two countries became involved in a number of dangerous escalatory moves, including ones with nuclear implications during the Crisis.

India's forceful response to Pakistani actions in Kargil and Pakistan's determination to hold on to the captured areas, led to tit-for-tat counter-moves and eventually spurred President Clinton to involve Washington in a high profile way in order to diffuse the regional crisis. The Crisis finally ended as Washington coerced Islamabad to withdraw its forces from the Kargil heights by threatening international diplomatic isolation and other possible punitive moves.

This Chapter will first discuss the geographical, regional and international context of the Kargil Crisis. It will then elaborate on the key turning points and the major escalatory moves of the two regional players during the Crisis. While discussing the escalatory dynamics of the Crisis, the Chapter will outline the US role in diffusing the regional situation. It will then be followed by concluding remarks and a brief discussion of the chapter's relevance to the overall argument.



## ***The Geographical Setting***

The Kargil Crisis started when Pakistani forces crossed the Line of Control (LoC) in the Kargil area in the summer of 1999 and occupied a considerable tract of India-controlled territory of Kashmir.

### **The Line of Control (LoC)**

The LoC separates the Indian and Pakistani controlled areas in the disputed region of Kashmir and was established as a result of the Simla Agreement between the two countries in 1972. The LoC however ultimately evolved out of the Ceasefire Line (CFL) which was created through the Karachi Agreement on July 27, 1949 at the end of the First Kashmir War in 1949.

The two countries returned to the position of the CFL at the end of the Second Kashmir War (1965), however at the end of the 1971 war, India refused to return back to the CFL position. India now insisted on the drawing of a new line according to the changed status quo as it had acquired a much larger area in Kashmir across the CFL as compared to Pakistan. India's gains were mainly in the strategically important Kargil area. India thus wanted to retain the status quo on its advances across the CFL and insisted upon the new demarcation of positions. Despite its unwillingness Pakistan, being a defeated party, had to accept the Indian demands and thus the LoC emerged as a new line separating the two parts of Kashmir.

Another important objective behind the Indian pressure to redraw the line was that it wanted to minimize the role of UN as the UNCIP was also a signatory to the CFL. Thus for India 'The change in nomenclature signified a transition from a military line separating two armies brought about by the UN-arranged ceasefire in 1949 to a political divide which should evolve into a boundary'<sup>1</sup>, a perception not shared by Pakistan.

After establishing the LoC, India banned its supervision by the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), while retaining its overall presence in a unilateral move. The development thus eliminated any impartial reporting of transgressions along the LoC. Pakistan, however, continued with the earlier arrangements of the supervision of the LoC by the UNMOGIP.

Starting from the international border between the two Punjabs, as Robert Wirsing describes, the LoC is , 'a rough arc running 800 kilometres north and then

north-eastwards to a point (map grid point NJ 9842) 20 kilometres north of the Shyok river at the foot of the Saltoro Range'.<sup>2</sup> It has a length of about 740km from Manawar up to the point NJ 9842. Further to this point the line moves 'north to the glaciers' up to the Chinese border and has never been delineated on the ground because the area was considered inaccessible and non-habitable.

This undemarcated part of the LoC is a glacier called as Siachen which is 75 kilometres long, 2 to 8 kilometres wide and is about 300 metres deep. The glacier was however generally considered to be under Pakistan's administrative control and it had an unambiguous claim on Siachin because all the expeditions of the mountaineers to the areas used to seek Pakistan's permission in this regard. Moreover all the major world geographical surveys showed this area in Pakistan including that of the US ones.<sup>3</sup> India however occupied the glacier in a unilateral move in 1984.

From Manawar up to Gurez, above the upper Kishenganga, the LoC is tightly held by the armies of the two countries while beyond that there are wide gaps of 10 to 45 kilometres between the military posts of two countries. The terrain and weather is so harsh in this area that both the armies have traditionally established temporary posts during the summer, only to withdraw with the arrival of the winter between November and May.

The scene of the Crisis was the Kargil sector of the LoC. The Kargil area is part of the Ladakh region of Kashmir state and is divided between India and Pakistan. The area of conflict comprises approximately 155 by 75 kilometres of harsh terrain, ranging between 9000 feet to 18000 feet high with craggy and snow-covered mountain peaks. It is sparsely populated with scant rainfall and therefore is devoid of any forests and almost no agricultural activity is seen in the area. There is heavy snowfall in the area during the winter and temperature can go as low as minus 30 to minus 40 at night.

The Indian side is enclosed by the Zojila Pass on the west, Shyok River on the east, LOC on the north and some villages of the area form the southern flank. There are two main roads leading into the area from the Indian side, the Srinagar-Kargil-Leh (NH-1) and the Manali-Leh road, which is an alternative route far away from the LoC. Both the roads remain closed during the winter due to heavy snowfall.

The Pakistani side of the Kargil conflict region is enclosed in the north by Skardu, in the south by the LoC, in the east by the Siachin Glacier and the Indus River and in the west by the Neelum Valley. The approach to the area is only through one

narrow road that moves across the Burzil Pass and remains open only for four months during the whole year.

Zojila and Burzil are two highly important passes in the politico-military geography of the area. The Zojila Pass is the only strategic pass that links Srinagar with the Northern Areas and Leh on the Indian side of the LoC. On the other hand Burzil is the only such pass on the Pakistani side that links the Skardu and Gilgit areas into Pakistan's portion of the Deosai Plains and Shaqma sector.

However, due to less than usual rainfall in 1998, the passes of approach, both from the Pakistani side and the Indian side, i.e. Zojila and Burzil, became available a month earlier than usual in 1999. Burzil was available in the third week of March for foot movement, while Zojila opened somewhere in late February or early March, providing the Indians some lead time.

The defence of the Pakistani area comes under the responsibility of the Force Command Northern Area (FCNA), which has an area of operation stretching from Siachin to Anzbari – a total distance of 175 kms. This is divided into four sectors: Baltoro, Dansum-Shyok, Skardu and Minimarg. A portion of the NH-1 – the Dras-Kargil Road – is visible to the Pakistani troops from the Minimarg sector. For Pakistan there are three strategic defence objectives assigned to the FCNA: the defence of Skardu, of Gilgit, and the prevention of the severance of the Karakoram Highway (KKH). It was the Northern Light Infantry (NLI), under the command of FCNA that was mainly used by Pakistan to occupy the forward heights in Kargil. It was not a part of the regular army of Pakistan but was a paramilitary force composed of the locals of the area. However after the Kargil War, it became a regular part of the Pakistan army.

While on the Indian side, the operational responsibility for Jammu and Kashmir rested with Headquarters Northern Command, located at Udhampur, which lies south of Kargil between Jammu and Srinagar. The Indian Army's XVI Corps and XV Corps divided the area, with XV Corps directly responsible for the Kargil area.

### ***Prelude to the Kargil Crisis***

Increased tensions between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir dispute were witnessed following their nuclear tests in 1998. After conducting its nuclear test, India adopted a more coercive posture towards Pakistan on the dispute. This was highlighted when soon after its nuclear tests, signals started coming out of New Delhi

that it was prepared to utilize its nuclear capability to attain its objectives on Kashmir. The belligerent statements of Indian leaders, intensification of clashes between Indian and Pakistani troops along the LoC, and Vajpayee's decision to assign responsibility for Kashmir affairs to the hawkish Advani, the presence of Farooq Abdullah at the test site along with Vajpayee, all gave a strong impression to Pakistan that after the declaration its nuclear capabilities India would adopt a more forceful approach towards Kashmir.

Commenting on the presence of Farooq Abdullah along with Vajpayee at Pokhran, an influential Indian analyst Baharat Bhushan wrote in *Hindustan Times* that the 'Kashmir issue is sought to be situated (sic) in the changed context of Indian nuclear aggressiveness by none other than the prime minister himself.'<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the statements emanating from BJP ministers took the 'belligerence on the issue to a war-like situation (sic).'<sup>5</sup> For example, the Union Minister for parliamentary affairs and tourism, Madan Lal Khurana, warned Pakistan of a fourth round. In a statement made in Jammu on May 21, he said that 'If Pakistan wants to fight another war with us, they should tell us the place and time as we are ready for it.' He further said that an action plan had been prepared to eliminate militancy in Jammu and Kashmir and that 'we will destroy their camps and those helping sustenance of militancy in the state.'<sup>6</sup>

The deteriorating regional situation was again highlighted when soon after Pokhran II Indian Home Minister L. K. Advani said in a statement on 18 May that India would take 'a tough stance over Kashmir.' He remarked that 'Islamabad should realise the geostrategic situation in the region' and 'roll back its anti-India policy, especially with regard to Kashmir' as India's 'bold and decisive' step to become a nuclear weapon state has brought about a 'qualitative new stage in Indo-Pakistan relations particularly in finding a solution to the Kashmir problem.' He said that India's nuclear tests had signified 'India's resolve to deal firmly and strongly with Pakistan's hostile designs and activities in Kashmir.' He hinted further that India's demonstrated nuclear power would allow it to intervene forcefully across the Line of Control in response to future attacks on Kashmir.<sup>7</sup> The situation was made even worse when military activities along the LoC were increased following the nuclear tests. In this regard, July and August of 1998 saw the most violent round of military exchanges along the LoC and there were heavy civilian casualties in the Neelum Valley.<sup>8</sup>

Pakistani leaders regarded these statements with great alarm. India's posture following its nuclear test amply demonstrated to Pakistan that whatever the broader

objectives and causes were of the Indian decision to hold nuclear tests at that particular moment, the immediate target of its nuclear capability was going to be Pakistan and the Kashmir dispute. Expressing Pakistani perceptions of the Indian posture, Prime Minister Sharif stated later on that ‘Can anyone forget the crass Indian bid to establish its overlordship (sic) over this region after detonating nuclear bombs on 11 and 13 May 1998? Highly provocative statements were issued and it was said that Pakistan would have to come to terms with its reduced status.’<sup>9</sup>

Rising tensions in the region following India and Pakistan’s tit-for-tat nuclear tests however calmed down briefly when the two countries showed willingness to enter into comprehensive dialogue process. Taking the initiative, Vajpayee gave a statement showing a desire to visit Pakistan in connection with the inauguration of the new bus service connecting the Pakistani city of Lahore with the Indian city of Amritsar. The Indian move received strong international approval. Despite misgivings, Pakistan also decided to respond positively and Sharif accepted Vajpayee’s proposal. This resulted in Vajpayee’s bus journey to Lahore on February 20-21, 1999. Vajpayee was welcomed in Lahore by Sharif and all this led to a bilateral dialogue process now known as the Lahore process.

Vajpayee’s journey to Pakistan was welcomed in all the major capitals of the world, including Washington and Beijing. At Lahore the two countries agreed to undertake ‘immediate steps’ for reducing the risk of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons and pledged to continue to abide by their respective unilateral moratoria on conducting further nuclear explosions.

Similarly, the Lahore Declaration issued at the end of the Summit covered all bilateral issues ranging from commitment to ‘intensify their efforts to resolve all issues, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir’ to ‘condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations’ and to ‘undertaking national measures to reduce the risks of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons.’<sup>10</sup> The Declaration also said that ‘the nuclear dimension of the security environment of the two countries adds to their responsibility for avoidance of conflict between the two countries.’

It further stated that both countries are ‘convinced of the importance of mutually agreed confidence building measures for improving the security environment’ and that their respective governments ‘shall refrain from intervention and interference in each other’s internal affairs.’ The Declaration further committed the two sides to ‘discuss concepts and doctrines with a view to elaborating measures

for confidence building in the nuclear and conventional fields, aimed at prevention of conflict.’<sup>11</sup>

However the mood in Pakistan about the outcome of Vajpayee’s visit was that of disappointment.<sup>12</sup> There was resentment in Pakistan regarding the Indian posture in the post-Summit period. There was a feeling in Pakistan that Islamabad had given important concessions during these talks. For example, as bilateral talks were emphasised there was even no mention of UN principles for governing bilateral relations as in the Simla Agreement. There was also a reference to the ‘sanctity’ of the LoC, thus meeting Indian concerns regarding the violations of the Line. Pakistan came to perceive Indian peace gestures on the diplomatic front following the nuclear tests as merely being motivated by the desire to deflect strong international criticism of India for initiating the nuclear arms race in South Asia.

The dispute over Kashmir emerged as the key hurdle in the negotiation process. Indian cabinet minister stated soon after the Summit that what had been discussed in Lahore had been Indian claims over Azad Kashmir. Even at Lahore, Vajpayee remarked that ‘we can change history but not the geography,’ an obvious reference to the Pakistani demands of the resolution of the Kashmir dispute.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, while Pakistan called for third party mediation for the resolution of bilateral disputes including Kashmir, India did not favour the involvement of any third party in determining the course of the process. Responding to Pakistani assertions in this regard, an Indian official remarked just before the Lahore meeting between Vajpayee and Sharif that ‘We don’t need interpreters’ as ‘we speak the same language.’<sup>14</sup> The divergences between the approaches of the two countries were also highlighted when the Indians proposed a ‘no first use’ pact on nuclear weapons while the Pakistanis discussed a ‘no war’ treaty.

### ***The Course of the Crisis: Dangerous Escalation***

It was in the wake of this mixed regional scenario marked by the high hopes generated by the Lahore process coupled with the disillusionment in Pakistan regarding the peace overtures that armed hostilities between the two countries broke-out in the Kargil area of Kashmir. The Crisis that started as a result of Pakistani aggressive operations in the Kargil dangerously intensified due to a number of escalatory moves by the two players with neither side being deterred.

## Initial Developments

The LoC is generally tightly guarded by the militaries of India and Pakistan. However, it was a routine activity of the militaries of the two countries to leave large gaps in their defenses along the LoC during the winter months because of harsh weather conditions which were to be re-occupied with the start of the summer. However in the start of the summer of 1999, Pakistan-backed forces occupied considerable territory in the Kargil sector across the LoC before Indian forces could re-occupy this area as per the tacit convention. These Pakistan-backed forces established a number of picquets well into the Indian side thus capturing a significant slice of the Indian controlled land in Kashmir.

India was caught by total surprise by the developments in the Kargil area and the hostilities began soon after the Indian discovery of the Pakistani incursions in early May, 1999. According to the Report prepared by the Kargil Review Committee established by the Indian government after the Kargil Crisis, the infiltration in the area by the Pakistan-backed forces was first noticed by the Indians on May 3, 1999.<sup>15</sup> However, according to the then Indian Army Chief General V. P. Malik's account of the conflict, India's director-general of military operations (DGMO) visited Leh and Kargil on May 4 and 5 but 'did not get any inkling of the Pakistani intrusion' during his briefings.<sup>16</sup>

However, the first public admission by the Indian army, that it had detected 'intruders' on the Kargil ridges on the Indian side of Kashmir, was made on May 7.<sup>17</sup> According to Pakistani sources, the first encounter between the militaries of the two countries was reported to be on May 2 when Pakistan army had repelled an attack by the Indian forces in the area. The second encounter took place on May 7. According to Pakistan's military chief, General Pervez Musharraf, Indian forces suffered 'heavy casualties' in these early skirmishes.<sup>18</sup>

The composition of the forces involved in the operations emerged as a subject of much debate as both of the Pakistani and Indian sides kept on changing their positions on the matter. The Indians initially used the word '*Ghusbaityas*' (Intruders) for the occupiers of the Kargil heights, something which continued for some time. As late as on May 19, 1999, during a press briefing, India's GOC Corps 15 stated that although 'the intruders are well armed and appear to be on [a] almost suicidal mission,' there was 'no proof' that whether the intruding groups are regular armed

personnel of the Pakistan Army or any combination of regulars and Kashmiri freedom fighters.<sup>19</sup>

According to an unofficial Pakistani account, written by a retired army officer, the ‘total number of troops occupying these posts never exceeded 1,000 and that ‘four times this number provided the logistical backup to undertake the operation.’ It says that while the occupants were essentially soldiers of the Northern Light Infantry (NLI), there were some local *Mujahideen* assisting as labour to help in logistical matters.<sup>20</sup> Owen Bennett Jones however claims that some of the infiltrators were commandos from the Pakistan Army’s Special Services Group, and that ‘the Islamic militants probably accounted for no more than 10 percent of the total force and were given only portering duties.’<sup>21</sup>

While the Indians admitted the presence of Pakistan Army regulars later in the Crisis, the Pakistani side continued to refute the presence of its regulars in the forces involved in the Kargil operations. Late in May, Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz commented that ‘no one knows where they [the infiltrators] come from and who they are.’<sup>22</sup>

However semi-official versions of the Pakistani position now admit that Pakistan was directly involved in the planning and execution of the operations. According to such versions, the plan was formally presented and approved towards the middle of January 1999. The Rawalpindi Corps of the Pakistan army and Force Command Northern Areas (FCNA) were given the task to execute it. The Northern Light Infantry (NLI) which was under the command of FCNA was mainly used to occupy the forward posts. By the end of April 1999, ‘over 100 new posts of ten to twenty persons each’ had been established ‘along seventy-five miles (120 Kilometers) of the LoC’.<sup>23</sup> However, an analysis of the scale of logistics of the operations in Kargil by the military observers shows that planning and preparatory steps would have started as early as during the winter of 1998.<sup>24</sup>

During the early days after the discovery of the incursions, New Delhi did not take the developments seriously and there was an impression that these were nothing more than routine artillery firing. This was highlighted when General Malik went ahead with the already scheduled service visit to Poland and Czechoslovakia on May 10. However, ‘by May 11, 1999, XV Corps had acquired sufficient information to be able to assess that intrusions had taken place at a number of places in the Batalik sector’ and all troops in Jammu and Kashmir were placed on high alert on May 12.<sup>25</sup>



Pakistan's incursion in the Dras sector was discovered on May 12, and the incursions in Mashkoh and Kaksar on May 14. According to Praveen Swami, the Indian Army took almost two weeks to achieve 'a good deal of clarity' about what was happening in the area.<sup>26</sup> The initial assessment of the numerical strength of the infiltrators by India was about 600 guerrillas which were armed by anti-aircraft missiles, radar, snowmobiles and sophisticated communication devices. After the initial discovery, more incursions were identified in the following days.

Finally assessing that the incursions had occurred along a vast area near Kargil, the Indian Army decided to respond to the situation. New Delhi's initial response was to send in thousands of soldiers to try to evict the Pakistanis. As gun battles in Kargil area flared up, a diplomatic war of the words also began between Islamabad and New Delhi. Pakistan accused India of 'unwarranted military action' while India accused 'Pakistan backed infiltrators' of occupying areas of the Kargil sector.

India initially hoped to clear the Kargil area easily and moved the additional forces to the area including the ones de-inducted from the Siachen area. Special Forces personnel were dropped on to high ridges by helicopter. Indian troops equipped with howitzers, rocket launchers, and heavy mortars launched attacks supported by helicopter gunships. 'The aim was to surround the infiltrators and choke off their supplies even while building up Indian strength to launch assaults.'<sup>27</sup>

The Kargil Review Committee Report does not tell us much about these initial efforts and only says that these activities were 'rapid' and 'energetic.' In fact, it was quite tormenting when Indian soldiers tried 'to push their way up to heights of 16,000 feet and beyond.'<sup>28</sup> The topography of the terrain along the LoC favoured the Pakistani forces which made such efforts almost suicidal, for 'due to lack of ground cover, they became easy targets for Pakistani snipers and gunners.'<sup>29</sup>

### **Increased Hostilities: Vertical and Horizontal Escalation**

After initial failures to vacate the heights, it was recognized in New Delhi that it would not be easy to clear the area and some elaborate planning would be required for any such undertaking. Indian defence analyst Manoj Joshi commented later on that the Indian armed forces 'did not quite anticipate this battle and were unprepared for it.'<sup>30</sup> Brahma Chellaney, an analyst at the Center for Policy Research in New Delhi, remarked that 'Kargil will become another Siachen [but] on a bigger scale. If Siachen

is bleeding India, Kargil will bleed India profusely.’ He further opined that even if India expels every invader or negotiates their withdrawal, it will still have to choose between a huge, permanent military presence and the possibility of repeated incursions.<sup>31</sup>

After having received a detailed appraisal of the situation in the area, General Malik, who was at Prague, advised his commanders on May 15 that helicopters be brought into the battle, additional troops to be requested, and that the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) be informed of the developments.<sup>32</sup> Subsequently things were taken seriously at the central level by India. Prime Minister Vajpayee formed an ad hoc executive committee to deal with the crisis. The committee was a meeting of all the component entities of the National Security Council including Cabinet members constituting the National Security Council and the members of the Strategic Policy Group of the Council, and all the members of the National Security Advisory Board.

J. N. Dixit, one of key security managers of India who served during a number of administrations, and also a member of the ad hoc executive committee, states that ‘India’s response was measured and decisive... The Cabinet Committee on Security met regularly and as often as necessary, including daily meetings. Service chiefs were in regular consultation with the prime minister, the defense minister, and the national security advisor.’<sup>33</sup>

Subsequently, India came up with an elaborate new plan code-named ‘Operation Vijay’ to dislodge the infiltrators. As a result, India increased military pressure in the area and more troops were mobilized into the battle ground. India moved about 12000 soldiers and 70 of its aircrafts into the area by the third week of May.<sup>34</sup> It also embarked on an intense diplomatic initiative to bring international pressure on Pakistan to force it to vacate Kargil heights.

Despite India’s forceful response, Pakistan decided to hold on to the captured posts and it also mobilized one to two more brigades as additional strength into the FCNA at the end of May.<sup>35</sup> In the face of Pakistani resolve to hold the captured positions, India took the next escalatory step that included shelling on the Pakistani side of the LoC, and the deployment of troops along the international border with Pakistan. Strobe Talbott notes that after suffering significant losses at the hands of Pakistan’s well-entrenched troops, ‘the Indians upped the ante by firing on targets on the Pakistani side of the Line of Control.’<sup>36</sup>

Horizontal escalation in the ongoing Crisis was witnessed when India brought into action its navy in the Arabian Sea on May 22, 1999. The Indian Navy came up with the idea of forward deploying its naval fleet in the North Arabian Sea, close to the Pakistani coastal areas. India also shifted the area of operations for a June naval exercise from the east coast to the west. In response to the Indian moves at the sea, the Pakistan Navy also started escorting Pakistani oil tankers moving between the Gulf and Karachi.

The fears of further escalation became more evident when on May 25 Vajpayee threatened Sharif in a telephone conversation that ‘all possible steps will be taken to clear our territory of intruders.’<sup>37</sup> At the same time India’s military push into the Kargil area continued and its mobilization of Bofors guns into the Kargil fight was another escalatory move.

A further vertical military escalation in the Crisis was witnessed when India decided to use its air force in its ongoing operations in the context of growing Indian casualties along with little success on the battle ground. India had already brought its air force to forward bases in the area early in May. Between May 13 and 26, 1999, the total strength of the Indian Air Force (IAF) at forward bases at Srinagar, Awantipur, Leh and Udamphur was raised from one to four squadrons. On May 25, the CCS ordered the Indian armed forces to ‘take any action necessary to evict the invaders.’<sup>38</sup> Almost all of the IAF’s ground-attack aircrafts—Mirage-2000s, MiG-21s, MiG-23s, and MiG-27s—began to pound the intruders’ positions on May 26.

Pakistan perceived the introduction of the air force by India as a dangerous escalatory move. Whereas India claimed that its air strikes were targeting the position on the Indian side of the LoC, Pakistan alleged that air strikes were also being carried out on the Pakistani side of the LoC. Musharraf notes that ‘the actions of the Indian Air Force were not confined to the freedom fighters’ locations; the Indians also started crossing over and bombarding positions of the Pakistan Army.’<sup>39</sup> This was also confirmed in an intercepted communication between Musharraf and Lieutenant-General Mohammed Aziz Khan on May 26. Aziz told Musharraf that, ‘about three bombs landed in our side of Line of Control. ... In my interpretation, it is a (sic) sort of a giving of a message that if need be we can do it on the other side as well.’<sup>40</sup>

India’s decision to use its air force however did not convince Pakistan to undo the infiltrations. Reacting to the Indian decision to use its air power in the conflict, Pakistan’s Foreign Minister, Sartaj Aziz remarked that ‘we will defend our positions

if attacked.’<sup>41</sup> In response to Indian air strikes inside the Pakistani side of the LoC, the Pakistani air defences also became active.

On May 27, two IAF fighters (MIG-27 and MIG-21) were shot down by the anti-aircraft guns of Pakistan while a third was shot down by Indian firing itself in the Shyok area. One Indian pilot, Flt. Lt. K. Nachiketa was taken into custody by the Pakistani forces while the other Sqn. Ldr. Ajay Ahuja was killed in action. On May 28, one Indian helicopter MI-17 was also shot down by Pakistan inside the Pakistani side of the LoC. Its four man crew died and as a result India withdrew its choppers from advanced operations.

On May 28, Sharif and Vajpayee talked on the hotline and Sharif urged the Indian prime minister to come to the negotiating table and resolve the issue through peaceful means. Sharif also proposed to send his foreign minister to India to hold talks on the deteriorating situation.<sup>42</sup> However the mood in Pakistan was communicated when Sharif remarked that during his talks with Vajpayee he had ‘asked him how long the air strikes will continue and told him that if more planes will come, their fate will not be different from the two which were downed yesterday.’<sup>43</sup>

India’s willingness to escalate the conflict horizontally along the LoC was also highlighted by the reported casualties of the Pakistani civilians in the Bhimber area along the LoC. Pakistani authorities claimed towards the end of May that indiscriminate Indian firing across the LoC in Bhimber area, 260 kms southwest of Kargil, left 12 dead and scores injured.

Responding to these developments, Pakistan’s foreign secretary, Shamshad Ahmed, remarked that ‘Pakistan wants to settle all disputes peacefully but its desire for peace should not be construed [as] a sign of weakness.’ He said that ‘India will be at [a] disadvantage in any imposed war on the line of control’ and that ‘Pakistani troops are on full alert and will give an appropriate response to any violation of the line of control.’ He also warned that any attack, whether launched by aircraft or naval ships, would meet the same fate as that on May 27 when an Indian aircraft was shot down by the Pakistani army. At the same time he urged the international community to drop its ‘double standards’ and force India to start talks with Pakistan on all disputes, including Kashmir.<sup>44</sup>

Tensions seemed to be lowering to some extent when India accepted to receive the Pakistani foreign minister on May 31, even though at the same time it was accusing Pakistan of ‘engineering’ the infiltration along the LoC.<sup>45</sup> On June 2, Sharif

again stated that the Lahore process was 'in grievous danger of being derailed' and that the urgent necessity was 'to defuse the current situation.'<sup>46</sup>

However despite such gestures at the diplomatic level, the Indian leadership was full of anger. Indian Home Minister, L. K. Advani described it 'a case of an armed intrusion by Pakistan, amounting to armed aggression'.<sup>47</sup> An Indian analyst commented on the incursion that 'No single issue in the 1990s has wounded Indian pride as much as this incident, in which a supposedly powerful, nuclear-armed nation found itself abjectly taken by surprise by invaders.'<sup>48</sup>

On June 3, Aziz gave a detailed statement on the escalating crisis in the region in the Pakistan Senate. He said that Pakistan was committed to resolve all the outstanding disputes including Kashmir with India through dialogue and peaceful means. He said however that if there was any transgression of the LoC and if Pakistani positions were hit and air space violated, Pakistan will have no option but to retaliate in self defence. He accused India of building up forces in the Kargil sector and violations of the LoC, and said that Pakistan would 'firmly retaliate against any intrusion or violation of the LoC.'<sup>49</sup>

Further escalation of the crisis was witnessed in early June when India increased its activity in other sectors along the LoC. Indian artillery fire on a village in the Neelum Valley in Azad Kashmir killed at least twelve school children on June 2. Also there was an increase in attacks by Kashmiri fighters on the Indian security forces inside Kashmir. During these attacks there were instances where civilians, especially Hindus, were targeted and killed.

Similarly, intense artillery fire between India and Pakistan along the LoC was reported on June 5 and India claimed that its troops had recovered the bodies of three Pakistani soldiers fighting alongside Kashmiri fighters in the Kargil area along with official documents and weapons. Indian Army spokesman Brigadier Mohan Bandari claimed India had cleared 15 heights in Batalik, Drass and Mushko regions.<sup>50</sup>

The increased tensions in the region was highlighted when on June 6, Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes remarked that 'a war-like situation prevails along the Line of Control.'<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, Pakistan's Federal Cabinet expressed 'serious concern' on June 6 about 'the unwarranted Indian military operations in the area across the Line of Control involving heavy artillery, helicopter gunships and jet aircraft.'<sup>52</sup>

On June 7 Pakistan announced that its foreign minister would travel to India for talks aimed at reducing tension. However, India now rejected the Pakistani proposal, showing a hardened Indian position on the issue. In a broadcast on June 8, Vajpayee said that ‘India is always open to talks but the talks must have a definite specific purpose. In the present instance, the subject is one and one alone; the intrusion and how Pakistan proposes to undo it.’<sup>53</sup>

On June 9 Pakistan handed over six bodies of Indian soldiers killed during the encounters in Kargil to India. Pakistan said that Indian forces left these bodies on the Pakistani side of the LoC while retreating after making ingress while India claimed that these were the bodies of Indian prisoners of war that were tortured and then put to death.<sup>54</sup>

On the battle front there was still a stalemate and the ‘Indians had to assault bunkers and redoubts while facing punishing fire from well-entrenched, fortified positions at considerable heights.’<sup>55</sup> India brought in additional forces into the Kargil area by June 10. The IAF also started using high-altitude laser-guided bombs. It was reported that by early to mid-June, Pakistan had also started strengthening its positions in Kargil and the number of infiltrators in the Kargil area had increased to roughly 1,000.<sup>56</sup>

It was amidst such growing tensions that India finally agreed to host a visit of Pakistan’s foreign minister on June 12. Sartaj’s meeting with his Indian counterpart was the first of its kind between the foreign ministers of the two countries since the eruption of the Crisis. During his India visit, Pakistan’s Foreign Minister was accorded a ‘frigid and hostile reception’ and India conditioned its further talks with Pakistan only after the withdrawal of the Pakistan backed forces from Kargil. India’s posturing during the talks was highlighted during the press conference after the meeting between the foreign ministers of the two countries when the Indian foreign minister used the word ‘demand’ three times in one minute.<sup>57</sup>

The meeting between the foreign ministers of the two countries thus failed to bring down the tensions. A spokesman from Pakistan’s Foreign Office said that despite New Delhi’s negative response to Islamabad’s peace initiatives, ‘we will keep on trying to defuse the tension through peaceful means.’<sup>58</sup> A day after the failure of the foreign ministers’ meeting, Sharif again contacted Vajpayee by telephone on June 13, and asked him to resume the dialogue.

There were also controversies regarding the use of chemical weapons during the Kargil fight. According to Pakistan Television some shells exploded about 400 metres above the ground to emit chemicals that caused suffocation and skin irritation. The broadcast described the alleged resort to chemical warfare as a sign of the Indian military's frustration at the failure of its current campaign against Kashmiri freedom fighters. Pakistan army spokesman Brigadier Rashid Qureshi said that 'The Indians used chemical shells and we are in the process of analysing what it actually was. It was a smoke type of material that came out of the shells and causes blisters and causes itching and so far nausea.' Similarly, Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesman Tariq Altaf said that although no 'serious' cases of chemical injury have been reported, 'this issue is engaging international attention.'<sup>59</sup>

However, despite the use of heavy fire power and the help of IAF, there seemed to be little progress by Indian forces on the ground. For instance, according to 'India Today', the attack on Tololing Ridge was supported by 120 artillery guns which pounded the ridge for more than four hours, firing at least 10,000 shells (50,000 kg of TNT), before initiating the assault. Despite this, the Indians could not clear the whole ridge. However, it was reported on June 29 that India was able to make some headway in the conflict at Kargil.

On July 1, Sharif again called for dialogue with India. However his statement that Pakistan wanted to de-escalate the situation by holding talks with the Indian authorities did not hint at any signs of withdrawal by Pakistani forces from the area.<sup>60</sup> Reacting to Pakistani calls for talks India remained steadfast on its position and rejected any possibility of a dialogue with Pakistan until 'Islamabad abandoned an armed intrusion in the Kargil sector of occupied Kashmir.' A spokesman of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, Raminder Singh Jassal remarked on July 2 that India hoped Pakistan would heed the advice of the international community to respect the sanctity of the LoC.<sup>61</sup>

## **Dangerous Nuclear Moves**

The nuclear capabilities of India and Pakistan, demonstrated through their nuclear tests in 1998, made Kargil a nuclear crisis beyond any doubt. Not only did nuclear weapons not prevent the regional players from initiating the crisis and escalating it dangerously both vertically and horizontally, the two sides also indulged in nuclear posturing during the Crisis. Dangerous nuclear signalling by India and

Pakistan was witnessed during the Crisis. The two countries openly hurled nuclear threats at each other and also took important practical steps to put their nuclear weapons on a high state of alert and readiness for quick use, thus making it clear that they were ready to take extreme steps.

Indeed such thinking in South Asia was highlighted soon after the overt nuclearization of the region. Shortly before Pakistan's Kargil intrusion was discovered, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, General Pervez Musharraf announced that while nuclear weapons had dramatically changed the nature of war, 'this, however, does not mean that conventional war has become obsolete. In fact conventional war will still remain the mode of conflict in any future conflagration with our traditional enemy.'<sup>62</sup> While on February 10, 1999, much before the Kargil encounter between the two countries, Indian Chief of Army Staff General V. P. Malik said, 'Having crossed the nuclear threshold does not mean that a conventional war is out [of the question].'<sup>63</sup>

Nuclear threats were regularly issued during the Crisis. For example, in late May 1999, at a very early stage of the conflict in Kargil, Pakistan's foreign secretary Shamshad Ahmed warned New Delhi that Islamabad could use 'any weapon' to defend its territorial integrity. He said, 'We will not hesitate to use any weapon in our arsenal as our security is more dear to us than the advice of international leaders which is one-sided.'<sup>64</sup> It is important to note that Shamshad's warning was issued shortly after India had escalated the military situation by authorizing the use of the Indian air force. The warning was fairly contrary to the official Pakistani position on its nuclear doctrine whereby Islamabad emphasises its nuclear use was a 'last resort' only to be used when the survival of the state was at stake.

The Indian position on the use of nuclear weapons during the Crisis was also quite dangerous and complex. The Kargil Review Committee claims that unlike Pakistan, India did not issue any nuclear threat, although this stance is not entirely correct given the above, and New Delhi did indulge in nuclear threats in response to Pakistani warnings. For example, Indian naval chief Admiral Sushil Kumar said that the Indian navy could both survive a nuclear attack and launch one in retaliation.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, on June 20, an editorial in the newspaper of the extremist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), having close ideological and political links with the ruling BJP, urged Prime Minister Vajpayee to launch a nuclear strike on Pakistan.



More nuclear threats were issued by Islamabad and New Delhi at the height of the Crisis. At a time when Prime Minister Sharif was preparing to go to Washington to gather support for Pakistan's position, a senior member of Pakistan's federal cabinet, Raja Zafar-ul-Haq, publicly warned that Pakistan could resort to the nuclear option to preserve Pakistani territory, sovereignty, or security.<sup>66</sup> In response a series of nuclear warnings were issued by New Delhi at peak moments of the Crisis. Prime Minister Vajpayee stated that India was prepared for all eventualities.<sup>67</sup> Similarly, the Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes said 'Pakistan's threat of a full-fledged nuclear war should not be taken frivolously and that the country was prepared for any eventuality.'<sup>68</sup> The Indian National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra also joined them stating that 'Let me make one thing absolutely clear. We have a policy of no-first-use.... But if any attempt is made against us, God forbid, we will go all out.' He said that India was prepared in case 'some lunatic tries to do something against us.'<sup>69</sup>

In yet another statement from Islamabad, Pakistan's Information Minister Mushahid Hussain, while replying to a question asking about the possibility that Pakistan might agree to a 'no-first-use' declaration, remarked 'Well, what do they say, 'Que sera sera', what will be will be. We hope it will not come to the nuclear thing.'<sup>70</sup>

In addition to the dangerous verbal nuclear posturing during the Crisis, it has been now widely reported that both sides increased their nuclear readiness, making their nuclear weapons available for use. Indian military chief General Malik notes that India had 'one or two intelligence reports indicating that Pakistan Army personnel were noticed cleaning up artillery deployment areas and missile launch sites at the Tilla Ranges.' He notes that even though India had no specific information that Pakistan 'was readying its nuclear arsenal ... we considered it prudent to take some protective measures [and] some of our missile assets were dispersed and relocated.'<sup>71</sup>

Similarly, in a testimony, Bruce Riedel, formerly the Senior Director for Near East and South Asian Affairs at the US National Security Council, disclosed that the US intelligence had detected 'disturbing evidence that the Pakistanis were preparing their nuclear arsenals for possible deployment' on July 3.<sup>72</sup> Bruce Riedel recounts that 'we could all too easily imagine ... a deadly descent into full scale conflict all along the border with a danger of nuclear cataclysm.'<sup>73</sup> In a personal meeting with Prime Minister Sharif, when President Clinton asked whether Sharif knew that 'his military was preparing their nuclear tipped missiles?', Sharif evaded the answer and said only

that 'India was probably doing the same.'<sup>74</sup> Bruce Riedel's testimony was later confirmed by then Indian Chief of Army Staff General Sundarajan Padmanabhan in early 2001, when he remarked that Pakistan 'activated one of its nuclear missile bases and had threatened India with a nuclear attack.'<sup>75</sup>

Raj Chengappa, a senior journalist with *India Today* with access to defence personnel, has also reported extensively that during the Kargil Crisis, India 'activated all its three types of nuclear delivery vehicles and kept them at what is known as Readiness State 3 - meaning that some nuclear bombs would be ready to be mated with the delivery vehicles at short notice.' He tells that 'The air force was asked to keep its Mirage fighters on standby. DRDO [Defence Research and Development Organization] scientists headed to where the Prithvi missiles were deployed and at least four of them were readied for a possible nuclear strike. Even an Agni missile capable of launching a nuclear warhead was moved to a western Indian state and kept in a state of readiness.'<sup>76</sup>

As noticed by Neil Joeck, Chengappa may be overstating the case but when seen in combination with Malik's statement, it does become clear that India took at least some steps to prepare for nuclear threats, if not necessarily nuclear use.<sup>77</sup>

### ***Deterrence Failure and the Escalatory Dynamics during Kargil: An Analysis***

Nuclear weapons neither prevented Pakistan from moving to Kargil nor did they stop the two sides from consciously raising the stakes during the Crisis. As narrated by Dixit, India was guided by a senior group of seasoned strategic policy analysts throughout the Kargil crisis whose 'assessments and suggestions ... formed the basis of political and military action to resist and neutralize the Pakistani aggression.'<sup>78</sup> Among such members included K. Subrahmanyam, India's most prominent nuclear analyst, and Raja Ramanna, former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and a critical figure in India's development of nuclear weapons. Dixit notes that New Delhi's response to Pakistan's aggression was carefully calculated and considered, with no options left unexamined.<sup>79</sup>

In his study on the military operations during the Kargil Crisis, John Gill highlights India's willingness to escalate if objectives are not achieved at a certain threshold. Commenting on the Indian military response in the Kargil area, Gill notes

that ‘the key political limitation imposed on local commanders was the restriction not to cross the LoC’ and this guidance was followed. But, he adds that the ‘military and political leadership was careful to keep the option of cross-LoC operations open and used public statements by senior officials to highlight the latent threat of escalation.’<sup>80</sup>

Similarly, Dixit also discloses that a ‘subgroup of the National Security Advisory Board,’ of which he was a member, recommended during the peak days of the Crisis in late June 1999 ‘that India considered carrying out air strikes and launching a military operation across the Line of Control. ... We collectively felt that a quick end to the war could be achieved by strikes across the Line of Control.’<sup>81</sup> General Malik even recommended that the military be allowed to cross the border or the LoC.<sup>82</sup> Similarly Raj Chengappa reports that when the Indian casualties at Kargil mounted, New Delhi’s patience had started wearing thin during the last moments of the crisis and a senior Indian official even informed Washington that India might be compelled to escalate the operations.<sup>83</sup>

When seen in conjunction with the fact that India and Pakistan had also started taking concrete steps to expand the scope of the conflict, the situation during Kargil became quite a harrowing one. As shown previously, along with introducing its air force in the conflict, increased cross-LoC shelling, and repositioning of its naval forces, New Delhi had also mobilised its offensive ground forces and Indian leaders ordered their armed forces to prepare for war all along the India-Pakistan border. Military leaves were also cancelled nationwide. Within a few weeks of the first Indian preparations, Pakistan too had begun to prepare offensive units in response.<sup>84</sup>

Dixit has discussed how the decision to introduce air force in the Kargil conflict was made and shows that how India was prepared to expand the scope of the conflict.

Dixit notes:

There have been some rumors about the Indian Air Force being reluctant to join the military operations in the initial stages. This is not true. The chief of air staff, Air Chief Marshal Y. Tipnis, only made the rational point that the use of the air force would change the nature of the military conflict: that if India decided to deploy the air force in Kargil, *India should be well prepared to anticipate the expansion of war beyond Jammu and Kashmir*, and respond to expanded Pakistani offenses in other parts of India . Once the CCS and National Security Council affirmed their willingness to face the situation, the Indian Air Force joined the operations and played an effective and important role in the war.<sup>85</sup>

US officials later on revealed they had spotted evidence that ‘In the desert state of Rajasthan, elements of the Indian army’s main offensive ‘strike force’ were loading tanks, artillery and other heavy equipment onto flatbed rail cars.’ They put it authoritatively that the Indian army was making defensive preparations along India’s main border with Pakistan, and its armored units, intended for offensive use, were leaving their garrisons in Rajasthan in northwest India, and preparing to move.<sup>86</sup>

The movements and preparations of the Indian and Pakistani offensive ground forces towards the borders was also confirmed by Indian sources which say that by the end of June, Indian ‘mechanized and artillery divisions [had] advanced to forward positions all along the border in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, and Jammu and Kashmir’ and that the Pakistan Army was also making similar preparations along the frontier. There had also been increased pressure on the Indian military to cross the LoC.<sup>87</sup> In the wake of such developments, Peter Lavoy notices that ‘we now know that Indian troops were within days of opening another front across the LoC and possibly the international border, an act that could have triggered a large-scale conventional military engagement.’<sup>88</sup>

Such a grim regional scenario was recognized in Washington. The US officials had concluded during the crisis that as Indian soldiers continued to come home in body bags and the stories of alleged Pakistani atrocities continued to make headlines in the Indian newspapers, India’s strongly nationalistic ruling party - the BJP, will come under intense domestic political pressure to adopt a more forceful response, especially when it was due to face elections in a few months. As reported by the Washington Post, the US official strongly feared that if India failed to dislodge the Pakistani infiltrators in Kashmir, it might open a second front that could engulf the two countries in a full-scale war.<sup>89</sup>

According to senior administration officials ‘the latest conflict over Kashmir came much closer to full-scale war than was publicly acknowledged at the time - and raised very real fears that one or both countries would resort to using variants of the nuclear devices each tested last year.’ They said that ‘It was very, very easy to imagine how this crisis . . . could have escalated out of control, including in a way that could have brought in nuclear weapons, without either party consciously deciding that it wanted to go to nuclear war.’ Putting it more clearly they said that ‘they could easily envision a scenario under which Pakistani forces, overwhelmed by India’s much larger army, could find themselves backed into a corner that could tempt them

to play their last and most devastating card. There wasn't any question that this thing could have gone to a high level.... That's what scared us.'<sup>90</sup>

While describing the escalatory dynamics during the Crisis, General Malik notes that having responded swiftly at the point of attack and having expanded its use of firepower, India then made a decision to 'raise the ante for the other side' by mobilizing on a number of additional fronts.<sup>91</sup> India deployed forces from the western and southern commands to positions along the international border with Pakistan 'to ensure a balanced posture at the strategic level to deter Pakistan from escalating the conflict and prevent it from focusing solely on Kargil.'<sup>92</sup>

Thus India kept all the options open to escalate the hostilities if needed. Malik notes that notwithstanding the order not to cross the LoC, 'we had to cater for all contingencies. My instructions, therefore, were that our forces should be deployed and maintained in such a state of readiness so that, given six days' notice, we should be in a position to launch an offensive anywhere across the international border or the LoC.'<sup>93</sup> As noticed by Neil Joeck, 'Viewed in isolation, Malik's instructions can be interpreted as merely an act of prudence. However if it is analyzed within the broader context of actions taken and readied, it looks more consistent with a strategy of escalating the situation.'<sup>94</sup>

Similarly, Raj Chengappa also notes that 'The message was clear: not only was India preparing to strike hard in Kargil but if needed it could open other fronts and was willing to risk even a full-scale war.'<sup>95</sup> Raj Chengappa's claims that 'the Indian Army pressed for an all-out war with Pakistan' and going even further, a senior Indian journalist, Raja Menon's contentions that 'India ... prepared to mobilize for full-scale war should its plans to stay on its own side of the cease-fire line not bring them the desired results.' These all speak to the willingness of the Indian leadership to take all sorts of risks. These comments also highlight that New Delhi was not only prepared for Pakistan to do something similar but it also accepted the risk that Pakistan might escalate in response.

On the other hand it is also important to look at Pakistani perceptions during the Crisis. According to Musharraf, as late as on July 2, India's deployments in Kashmir had restricted the capacity of its offensive forces elsewhere along the international border. Musharraf notes that 'India had created a serious imbalance in its system of forces. It had bottled up major formations inside Kashmir, leaving itself no capability to attack us elsewhere, and, most seriously, had left the field open for a

counteroffensive with which we could choke the Kashmir Valley. We had no offensive designs on the international border, and were reassured that India's offensive capability was restricted to Kashmir.'<sup>96</sup>

Describing the perceptions of Pakistan's rulers regarding Indian moves during the crisis, Prime Minister Sharif later said in his address to the nation on July 12 that 'going by the attitude of India, it did seem to us that New Delhi was moving rapidly towards the war ... the number of troops deployed by India on our borders was again war-like. Its naval power was moved close to our shores and its nuclear missiles turned towards us. The Indian air force was put on red alert.'<sup>97</sup>

These perceptions highlight that the hostilities at Kargil could expand before eventually getting out of control. India's expansion of the war into Pakistani Kashmir or along the international border would have invited a counter-offensive from Pakistan to nullify Indian moves. As noticed by Neil Joeck, it can be concluded that at the minimum, India did not back down in the face of Pakistan's nuclear rhetoric and did not show any restraint while dealing with the situation on the ground. On Pakistan's side, the nuclear movements also exhibited a willingness to escalate the risks rather than back down.<sup>98</sup> While commenting on the possibility of the Crisis escalating to the nuclear level, Neil Joeck notes that 'Both sides were prepared to bid up the risks. The fact that the war was resolved before this was necessary does not change this basic dynamic.'<sup>99</sup>

In discussing deterrence failure within the purview of the rational deterrence model, Alexander George and Richard Smoke provide three patterns or characteristics: : *fait accompli*, limited probe, and controlled pressure.<sup>100</sup> According to Ganguly and Hagerty Pakistani actions during Kargil 'had all the characteristics' of 'limited probe.'<sup>101</sup> On the other hand, Khan, Lavoy and Clary explain deterrence failure during Kargil along the lines of what is known as *fait accompli*.<sup>102</sup> However as discussed in detail by Neil Joeck, a careful examination of Pakistani actions shows that neither of these patterns explains deterrence failure during Kargil completely.<sup>103</sup>

The occupation of Kargil by Pakistan does seem to follow the pattern of a *fait accompli* in the sense that an attacker aims to 'deprive the defender of time and opportunity to reverse his policy of no commitment.' According to this logic a *fait accompli* would have helped Pakistan to pursue its objectives whether these were strategic or tactical in nature. Pakistan's objectives in Kargil seem to be aimed at taking away the time from India to reverse its policy of no commitment. That required

Islamabad to continue to hold to the captured area and hope for international intervention and this appears to be exactly what Pakistan did. Although the story about the *mujahideen* is inconsistent with that objective, it can be assumed that if India had accepted the *fait accompli*, the Pakistan Army would then have emerged from behind to take credit for the victory.

However as noticed by Neil Joeck, it is not clear why Pakistan, before the war, would have believed that India was not committed to defending Kargil. It can be argued that when Pakistani forces encountered no resistance in the area, Pakistan might have concluded that India was not committed. However after India counter-attacked vigorously to undo the occupation, there could be no doubt that India was committed to defend the area. The explanation based on this pattern becomes problematic when it is evident that Islamabad did not have a backup plan when it became evident that India would not accept the *fait accompli*.

There is a possibility that Islamabad might have planned to convert its infiltrations to a secondary objective of a 'limited probe', the second pattern of deterrence failure according to George and Smoke. The pattern of 'limited probe' is 'a cautious, slowly unfolding effort to alter the status quo' that can be reversed.' According to this explanation, Pakistan's calculations at Kargil could be to retain its favorable position while putting the onus on India 'to clarify the ambiguity of [its] commitment.'<sup>104</sup> This would have left room for a graceful exit if India's reaction was more forceful and determined than expected. It can be argued that Pakistan's claims that the fighting in Kargil area had nothing to do with its army and was only the work of Kashmiri Mujahideen and their freelance Pakistani supporters, does lend credence to applicability of the pattern of 'limited probe.' But the explanation becomes problematic when it is clear that such a story could also have provided Pakistan with a face-saving retreat without being caught in a lie.

The application of the third pattern of deterrence failure according to George and Smoke i.e. 'controlled pressure' to explain Pakistani incursions in Kargil is also problematic. It can be argued that Pakistan's support to the Kashmiri insurgency in the 1990s conforms to this pattern and that by supporting the insurgents in Kashmir Pakistan tried to 'take advantage of available asymmetries in the structure of the situation that can, perhaps, be turned to account by means of various controlled pressure tactics.'<sup>105</sup> However this pattern also fails to explain the overt Kargil incursion by Pakistan. As argued by Neil Joeck:

A limited probe that failed and resulted in reversal, however, would not have satisfied any of the key motivations for the intervention.' Siachen would not have been avenged, Kashmir might have been put back on the international agenda—though only in the context of local conditions, fueled, as Pakistan claimed, by local *mujahideen*—and the Pakistan Army would have appeared to be confused and inept. In the end, the contradiction between achieving its objectives, which required a *fait accompli* strategy, and avoiding battlefield defeat, which could have been avoided with a limited probe strategy, was not resolved to Pakistan's satisfaction. The available record does not tell us whether one or all of these patterns describe Pakistan's approach at Kargil. What is clear is that nuclear weapons did not prevent war and as an initiator, Pakistan drew conclusions about India's commitment that were wrong.<sup>106</sup>

### ***The US Involvement and the De-escalation***

The de-escalation of the Crisis occurred only as a result of intense diplomatic engagement of the United States which brought both overt and covert pressure on Islamabad to affect a withdrawal of Pakistani forces from the Kargil area.

#### **Initial Responses**

The first reports of renewed fighting along the cease-fire line did not attract much attention in Washington as the US officials viewed it as a routine exercise whereby the two sides used to ratchet up their military operations at the start of every spring when weather conditions improve. Another possible reason could be that the US administration officials were preoccupied with the air campaign against Yugoslavia at that time.

On May 9, however, Pakistani-backed infiltrators grabbed the attention of U.S. intelligence analysts when they blew up an Indian ammunition dump near the front-line city of Kargil, destroying 40,000 to 50,000 artillery rounds in a tremendous blast. It soon became clear that up to 700 Pakistani-backed troops - either Muslim militants, regular army soldiers or some combination of both - had seized positions on the Indian side of the cease-fire line at altitudes as high as 17,000 feet.

With the unfolding situation on the ground, the United States became active diplomatically right from the start of the hostilities in Kargil. Its initial reactions were however low key and mainly revolved around urging India and Pakistan to find a negotiated and peaceful solution to the Crisis. In its earliest manoeuvres, Assistant



Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Karl Inderfurth advised Pakistani and Indian ambassadors in Washington to show restraint in the conflict.

At the same time the United States took a pro-India stance towards the Crisis and pressed for the restoration of the LoC and urged Pakistan to withdraw its forces, making it a precondition for any cessation of hostilities. It also refused to endorse Pakistani stance that Pakistan has nothing to do with the activities of the ‘Mujahideen’ in the area.

With the passage of time, the United States became increasingly involved in the Crisis, partly due to its fears about the possibility of the escalation of the conflict given the fact that the two countries were also nuclear armed. Inderfurth in an interview on May 30, 1999 said, ‘There is always the possibility of events spinning out of control. Clearly the ingredients are there for miscalculations. Our hope is that both sides will take steps to move this in a peaceful direction.’<sup>107</sup>

Initially the United States also refrained from offering any mediatory role to end the Crisis. Instead of offering any of good offices to facilitate talks, it emphasised ‘direct talks’ between the two countries to solve the issue. This was clearly indicated by the statement of James Rubin, the spokesman of the State Department when he said that the United States strongly supports ‘talks between India and Pakistan to resolve this latest dispute’ and believes that ‘these talks should take place as soon as possible.’ He further clarified that ‘ending the fighting in Kargil area can only be accomplished through direct engagement by India and Pakistan.’ He warned the countries ‘to not take steps to expand the conflict beyond the current Kargil area.’<sup>108</sup>

After the failure of Sartaj Aziz’s mission on June 12, Washington’s profile in managing the Crisis increased. This was highlighted when the United States contacted the regional leadership at the highest level in mid-June 1999. Washington made a proposal for continuing talks to settle the situation when Clinton made a telephone call to Vajpayee on June 15. The call was however rejected by New Delhi and the Clinton administration said that it was disappointed that its efforts to encourage talks between India and Pakistan on defusing tension on the LoC were not productive, expressing the view at the same time that the issue had to be resolved bilaterally.

President Clinton also telephoned Sharif on the same day and urged him to pull back its forces from Kargil and made this a precondition for ending the fighting between the two countries. Crowley, the spokesman for the US National Security Council, said at a press briefing after the telephonic conversation that ‘The President

said he did not see how progress could be made on this issue until (Pakistani) forces are withdrawn back across the line of control.<sup>109</sup>

The American exhortations on the need for mutual talks were quite in line with the Pakistani expectations, but its stance on the issue of withdrawal without any quid pro quo from the Indian side and its hesitation to involve itself directly was much to the disappointment of Pakistan. The increasing pro-Indian tilt in the US policy was being resented by Pakistan and it expressed its disappointment that the United States was biased and prejudiced against Islamabad.

The United States might have hesitated to involve itself in the conflict situation in the initial stages of the conflict, as opposed to its high profile active role later on, due to some other reasons as well. One reason could be that it was not fully clear about the situation on the ground and the extent of the Pakistani incursion in the area as both India and Pakistan had been frequently accusing each other in the past of transgressing across the LoC. Moreover the Americans were probably not sure how seriously the matters would be taken up in Delhi. Also the refusal to get involved in the situation may have something to do with Kosovo-induced fatigue.

However the main reason behind the initial low profile US engagement in the Kargil crisis seems to be the chronic aversion of India to any mediatory role for any third party in the Indo-Pak conflict, especially the Kashmir dispute. The United States was, thus, very careful about such Indian ‘sensitivities’ and never wanted to appear as a mediator. Although Pakistan did seek an active and impartial US role to mediate in the conflict, the United States remained sensitive to the Indian position and became active only after the Indians showed some flexibility in their position by seeking international support on their side.

### **General Zinni’s Visit**

By mid-June, the US concerns regarding the situation in South Asia had increased considerably. Bruce Riedel narrates the growing concerns in Washington at that time as follows:

By late June the situation was deteriorating fast. The two parties were engaged in an intense conflict along the Kargil front and both were mobilizing their forces for larger conflict. Casualties were mounting on both sides. Our intelligence assessments were pointing toward the danger of full-scale war becoming a real possibility. The danger was that the Indians

would grow weary of attacking uphill (actually up-mountain) into well dug in Pakistani positions. ... New Delhi could easily decide to open another front elsewhere along the [Line of Control] to ease its burden and force the Pakistanis to fight on territory favorable to India. Even if the conflict remained confined solely to Kargil, the danger of escalation was high.<sup>110</sup>

The change in the US approach towards Kargil was highlighted when the United States decided to send its team to the region, despite having denied it had plans to send special envoys to defuse the tensions during the initial phase of the Crisis. Gen. Zinni Commander-in-Chief US Central Command (CENTCOM) visited Pakistan on June 23. He was accompanied by G. Lanpher, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia. Immediately after visiting Pakistan, Lanpher proceeded on to New Delhi to hold talks with the Indians. Their visit to the region was the beginning of the evolving high profile and more pro-India US role in the conflict as compared to its more neutral and relatively low profile initial role.

The US decision came in the wake of the flexibility that the Indian leadership showed in its stance by approaching the international community to seek their active support. The Indians had initially calculated that the infiltrators would be cleared of by using the military force effectively. On May 16, the Indian Defence Minister, George Fernandes claimed that the intruders would be evicted within 48 hours. However, the stalemate continued for so long that as late as on June 10, the Indians brought in additional forces to the area. Earlier India had tried to restrict international involvement in the conflict as it feared the internationalization of the conflict and adopted all relevant measures in this respect.

India never wanted the issue to be raised in the United Nations. The United States, Russia, France and UK assured India that they would not raise the issue in the United Nations Security Council. India's Defence Minister Fernandes remarked that 'All of them [members of the Security Council] made it clear that they would not take up the matter in the United Nations Security Council.'<sup>111</sup> Similarly he remarked that India was not at all planning to take up the matter in the United Nations.<sup>112</sup> India also rejected the sending of UN observers to the area and also declined the offer by UN to send a special envoy to defuse Indo-Pak tensions and reaffirmed its determination to vacate the aggression in Kashmir.<sup>113</sup>

The flexibility in the Indian position came after the failure of Aziz's mission when India was becoming desperate as it was not making any progress on the military

as well as the diplomatic front. There was an emerging fear of Kargil becoming a recurring phenomenon, perhaps on a yearly basis. India thus decided to look for other avenues to put pressure on Pakistan to get the heights vacated and started approaching key international players and organizations like G-8 in this regard.

On June 17, Indian Prime Minister's Principal Secretary, Barjesh Mishra, visited Geneva to talk to G-8 leaders at their annual Summit meeting. There he met US National Security advisor, Sandy Berger, and handed over Vajpayee's letter addressed to the US President Clinton, in which he conveyed to the US President the Kashmir situation and threatened that 'India might have to attack Pakistan if Pakistan did not pull troops who had seized Indian outposts in the disputed territory of Kashmir.'<sup>114</sup>

It was in the wake of this evolving 'flexibility' in the Indian stance that the United States decided to play a more high profile role in the Crisis. After Berger received Vajpayee's message in Geneva, Clinton decided to turn up the pressure on Pakistan. First he persuaded G-8 countries to include in their final communiqué a statement condemning the 'infiltration of armed intruders' and demanding 'full respect' for the LoC. The increasing US tilt towards India was highlighted when the statement did not call for a cease-fire which was an implicit acknowledgment of India's position.

Zinni and Lanpher met the Chief of Army Staff, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, on June 24 at Joint Staff Headquarters, in which the latter briefed the US team about the situation prevailing along the LoC and international borders. They were told that India was increasing tensions as its forces were posing an offensive threat to Pakistan.<sup>115</sup>

The US General also met with the PM Sharif on June 25. In his meeting, Zinni categorically asked Sharif to pull back its forces from Kargil. The purpose of Zinni's visit to Islamabad was to tell Pakistani leadership to pull back to their side of the LoC. Gen. Zinni also told Nawaz Sharif that he would get to meet President Clinton as a quid pro quo if he got the 'Mujahideen' to withdraw.<sup>116</sup>

Zinni's visit highlights the changing US attitude towards the crisis where the US started emphasising the need for the withdrawal of Pakistani forces from Kargil. While Zinni and Lanpher were in Pakistan, US spokesman, James Rubin clearly said, 'We want to see withdrawal of forces supported by Pakistan from the Indian side of the Line of Control.'<sup>117</sup> The mission, however, was not ostensibly designated as a special envoy by the US in response to Indian sensitivities.

Pakistani FO also impressed upon the United States during Zinni's tour the need to adopt a comprehensive approach to the conflict and not just merely focus on the immediate cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of Pakistani forces. It wanted the United States to adopt a balanced approach and not focus only on Kargil. FO spokesman Tariq Altaf remarked on the US position that 'To focus on one incident, which can be repeated here and there again, is wrong. It is a focus not evenly spread. You can never have a fair solution to a dispute unless you have fair and balanced approach. You cannot forget India's continuous violations of the Line of Control...By focussing on the withdrawal of Mujahideen from Kargil, the United States will encourage India to talk of war. It would encourage India to talk of war and wider conflict.'<sup>118</sup>

After visiting Pakistan, Lanpher went to Delhi immediately, although he was not accompanied by Zinni on his India tour. It was claimed in the Indian media that the main objective of Lanpher's visit was only to brief the Indian leadership on what had transpired in Pakistan between the US delegation and the Pakistan government.<sup>119</sup>

The US pressure on Pakistan in the wake of Zinni's visit was also highlighted when P. J. Crawley, spokesman for the National Security Council, remarked that Zinni's 'trip to Pakistan was focussed, specifically on the current situation. We want the fighting to stop and both countries to respect the Line of Control. The cause of war is Pakistan-supported militants which we want to see out of those areas.'<sup>120</sup>

Following the visit of Gen. Zinni, Musharraf hinted at the possibility of a Nawaz-Clinton meeting on Kashmir. He also commented that 'We are trying to find a solution which is agreeable to us, to the United States and to the Indians also.'<sup>121</sup> Musharraf also uttered the term 'withdrawal' for the first time at this press interview. Similarly, State Department spokesman, James Rubin declared Anthony Zinni's visit to have been 'productive'.<sup>122</sup> After Zinni's visit, the US ambassador, William Millam, in an interview with a group of Pakistani journalists, said, 'General Zinni's talk with the Pakistani leaders was very productive in view of the flexibility in their position.' The assurance from Islamabad also led to a lowering of US rhetoric and public criticism of Pakistan as the ambassador also declared that 'We have decided to de-escalate our rhetoric so as to defuse the situation.'<sup>123</sup>

The increasing pro-India tilt in the US approach to the Crisis was also highlighted when a key Congressional Committee, the House Foreign Relations Committee adopted, with an overwhelming majority, a resolution accusing Pakistan

of precipitating the Kargil conflict and urging President Clinton to consider opposing the release of financial assistance to Pakistan from lending agencies unless the Pakistani-backed forces were withdrawn. The Foreign Relations Committee also defeated by a 20-8 vote an amendment moved by Republican Congresswoman Dana Rohrabacher, asking the United States to encourage India and Pakistan to hold a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir, in accordance with the 1948 resolutions of the UN Security Council.

Republican Congressman Douglas Bereuter opposed the amendment, urging fellow member to concentrate on ending fighting in Kargil rather than going into the history of the dispute at this stage. Congressman Ackerman, also opposing the amendment, even blamed Pakistan for non-implementation of the Security Council resolution. The resolution passed by 22-5 votes, and was a serious blow to Pakistan's interests. It clearly showed that the Congress was not interested in any arrangement that could address the permanent resolution of the Kashmir dispute along with the immediate need for the cessation of hostilities. Pakistani diplomats and lobbyists were caught by surprise and according to a senior diplomat, 'We got the news of the resolution from an AP report.'<sup>124</sup>

In the face of mounting international criticism, Pakistan tried to enlist Chinese support to balance the US pressure for its objective. Unlike the United States, China was neither involved in any high profile diplomacy during the Kargil Crisis nor gave any support to the Pakistani stance on the Kargil Crisis. Whereas China came up openly in support of Pakistan during the 1965 and 1971 wars, China attempted to adopt a neutral stance during the Kargil Crisis despite Pakistan's efforts to seek its support. China also did not offer any third party mediatory role in defusing the tensions. It also continuously emphasised mutual restraint and talks to settle the dispute during the Crisis.

In one of the first responses to the brewing tensions Chinese President Jiang Zemin hinted at China's position regarding the situation on the LoC during the visit of Chief of Army Staff Gen. Pervez Musharraf to China in late May which was probably the first Pakistani attempt to gain Chinese support regarding its stance on Kargil. On May 24, during his meeting with the visiting general, Jiang said, 'The South Asian region is an important part of Asia. Without South Asia's stability and development, there would be no peace and prosperity in Asia. China seriously hopes the South Asian region will maintain peace and stability.'<sup>125</sup>

As tensions flared up in the region, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Zhu Bangzao commented on June 3 that both India and Pakistan should ‘settle their divergence through peaceful dialogues in a frank and patient spirit.’ He also called upon the two countries to ‘exercise restraint and relax the current tense situation.’<sup>126</sup> Similarly, an editorial article in the China Daily observed ‘that war will do nothing to the settlement of the border disputes but crank up tensions.’<sup>127</sup> The Chinese Foreign Ministry in a press briefing on June 10 reiterated the Chinese position and remarked, ‘we hope that both sides will use peaceful means and solve any crisis through negotiations to prevent the escalation of the situation’.<sup>128</sup>

Pakistan made another effort to get Chinese support when on June 11, a day before he had to visit India, its FM Sartaj Aziz paid a one-day visit to China. However, his mission failed to muster any support from Beijing. During the Crisis, Sartaj Aziz visited China on June 11. On the occasion, Chinese FM Tang Jiaxuan told Aziz that the recent conflict in Kashmir has caused great concern among the international community.’ He further said that ‘The Kashmir issue is a complicated affair with a long history and should be, and could only be, solved through peaceful means’. He hoped that ‘Pakistan and India will find an effective approach to bringing about a political solution to the Kashmir issue through negotiations and consultations.’<sup>129</sup>

Similarly, during his meeting with the visiting Pakistani FM Li Peng, Chairman of the Committee of the Chinese People’s Congress, also urged that ‘out of consideration for maintaining peace and stability in the South Asian Region, Pakistan should remain cool-headed and exercise self-control and solve conflicts through peaceful means and avoid worsening the situation.’ He told Sartaj that ‘We hope that India and Pakistan will resume dialogue and return to the path of peaceful negotiations.’<sup>130</sup>

Another Pakistani attempt in this regard was initiated by the prime minister himself when the US pressure had started showing its impact on Islamabad. During Sharif’s visit to China late in June, the Chinese position on the regional Crisis remained unchanged. Pakistani media reports citing certain reliable resources said that in his meetings in Beijing, Sharif was advised by both Zhu Rongji and Li Peng that Pakistan ‘must play’ its role in reducing tension in Kargil, as any escalation of tension could lead to a larger conflict that may not be in the long term interest of Pakistan. During his talks with Nawaz Sharif, Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji maintained that the

Kashmir dispute is a 'historical issue involving territorial, ethnic and religious elements' which should 'be solved only through peaceful means.'<sup>131</sup> Sharif, later, cut down his visit and returned home earlier than planned and Pakistan's leading English newspaper *Dawn* commented that, 'it is perhaps not surprising that the prime minister found little to comfort him.'<sup>132</sup>

Again, early in July, the Chinese Foreign Ministry again commented that, 'Proceeding from the aspiration of maintaining peace and stability in South Asia, we sincerely hope that India and Pakistan will respect the LOC and resume negotiations at an early date in accordance with the spirit of the Lahore Declaration.'<sup>133</sup>

### **The Clinton-Sharif Meeting**

According to the US position, during his visit to Islamabad on June 25, Gen. Anthony C. Zinni, commander of the U.S. Central Command, had received 'fairly clear' assurances from his Pakistani counterparts that their forces would withdraw from the Indian side of the line. However, the US intelligence analysts saw no evidence of a pullout.

The evolving scenario led US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott to cut short a vacation in the Hamptons on July 1 and return to Washington to deal with the Crisis.<sup>134</sup> On July 3, Clinton called Sharif which led to the scheduling of a meeting between Clinton and Sharif on July 4. But Clinton also made clear to Sharif that the meeting had to produce 'a positive result' and anything less could 'accelerate the downward spiral.'<sup>135</sup>

While explaining Sharif's visit to Washington which had been criticized in the local media as too hasty a step, a Pakistan's foreign office statement clarified that the meeting was not a sudden development. According to the statement it was 'the result of the recent contacts between the two leaders on the deteriorating situations and the need for a settlement of the Kashmir dispute which holds the key to durable peace and security in South Asia.'<sup>136</sup>

Clinton also had a discussion with the Indian PM Vajpayee on telephone during the meeting. During the summit Clinton repeatedly expressed the threat of a nuclear war. He even opened his dialogue with Sharif by handing him a cartoon from the day's Chicago Tribune newspaper that showed Pakistan and India as nuclear bombs fighting with each other. Then Clinton remarked that 'this is what worried him.'<sup>137</sup>



The meeting was quite tense. President Clinton “reminded Sharif how close the U.S. and Soviet Union had come to nuclear war in 1962 over Cuba. Did Sharif realize that if even one bomb was dropped . . . Sharif finished his sentence and said it would be a catastrophe.” With Sharif continuing to vacillate over a Pakistani withdrawal from Kargil, Clinton grew angry: ‘Did Sharif order the Pakistani nuclear missile force to prepare for action? Did he realize how crazy that was? You’ve put me in the middle today, set the U.S. up to fail and I won’t let it happen. Pakistan is messing with nuclear war.’<sup>138</sup>

In the end, Prime Minister Sharif however agreed to pull back Pakistani forces from Kargil. A Joint Statement called the Washington Declaration was issued at the end of parleys. It provided for the ‘immediate cessation of hostilities, concrete steps to be taken for the restoration of the Line of Control in accordance with Simla Agreement, and resumption of a Pakistan-India dialogue as begun in Lahore in February 1999 for resolving all issues dividing India and Pakistan, including Kashmir.’ The Declaration also expressed President Clinton promise to take a ‘personal interest’ in encouraging an expeditious resumption and intensification of bilateral efforts for resolving all issues including Kashmir ‘once the sanctity of the Line of Control has been fully restored.’<sup>139</sup>

In their statement, Mr Clinton and Mr Sharif said they shared the view that the recent conflict was ‘dangerous and contains the seeds of a wider conflict.’ They also agreed that it was vital for the peace of South Asia that the Line of Control in Kashmir be respected by both parties in accordance with their 1972 Simla Accord. The statement said that Mr Clinton stressed that the best way for the two countries to settle their differences, including Kashmir, was to continue the direct talks that began when their prime ministers met in Lahore in February.

Responding to the Clinton-Sharif accord, an Indian statement read that ‘Our US interlocutors have informed us that ‘concrete steps’ referred to in the statement mean withdrawal by Pakistan of their forces from our side of the Line of Control in the Kargil sector.’ It further said that ‘only after withdrawal is completed will other contemplated steps be initiated.’ India said that its ‘military aggression’ is making ‘steady progress’ and will continue ‘with full force until aggressors are cleared out.’<sup>140</sup>

On July 9, a meeting of the Defence Committee of Cabinet (DCC) was held and it was agreed upon to appeal to the Kashmiri fighters ‘to help resolve the current

Kargil situation and to provide an opportunity to the international community to play an active role for realisation of the legitimate aspirations of the Kashmiri people and to promote peace and development in South Asia.<sup>141</sup> By July 14 Pakistan-backed forces started withdrawing from their positions which were then taken over by the advancing Indian army.<sup>142</sup> Pakistan withdrew the last of its troops from Kargil on 16 July 1999.

Strobe Talbott, who was then the US deputy secretary of state, describes how American pressure on Pakistan led to the diffusion of the Crisis. He notes: 'In all these dealings, [we] put the blame squarely on Pakistan for instigating the crisis, while urging India not to broaden the conflict.'<sup>143</sup> Nor did China provide Pakistan any comfort when Prime Minister Sharif and Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz paid an emergency call on Beijing in mid-June.

This was not the outcome Pakistan expected. Talbott's comment that the US tried to dissuade India from broadening the conflict was consistent with Pakistan's initial assumptions, but in the end played a less powerful role in the outcome of Kargil than did the US pressure on Pakistan to reverse its initial provocative action. The fear of nuclear escalation worked against Pakistan, not for it.

Not only did Pakistan not find enough support at the international level, there was also strong condemnation of Pakistani behaviour in important international forums. For example, the G-8 considered the 'infiltration of armed intruders' as 'irresponsible' and squarely condemned Pakistan for initiating the crisis.<sup>144</sup> Similarly, the EU openly criticized Pakistan and called for 'the immediate withdrawal of infiltrators.'<sup>145</sup> The only international solace for Pakistan's position on Kargil situation came from the Muslim world. The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in its meeting of the foreign ministers of the member countries endorsed Pakistan's stance on the ongoing regional tensions.<sup>146</sup>

Washington publicly depicted Pakistan as the instigator, with administration spokesman declaring that it was for 'Pakistan to figure out how to restore the status quo ante.' In a rare break from precedent, US officials also made public the substance of President Clinton's message to Sharif in a phone conversation on June 14. In this he indicated that no progress was possible until 'Pakistan pulled out its forces from the Indian Zone of Kashmir'. Two letters from Clinton to Sharif in June also left little doubt about the seriousness of Washington's message and the oblique warning that Islamabad had a narrow window in which to respond.

The de-escalation thus came as result of forceful US mediation. According to the Kargil Review Committee Report ‘there was little left from which to withdraw’ when the withdrawal of Pakistani forces started.<sup>147</sup> Some Indian sources have even claimed that by the time of Sharif’s crucial meeting with Clinton, the Indian army had cleared about 80% of the area.<sup>148</sup> Musharraf however, claims that by July 4, India had achieved ‘some success’ but it was ‘insignificant’. According to Musharraf Pakistan army had lost ‘some ground in the Dras, Battalik, and Shyok positions, while the Kaksar and Mushko ingresses remained untouched.’<sup>149</sup> Whereas according to one independent observer, by the time of withdrawal the Indians had been able to dislodge only 12 out of the more than 130 posts.<sup>150</sup> As far as number of casualties on both sides is concerned, it is generally believed that around 1714 Indian soldiers were killed during the war, while around 772 Pakistani soldiers died.<sup>151</sup>

Pakistan’s army did not accept Prime Minister’s decision whole-heartedly. In its eyes, the political leadership capitulated too early. According to Musharraf, ‘Our troops were fully prepared to hold our dominating positions ahead of [a] watershed.’ Commenting on Clinton-Sharif talks, he says that ‘in truth, it was no negotiation at all. Sharif agreed to an unconditional withdrawal.’ Describing Indian military gains on July 4 as ‘insignificant’, he regards the Kargil operations as ‘successful’ while pointing out the ‘political mishandling that had caused so much despair.’ While resenting the decision of the political leadership, he says that ‘I am ashamed to say, our political leadership insinuated that the achievements of our troops amounted to a “debacle.”’<sup>152</sup>

The United States was not only a mediator in the Kargil conflict but also a partial one. It clearly came out in favour of the Indian position and helped it in hastening the conclusion of the episode. The mediatory nature of the US role was thus disguised only to appease Indian concerns. The United States adopted such a stance owing to the Indian sensitivities who claimed that the acceptance of the US role towards the resolution of the Kargil conflict does not impinge upon their long-held stance that India-Pakistan relations must be managed free of outside interference.

Whereas the United States was genuinely interested in pacification of the regional tensions owing to its fears of nuclear catastrophe, its involvement in Crisis was mainly guided by its growing interests in the region. Kargil also helped to advance Clinton Administration’s agenda of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. During his visit, in his address to the Indian Parliament, Mr. Clinton appealed to the

‘great nation of India’ to give up its nuclear arsenal. Vajpayee however refused to renounce the country’s nuclear arsenal. Similarly, New Delhi also brushed aside efforts by Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott to persuade it to join international talks aimed at ending the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

In the post-Cold War era the United States had shown more interest in Asia as compared to Europe and sought close partnerships with important countries of the area.<sup>153</sup> In this regard it has sought a close economic and political relationship with India in the South Asian region. Thus, the most important factor shaping US policy towards India-Pakistan conflict has been the phenomenon of the evolving US-India strategic partnership during the period. The post-Cold War era has witnessed a steady trend of the development in the US-India strategic partnership.

Washington’s pro-India stance during Kargil was recognition of India being an important country in its foreign policy goals in the post-Cold War era. Kargil depicted the emergence of India as the key state in the region in its evolving strategic calculations in the area. Kargil provided the US with an opportunity to improve its relations with India and accelerated the process of rapprochement between India and the United States. As expressed by Jaswant Singh, India’s External Affairs Minister, the US support to India on Kargil was recognition ‘of the altering geostrategic contours in the region.’<sup>154</sup> He said, ‘The legacies of the past continue to occupy space in our thinking, I do believe that, if properly handled, there is a great future for this relationship between two of the largest democracies of the world.’<sup>155</sup>

The US tilt towards India was more apparent following Kargil and Pakistan suffered a sort of diplomatic isolation in the important capitals of the world, more specifically in Washington. Soon after the Kargil episode, the State Department’s Senior Adviser for South Asia, Mathew Daley, stated in a more blunt way that the days of ‘even-handedness and balance’ in US policy towards India and Pakistan are now over. He said ‘In the past there have been attempts to impose intellectual constructs such as balance or even-handedness on American foreign policy towards India and Pakistan ... Those days are over, if indeed they ever existed.’ He further said that the US relations with India and Pakistan were going to have their own separate vectors, trajectories and velocities and ‘At any given moment, on any given topic, we might appear to be even-handed, but that will be an incidental outcome of a policy, not the objective of a policy.’<sup>156</sup>

## ***Pakistan's Motivations and Objectives***

Historically, Kargil area has always been an important scene in the India-Pakistan military struggle over Kashmir. It was a key battleground during the First Kashmir War. In October 1947, Gilgit Scouts, assisted by Muslim soldiers in the Kashmir state army, waged a successful campaign against the Maharaja forces to 'liberate' the area. The Azad Kashmir Forces later set up their local headquarters in the valley town of Astore for further actions in the Northern Areas. Subsequently, they moved along the valleys and the Indus River capturing more and more territory from the Maharaja forces. In February 1948, these forces besieged and ultimately captured the garrison in Skardu. The town of Skardu later on became an important target of the Indian Army. A combination of the Maharaja's forces and the Indian troops later on made two failed attempts to recapture the Skardu garrison.<sup>157</sup>

In April 1948, the Azad Kashmir Forces moved southward into the Gurez Valley, Kishanganga Valley and Tragbal Pass, and also captured the strategically important Zojila Pass. This later on led to the capturing of the surrounding towns of Kargil and Dras in May 1948. Maj. Gen. D. K. Palit, who was then serving in a nearby Indian unit at Poonch, noted India's concern that 'As a result of the fall of Skardu and Kargil, the Valley of Kashmir was threatened from the north as well as from the east; what is more, the only line of communication between Srinagar and Leh, over the Zojila and through Kargil, was disrupted. Failing rapid reinforcements, it would be only a matter of months before the enemy could walk into Leh.'<sup>158</sup>

As a result, India later on counterattacked with a much bigger force from Srinagar and Leh and the Indian Army was able to regain the control of Dras, Kargil and the Zojila Pass in December 1948. In the end, while India was able to reoccupy the Zojila Pass and the town of Kargil, Pakistani forces were able to defend the town of Skardu.

Commenting on the resolve of the Indian moves in the fight for the area, Alastair Lamb writes that 'The intensity with which the Indians fought to hold Kargil is probably the evidence of the appreciation that this was the vital battle to retain an Indian presence on the Northern Frontier. Kargil dominated the Srinagar-Leh road, for which there was no satisfactory alternative. With Kargil would also have gone the rest of Ladakh.'<sup>159</sup> India thus demonstrated that it was unwilling to accept such an outcome and would retaliate forcefully to vacate any intrusion in this strategically

important area. At the end of these campaigns, the Gilgil Scouts were later on incorporated into the Northern Light Infantry (NLI) becoming part of the FCNA.

Kargil also featured in the Second Kashmir War when, in August 1965, a combination of commandos from the Pakistan Army and local Mujahideen moved across the ceasefire line to stimulate an indigenous uprising in Kashmir, an operation codenamed *Gibraltar*. As part of this operation, Pakistani irregular forces launched an attack on the Kargil area on August 7, 1965 with the aim of cutting the Indian road link between Ladakh and Srinagar.

Also during the 1971 War, India made large territorial gains in this area. Although the 1971 War remained limited to East Pakistan, some activity did take place on the Kashmir front and India occupied about 340.88 sq miles of territory beyond the ceasefire line.<sup>160</sup> It was also due to the strategic importance of the area that India did not want to go back to the CFL position. India's advances in Kargil were, thus, aimed at further securing the vital Srinagar-Leh road from any interruptions by Pakistani shelling from the high positions in the area.

The rationales behind Pakistan's dangerous moves in Kargil are part of an endless debate. As Brian Cloughley, one of the leading experts on the Pakistan army notes, it is doubtful if this rationale will be ever revealed.<sup>161</sup> Cloughley's suggestion that 'the whole affair seemed a good idea at the time, and got out of hand' seems as reasonable an explanation as any.<sup>162</sup>

The whole truth may never see the light of the day and the details may always remain shrouded in secrecy. The controversies in this regard have been further fuelled by the way the Kargil operations were envisaged, planned and implemented as the political leadership of the country openly distanced itself from the whole affair after the de-escalation. The question of the responsibility of the planning and execution of the Kargil operations led to a severe controversy between the ruling civilian government led by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the army chief Pervez Musharraf. However a number of objectives can be inferred from the Pakistani behavior during the Crisis.

Moreover, most Pakistani analysts contend that Pakistan Army's operations in Kargil were affected by what is described as 'mission creep.' According to these explanations, it is said that as the Kargil plan was being put into effect, it became evident to the infiltrating soldiers that India was paying little heed to the region. Thus, as a result, Pakistan's planners found they could advance further than initially

intended. What was supposed to be the seizing and holding of a small number of posts expanded into the projection of force well across the LoC into Indian-held Kashmir, and ultimately the occupation of a 200-kilometer stretch of territory.

It is said that India's failure to guard the area during the winter and therefore to observe the forward movements of the NLI, allowed Pakistan to make significant advances that were much more than initially anticipated. Thus, a combination of 'mission creep' and the battlefield initiative in the absence of any Indian opposition contributed to Pakistan's initial success. It is said that before the incursion began, Pakistan's small number of planners apparently had limited objectives, but opportunity opened the door for expanded operations. Shaukat Qadir, a retired Pakistani brigadier general, wrote: 'The operation was, in my view, not intended to reach the scale that it finally did. In all likelihood, it grew in scale as the troops crept forward to find more unoccupied heights, until finally they were overlooking the valley.'<sup>163</sup>

Thus, once they saw their advantage, ground commanders could not resist seizing the available opportunities, leaving headquarters to adjust its objectives accordingly. Once in the field, it became difficult to stop the field commanders from seizing available opportunities to improve their position. Pakistani analysts thus argue that Pakistan was a victim of its own success, as the forces expanded well beyond the original plan.

However when India discovered Pakistani advances, it escalated vertically and the weaknesses created by the early NLI battlefield success that resulted in its over-extension were consequently exposed. The NLI had been established as a defensive force, and the pull of mission creep led the NLI more into offensive positions. Thus once India counter-attacked it was able to push the NLI back in a number of areas.

Another assumption by Pakistan that turned out to be false was that following the Siachen debacle a belief took hold within the Pakistani military that once ground was lost, it could not be regained without a major offensive.<sup>164</sup> The Kargil planners assumed that India would draw the same conclusion about Kargil and would not mount a major offensive to take back the positions Pakistan had occupied.

Pakistani decision-makers also assumed that, even if they wanted to mount a serious counter-offensive, the Indian army was so entangled in the Kashmir insurgency that it would not be able to respond effectively. They also assumed that India's response would be delayed because bad weather and snow would keep the

Zojila Pass, a key access route between Srinagar and Kargil, closed until June. Another assumption was that the incursion would be detected only in late May or June, and that the onset of monsoons would make India's response difficult in the area. This would enable Pakistani forces to sustain Indian counter-attack until late October, when winter weather would again complicate Indian operations.

All these Pakistani assumptions and calculations did not pan out as desired by its decision-makers. India showed considerable resolve with significant preparations to launch a major counter-attack to reoccupy the Kargil heights. Furthermore, the Zojila Pass cleared in May, much earlier than it does usually, allowing India to bring its heavy weapons to the front quickly. Also the earlier than expected discovery of the Pakistani forces early in May by New Delhi made it possible for the Indian Army to respond before the onset of the monsoon season. Moreover, there could be a possibility, as noticed by the Kargil Review Committee Report, that 'The intruders were perhaps discovered a little too soon and were unable either to reach or firmly establish themselves on the forward features before the Indian army arrived.'<sup>165</sup>

The following sections will discuss the possible explanations of Pakistan's actions in Kargil.

### **Pakistan's Official Position**

Pakistan's official position regarding its operations in Kargil area is that its manoeuvring in the area was a defensive measure aimed at perceived Indian threat of aggression across the LoC. According to General Pervez Musharraf, the then chief of Pakistan's army, the movement towards the Kargil War started when the Pakistan Army 'discovered' the increase in intensity of activities by Kashmiri fighters who were operating along the LoC in the Kargil area.<sup>166</sup>

According to Musharraf, the developing scenario in the area led to the analysis by the Pakistan Army that 'it could possibly be used by the Indians as a *casus belli* to launch an operation' in the areas of Pakistani Kashmir. He contends further that such a perception was strengthened by the intelligence reports received by the Pakistan Army that Indians were planning to conduct some operations in the Northern Areas and 'India appeared on the verge of an attack' across the LoC.<sup>167</sup>

Arguing along the official Pakistani view of the Kargil Crisis, Shireen Mazari stresses that Kargil operations were defensive moves by Pakistan to pre-empt Indian designs for incursions along the LoC and it 'got sucked incrementally into a larger



military operation by India with the latter's introduction of reinforcements, the Bofor guns, and the use of the IAF.'<sup>168</sup>

While elaborating on Indian objectives in attempting to undertake operations in the area, she contends that at the tactical level it was meant to 'occupy dominant heights and protect the vulnerable Dras-Kargil road' while at the strategic level India's objective was to 'coerce Pakistan and the Kashmiri Mujahideen into capitulation on Kashmir, by trying to undermine Pakistan's military capability as well as show the futility of the Mujahideen's military struggle against the overwhelming military superiority of India.' She contends that 'The end being sought here was the acceptance of the status quo on Kashmir, which meant accepting the conversion of the LoC into an international border between Pakistan and India as well as the permanent division and occupation of Kashmir by India.' She argues that 'the planned operation, devised by India, in the area seemed to be one piece of a larger picture and game plan.'<sup>169</sup>

### **Kargil and the Kashmir Dispute**

The Kargil Crisis occurred against the backdrop of ongoing India-Pakistan tensions over Kashmir. Kargil is not an isolated incident but is embedded in the long history of Pakistani grievances toward the Kashmir dispute. Not only was it the scene of the hostilities between the two countries during the Crisis some of the statements of the Pakistani leaders during the Crisis demonstrate a linkage between Kargil and Kashmir.

One objective behind Pakistani operations at Kargil in this regard thus could be the internationalization of the Kashmir dispute i.e. to seek international support for the resolution of the dispute through third party intervention. For a number of reasons the Kashmir issue had been off the international radar screen for almost a decade. Following the 1990 Indo-Pakistani confrontation over Kashmir, little had transpired to support Pakistan's continuing demand for a 'just' settlement, while Pakistan was preoccupied with other foreign policy concerns. First, the US had invoked the Pressler Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act in 1990, seriously damaging US-Pakistan relations and isolating Pakistan. Second, in addition to its falling out with the US, Pakistan had to deal with the aftermath of the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. Faced with a civil war in its neighboring country after the Soviets left Afghanistan in

1989, Pakistan devoted considerable attention to establishing a regime in Kabul that was sympathetic to Pakistan.

Finally, the reports of a planned Indian nuclear test in 1995 and then New Delhi's actual test series in 1998 complicated Pakistan's foreign-policy agenda. Isolated, preoccupied with Afghanistan, and challenged by India's nuclear tests, Pakistan felt that the Kashmir issue was fading from international attention. By the end of the decade, Pakistan's leaders felt that the Kargil confrontation would remind the world that Kashmir was not a settled matter. As Ashley Tellis argues, "Pakistan's military operations at Kargil may well have focused at least as much on precipitating international intervention in support of its claims over Kashmir as they did on securing marginal pieces of Indian territory."<sup>170</sup>

This is the most popular explanation of the Pakistani actions in Kargil, especially among the Indian analysts and contends that by occupying the area, Islamabad wanted to gain a better bargaining position with India on the disputed region of Kashmir.<sup>171</sup> Such explanations contend that Pakistan wanted to gain a bargaining chip, in the form of the Kargil-Drass peaks that threatened the vital Indian Srinagar-Leh highway, to be employed during Pak-India diplomatic negotiations on Kashmir supervised by the key international players.

Such an explanation is supported by a number of statements made by Pakistani leaders during the Crisis. For example, soon after the start of hostilities at Kargil, Pakistan's FO spokesman Tariq Altaf said on May 26, 1999 that 'Kashmir today is a nuclear flashpoint. The solution of the issue does not lie in escalation of brutal repression or in provocative military action but in recognising the wrong done to the Kashmiris and honouring the commitments made to them by India.' He further said, 'We call upon the international community to recognise the serious implications in [the] continued impasse in the Kashmir dispute on account of the Indian intransigence and to engage meaningfully with the process of finding a just and final settlement of the dispute.'<sup>172</sup>

Similarly, on May 27, 1999, as hostilities along the LoC increased, Pakistani FM Sartaj Aziz asked the UNSG to send a special representative to the region. He said, 'being here, he [the special representative] can .... reduce the ongoing tension and this could also lead to an increase in the presence of United Nations military observers.'<sup>173</sup> The letter to the UNSG said, 'India not only refuses to accept any role by the UN in the resolution of the Kashmir dispute but also rejects any third party

involvement which is against the global trend for mediated settlement of conflicts and disputes.’<sup>174</sup>

Similarly, on June 18, the eve of the G-8 meeting in Cologne, Sharif wrote a letter to the leaders of the countries of the group in which he urged the G-8 leaders to ‘play an effective role, collectively and individually,’ for the resolution of the Kashmir issue and for averting a conflict between India and Pakistan. In his letter Sharif stressed that the G-8 ‘should avoid taking a narrow view [of the Kargil crisis] which could encourage India to justify its belligerence.’ Sharif urged the G-8 ‘to adopt a constructive and solution-oriented approach’ in dealing with South Asia’s most serious crisis in 28 years, recognising in this context ‘the centrality’ of the unresolved Kashmir dispute. He stated that ‘Kargil cannot be viewed in isolation from the larger issue [of Kashmir] nor dissociated from the record of India’s past transgressions to alter the LoC to its advantage.’<sup>175</sup>

Similarly, Sharif told the visiting US General Anthony Zinni that the current crisis requires ‘a balanced and constructive approach’ if durable peace is to prevail in the region. According to a handout issued by the Pakistani government at the end of Zinni-Sharif meeting, Sharif regretted that ‘for more than 50 years, the world had evaded resolving the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the United Nations resolutions.’ Referring to India’s repeated violations of the LoC, he recalled Pakistan’s proposals for strengthening the UNMOGIP and stationing of neutral observers on the LoC. Sharif stated that the confrontation in Kargil was symptomatic of the problems that had bedevilled Pakistan- India relations over Kashmir. He emphasised that unless a peaceful solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute was reached in the shortest-possible time, ‘situations like Kargil would continue to erupt, threatening peace and endangering the stability of the region.’<sup>176</sup> The Kargil operation thus can be viewed against the backdrop of Pakistan’s historical quest to correct the ‘injustice’ in Kashmir.

Two tactical objectives, closely associated with Pakistani ambitions in Kashmir, can also be discerned; firstly, by ‘stirring up’ instability along the LoC, it may have wanted to prevent the formation of any consensus that may lead to the legitimization of the division of Kashmir on a permanent basis along the LoC. This could be a factor in the light of the stalemate in the ongoing post-tests India-Pakistan negotiation process. Pakistanis had been disappointed by the remarks of Vajpayee that

‘only [the] history of Kashmir can be discussed, not the geography.’ Sartaj Aziz, during his June 12 visit to Delhi, hinted at the possibility of redrawing of the LoC.

Secondly, it may have been an effort to give a boost to the ongoing insurgency in Kashmir. By highlighting the Kashmir dispute and using the cover of Mujahideen in its operations, it might have been aiming to give a boost to the armed resistance movement in Kashmir. It could have been an effort on the part of Pakistan to “thin out” the Indian armed forces across a broader swath of Kashmir, so as to give more space to the Kashmiri insurgents in the Valley of Kashmir—the heart of the insurgency. The massive Indian presence in the Valley had put such a dampener on insurgent operations that the guerrillas had found it increasingly difficult to mount effective assaults against Indian assets.<sup>177</sup>

The Kargil operations may have thus been initiated to give stimulus and support to the resistance movement in the Indian-held Kashmir, boost its morale, and ‘to release pressure on the oppressed Kashmiris by forcing a large portion of Indian security forces to look outwards.’<sup>178</sup> In fact in the post-Kargil period, there has been a considerable upward trend in the armed struggle of the Kashmiris and the region witnessed a continuous rise in the casualties of both the Indian army and Kashmiri fighters in the years following the Kargil Crisis.

### **Kargil and the Siachen Dispute**

Another important rationale behind Pakistani moves in Kargil may have been Pakistani grievances regarding the unilateral occupation of the Siachen Glacier by the Indian Army. The erosion of the LoC for all practical purposes started right after the signing of the Simla Agreement. Soon after the Simla Agreement, India also banned the supervision of the LoC by the UNMOGIP while still retaining its overall presence. On the other hand Pakistan continued with the established arrangement of the supervision of the LoC by the UN body.

The LoC was first undermined militarily when in 1972 the Indian army crossed the LoC in Choribat La sector and established 3-4 posts, 2-3 kilometres apart on the Pakistani side (around 10 square kilometres).<sup>179</sup> Since then there have been frequent incursions by India and Pakistan along the LoC and both sides have been involved in capturing a few square kilometres of area beyond their positions. In 1988, the Indian army established three posts in the unoccupied Qamar sector and, later they increased these to twelve posts, thus capturing about 33 square kilometres.<sup>180</sup> Also

reported are the Indian incursions across the LoC around Dras area where they set up the Bhimbet and Marpola posts.<sup>181</sup>

From Pakistan's perspective, India undertook a major violation of the Simla Agreement when it occupied the Siachen Glacier in 1984. Pakistan believes that India violated the Simla Agreement when it occupied the glacier as the Agreement calls for the settlement of disputes between the two countries without resorting to force. Taking advantage of the ambiguity of the LoC beyond NJ9842, the Indian Army occupied the glacier in an operation codenamed as 'Operation Meghdoot' (Cloud Messenger) at a time when Pakistan was pre-occupied with a Sino-US supported war against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Pakistan not only protested this but also responded by launching its own military operation and moved its forces into the area. Although Pakistan was unable to dislodge Indian forces from the area, it was able to block Indian advances further to south by stationing themselves at Gyong La Pass.<sup>182</sup>

From then onward there have been regular clashes between the two armies in the area. Pakistan's army has been trying to push back the Indian forces from the area and has also been trying to interdict the supply lines of the Indian forces that mainly ran through the Srinagar-Leh Highway that also became more vulnerable after Pakistani advances in the Kargil sector. Siachen, thus, became a dispute within a dispute. Regarded as the 'world's highest battleground', it further complicated the Kashmir dispute.

Some of the Pakistani accounts have highlighted the link between Siachen and Kargil. For example, Altaf Gauhar, a well informed journalist and former information minister, emphasises the centrality of Siachen in Pakistan's advances in the Kargil area. He notes that 'The occupation of the strategic hilltops in Dras, Kargil, and Leh has been a major objective of the Pakistan army ever since the Indians occupied Siachen.'<sup>183</sup> However the long gap between Siachen in 1984 and Kargil in 1999 makes the connection between them somewhat far-fetched. However some analysts like Paul Kapur also contend that the plan was devised 'during the late 1980s in reaction to India's 1984 capture of the Siachen Glacier.'<sup>184</sup>

While deliberating upon the Siachen imperative behind Pakistan's Kargil operations, Khan, Lavoy and Clary notice that the military leadership probably reasoned that they could pull off a parallel operation elsewhere along their disputed boundary in Kashmir that would counter India's move and undercut India's ability to sustain its own actions in Siachen. India would then be placed in the same position as

Pakistan. Once Pakistani forces seized territory at Kargil, and controlled movement along Highway 1A (India's main logistical supply route to Siachen), India would not be able to regain it without a major offensive. In Islamabad's analysis of the situation, New Delhi would be caught in the same bind and would not mount a major offensive to regain the lost ground.<sup>185</sup> Thus, Kargil can be viewed as an effort by Pakistan to force India to withdraw from Siachen.

### **The Neelum Valley Imperative**

Pakistani actions in Kargil can also be linked to the ongoing military situation in the Neelum Valley along the LoC. There has always been continuous shelling across the LoC by the two countries especially in the Neelum Valley area. These became a regular phenomenon after 1989 when a mass uprising of the Kashmiris erupted against Indian rule. The Indian military started a regular campaign of interdiction of supplies along the Neelum Valley road, especially after 1992. Pakistan subsequently had to build the alternative Laswa and Kiran bypasses.

In 1994, the Indian shelling along the Neelum Valley road was so heavy that it had to be closed resulting in a humanitarian crisis in the area. The extent of the civilian suffering was so extensive that UNMOGIP took up the matter with the UN headquarters in 1997/98, seeking the running of humanitarian convoys to provide relief to the besieged population of the area. Pakistan had also started responding to the Indian shelling in the Neelum Valley area in the Dras-Kargil area where it attempted to interdict the Indian supply line to the Siachen area.

Robert G. Wirsing asserts that 'There is great likelihood, in fact, that Pakistani expectations of military gains from Kargil were quite modest, that the main motivation was simply to bring relief to Pakistan's exposed beleaguered transport routes along the Line-of-Control by bringing India's own primary route with range of Pakistani artillery, and that Pakistani decisions were caught significantly off guard by the effort's stunningly swift escalation in to a conflict.'<sup>186</sup> However it can be concluded safely that whatever the tactical or strategic objectives behind Pakistani moves in the Kargil area, these had occurred against the backdrop of the long-standing dispute between the two countries over the territories of Kashmir.

## **Conclusion**

The Kargil Crisis started as a result of unexpected Pakistani moves along the LoC in the summer of 1999 which dangerously escalated to the brink of an all-out war between India and Pakistan. As noticed by Joseph Cirincione, the Kargil conflict ‘destroyed any illusions that the overt nuclear postures of the two countries would act as a restraint on military conflict.’<sup>187</sup> Thus, despite the presence of now overtly declared nuclear capabilities in the region, Islamabad went ahead with its plans along the LoC. On the other hand, India not only refused to digest Pakistani incursion but also decided to expand the war incrementally despite the presence of nuclear weapons on both sides. Moreover the Crisis also witnessed dangerous nuclear signalling from both sides.

The developments during the Crisis amply demonstrated that India and Pakistan were not prepared to back down from escalating the Crisis. During the Crisis, both sides did escalate and were prepared to escalate further. India escalated vertically to the point of attack, and horizontally at sea and on land, while Pakistan also conducted counter-moves. There was a competition in risk taking as both sides tried to force the other to back down. India was not deterred from this military escalation by Pakistan’s demonstrated nuclear capability. As noted by Neil Joeck, ‘at Kargil both sides were willing to compete and were reluctant to concede ... In the Kargil confrontation, the availability of nuclear weapons on both sides did not prevent war but did increase the potential for a catastrophic outcome.’<sup>188</sup>

Occurring largely against the backdrop of the Kashmir dispute, the de-escalation of the Crisis came as a result of the intervention of the United States which played an active open as well as behind-the-scene role during the Kargil War. The United States refused to endorse Pakistani actions in Kargil and brought huge pressure to bear on Pakistan to withdrawal its forces from the occupied area. The behaviour of India and Pakistan during the Crisis thus showed that the two countries were prepared to fight a war despite the presence of nuclear weapons in the region.

## **Chapter 4**

### **The 2001-02 India-Pakistan Crisis**

#### ***Introduction***

After Kargil, India-Pakistan relations witnessed a second major crisis during 2001-2002, again testing optimistic views about nuclear deterrence in the region. ‘The 2001-02 India-Pakistan Crisis’ (the Crisis) developed at a time when there was significant change in the regional and international environment as a result of the September 11 attacks in the United States.

The Crisis ensued as India escalated regional tensions on the lingering Kashmir dispute in the wake of the terrorist incidents of October 1, 2001, December, 13 2001 and May 14, 2002. This led to an unprecedentedly long military and diplomatic standoff between India and Pakistan. For almost a year the armies of the two countries stood almost eyeball to eyeball and on more than one occasion the two countries came dangerously close to the brink of all-out war during the Crisis. The Crisis came to an end as a result of the intense engagement of the international actors chiefly led by the United States.

This chapter will first discuss regional and international developments in the post-Kargil period. In this regard it will first discuss post-Kargil tensions in the region. This will be followed by an elaboration of the transformation of US-Pakistan relations in the post-9/11 period. The following sections will outline the dangerous escalatory moves by the two regional players during various phases of the Crisis, including a section that will detail the dangerous nuclear moves and signalling undertaken by India and Pakistan during the crisis. The chapter will then elaborate on the role played by the United States in diffusing the regional tensions. This will then be followed by an analysis of the Indian objectives in initiating the crisis. It will then conclude by showing the relevance of the discussion in the chapter with regard to the overall argument of the study.

#### ***Post-Kargil Regional Tensions***

Though India confirmed on July 16 that Pakistan had vacated the Kargil heights, the tensions between the two countries however remained at a considerably



high level. A major escalation occurred barely three weeks after the fighting at Kargil had subsided. India shot down an Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) surveillance aircraft (Atlantique) of Pakistan Navy on August 10, 1999, with an air-to-air missile in the disputed marshy Sir Creek area, which gets covered by water gushing in from the Arabian Sea during high tide, along the international border between the two countries. The attack killed all 16 officers on board. The incident led to renewed tensions between the two countries and Sharif described it as 'barbaric' and 'naked aggression' during the funeral services of the officers killed during the incident. He said that 'it will further complicate things and cast [a] shadow over the peace process between the two countries.'<sup>1</sup> Pakistan also accused India of collecting the debris of the plane from inside the Pakistani territory.<sup>2</sup>

The tensions over the Atlantique incident had barely subsided when another event shook the regional environment and international attention turned again towards Kashmir. On 24 December 1999 a group of armed men hijacked an Indian Airlines airbus flight IC-814 on its way to New Delhi from Nepal. The plane first landed at the Indian airport of Amritsar. The hijackers demanded the refuelling of the plane. Although the Indian authorities did not refuel the plane it was allowed to take off. The plane tried to land at Lahore but the government of Pakistan did not permit it to do so, initially fearing that the country might be linked with the issue. However due to extremely low fuel levels, Pakistan finally allowed the aircraft to land. Lahore airport officials refueled the aircraft and allowed it to leave. The aircraft later landed at Dubai, UAE where the hijackers released some 27 passengers.

The plane then took off from Dubai and finally landed at Kandahar. An unknown militant group, Islamic Salvation Army, claimed responsibility. India claimed that the hijackers were Pakistani nationals, which was strongly denied by Pakistan. The group demanded the release of some militants active in Kashmir. Among them was a Pakistani religious leader Maulana Masud Azhar who had been captured in Kashmir by the Indian security forces. At Kandahar, Taliban authorities, in an attempt to gain international recognition, agreed to cooperate with Indian authorities and took the role of mediators between the hijackers and the Indian government. The Indian government later agreed to release some three persons including Maulana Masud Azhar. The kidnapers later left the plane and disappeared into Afghan countryside taking along with one Taliban official as a hostage.

On the other hand, after assuming the leadership of Pakistan, in the fourth such military coup, General Musharraf reiterated Pakistan's commitment to Kashmir along with some conciliatory gestures towards India. In an interview to *The Hindu*, the first to any Indian journalist and newspaper, he described Kashmir as the core issue affecting India-Pakistan relations. He said, 'We have been trying all kinds of bus diplomacy and cricket diplomacy .... why has all of it failed? It has failed because the core issue was not being addressed .... because there is only one dispute, the Kashmir dispute .... others are just aberrations, minor differences of opinion which can be resolved.'<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, soon after the Kargil Crisis, India reviewed its strategic options so that it would not have to rely on the international community to contain Pakistani moves. One of India's first steps in this regard was to upgrade its contingency planning to cater for the threat of nuclear attacks. India also started taking concrete steps to operationalize its nuclear forces and evaluated the impact of a limited conflict in a nuclear environment.<sup>4</sup>

In the wake of continued tensions between India and Pakistan in the post-Kargil period, the fears of a war in South Asia were highlighted with the preparation of a detailed assessment of the regional situation by Washington known as 'National Intelligence Estimate.' The assessment undertaken soon after the Kargil episode concluded that the likelihood of a war between India and Pakistan which could turn into a nuclear conflict had increased significantly. This led to President Clinton's blunt warning that South Asia was 'the most dangerous place in the world.'<sup>5</sup>

### **The Hizb Initiative**

The regional environment however started improving towards the mid of 2000 when some contacts between the two countries started at the non-governmental level. Certain public sector research institutes and universities were also allowed to have bilateral interactions. The relatively improved situation paved the way for some other substantial efforts to break the regional impasse when some new thinking came up regarding the Kashmir dispute. This was highlighted when an unexpected announcement of a unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir was made by the mainstream Kashmiri resistance group, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), on July 24, 2000.

The move suddenly transformed the regional atmosphere and the HuM later on converted its three day truce into a three month ceasefire and indicated a

willingness to talk to the Indian government without any preconditions. This move by the HuM led to some important activities at the diplomatic level, which in turn led to the start of the back-channel contacts between the Indian government and the All Parties Hurriyyat Conference (APHC).<sup>6</sup> While supporting the HuM move, Pakistan also demanded its participation in the talks. At the same time HuM also insisted that Pakistan should be included to make it a tripartite venture. India however refused to accept the demand.

Despite welcoming the move, India, however, remained unable to benefit from this move and did not enter into serious dialogue on Kashmir. Instead the response to this initiative came in the form of a resolution endorsing autonomy from the State assembly being led by Farooq Abdullah, leader of the pro-India party. On the other hand, India's National Security Advisor Barjesh Mishra stated that any solution emerging from the discussion had to be within the parameters of the Indian Constitution, while HuM and the APHC leaders categorically rejected any solution within the Indian Constitution. As the two sides remained stuck to their positions, the stalemate finally led to the collapse of the ceasefire on August 8, 2000.<sup>7</sup>

### **Vajpayee's Ramazan Initiative**

Hopes of a negotiated settlement were rekindled when another unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir was announced, this time by Indian PM Vajpayee on November 19, 2000, at the advent of the Muslim holy month of Ramazan. New Delhi also announced that if the ceasefire held, it would be willing to resume dialogue with all Kashmiri groups. It also indicated that it would allow the APHC and other resistance groups to travel to Pakistan to have discussions. HuM welcomed the move and also there was a sense of relief among the general population of Kashmir. The APHC leadership also welcomed the move and showed its willingness to engage in the dialogue with the Indian government. The international community also welcomed the move.

Pakistan gave a cautious welcome to the move by the Vajpayee government based on its experiences of the fate of the previous move of July 2000. Pakistan accepted the declaration as an interim step that could lead to a dialogue. Just as the international community appreciated Vajpayee's Ramazan offer, Pakistan's response of 'maximum restraint' was also welcomed with somewhat similar enthusiasm at the international level. In order to give momentum to this initiative, Pakistan announced

on 2 December that apart from having withdrawn some of its forces from the LoC, it would observe 'maximum restraint' on the LoC.

The government of Pakistan also gave an important concession this time when it agreed to be excluded from the talks 'in the initial stages' and would wait for the ground to be prepared through these discussions for its eventual participation in the dialogue. Pakistan underlined that it was flexible on the issue but reiterated at the same time that no durable solution to the Kashmir problem could be achieved without tripartite talks between India, the Kashmiris, and Pakistan.

The process, however, started losing its credibility with the passage of time as India failed to come up with any plan of settlement that could satisfy the Kashmiri populace and the other parties to the dispute. Instead, the relative peace during these months was used by the State government of Farooq Abdullah to consolidate its hold by holding (local bodies) elections. The APHC seriously objected to the holding of the panchayat elections which led to another addition to the history of rigged elections in Kashmir. The ceasefire was later twice extended by the Indian government however without any political breakthrough and remained in place till the end of May 2001.

## **The Agra Summit**

The most publicized peace initiative in the post-Kargil period was however the Agra Summit between Musharraf and Vajpayee on July 15-16, 2001. It occurred when there was a sudden policy shift in India resulting in an invitation to Musharraf on May 24, 2001, to visit India. The invitation was a complete turn-around of India's policy pronouncements since October 1999, whereby India had consistently maintained that it would not deal with a military government of Pakistan which had come to power by unconstitutional means, overthrowing an elected prime minister. Attracting huge media attention similar to that of Vajpayee's visit to Lahore, the initiative was also strongly hailed by the United States and other major powers.

The proposed summit gave a major fillip to the hopes of successful negotiations on major issues between the two countries and aroused great expectations regarding the normalization of the relations between the two countries. In his articles 'Musings from Kumarakom' where could be seen as the genesis of the new thinking in India regarding its relations with Pakistan, Vajpayee not only talked of his personal desire to seek 'innovative approaches' toward the Kashmir dispute but

also clearly stated that ‘India is willing and ready to seek a lasting solution to the Kashmir problem. Towards this end, we are prepared to recommence talks with Pakistan at any level, provided Islamabad gives sufficient proof of its preparedness to create a conducive atmosphere for meaningful dialogue.’<sup>8</sup> On May 23, New Delhi sent a formal letter of invitation to Musharraf for a visit to India to hold talks with Vajpayee on ‘all outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir.’

Islamabad positively responded to this offer of top-level talks and accepted the invitation a week later emphasising the need for the two sides to ‘do their utmost to overcome the legacy of distrust and hostility, in order to build brighter future for our people.’ These moves created high hopes in Pakistan regarding the success of the summit. Musharraf also elevated himself and assumed the presidency giving a signal to the government of India that he was coming to India with full authority to negotiate on Kashmir. His decision to travel to India was widely endorsed by public opinion and also the rightist parties of the country. This was highlighted by his consultations that he held with all the political parties on June 24.

It was under the full gaze of the global media that Musharraf visited India. During his visit the two leaders held several exclusive meetings and recognised the need to transform the historic confrontation between the two countries into a good neighbourly cooperation. During his visit Musharraf also met Indian President Narayanan, Congress Party leader Sonia Gandhi, the APHC leadership and the Indian media leaders. Despite high hopes attached, the summit ended in a hopeless way when even a joint declaration could not be agreed upon. The summit failed to break the ice and the two sides remained stuck to their traditional position on the various disputes.

### **The Post-Agra Scenario**

After the failure of Agra summit, the region continued to witness a tense relationship between the two countries. However some peace initiatives and gestures of goodwill were also seen in the region during the months leading up to the fateful events of 9/11. For example, Musharraf formally invited Vajpayee to visit Pakistan for second round of summit talks through a letter in July 2001 which was accepted by the Indian Prime Minister.<sup>9</sup>

Similarly, Indian FM Jaswant Singh remarked in a debate on Agra Summit in Lok Sabha that ‘The caravan of peace is in motion. The dogs of war cannot deviate

(sic) this process.’<sup>10</sup> Also Pakistan and India held their first talks on the sidelines of a SAARC meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka on August 10 after the Agra Summit failed to end a deadlock over the Kashmir dispute. The foreign secretaries of the two countries discussed mutual tensions and vowed to build ‘trust and confidence’ in their 75- minute closed-door talks and described these as ‘friendly and very useful’ in building on the process begun at the Summit.<sup>11</sup>

Indian Home Minister, L. K. Advani reiterated on August 19 that Vajpayee would visit Pakistan to pursue peace talks whereas India’s influential newspaper *The Hindu* expressed hopes of a Vajpayee-Musharraf meeting in New York on the sidelines of UN General Assembly meeting late in September. It wrote that ‘there is enough of an overlap for the leaders to meet in New York and pick up the threads from their unfinished conversation at Agra last month.’<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile Pakistan sent a formal invitation to Vajpayee for a summit on the sidelines of the UN meeting and a spokesman of Pakistan’s Foreign Office remarked that the dates of the New York meeting between Musharraf and Vajpayee had ‘almost been finalized.’<sup>13</sup>

However, despite such a peace gesture, India and Pakistan remained stuck to their traditional positions on Kashmir. In his July 2001 letter to Vajpayee, Musharraf referred to the issue of Kashmir, and emphasized for its early solution. He said that ‘The path to normalization of relations between India and Pakistan leads through Kashmir.’<sup>14</sup>

### ***9/11 and the Transformation of the US-Pakistan Relationship***

Though not as a direct consequence of Pakistan’s Kargil adventure, the US tilt toward India after Kargil was more apparent following Kargil and Pakistan suffered diplomatic isolation in the important capitals of the world, most crucially in Washington. After the Kargil episode, State Department’s Senior Adviser for South Asia Mathew Daley had stated in a blunt way that the days of ‘even-handedness and balance’ in US policy towards India and Pakistan are now over.<sup>15</sup> This pro-India trend in the US policy towards the region was soon highlighted when despite Clinton’s desire of resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan on Kashmir dispute, he remained highly careful regarding the Indian position and its sensitivities on the issue during his visit to South Asia in March 2000. During his talks with Vajpayee, Clinton did not refer to Kashmir as a ‘disputed territory’, nor did he say that the solution to the crisis would have to involve the ‘wishes and aspiration of the people of Kashmir.’ He

did not even refer to Kashmir during his address to Indian parliament. Also there was no mention of Kashmir in the 'vision statement' that he signed with the Indian Prime Minister.<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, Clinton's demeanour and public pronouncements in Islamabad were more like admonition. In Islamabad, he merely gave a four-point formula for the immediate normalisation of the situation in South Asia, namely, respect for the LoC, restraint and giving up violence on the LoC, the restoration of dialogue, and restraint on military posturing rooted in nuclear and missile weaponization. In his televised address, he said that democracy must be restored and Musharraf must take steps to control the insurgent groups, based in Pakistan, whose fighters were crossing the LoC to fight in Kashmir. Fully endorsing India's stance he said that Pakistan 'must help create conditions that will allow dialogue to succeed.' He said that the Lahore Declaration is the right road for Pakistan and India for the resolution of Kashmir dispute.<sup>17</sup>

During his visit Clinton urged India to take the lead in starting a dialogue with Pakistan, but also categorically declared in line with the Indian position, saying: 'Let me also make clear, as I have repeatedly, I have certainly not come to South Asia to mediate the dispute over Kashmir. Only India and Pakistan can work out the problems between them.'<sup>18</sup> The convergence in the US-India world view during the period was also highlighted by the Indian reaction to the US decision to abandon the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2001 in its quest for national missile defence. Whereas many European countries expressed their dismay, India was quick to give a hand of support to the United States.<sup>19</sup>

The events of 9/11 however brought important adjustments in the US policy towards South Asia whereby it now sought close cooperation with Pakistan to attain its objectives in Afghanistan. The attacks radicalized American apprehensions regarding the threat of international terrorism and the United States declared 'international terrorism' as the biggest threat to its security interests in world. The 'Bush doctrine' aimed at a global 'war against terrorism,' and the United States identified Al Qaeda as the core organization behind international terrorism. Putting the responsibility of the 9/11 attacks on Al Qaeda, the United States accused the Taliban regime in Afghanistan of sheltering its leadership. It asked the Taliban government of Afghanistan to hand them over to the United States. The diplomatic failure in this respect led to the US attack on Afghanistan.

The post-9/11 developments completely altered the regional and international context of Pakistan's foreign policies as Afghanistan once again became an important focus of the US foreign policy. Pakistan had close relations with the Taliban regime and was the only country that recognized it. The United States demanded Pakistan not only to sever its links with the Taliban regime of Afghanistan but also asked for unrestrained help in making its operations in Afghanistan a success.

This resulted in immense US pressure on Pakistan because of its close relations with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. On 12 September, President George W. Bush called for a 'monumental struggle of good and evil' and subsequently Washington demanded full cooperation from Pakistan in this regard. Pakistan thus became the focal point of US war against terrorism. The pressure on Pakistan to cooperate with the United States was highlighted when the US NSC Principals Committee, on 13 September, 'concluded that if Pakistan decided not to help the United States, it too would be at risk.'<sup>20</sup>

On 13 September, US Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, summoned the ambassador of Pakistan along with the Director General of ISI who was then on a visit to Washington. They were conveyed a list of seven steps that the United States wanted Pakistan to take. Pakistan was asked to make a clear choice. The country was told that there were no half ways as 'The future starts today' and Pakistan was either with the US or not. Pakistan was presented with seven key US demands. These seven steps required full cooperation with the United States regarding its future plans for Afghanistan and the Al Qaeda hide-outs over there.

In response to the post-9/11 US demands, Islamabad decided to align itself with the US war against terrorism and offered support to US operations in Afghanistan. Despite immense public outrage as a result of cooperating in an attack against a fellow Muslim country, Pakistan decided to join the international coalition against terrorism and gave a 'prompt and generally positive responsive' to the US demands.<sup>21</sup>

As Pakistan conveyed its willingness to cooperate, it acquired an important position in the US foreign policy calculations. Being a 'frontline state against communism' during the 1980's, Pakistan now became a frontline state against 'international terrorism.' As a reward for its 'support' in Afghanistan, Pakistan was offered significant economic and military aid. A number of sanctions on Pakistan were removed and it again started getting military supplies from India. In the course



of time the country was also declared as a 'major non-NATO ally' of the United States providing Islamabad with additional access to US weaponry.

Pakistan's post-9/11 decision to align itself with the United States was mainly dictated by its concerns regarding India and Kashmir. India's prompt offers of help had complicated Islamabad's security landscape. Given the already existing strategic cooperation of India with the United States, New Delhi had the highest hopes for a pro-Indian American role in the region. Soon after 9/11 attacks, India quickly offered its military bases to the United States for any of its military operations in the region. India was so forthcoming in its offers that it even surprised the US diplomatic staff in Delhi. The US Embassy had to seek written clarifications on the Indian offers of unstinting military support and to which it found an affirmative answer.<sup>22</sup>

Pakistan didn't want India to be the sole ally of the United States in the region as that could have devastating consequences for its key national interests. By joining the US-led coalition, it wanted to keep Kashmir out of the scope of the US war against terrorism and also perceived an opportunity in this new alliance to enlist the US support for the resolution of the dispute and to bring the dispute back on the world stage.

This was highlighted when President Musharraf, explaining Pakistan's shifts in its Afghan policy, said that Pakistan's existence, its economic revival, its defence of nuclear installations and the Kashmir cause were the four critical concerns that had made him extend support to the United States. He said 'I will defend my country first, then comes anything else.' He said that the nation was passing through the most critical phase since 1971 and 'Our decision will have far-reaching consequences for the country. Any wrong decision can spell disaster for the country's existence and jeopardize its critical concerns, including nuclear installations and [the] Kashmir cause.'<sup>23</sup> Pakistan thus was not only able to overcome its post-Kargil diplomatic setbacks successfully by agreeing to provide complete support to the United States in its war against terrorism, it also could respond to India's moves with greater confidence and remain firm on Kashmir.

## ***The Course of the Crisis***

### **Prelude to the Crisis: Rising Regional Tensions after 9/11**

The relations between Pakistan and India started deteriorating following the 9/11 attacks. Soon after 9/11 India hardened its position vis-à-vis Pakistan and put all sorts of negotiation activities with Pakistan on hold. In a nationally televised address on September 14, Vajpayee while pledging Indian unity with the American people warned his country to ‘gird’ for a possible American response.<sup>24</sup> Deterioration in the regional environment became more evident when Vajpayee announced late in September to discontinue the talks process initiated in Agra and said that India would have to reconsider the acceptance of President Musharraf’s invitation to visit Pakistan later that year.<sup>25</sup>

Pakistani perceptions of the Indian behavior in the post-9/11 period were highlighted when, in a speech to the nation on September 19, Musharraf accused India of dishing out propaganda against Pakistan, day in and day out, and ‘bringing [a] bad name to his country.’ He accused India of hatching a plot to harm Pakistani interests in the changed regional and international environment and warned New Delhi to ‘lay off.’<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Nations Munir Akram remarked while addressing the UN General Assembly’s debate on international peace and security that India was exploiting the war against terrorism in Afghanistan to embark upon a course of ‘adventurism or blackmail’ against Pakistan. He called on the international community to dissuade India and for it not to exploit the current situation by launching ‘pre-emptive strikes’ against Pakistan in its ‘narrow selfish desire’ to secure concessions on Kashmir.<sup>27</sup>

The regional situation further deteriorated in the wake of the bombings at the Jammu and Kashmir State Assembly on 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2001 in which about 29 people were killed. New Delhi blamed the attack on JeM and demanded from Islamabad that Masood Azhar be handed over to India. The next day Vajpayee wrote a letter of ‘anguish’ to President Bush in which he warned Pakistan that ‘there is a limit to patience of the people of India.’<sup>28</sup> Similarly, the Chief Minister of Indian-controlled Kashmir, Farooq Abdullah, remarked that ‘Pakistan is fully involved in the attack and ‘We will [take] revenge [for] this attack and will not sit idle’ and called for a war with Pakistan.<sup>29</sup>

Shortly after on October 3, Indian Home Minister L. K. Advani visited Srinagar. Putting responsibility of the attack on Pakistan, he asked Islamabad to hand over Masood Azhar to India. He said that although India had 'a measure of understanding' for Washington's reliance on Pakistan to go after Mr. Bin Laden, 'For the common Indian, terrorism is associated with Pakistan.' He further said that 'For him and the government of India also, Pakistan is a terrorist state.'<sup>30</sup> In other remarks, G. Parthasarathy, a career diplomat who had retired a year earlier as India's high commissioner to Pakistan, said, 'If the United States can travel thousands of miles to take out terrorist camps, I don't see why India shouldn't do so when our cities are bombed and our legislatures attacked.'<sup>31</sup>

In its response to the Srinagar attacks, Pakistan strongly condemned the attack and a statement issued by the Foreign Office said that 'Pakistan condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.' However at the same time it also said that the act of terrorism was aimed at 'maligning the Kashmiri struggle for their right to self-determination.'<sup>32</sup> The rising tensions in the region were also highlighted when, responding to the Indian allegations, Musharraf accused India of 'trying to draw mileage out of the situation' in Afghanistan and reiterated that Pakistan has the power to defend itself.<sup>33</sup>

In a further move, India also despatched its Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh to the United States and Britain to gain their diplomatic support. During his talks with the US Secretary of State Colin Powell on October 3, 2001, Jaswant Singh demanded that the yardsticks of international terrorism should also be applied to the situation in Kashmir. He also asked the United States to outlaw the group and to freeze its assets, as Washington has with other terrorist outfits since the 9/11 attacks.<sup>34</sup> He also impressed upon the United States that 'Pakistan is part of the problem' of terrorism and not a 'part of solution.'<sup>35</sup>

As Indian rhetoric against Pakistan increased following October 1, Musharraf talked to the Indian Prime Minister on telephone on October 7 in an effort to mellow down Indian anger. It was the first time since Agra that Musharraf and Vajpayee talked to each other. During the 15 minute conversation, Musharraf told Vajpayee that the two countries should not do anything to heighten tensions in the region. He said that Pakistan stood for dialogue while Vajpayee said that the exercise cannot be meaningful if Pakistan remains 'unifocal' on Kashmir. Vajpayee again claimed that the perpetrators of violence had their base in Pakistan and that Islamabad had done

nothing to capture them. Musharraf in turn promised to 'inquire' into the presence of any such groups.<sup>36</sup>

On October 11, Vajpayee warned that operations against 'terrorists' could be stepped up in Kashmir and that New Delhi would take decisions after due deliberations and wide-ranging consultations.<sup>37</sup> It was interpreted in Pakistan that India might consider military action against the alleged terrorist camps in Azad Kashmir. Responding to this Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesman said that 'Pakistan desires settling of all issues through peaceful means. However, Pakistan's armed forces are ready to face and repulse any aggression.'<sup>38</sup> Although there was no immediate threat of war, the tensions were so high that the United States had to despatch a special envoy, none other than Secretary Powell himself, to the region. He visited India and Pakistan on October 15-17.

A major escalation occurred on 15<sup>th</sup> of October on the eve of Powell's visit when the Indian army shelled eleven Pakistani border posts along the LoC. Two days later, Islamabad announced that its armed forces had been 'put on high alert in view of the forward movement of some of the Indian troops and air force assets.' The Director General of Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) of Pakistan, General Rashid Qureshi, remarked on the occasion that India was seeking to gain attention in the wake of September 11 events but the 'limit (sic) to which Indians are going, I am afraid they will have to face the consequences.' He said that 'we cannot ignore completely that there have been movements of troops in occupied Kashmir, where there are already more than 650,000 troops.' He added that Indian troop movement was far from the ordinary' and there had also been a movement of aircrafts to forward areas where they [Indians] normally do not go.'<sup>39</sup>

At the same time, Pakistani leadership also impressed upon the United States the need to be involved in the resolution of the Kashmir dispute during talks with the visiting US Secretary Powell. Musharraf termed the Kashmir dispute to be 'at the heart of Pakistan-India tensions' during his meeting with Powell. Similarly, during the press briefing after their talks on October 16, Musharraf said that he had briefed Powell about Pakistan's desire to develop tension-free relations with India while emphasising at the same time that the 'normalization of relations would require that the Kashmir dispute is resolved in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people.' He further remarked that he and the Secretary Powell had 'agreed on the

need for the two sides to address this and other bilateral issues with sincerity and with a sense of purpose.’<sup>40</sup>

Although tensions subsided in the wake of Powell’s visit, a war of words started again between the two countries soon after. This was highlighted when Advani vowed during his visit to Siachen late in October 2001 that ‘We will not be looking for terrorists to strike and then reacting. We will follow a proactive policy.’<sup>41</sup> Similarly, on October 21, Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes warned of ‘specific action’ in Kashmir. Without elaborating on details, he said, ‘We are not sticking to only one option and we have some more plans too. I have discussed the operations with senior army commanders and we will make things public soon.’<sup>42</sup>

This led to the counter-statements by Pakistan. In a television interview, while describing resistance in Kashmir as a freedom movement, Musharraf threatened that any ‘Indian military adventurism’ will be paid back in the ‘same coin’ and that we ‘are ready for any eventuality.’<sup>43</sup> At the same time Islamabad also sent a *demarche* to New Delhi on October 23 protesting ‘provocative statements.’ Pakistan’s Foreign Office also called the Indian High Commissioner and sought clarifications on the Indian troop movements across the LoC and reasons behind the tough-talking done by the Indian leadership on bilateral ties.

On October 27, Musharraf renewed his call for the resumption of dialogue in New York during the coming UN summit. He said, ‘It is our desire that the two countries should resume dialogue on the format agreed at Agra.’<sup>44</sup> Similarly, another Pakistani invitation for talks read, ‘We have expressed our desire to resolve all outstanding issues with India, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir, through peaceful negotiations. For this purpose we are ready for a meeting anytime, anywhere and at any level.’<sup>45</sup> India, however, again rebuffed Musharraf’s call for talks. An Indian spokeswoman said that the proposed meeting on the sidelines of the UNGA summit in New York between Vajpayee and Musharraf was unlikely because ‘there appears to be no time for such a meeting.’<sup>46</sup>

Subsequently, threatening statements kept on coming out of India, prompting counter statements from Pakistan, keeping the region in state of precarious peace. For example, on October 31, Vajpayee used a political rally to warn Pakistan not to take India’s patience for granted.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, on November 6, on the eve of the regional tour of the US Secretary Defence Donald Rumsfeld, Pakistan accused India of

launching a heavy artillery and mortar barrage at civilian targets across the Kashmir border.<sup>48</sup>

Responding to Indian allegations, Pakistan again tried to bring the larger issue of Kashmir in to the international limelight. While referring to constant Indian criticism about ‘cross-border terrorism’ during his address to the UNGA on November 10, 2001, Musharraf stressed the need for the resolution of the disputes like Kashmir and Palestine which ‘remain unsettled for decades despite UN Security Council resolutions.’ Accusing India of ‘state-terrorism’, he remarked that ‘The question then is whether it is the people asking for their rights in accordance with UN resolutions who are to be called terrorists or whether it is the countries refusing to implement UN resolutions who are perpetrators of state terrorism.’<sup>49</sup>

At the same time calls from the major international capitals kept on coming for restraint and dialogue between the two countries. The continued tensions in the region were highlighted when in his message to the nation on the eve of Ramazan, Musharraf accused India of ‘conspiring’ against his country and taking advantage of the volatile situation around the international coalition’s battle against terrorism in Afghanistan. He remarked that ‘Our old foe appeared busy in preparing for adventurism against us through various excuses and tactics.’<sup>50</sup> Also reports of heavy shelling and attacks across LoC kept on coming during the period.

It was in such a tense regional environment that the relations between the two countries entered into a fresh crisis. The 2001-02 Crisis or what is also called as the ‘Twin-Peak Crisis’ occurred in two major phases. Kanti Bajpai however describes these phases as two different crises.<sup>51</sup>

### **The First Phase: Dangerous Escalation**

India-Pakistan relations nose-dived toward the middle of December 2001 as a result of a terrorist incident in the vicinity of the Indian parliament, triggering the first phase of the 2001-02 Kashmir Crisis. On December 13, 2001, a few armed men entered the premises of the Indian parliament leading to an armed clash between the intruders and the security forces. It resulted in a few casualties among the security personnel whereas all of ‘the would-be assailants’ on the parliament’s central hall were killed.

The event was dubbed as ‘India’s 9/11’ and the Indian media became full of demands for taking stern actions on the lines of the US response in Afghanistan.

Addressing the Indian nation on television, Vajpayee remarked that ‘This was not just an attack on the building, it was a warning to the entire nation. We accept the challenge.’ He further said that ‘the fight is in the last stage. It will be a do or die battle.’<sup>52</sup> Indian Home Minister Advani also tried to link it with the 9/11 attacks.<sup>53</sup>

The hysteric mood in India was further highlighted when a resolution by the Indian Cabinet stated that ‘we will liquidate the terrorists and their sponsors wherever they are, whosoever they are.’<sup>54</sup> Similarly, the extremist Vishva Hindu Praishad (VHP) leader Ashok Singhal asked Vajpayee to take the fight ‘across the border’ like Israel and ‘Don’t just protest’ while the message of the Hindu militant group Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackeray was ‘take revenge.’<sup>55</sup>

Although no group claimed the responsibility, India quickly blamed JeM and LeT for the attack. New Delhi also accused Pakistan and its ISI for the planning and implementation of the attack and took to the oft-repeated demand of an end to the ‘infiltration’ across the LoC while labelling the Kashmiri freedom struggle as a ‘terrorist’ movement. On the other hand these groups denied their involvement and a spokesman of LeT, Yahya Mujahid, described the allegations as ‘a lie and baseless.’<sup>56</sup> A number of other Kashmiri resistance groups condemned the attack and the United Jihad Council (UJC) chairman and chief of the HuM, Syed Salahuddin alleged that the attack on the Indian Parliament was ‘engineered’ by the Indian intelligence agencies ‘to bracket the Kashmir freedom struggle with terrorism.’<sup>57</sup>

Pakistan condemned the attack and within hours President Musharraf said in a statement that ‘I would like to convey our sympathies to the government and people of India as well as our deep condolences to the bereaved families.’<sup>58</sup> Islamabad denied Indian allegations and offered a joint investigation of the incident. However at the same time, Musharraf hinted that the entire episode might have been an Indian conspiracy to give a bad name to Pakistan as a state supporting terrorism and to divert attention from ‘internal problems’ and to defame the ‘freedom struggle’ in Kashmir.<sup>59</sup> Musharraf said that Islamabad would examine the evidence and act against any group or individual of involvement in the terrorist attacks on Indian parliament if New Delhi provides with the credible evidence, and also remarked that his country would not allow its soil to be used for terrorism. However, cautioning India against adventurism he also warned India against ‘any precipitate action’ and announced that the country’s forces had been put on high alert.<sup>60</sup>

Rejecting Islamabad's call for an independent and joint investigation of the incident, the Indian government issued a stern warning to Pakistan on December 18. During a tough talk in the Lok Sabha, Advani asserted that the attack on Parliament was aimed at wiping out the 'entire political leadership of India.' He claimed that all the five terrorists involved in the attack on the parliament were Pakistani nationals and that 'the assault on the Parliament House was executed jointly by Pakistan-based and supported terrorist outfits, namely LeT and JeM and that these two organisations are known to derive their support and patronage from Pakistan's ISI.' He vowed that the fight against terrorism had reached 'a decisive phase.' He remarked further that Pakistan was 'a product of the indefensible Two-Nation theory' and that it was 'a theocratic state with an extremely tenuous tradition of democracy... unable to reconcile itself to the reality of a secular, democratic, self-confident and steadily progressing India, whose standing in the international community is getting inexorably higher with the passage of time.'<sup>61</sup>

India also announced that it was sharing information about Pakistan's complicity in the attacks with the United States, France, and the UK, among other countries. On December 21, India downgraded its diplomatic relations with Pakistan by recalling its High Commissioner. Pakistan however decided not to respond in kind. Pakistani High Commissioner at New Delhi, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi described the announcement as 'unfortunate' and stated Pakistan's readiness to act against terrorists provided New Delhi furnished Islamabad with concrete proof.<sup>62</sup> President Musharraf described India's decision to recall its ambassador as a 'very arrogant and knee-jerk response.'<sup>63</sup>

Increased war hysteria in India was highlighted when Vajpayee commented that his country was 'well versed in the art of war.'<sup>64</sup> India also unilaterally terminated train, bus and air services with Pakistan and banned over flights of Pakistani aircrafts. The terminated services included some important symbols of the thaw that India-Pakistan relations had experienced in the wake of the Kashmir ceasefire initiatives and the Agra summit including the Samjhauta Express train, which was running between Amritsar and Lahore, and the bus service from New Delhi to Lahore.

On the other hand, Pakistan called for the involvement of the third party in resolving the issue. On December 17, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar accused India of jumping to the 'conclusions without conducting and allowing an impartial inquiry'. He said that if India 'believes that its allegations are right, then



India should take the matters to the Security Council of the UN for impartial determination.<sup>65</sup> Referring to the Indian allegations of the cross-LoC movement of the Kashmiri insurgents, the spokesman of Pakistan's Foreign Office recalled that Pakistan had offered deployment of independent international monitors on both sides of the Line of Control to confirm the Indian allegations but highlighted at the same time that New Delhi had declined to accept the offer.<sup>66</sup>

The situation further deteriorated when India undertook the mobilization of its military. On December 19 India launched the largest ever mobilisation of its armed forces which was codenamed 'Operation Parakram' (valour). India moved its forces, including strike formations, forward to the borders with Pakistan and the LoC in Kashmir, and its air force started carrying out aggressive sorties near Pakistani borders. Some of troops were even pulled away by India from the Sino-Indian border for deployment along the border with Pakistan.

The Indian army units were deployed mainly in the Anoopgarh and Sri Ganganagar areas in the western state of Rajasthan. These units were dug in behind the Indian Border Security Force (BSF). Civilian trains were stopped in the sector, and special trains 'with a large number of troops' left Suratgarh.<sup>67</sup> Faced with the threat of an Indian military action, Pakistan also decided to move its troops to the forward defensive positions and cancelled all leave for its army personnel while putting medium-range missiles on alert. On December 24 India also moved its Prithvi missiles to northern Punjab, thus placing Islamabad within striking range.<sup>68</sup>

In an effort to appease India and to deflect international pressure regarding action against the militant groups, Pakistan moved against the organizations whom India had implicated in the Parliament attacks. On December 24, the State Bank of Pakistan froze LeT bank accounts. Later, about fifty persons connected with these organizations, including Masud Azhar, the founder of JeM and Hafiz Mohammad Saeed, the head of LeT, were arrested in quick succession by the authorities in Pakistan. However, India was not satisfied with the Pakistani measures and it described Islamabad's actions as 'cosmetic.'<sup>69</sup>

Meanwhile India continued to increase pressure on Pakistan and reports came out of India about the possibility of scrapping the Indus Basin Treaty of 1960. The situation became further complicated when India prepared a list of 20 'dreaded terrorists' whom it accused of crimes and acts of terrorism on its soil and asserted that

they were present in Pakistan. It demanded that Pakistan hand over these twenty Indian and Pakistani nationals to New Delhi.

Responding to the Indian demand of handing over of the 20 persons, Musharraf said that no Indian terrorists figuring on the list of 20 were in Pakistan and ruled out the possibility of handing over any Pakistani national accused of carrying out terrorist attacks to India. He however said that ‘action would certainly be taken if credible and satisfactory evidence was provided to Pakistan.’ He also proposed a dialogue to discuss an extradition treaty between the two countries.<sup>70</sup>

On the other hand, tensions continued to escalate between the two countries with more reports of exchanges of fire across the LoC in Kashmir. With the start of 2002, almost one-million Indian and Pakistani troops were facing each other along the LoC and the international borders. The seriousness of the regional situation was highlighted when in a special article published on New Year’s Day, Vajpayee warned the Indian people to be prepared for any eventuality. He said that the only way to stop terrorist attacks is ‘by forcing Pakistan’ to stop cross-border terrorism.<sup>71</sup>

In the wake of the rising tensions on its eastern borders, Islamabad also warned that it might have to shift its forces from the Afghan border where they were engaged in fighting against the Al Qaeda and Taliban elements to its eastern borders with India. On January 1, 2002, the Washington Post reported that the Pakistani high command had decided to pull back up to 50,000 of the nearly 60,000 troops who had been deployed along the rugged frontier with Afghanistan.

There were some hopes of a breakthrough during the SAARC summit at Kathmandu in early January 2002. However no progress could be achieved in the summit as Vajpayee ruled out any possibility of the resumption of dialogue between the two countries. During the summit, Musharraf suggested that ‘The way forward is to make SAARC genuinely potent and through it sink differences, resolve disputes on the basis of sovereign equality.’ At the end of his speech, in an unexpected gesture, he turned to Vajpayee and said, ‘As I step down from this podium, I extend a genuine and sincere hand of friendship to Prime Minister Vajpayee. Together we must commence the journey for peace, harmony and progress in South Asia.’<sup>72</sup> Then he moved towards Vajpayee and offered a handshake to him, to which Vajpayee responded by getting up from his seat and extending his hand to Musharraf.

In response, Vajpayee remarked at the end of his speech that he was ‘glad that President Musharraf extended a hand of friendship .... I have shaken his hand in your

presence. Now President Musharraf must follow this gesture by not permitting any activity in Pakistan or any territory it controls today which enables terrorists to perpetrate mindless violence in India.<sup>73</sup>

Musharraf again offered talks at a news conference immediately after the Summit. Describing the Indian PM as a friend whose friendship he wanted to cherish for a long time, he remarked that ‘we need to see the complexity of the circumstances facing India and Pakistan’ and set out two urgent tasks the two leaders had to carry out. ‘First we must remove the dangerous tensions facing India and Pakistan’ and ‘in the next stage we have to settle all disputes between us.’<sup>74</sup>

Similar expectations of a breakthrough emerged in the wake of the visit of the British Prime Minister Tony Blair to the region at the time which also failed in bringing down the tensions. Meanwhile the situation along the LoC remained tense with continuous reports of shelling along the Line by the armies of the two countries. Five Pakistani soldiers were reportedly killed on January 7 in the area during the shelling.<sup>75</sup>

In the wake of the growing pressure from India coupled with the US nudge, President Musharraf gave an important speech on Pakistan’s national television on January 12. It was expected that the speech would contribute to the lowering of tensions in an important way. In his speech he announced ban on JeM and LeT and vowed to prevent Pakistani territory from being used to carry out acts of terror against India or other foreign countries. He also announced that no organization would be allowed to engage in terrorism in the name of Kashmir.<sup>76</sup>

During the speech, Musharraf remained firm on Kashmir. He declared that ‘Kashmir runs into our blood’ and that there was ‘no question of having any compromise on it.’ He again appealed to international mediation to resolve the regional disputes when he stated: ‘I want to address here the international community, especially the United States, that we are against terrorism and condemn it and now you play a role to resolve the Kashmir dispute.’ He said that Pakistan would continue extending all political, diplomatic and moral support to the people of occupied Kashmir.<sup>77</sup>

Musharraf’s speech received a mixed response from New Delhi.<sup>78</sup> Reaction in India to the Musharraf speech was approving but cautious. It was said that New Delhi would look carefully at Musharraf’s actions in the coming days and weeks before committing itself to resuming talks. At the same time the Indian leadership insisted that when talks resumed they had to be composite in nature and could not be restricted

to the issue of Kashmir. New Delhi emphasised that security and a range of other bilateral matters were equally important and that India would maintain its military readiness in the meantime.<sup>79</sup>

The situation however didn't improve and the Indian military pressure continued unabated. In the wake of the situation, the United States sent Secretary Powell to the region on January 16 to seek fresh consensus between India and Pakistan on the prevalent tensions. The Indian military pressure continued during the later period, however, there developed a gradual lull in the tensions after mid-January 2002 in the wake of the visit of Secretary Powell.

Nevertheless, the threat of war between India and Pakistan remained high. For instance, in a testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency George Tenet expressed alarm when he argued that 'The chance of war between these two nuclear-armed states is higher than at any point since 1971. If India were to conduct large-scale offensive operations into Pakistani Kashmir, Pakistan might retaliate with strikes of its own in the belief that its nuclear deterrent would limit the scope of an Indian counterattack.' He added that 'We are deeply concerned, however, that a conventional war - once begun - could escalate into a nuclear confrontation.'<sup>80</sup>

## **The Tenser Second Phase**

The second and tenser phase of the Crisis started in the wake of the attacks on the Indian army base in Kaluchak, near Jammu on May 14, 2002. About thirty-three persons, mostly civilians, were killed in the attacks. Two organizations active in Indian-controlled Kashmir, the Al-Mansooreen and the Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen, claimed the responsibility whereas LeT denied any involvement in these attacks.<sup>81</sup> India however insisted that the modus operandi suggested that it was the handiwork of the LeT or the JeM or a blend of both.

Quickly blaming Pakistan for the attacks, Indian officials began to issue belligerent statements. A day after the Kaluchak attacks, Vajpayee told the Lok Sabha (lower house of the Indian Parliament) that India would have to retaliate. At the same time Indian Army Chief General Padmanabhan threatened that the time had come for 'action.'<sup>82</sup> Indian Defence Minister, Fernandes also remarked that 'it seems that we are heading towards a war with Pakistan.'<sup>83</sup>

In response Pakistan strongly condemned the attack. However, describing the Indian attitude as being ‘both accusers and judges,’ Pakistan called for an enquiry by a neutral international body into the identity and objectives of the militants who struck in Jammu. Pakistan’s Foreign Office spokesman said that wild allegations of Pakistan’s involvement in the Jammu incident and threats of retaliation by the Indian government were part of Delhi’s plan to divert international attention from the genocide of the Muslim minority in Gujarat.<sup>84</sup>

Kaluchak attacks occurred at a time of the visit of the US assistant secretary of state Christina Rocca to the region. Pakistan drew attention to the fact that, as in the past, this attack had also coincided with the visit to the region of a high level American emissary.<sup>85</sup> Implicit in the Pakistani statement was the suspicion that the perpetrators of the attack wished to sabotage American efforts to bring about a de-escalation of tension between India and Pakistan, a resumption of dialogue and drawback of the armies of the two countries.

On May 17, New Delhi expressed its disappointment over the inefficacy of the US pressure on Pakistan and promised it would take ‘appropriate actions’ against Pakistan. It noted that infiltration into India from Pakistan and the incidence of terrorism had actually increased since Musharraf’s January 12 speech.

India’s Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) which also included the three service chiefs of the Indian army, navy and air force, met on May 17 to consider Indian response to the evolving situation. In this regard, it considered a range of options from diplomacy to force. The military options included the possibility of strikes against militant camps in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, while the diplomatic options included the breaking of relations with Pakistan and the abrogation of the Indus Rivers Treaty.<sup>86</sup>

At the end, the CCS decided to give diplomacy a chance and asked Islamabad to recall its high commissioner. However what is important to note is that India did consider using military option. Moreover it is important to note the reasons that led New Delhi to opt for diplomacy. It was reported that the rationales behind CCS’s preference for diplomacy included: the government felt that in December it may have mobilized the Army too soon, that the Western diplomatic efforts should be given more time, and that the Indian military needed two additional weeks to be ready for an attack.<sup>87</sup> On May 18, India asked Pakistan to recall its High Commissioner from Delhi within a week.

While India, for the time being, chose diplomacy rather than the military option, both New Delhi and Islamabad did make a number of military moves making the phase tense. Soon after the May 14 attack, Pakistan placed its forces on full alert. On the other side, India also placed its paramilitary and border forces under the command of the army while the Indian coast guards were put under the navy, all considered to be standard moves during wartime.<sup>88</sup> The regional situation now became more precarious. Reports started emerging that India was planning of attacks in certain areas of Pakistan where it believed that training camps for the Kashmiri fighters were operating.<sup>89</sup>

An increased threat of war was highlighted by heightened military skirmishes between the two countries along the LoC and the Working Boundary and Pakistan took up a major operation to shift civilian population from the boundary areas in the districts of Sialkot and Narowal along the Working Boundary that were most affected by the Indian shelling.

More violent incidents were also reported in Kashmir. An attack on another Indian army camp in Kashmir on May 19 killed four Indian soldiers.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, two days later Abdul Ghani Lone, a Kashmiri separatist leader, was assassinated by some unidentified persons. India however did not blame Pakistan for that.<sup>91</sup>

Meanwhile the two sides continued to prepare for war. Pakistan deployed its Shaheen missiles (with a range of 750 kilometers) and moved the major part of its strategic reserve corps in Peshawar to the Ferozpur area, and the Indian army was reported to be studying the War Book, a standard procedure undertaken before the war.<sup>92</sup> On May 21, India moved additional fighter planes to the forward bases along the Pakistani borders. It also moved its warships deployed in its eastern waters to the western shores for possible operations along the Pakistani coast.<sup>93</sup>

In the wake of heightening fears of war, Pakistan moved to mellow Indian anger in the midst of growing international pressure. A joint meeting of Pakistan's National Security Council and the Federal Cabinet on May 22 issued a statement that the government will not allow Pakistan's territory to be used 'for any terrorist activity anywhere in the world and no organisation in Pakistan will be allowed to indulge in terrorism in the name of Kashmir'. However, at the same time, Musharraf emphasized that Pakistan will continue to give moral, political, and diplomatic support to the struggle for Kashmiri self determination.<sup>94</sup>

Meanwhile Pakistan also arrested the founder of the outlawed LeT, Hafiz Mohammad Saeed, accused by India of being involved in the Kaluchak attack. Publicly however, it maintained that Saeed had been detained for interrogation about his links to other hardliner Islamic groups and that the move was not connected to Kaluchak attacks.

Temperatures were still rising in India. Fears of an impending war between the two countries further increased in the wake of Vajpayee's visit to Kashmir and Fernandes' visit to forward military posts along the Pakistani border on May 21. Talking to the Indian troops in Jammu deployed along the borders with Pakistan, Vajpayee said, 'Whether our neighbour understands this signal or not, whether the world takes account of it or not, history will be witness to this. We shall write a new chapter of victory.' He further said 'Let's work for victory. Be prepared for sacrifices. But our aim should be victory. Because it's now time for a decisive fight.'<sup>95</sup> On the other hand, Fernandes told Indian military commanders in Rajasthan that a 'strong reply' had to be given to Pakistan and warned them to be 'prepared for any eventuality.'<sup>96</sup>

The tense regional scenario was highlighted when commenting on the evolving situation, Musharraf described the situation as 'grim' while Pakistan's High Commissioner in London warned that Pakistan and India are 'very close' to war.<sup>97</sup> Similarly, Pakistan's military spokesman said that 'Any incursions into Pakistani territory or Azad Kashmir will be responded to and met with full force.'<sup>98</sup>

On May 24, Vajpayee wrote letters to US President George Bush, Russian President Vladimir Putin and British Prime Minister Tony Blair on the tensions with Pakistan and warned that 'New Delhi's patience is running out.'<sup>99</sup> In response to this, Pakistan's foreign minister, Abdul Sattar also wrote a letter to the UNSG and UNSC President and urged the international community to prevail on India to withdraw its troops from borders and enter into a meaningful dialogue with Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir dispute. He wrote, 'The Indian leadership routinely blames Pakistan for every vicious incident inside India and in Occupied Kashmir' and in the wake of the latest Indian threats' we 'call on the United Nations and the International community to use their good offices with India and to advise it to choose the path of dialogue and negotiations as against confrontation to resolve the outstanding issues between the two states, including the core issue of Kashmir.'<sup>100</sup>

Meanwhile, Pakistan conducted test-fires of its five Shaheen-series missiles including the one with over a 2,000-kilometer range sending a clear signal of escalation to New Delhi. On the other hand, India continued to prepare for a military strike and it was reported that the Indian paratroopers were deployed around key defense installations. All military leaves were put on hold and defense personnel were on a seven-day week. Similarly, courses for military personnel were cancelled or postponed, officers of the Territorial Army were recalled and troops at the border were described as ready to go.<sup>101</sup> At the same time, Pakistan also continued to make military preparations. It moved its 10 Corps in northern Pakistan to block the mountain passes through which India could attack Azad Kashmir.<sup>102</sup>

Increasing threat of an Indian attack was highlighted when on May 26 Vajpayee regretted not having gone to war in December 2001. He remarked that ‘we should have given a fitting reply’ the day ‘they’ attacked parliament.<sup>103</sup> The later clarification was equally threatening when it was said that the statement did not mean that ‘we should have struck, but that it would have been better to ... have taken action immediately after December 13.’<sup>104</sup> At the same time, Vajpayee added that the ‘world leaders told India to keep patience while condemning the December 13 attack. But, India won’t follow the same advice now. The world should understand there is a limit to India’s patience.’<sup>105</sup> Responding to that Musharraf also issued a warning when he vowed that ‘We are very capable of an offensive defense. ... These words are very important. We’ll take the offensive into Indian territory.’<sup>106</sup>

In a further move to placate India, Musharraf appeared on television again on May 28. Musharraf’s televised address to the nation was seen as another opportunity to ease tensions with India. During his address, Musharraf announced further steps to curb the activities of the extremist groups and vowed that Pakistan would not allow terror to be exported anywhere. While calling for ‘sanity’ and ‘avoidance of war’ between two South Asian neighbours, he said that ‘nothing is happening across the Line of Control. So whether India accepts it or not, they cannot be the accusers and judges both. We don’t accept that. They have always been accusing us of everything .... there is no evidence, there is no proof.’<sup>107</sup>

However, at the same time he emphasised that ‘We need to address the Kashmir issue.’<sup>108</sup> He blamed India for the tensions and the crisis and asked the world leader to impress upon India to de-escalate, to restart the dialogue, to stop the violence in Kashmir, and to allow the international media and human rights groups to visit



Kashmir to see the 'ground realities' in the state. He also warned India that, if attacked, Pakistan 'will respond with full might', a reference that has a clear interpretation of the use of nuclear weapons.<sup>109</sup>

His speech however failed to pacify the Indians. Dressed in military uniform, Musharraf's speech was perceived as highly provocative in New Delhi. The Indian Minister for External Affairs Jaswant Singh remarked the following day that the address was both 'disappointing and dangerous' and that 'tension has been added to, not reduced.'<sup>110</sup>

There was also little improvement on the ground following Musharraf's speech. Rather, there were reports suggesting that the level of artillery shelling in the Kargil and Siachen sectors was the highest ever since the 1999 Kargil Crisis. There were also reports that Pakistan Army had moved its troops further up in the Poonch, Uri, and Kupwara sectors of the LoC while the local villagers also started vacating their homes.<sup>111</sup>

With the passage of time, India took further escalatory steps and towards the end of May, the war seemed quite likely. An elaborate plan named as Operation Salami Slice, proposed a joint air and infantry attack across the LoC in order to destroy the alleged terrorist camps and started undertaking increased mobilization of its forces.<sup>112</sup> Key military assets were put in position. Senior military officers of India started giving threatening statements to Pakistan publicly. The Indian Air Force deployed several squadrons of fighter aircrafts to its forward bases along Pakistani borders. The Indian Navy's only aircraft carrier, the INS Viraat was also placed on high alert off the coast of Mumbai. At the same time a further increase in the shelling across the LoC was also witnessed.

Late in May there were clear signs of an impending war in South Asia. Pakistan deployed its ground attack aircrafts closer to the Indian borders. Pakistani fears of an Indian attack were highlighted by its flooding of the strategic canal that stands between the city of Lahore and the border with India at Wagah. Meanwhile, Pakistan also moved additional troops from the western border to its eastern border with India 'to reinforce Pakistan troops deployed along the eastern border ... in view of the adverse posture of the Indian armed forces.'<sup>113</sup>

The mounting fears of a full-scale war between India and Pakistan were highlighted more clearly when the United States upgraded its travel advisory urging all the Americans to leave the country. Following the suit, a number of other countries

that included the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and Germany also issued travel advisories to their citizens.<sup>114</sup> Subsequently, over a hundred Western diplomats and their families left India on June 1.

The tensions started lowering down in early June. However the troops of the two countries remained deployed on the borders. It was not until mid-October 2002 that New Delhi announced the withdrawal of its forces from the forward positions.

### ***Indian Objectives and the Escalatory Dynamics***

Since the start of mass uprising in Kashmir, India was putting a lot of effort in terms of men and material to crush the insurgency in Kashmir that was also actively being supported by Pakistan. The post-Kargil period had seen a renewed vigour in the Kashmir insurgency with a rising trend in the violent activities. Also the casualties among the Indian security forces deployed in the area were on rise. The highest number of Indian security personnel killed in any year from 1990 to 1998 was 268 but these figures shot up dramatically in subsequent years.<sup>115</sup> A government statement just before the fateful events of 9/11 said that 360 officers and men from the army, paramilitary and police were killed and about 900 others wounded from January until 15 August during 2001.<sup>116</sup>

In the wake of the rising Indian cost of holding on to Kashmir, India would have perceived a permissible international environment to move against Pakistan in the post-9/11 period. It would have hoped that it will be able to manipulate the US concerns about terrorism and Pakistan's support for the Taliban regime that was accused of harbouring Al Qaeda for advancing its agenda on Kashmir. It was in this context that soon after 9/11, India not only put all sort of negotiation activities with Pakistan on halt but also demanded quickly that Pakistan be designated a terrorist state because of Islamabad's active sponsorship of 'terrorists' in Kashmir.

The Indian strategy in the transformed post-9/11 international scenario was thus to present itself as a democratic 'victim' of terrorism, so that it is perceived in Washington in the same light as the United States perceived itself after 9/11. It was thus in the transformed international environment after 9/11 that India escalated the regional tensions in the wake of the events of October 1, December 13 and May 14.

In an effort to replicate the US actions in Afghanistan in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, India not only built up forces along the Pakistani borders but also appealed for international support to force Pakistan to end its 'cross-border

terrorism' in Kashmir. The brewing thinking in India after 9/11 was highlighted when an Indian analyst while commenting on Indian expectations in the changed scenario remarked, 'What Indians hope and expect is that .... American policy makers become deeply conscious about what happens in Pakistan and translate that into pressure on Pakistan.'<sup>117</sup>

Similarly, another Indian influential analyst and country's former foreign secretary J. N. Dixit hoped that 'The US should be supportive of the steps that India would take to eradicate cross-border terrorism, politically and operationally.'<sup>118</sup> There were also pointed references to the United States and Israel in this regard and it was asked that if these countries could take on the countries that sponsored terrorism, why shouldn't India?

The Indian objectives in initiating the Crisis were not only that Pakistan stops the cross-border movement of the militants but also concedes to Indian position on the future of Kashmir. India hoped that after the United States had successfully been able to force Pakistan to take a U-turn in its Afghan policy similar shifts could be achieved on Pakistan's Kashmir policy in the changed international and regional environment. Describing the Indian demands vis-à-vis Pakistan and the United States, a prominent Indian analyst C. Raja Mohan wrote on December 17 that 'Having got the General to swallow the bitter pill on Afghanistan, it should not be impossible for Washington to administer another one to him.'<sup>119</sup>

Highlighting the escalatory potential of the Crisis, Kanti Bajpai notes, 'Indian actions were based on the assumption that its forces were in a position to "up the ante" at every level of violence and therefore that Pakistan could not count on nuclear weapons to deter India from launching a punitive conventional attack.... and that neither side was particularly attentive to the demands of crisis stability—indeed, quite the opposite.'<sup>120</sup> Similarly, Indian National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra openly remarked that New Delhi came close to using force against Pakistan during the Crisis.<sup>121</sup>

## **The Nuclear Threats during the Crisis**

The Crisis amply demonstrated that India and Pakistan were not solely deterred by the presence of nuclear weapons in the region and were ready to escalate the regional tensions. During the Crisis, the two sides also indulged in overt nuclear posturing and threats. Nuclear threats were conveyed at multiple levels by the

political, military, and bureaucratic leadership of both countries. These were also coupled with the specific actions on the readiness of their nuclear arsenal. Nuclear threats were hurled by the means of flight tests of ballistic missiles, speeches directed to the public and to the armed forces, and press briefings. Although at times the two sides tried to downplay the seriousness of their nuclear talk, such gestures seemed to be aimed more at the international audience in order to deflect international pressure.

The first such act of nuclear posturing occurred in the wake of growing regional tensions in post-9/11 period on October 31, 2001 Indian army commander of Northern Command, Lt. Gen. Nanavatty, highlighted India's preparedness to go to war with Pakistan despite the presence of nuclear weapons when he remarked that 'The nuclearisation of the subcontinent may have altered the situation, but space still exists for limited conventional operations' and that 'we must remain prepared to exercise the military option.' Describing the situation in Kashmir as not 'dissimilar to August 1965 when the second war between India and Pakistan over Kashmir broke out', he threatened Pakistan that 'the objective of reclaiming of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir was achievable.'<sup>122</sup>

As the tensions increased in the wake of the December 13 events, the two sides undertook a number of practical steps that included the deployment of their nuclear capable missiles for possible use as well as the test-firing of such missiles. For example, during the first phase of the Crisis, Pakistan reportedly moved its Hatf-I and Hatf-II missiles into eastern Punjab.<sup>123</sup> Similarly, on December 24 India also moved its Prithvi missiles to northern Punjab, thus placing Islamabad within striking range.<sup>124</sup>

Late in December, it was specifically reported that India's missiles were declared and that Pakistan's missiles had also been activated at a base in Kharian.<sup>125</sup> On January 1, 2002, Pakistan was again reported to have put its nuclear arsenal on high alert. A line of forty-seven railway cars was seen ready to move from Sargodha, where Pakistan apparently stores missiles and warheads.<sup>126</sup>

Both countries now openly referred to the threat of nuclear weapons. The Pakistani foreign minister, Abdul Sattar, announced that Pakistan did 'not seek war, local or general, conventional or nuclear' thus reminding India that conflict could spiral out of control.<sup>127</sup> In a counter-warning, Fernandes threatened that 'We could take a [nuclear] strike, survive and then hit back. Pakistan would be finished.'<sup>128</sup>

The most serious development in this regard occurred when in January 2002 Indian Army chief, General S. Padmanabhan, held a press conference which was unusual in Indian military practice. During his press briefing, which occurred at the peak time of the first phase of the Crisis, Padmanabhan told his audience that the military mobilization was complete and that the Army could remain mobilized for as long as necessary. He said that India's nuclear weapons were ready. Echoing Fernandes, he warned that 'the perpetrators [of nuclear war] shall be punished so severely that their continuation in any sort of fray will be doubtful.'<sup>129</sup>

Fernandes later on tried to downplay the 'uncalled for concerns' caused by the Padmanabhan's observations and remarked that the nuclear issues should not be handled 'in a cavalier manner.'<sup>130</sup> However within two weeks of Fernandes' statement India flight-tested its medium-range *Agni* ballistic missile on January 25, 2002, on the eve of its Republic Day. Considerable publicity was given to the range of the missile - 700 kilometers - with the implicit warning that it was a Pakistan-specific, nuclear-capable missile.

The next nuclear threat emanated from Islamabad during Musharraf's speech on the occasion of Pakistan's National Day on March 23, 2002. During his speech he warned India of an 'unforgettable lesson' if India tried to use force to solve differences between the two countries. The 'unforgettable lesson' was an implicit threat of the use of Pakistani nuclear weapons to counter an Indian conventional attack across the LoC. It was interpreted in New Delhi in the similar way and describing Musharraf's statement as 'childish', Fernandes remarked, while addressing Indian troops along the Pakistani border, that India was a powerful nation and it 'should not be forced to go in for an Afghanistan-style military operation.'<sup>131</sup>

Similarly, on April 6, 2003 the well-known German weekly newsmagazine, *Der Spiegel*, published an interview with Musharraf, quoting him as saying that in the event that pressure on Pakistan regarding the Kashmir dispute became too great, the use of atom bomb 'as a last means of defence' is also possible.<sup>132</sup> Fernandes again described Pakistani statements as 'childish or desperate' and wondered whether Musharraf was aware of the implications of his statement on Pakistan, echoing India's earlier threats of complete annihilation of Pakistan.<sup>133</sup>

Nuclear threats were also issued expressly during the second phase of the Crisis. For example, in response to the increasing threat of attack by India, a senior member of the Pakistani cabinet, Lt. General Javed Ashraf Qazi, remarked on May 22

that Pakistan would not hesitate to use nuclear weapons if its survival was at stake. As Minister for Railways, and a former Chief of the Inter-Services Intelligence (1993-95), Qazi stated that ‘If it ever comes to the annihilation of Pakistan then what is this damned nuclear option for, we will use [it] against the enemy.’ He added that ‘If Indians will destroy most of us, we too will annihilate parts of the adversary. If Pakistan is being destroyed through conventional means, we will destroy them by using the nuclear option as they say if I am going down the ditch, I will also take my enemy with me.’<sup>134</sup>

Similarly the two sides also took important practical steps to enhance the credibility of their nuclear threats. Responding to a media report that Pakistan had deployed the nuclear-capable *Shaheen I* ballistic missiles (with a range of 800 kilometers) on the border, an Indian official was quoted as stating that India’s missile systems had also been in position for some time.<sup>135</sup> Pakistan also conducted test firings of both short and medium-range missiles capable of carrying nuclear weapons on May 25 and 27 while the Indian Foreign Office said in response that it was ‘not impressed’ by the tests.<sup>136</sup>

However in order to alleviate the negative impact on international public opinion, Musharraf, in an interview with the *Washington Post* on May 26, attempted to downplay the threat of nuclear war. When asked to describe the circumstances in which he would consider using nuclear weapons in case of war, he remarked that ‘This is a – it is such a question which I wouldn’t like to even imagine, frankly, that we come to a stage where this is due. But let me give an assessment that this stage will never come...We have forces. They follow a strategy of deterrence. And we are very capable of deterring them...I really don’t think we will ever reach that stage, and I only hope that we – I hope and pray that we will never reach that stage. It’s too unthinkable.’<sup>137</sup> Two days later, Pakistan launched the nuclear-capable *Abdali* short-range (180 km) ballistic missile.

A week later, Pakistan’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, Munir Akram, again asserted his country’s right to use nuclear weapons against India’s conventional superiority. At a press conference in New York on May 29 Akram said that ‘we have to rely on our own means to deter Indian aggression. We have that means and we will not neutralize it by any doctrine of no first use.’ Accusing India of having a ‘license to kill’ with conventional weapons, he asked,

‘How can Pakistan, a weaker power, be expected to rule out all means of deterrence?’<sup>138</sup>

Responding to the Pakistani threats of the use of nuclear weapons in case of war, India’s Defense Secretary Yogendra Narain again emphasised in an interview in early June 2002 that India would retaliate with nuclear weapons if Pakistan used its atomic arsenal. He remarked that both countries were therefore required to be prepared for ‘mutual destruction.’<sup>139</sup> The two countries thus had dangerously come close to war without paying any heed to the dangers of nuclear escalation. As noticed by Pravin Sawhney and V.K. Sood that although the actual objectives of Operation Parakram can be debated, at a minimum, India clearly intended to signal to Pakistan that, nuclear weapons or not, it was willing to go to war to end Pakistani support for militants in Kashmir.<sup>140</sup>

### ***The US Involvement and the De-escalation of the Crisis***

The United States played a critical role in the developments towards the final conclusion of the Crisis. Throughout the Crisis, the United States remained actively involved in the management of the situation and conducted an open and private campaign to encourage India to back down from escalating the situation into an open conflict, while putting significant pressure on Pakistan to act against the militant organizations accused by India of being involved in terrorist activities. The American officials visited the region extensively and active telephone diplomacy was conducted by the US leadership to prevent a military flare up between India and Pakistan. President Bush remained in touch with the India-Pakistan leadership regularly throughout the Crisis and secretary of state Colin Powell visited the two countries a number of times during the period.

### **Rising Regional Tensions after 9/11 and the United States**

The United States became active in managing the regional situation as soon as the regional environment started deteriorating in the wake of the October 1 incident. Reacting to the October 1 attacks on Jammu and Kashmir State Assembly building, the State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said, ‘We strongly condemn the attack in Kashmir’. He further said, ‘India is a key partner in the global coalition against terrorism, and we do believe that terrorism must be ended everywhere.’<sup>141</sup>

Later on during a meeting with the Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh on October 2, Secretary of State Powell termed the attack as a 'terrible terrorist' and 'heinous' act and remarked that 'It is this kind of terrorism that we are united against.'<sup>142</sup> Similarly, while speaking after the talks with Jaswant Singh, Powell said that the United States was 'going after terrorism in a comprehensive way, not just in the present instance of Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden, but terrorism as it affects nations around the world, to include the kind of terrorism that affects India.'<sup>143</sup> He however did not mention JeM in his talks and the group was not also among the terrorist groups whose United States assets were frozen the previous week by the Bush administration.

US worries regarding the developing situation were highlighted when, in response to a question that India might try to take advantage of the prevailing situation in the region and ignite a conflict with Pakistan, Powell remarked 'I don't think that will be the case.' He further said that 'In fact, we have been in touch with both governments and they both realise the volatile nature of this situation and I think both of them understand this is not the time for provocative action, which would cause the situation in the region to become unstable.'<sup>144</sup>

Although there was no immediate threat of war between India and Pakistan soon after 9/11, the tensions were sufficiently high that the United States had to despatch Secretary Powell himself to the region, and he visited Pakistan and India between 15 and 17 October 2001.

In deference to Pakistani concerns, the United States did show some appreciation of the Pakistani position when just before the start of Powell's visit in mid-October, US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told reporters that Kashmir 'is the most dangerous place in the world'.<sup>145</sup> He said that 'the main purpose of Powell's trip would be to ensure that tensions between the two countries do not escalate' and Kashmir would be 'very high' on his agenda.<sup>146</sup>

In Pakistan, Powell had a number of meetings with Musharraf, his cabinet, the ISI chief, and other important Pakistani officials. The day Powell reached Pakistan the LoC experienced heavy Indian shelling on the Pakistani posts causing considerable damage to life and property on the Pakistani side. An official of Indian ministry of external affairs said, 'The time for diplomatic niceties is over' and the Indian army's 'shelling of Pakistani positions across the Line of Control was our message that we are determined to confront and stamp out terrorism.'<sup>147</sup> While reacting to the Indian



actions along the LoC, Powell remarked in a press briefing in Islamabad that ‘We believe maintenance of the Line of Control, exercise of restraint and the avoidance of provocative acts, which could lead to a conflict of any kind, is very important.’<sup>148</sup>

During his joint press conference with Musharraf in Islamabad, Powell pledged ‘a strengthened relationship that will grow and thrive.’<sup>149</sup> Showing an appreciation of the Pakistani position on Kashmir, Powell commented that ‘Kashmir is central point between India and Pakistan’ and called upon the two countries to resolve the Kashmir dispute through dialogue.<sup>150</sup> While in India, Powell held discussion with Jaswant Singh, Advani and Vajpayee, and also signed an agreement between the two countries to counter international terrorism activities.

The impact of Powell’s visit on the regional situation was highlighted when India’s Home Minister L. K. Advani, while commenting on the possibility of any ‘hot pursuit’ against ‘terrorists’ into Pakistan areas, remarked that ‘Not now. At this moment we are not thinking of it. At this point of time, we look forward to this phase of the global battle against terrorism [US campaign in Afghanistan] succeeding.’<sup>151</sup> Similarly, at the end of his tour to the region, Powell remarked that ‘I think they are both committed to the campaign against terrorism’ and ‘obviously there is tension between India and Pakistan’ but both were ‘anxious to get the dialogue started. I will try to be helpful in that regard.’<sup>152</sup>

The United States however showed a more appreciation of the Indian position on the regional disputes and remained concerned about the immediate normalization of the regional situation without coming up with any plans for long term involvement in the resolution of any regional dispute including the one over Kashmir. For example, there was no mention of Kashmir in the joint declaration issued at the end of the Bush-Vajpayee summit in November 2001. Similarly, the joint statement issued at the end of the later Bush-Musharraf talks in November 2001 simply said, ‘India and Pakistan should resolve the Kashmir issue through diplomacy and take into account the wishes of the people of Kashmir.’<sup>153</sup>

Later on, Bush told the reporters during a press briefing along with Musharraf that ‘We had a very good discussion on the subject [Kashmir] and I assured the Pakistan President that my country will do what we can to bring parties [India and Pakistan] together to have good, meaningful discussion on Kashmir so that we can come up with a solution.’ However, on the same day, Powell bluntly ruled out any US mediatory role in the dispute during an interview. He said, ‘The two sides have to

settle that. There needs to be a dialogue between Pakistan and India. To an extent, the United States can be helpful in fostering a dialogue but we cannot become a mediator or arbitrator or intermediary.’<sup>154</sup>

## **The Crisis and the Increased US Involvement**

With the onset of the Crisis, the United States became even more actively involved in managing the regional situation. Condemning the events of December 13, the United States called it a ‘brutal assault on Indian democracy.’ Describing the strike on Indian parliament as an attack on all democracies of the world, the US State Department said that ‘We strongly condemn the outrageous terrorist attack on the Indian parliament.’<sup>155</sup> President Bush called Vajpayee and offered FBI help in the probe into the attacks. Similarly, Secretary of State Powell also called his Indian counterpart to convey his sympathies.

Washington however cautioned New Delhi and Islamabad against any irresponsible reactions. Commenting on the evolving situation in the region, Ari Fleischer, the White House press secretary, remarked that India had a right to defend itself against terrorism, but also suggested it should act in a way that ‘does not complicate a situation that is already complicated.’<sup>156</sup> Similarly, Secretary Powell said that the Indian government has a legitimate right to self defence ‘but I think we have to be very careful on this because, if in exercise of that right self-defence, states are going to be at each other, it might create a much more difficult situation which could spiral out of control.’ He highlighted further that President Musharraf is ‘taking action against two organisations that have been tentatively identified as the ones which might have been responsible for this.’<sup>157</sup>

While highlighting the active US involvement in managing the regional situation, the US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, remarked at the Pentagon briefing that the President, the Secretary of State and the others had been working with both governments over the past days. Describing the situation in South Asia between India and Pakistan as ‘difficult and tense’, he said that ‘I suppose we must have had at least one or two calls each day discussing this subject.’<sup>158</sup>

However as no de-escalation seemed in sight even after Musharraf’s pledges to stop any of the material support to the insurgents in Kashmir from the Pakistani territories in his speech on January 12, Washington decided to send Secretary Powell again to the region. While talking to reporters travelling with him, Powell remarked

that 'even the most difficult issues' can be resolved through dialogue. He said that the 'Important thing now is for both sides to make a political judgment that the way out of this crisis is political and diplomatic and not through conflict.'<sup>159</sup>

Although Powell's visit did not completely settle the Crisis, India softened its tone after Powell's visit. The visit, thus, helped to bring the temperature down for the time being. Powell's visit ended with his optimistic observation that he believed that India and Pakistan were pulling back from the brink with actions that would lead to dialogue. 'I leave here very encouraged that we can find a solution to this situation,' Powell told a news conference at the end of his Indian tour.<sup>160</sup> As a result, the next few weeks saw a lull in the crisis. Frequent telephone calls and continuously visiting US officials kept asking Pakistan to do more and at the same time persuading India to show restraint.

As the tensions between India and Pakistan further soared in the wake of the Kaluchak incident, Washington again urged for restraint on both sides. Paul Wolfowitz, the US Deputy Secretary of State said that the United States 'was trying hard to prevent' a war between India and Pakistan and 'I really believe strongly that what President Musharraf is trying to do in Pakistan is hugely important for all of us, including I believe, India.'<sup>161</sup> On the other hand, the United States also asked India not to break diplomatic relations with Pakistan and to await the outcome of the visit of Powell and his assistant secretary of state, Richard Armitage, in two weeks.<sup>162</sup>

Although genuine fears of a nuclear war in Washington possibly pushed the United States to involve itself actively in resolving the regional crisis, another important concern that pushed the United States to more actively manage the regional situation was its objectives in Afghanistan. Washington's concerns were that India-Pakistan tensions would distract Pakistan from its role on its borders with Afghanistan.

As tensions flared up between the India and Pakistan, the United States feared a deflection on part of Pakistan from the situation on the western borders towards the eastern ones. It was in this context that as the tensions between the two countries mounted when India bombed Pakistani sides on the LoC in mid-October 2001, Bush issued a stern warning to stop the two countries from any brinkmanship. Reacting to the escalation by the Indian forces along the LOC, President Bush called on the countries to 'stand down.' He remarked that 'It is very important that India and

Pakistan stand down during our activities in Afghanistan, or for that matter forever.’<sup>163</sup>

The United States openly expressed its worries about reports of the shifting of Pakistani forces from its western borders to its eastern ones. The US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld had to express its concerns about the possibility that Pakistani troops massed at the Afghan border being shifted east to Kashmir and stressed the importance of Islamabad’s role in hunting down Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters. He said it was ‘very encouraging’ that Pakistan had not yet withdrawn forces from the Afghan border, and added that any redeployment ‘would be a big disappointment.’<sup>164</sup>

Rumsfeld further said that the United States had clearly informed New Delhi and Islamabad that their rapidly escalating standoff could detract from its war on terrorism and that ‘This is something we’re keeping our eye on very carefully, and we have clearly made the interests we have in this subject known to both sides very carefully and with clarity.’ Arguing that it would be a ‘big disappointment’ to the United States if Pakistan withdrew its forces from the Afghan border, Rumsfeld noted on December 28, 2001 that the Pakistani troops ‘are performing an important task. They must have seven, eight or nine battalions along the Pakistan-Afghan border, which is a clear deterrent to the people trying to escape from Afghanistan.’<sup>165</sup>

Similarly, Rumsfeld again expressed these concerns during his talks with the visiting Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes on January 17, 2002. Emphasising the pacification of tensions in the region, he said that the United States was ‘most anxious’ to see that the terrorists in the Taliban and Al Qaeda do not escape into Pakistan. He further said, ‘It’s not in Pakistan’s interest. It’s not in our interest. It’s not in Afghanistan’s interest, because they can come right back across that border. And it’s certainly not in India’s interest.’<sup>166</sup>

The US Afghan concerns were again highlighted on May 29, 2002, when Victoria Clarke, the spokesperson for the Pentagon expressed the ‘grave’ concern of United States about the rising tensions between India and Pakistan. She said that Washington was ‘working hard, in conversations and consultations with both countries, to try to ease and de-escalate the conflict’ as the US government had concerns about the effects of the present situation on the ongoing ‘war on terrorism’ in Afghanistan. ‘It’s very important for us; we want to stay focused on it. Pakistan has

been tremendously helpful in that effort and we need that assistance going forward'.<sup>167</sup>

Despite its Afghan concerns, the United States also placed considerable pressure on Pakistan to end the infiltration of the militants across the LoC which was taking place at the time. This was highlighted time and again during the Crisis when Washington urged the stoppage of the militants from crossing the LoC while keeping hands-off from the larger Kashmir dispute. For example, the visiting US Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca remarked in the wake of the rising tensions in the region after the Kaluchak attacks that the 'Infiltration by militants into Indian-controlled Kashmir to carry out acts of "terrorism" must stop' while urging 'both the sides to reduce rhetoric and take whatever steps possible to reduce the tension.'<sup>168</sup>

This was perceived in Islamabad as a pro-India tilt in the US policy and created a lot of resentment in Pakistan. Dawn, a leading daily of Pakistan, wrote in an editorial on January 11, 2002 that the whole world knew 'who has created' the present crisis on the borders and that 'Given the help which Pakistan has rendered the world coalition in its military operations,' Islamabad had expected America to show an 'understanding' of Pakistan's position on Kashmir. It further read 'Pakistan might even have stomached it if Washington and London had conducted tight rope walking between Islamabad and New Delhi in the hope that this would help end the eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation,' however, 'much to the Pakistani people's chagrin, this has not happened. Instead one is shocked to realize that Anglo-American diplomacy has shown a tendency to tilt toward India. .... One can imagine what the western attitude would be in a few weeks' or months' time, when American military operations come to an end [in Afghanistan].'<sup>169</sup>

### **Towards De-escalation: the US Role**

The de-escalation of the Crisis came as a result of intense international pressure chiefly led by the United States. International pressure on India and Pakistan gathered when Russia, in a diplomatic move endorsed by the United States, invited the leaders of India and Pakistan to attend a meeting in early June in Kazakhstan to prevent an escalation of the conflict over Kashmir. Russian President Putin remarked in a press conference along with President Bush that 'I hope they will come, so that we can discuss the matter here and prevent the further escalation of the conflict.' US President George Bush on the occasion expressed the hope that Vajpayee and

Musharraf would both attend a meeting in Kazakhstan in early June. In its immediate reaction, Islamabad welcomed the Russian initiative and said that Pakistan would appreciate any initiative, which could lead to de-escalation of the tensions between the two countries.<sup>170</sup>

Similarly, China also consistently emphasised talks for the resolution of disputes in South Asia during the Crisis and tried to pursue an even-handed policy. Zhu Rongji held a five-day visit to India in mid-January 2002. On the current crisis in South Asia, Zhu said China sincerely hoped India and Pakistan, as two of China's neighbours, could peacefully resolve their disputes through dialogue and consultation.<sup>171</sup> Similarly during his visit to Pakistan in mid-May 2002, the Chinese Foreign Minister Tang told his Pakistani counterpart that 'China supports peaceful solution to disputes through dialogue and negotiations, and is willing to continue its efforts alongside with other parties concerned to maintain peace and stability in the region.'<sup>172</sup>

The winding down of the Crisis came in the wake of the US travel advisory and the evacuation of the US and British diplomats from India. The impact of the US moves was highlighted when Indian officials resented the advisory and the departure of diplomats and embassy officials. The Indian Foreign Ministry called the advisory asking US citizens to leave India 'unnecessary' while the US State Department defended its decision.<sup>173</sup>

When Powell remarked on May 31 that the United States had seen indications that Pakistan had given instructions to stop 'infiltrations' across the LoC, it seemed the Crisis had entered a phase of lowered tension.<sup>174</sup> Gestures from India and Pakistan in early June further highlighted the changing of moods. In an interview with CNN, Musharraf said that the world 'shouldn't even be discussing' nuclear war 'because any sane individual cannot even think of going into it.'<sup>175</sup> Similarly, Fernandes played down the threat of war at this point, noting that the situation at the border was tense but stable.<sup>176</sup>

Further signs of de-escalation were seen in the wake of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Almatay on June 4. Although no direct parleys were held between India and Pakistan at the Conference, the developments at Almatay proved to be crucial in determining the endgame of the Crisis.

During the Almaty Conference, China also emphasised talks between India and Pakistan. During his address at the conference, President Jiang Zemin said ‘We sincerely hope that the parties involved in conflicts in this region solve their disputes in a peaceful way in the fundamental interests of this region’s peace and security.’<sup>177</sup> Similarly, describing the Kashmir dispute as ‘a question left over by history’ during his meeting with Vajpayee, Jiang urged upon the two leaders to settle their differences peacefully and through dialogue.<sup>178</sup>

Subsequently, there emerged further signs of de-escalation of tensions in the region. On June 5, President Bush spoke to the leaders of India and Pakistan urging them to take steps that would ease tensions in the region and reduce the risk of a war. Major Indian newspapers observed on June 5 that the tensions had receded. The Statesman wrote that ‘Tempers have cooled, and hopefully, we have seen the last of insanity of the past month.’<sup>179</sup> Similarly, Indian authorities announced on June 5 that they had detected the first signs that there was a decrease in the ‘Pakistan-sponsored militancy’ in Kashmir.<sup>180</sup>

Richard Armitage, US Deputy Secretary of State, visited the region on June 7-8. The visit of Armitage proved to be conclusive in settling the modalities of disengagement between India and Pakistan. In Pakistan, Armitage held meetings with President Musharraf and other Pakistani officials. The visit of Richard Armitage extracted a reversal of Pakistan’s Kashmir strategy and the mission was described by the Pakistani officials as ‘blunt’ and consisting of ‘detailed demands.’<sup>181</sup>

Armitage said after meeting with President Pervez Musharraf that the meeting had produced ‘a good basis on which to proceed.’ He remarked that ‘President Musharraf has made it very clear that he is searching for peace and he won’t be the one to initiate a war’ and that he ‘will be hopefully getting the same type of assurances tomorrow in Delhi.’ He further said that ‘The president of Pakistan has made it very clear that nothing is happening across the Line of Control’ and that ‘We’re looking for that to hold in the longer term.’<sup>182</sup> At the end of his visit, Armitage said that he felt ‘very heartened’ by the Pakistani President’s ‘assurance’ and that ‘I think we got very good basis on which we can proceed.’<sup>183</sup> The US rhetoric also toned down somewhat and Secretary Powell also noted on June 6 that ‘the situation is marginally better.’<sup>184</sup>

After getting assurances from Pakistan, Armitage then proceeded to India. In New Delhi, after his meeting with Vajpayee, Armitage remarked that tensions

between India and Pakistan were ‘a little bit down.’ Armitage reassured Vajpayee and other senior Indian officials of ‘pledges’ he received from the Pakistani leader that the crux of their standoff ... infiltration of Islamic militants into Indian Kashmir ... had been resolved. He remarked that he ‘was able to expose the senior leadership of India to the tenor and the full content of my discussions in Islamabad, including the commitment of President Pervez Musharraf to the United States to stop all cross-Line of Control infiltration.’<sup>185</sup>

After visiting India, Armitage remarked that ‘It’s quite clear that there will be some actions on the part of India responding to the messages I brought from Pakistan.’ He noted further that ‘It’s quite clear, at least temporarily, the tensions are down.’<sup>186</sup> At a time when Armitage was conveying Pakistani pledges to Indian leaders in New Delhi, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher was noting ‘growing indications that infiltration across the LOC is [was] down significantly.’<sup>187</sup> On the other hand an Indian foreign ministry statement of June 8 said that ‘India welcomes the pledge that President General Pervez Musharraf has given to US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, about immediately and permanently ending cross-border infiltration of terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir.’<sup>188</sup>

The pledge by Pakistan to ‘permanently’ halt cross-border support to Kashmiri resistance groups came in return for a vague commitment by the Indian officials that once the ‘cross-border terrorism’ ceases ‘permanently’, it would be willing to open dialogue with Pakistan on all issues including Kashmir. Indian and Pakistani postures during Almaty Conference also provide an important clue to the parameters of de-escalation. In return for the pledge from Pakistan that it was going to end the cross-border infiltration, Indian National Security Advisor gave a commitment of ‘appropriate steps’ at Almaty that ‘once cross-border terrorism’ ends India is willing to open dialogue with Pakistan on all outstanding issues.<sup>189</sup>

The next in line with the US diplomacy in stabilizing the regional situation was the visit of Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld to the region. His visit to India and Pakistan was mainly aimed at seeing the progress after the thaw initiated by Armitage. By the end of June there was further de-escalation as India removed its ban on Pakistani over-flights of Indian territories and stopped the aggressive patrolling of its warships in the Arabian Sea. Threat of war, however, remained high throughout June.



In late July Secretary Powell visited South Asia again urging India to take further de-escalatory steps while observing in Pakistan that cross-border infiltration had dropped significantly, although had not completely ceased. During his visit to the region, Powell emphasised the need for early resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan, whereas India maintained that ‘necessary conditions’ did not exist in this context. His visit was mainly aimed at ensuring that there was no reversal of the process of de-escalation of the Crisis. Part of Powell’s message was that Pakistan should not try to disrupt elections in Kashmir and it should take ‘more steps’ to halt the ‘infiltration’. Secretary Powell described it as ‘one step forward in a process of determining the will of people.’

While maintaining its coercive posture in the subsequent period, India declared that a violence free election was a pre-condition for demobilization along the frontier and a dialogue between the two countries. India maintained its military pressure on Pakistan in run up to the elections. Continued tensions in the region were highlighted when replicating the US policy outlined in National Security Strategy 2002, which asserted the US right ‘of self-defense by acting preemptively,’ India tried to ‘legitimize’ its assertions of using force across the LoC against alleged terrorist training camps in AJK. Jaswant Singh, now serving as Finance Minister, stated in Washington at the end of September 2002 that ‘Preemption or prevention is inherent in deterrence’ and that every country had a right to preemptive strikes as an inherent part of its right to self-defense, and preemption was not the prerogative of any one nation.’<sup>190</sup>

It was on 16 October 2002, India announced the demobilization of its forces. Islamabad described the Indian move as ‘a step in right direction’ and said that it ‘had consistently called for de-escalation, withdrawal by India of its forces to peace-time locations, and a resumption of dialogue for the resolution of all outstanding issues, including the core issue of Kashmir.’<sup>191</sup>

The modalities of disengagement as dictated by the United States were discerned by the Washington Post when it wrote in a long report as early as on May 25 that the US administration had stepped up pressure on Musharraf to halt ‘cross-border infiltration,’ and hoped that such a step would be followed by the pullback of many of the one million troops deployed by Pakistan and India along their border. It said after a stand down of troops, the two countries would be encouraged by the United States to resume political talks to resolve underlying disputes, including the

status of Kashmir. Although US diplomats did not directly link a Pakistani crackdown on militants to the opening of discussions on Kashmir, the newspaper quoted a senior administration official that 'We do tell the Indians they've to deal with underlying causes.'

The report further said that 'the key to a solution lies in a forceful approach to Musharraf, who must be asked again to choose between alliance with the civilized world and terrorism.' It further wrote that 'His government must take effective action against Kashmiri militant groups in a way that will be visible to India. Vajpayee, in turn, must persuade his military and party to accept such action as preferable to war, and stand down his forces.'<sup>192</sup>

Pakistan was however able to obtain some soothing from Washington in the form of the expression of US desires to maintain its interest in the negotiated settlement of disputes between India and Pakistan during the 2001-02 Crisis. To a question regarding the resolution of Kashmir issue, Powell said that the United States would encourage both sides to initiate dialogues and would also help in creating an atmosphere conducive for talks. Powell repeated in New Delhi that the US was 'anxious' to see a dialogue between India and Pakistan on all issues including Kashmir. However when asked whether the United States would like to act as facilitator in resumption of dialogue between Pakistan and India, he said they would certainly like to see beginning of dialogue. However, he said, both the parties would find the United States ready if they need any help in the peace process when he remarked that 'To the extent that the United States can help get that dialogue started on all the issues that are outstanding between the two countries (including) Kashmir, we would like to be helpful.'<sup>193</sup>

### **The US Factor in India's Restraint: An Analysis**

Some observers in India like Bedi suggest that India was confident that the US factor would not play a part in the decision to go to war. Quoting a military officer involved in the military planning, he reveals that 'India had assured Washington in the event of war it would give the American bases at Jacobabad, Pasni and Dalbandin close to the Afghan border wide berth.' Bedi also notes Jaswant Singh's press comments in May 2002 on how the US was not a factor in India's military planning whereby talks between Indian and US military officials 'also helped clarify India's position.'<sup>194</sup>

However, the escalation during the Crisis was only restrained by the active involvement of the United States and the nuclear weapons did not deter India from attacking Pakistan during the Crisis. It was third-party diplomacy plus considerations of India's relations with the outside world that discouraged it from going to war.

New Delhi was trying to forge a larger grand-strategic partnership with Washington in the post-Cold War era. New Delhi's efforts in this regard received a major boost with the coming of Bush to power in January 2001. After assuming his office the Bush administration had declared the forging of closer ties with India as one of its strategic goals. The events of 9/11 however had complicated US calculations about the region as Pakistan had become a crucial strategic asset once more with the beginning with the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Through the events of December 13 and May 14, India tried to demonstrate to the United States that Pakistan was part of the problem rather than the solution in the war against terrorism. However India had to discover the limits of its strategic partnership with the United States as Washington could not afford to risk its new relationship with Pakistan. Furthermore, New Delhi was aware that there were US troops on the ground in various parts of Pakistan. In a war, they might be hit mistakenly by Indian fire, which would be a disaster for the nascent India-US strategic relationship.<sup>195</sup>

The US travel advisory and an advisory to foreign navies to leave Karachi harbor had an important psychological impact on the Indian leadership. As noticed by Bajpai, the advisory was interpreted rather differently by Indian officials and Indian public opinion, which saw in the announcement a diplomatic *démarche*.<sup>196</sup> Thus the prospects of alienating Washington and the possibility of putting the larger grand strategic goal of a partnership with the United States was that which convinced India to show restraint. New Delhi might have also feared the economic cost of not heeding US advice through lost income and investment from western tourists and businesses.<sup>197</sup>

Dixit also noticed that 'In early 2002, representatives of four out of five Permanent Members of the UN Security Council – the US, the UK, Russia and China – met India's prime minister, home minister and foreign minister in New Delhi to give unanimous advice to India to be moderate, restrained and cautious.'<sup>198</sup> He says further that:

It is obvious, therefore, that if India refuses to abide by the advice for restraint given by the United States, the new beginnings made in Indo-US relations will be negatively affected. It is equally obvious that India would have to fight its own battles against terrorism in the foreseeable future in the context of US perceptions of its own interests and Pervez Musharraf's adroitly cosmetic gestures to remain on the right side of the United States. India has to conduct this struggle not only in terms of carefully structured anti-terrorist operations but more importantly by engaging in an intense publicity and diplomatic campaign to make the US and world public opinion aware of our concerns and the linkage of these concerns with issues of global security which interests the United States and the major powers of the world.<sup>199</sup>

Bajpai also noticed that the intervention by the US had two effects on India's war calculus. First of all, Washington played a role in convincing Musharraf to 'pledge' the stoppage of cross-LoC movement of Kashmiri insurgents. This came in the form of Musharraf's January and May television broadcasts, in which he announced appropriate actions against LeT and JeM. He notes that secondly it was US pressure that led to the June pledge from Musharraf. Bajpai noticed that Musharraf's 'television appearances slowed down India's decision to go to war. The delay also meant that India lost the element of surprise so crucial to successful military campaigns in the modern period.' While describing the second impact of US involvement, he notes that 'The fear of alienating the US tilted the scales, in New Delhi's view, toward the no-war option. The two effects were partly linked.'<sup>200</sup>

India's decision not to go to war was thus influenced by the behavior and interests of the United States. The prospect of US displeasure affected Indian calculations and eventually persuaded New Delhi to stop the drift to war. From the start of the Crisis, Washington did its utmost to prevent war. It did this by urging patience and caution by India, and by encouraging Pakistan to accept India's demand—the stoppage of cross-LoC support to the insurgency in Kashmir. As noticed by Bajpai, 'Washington did not have to threaten to sever relations with India to dramatize this latter danger. Indian decision-makers seem to have inferred this without any explicit warnings from the US.'<sup>201</sup>

## ***Conclusion***

India escalated regional tensions on Kashmir in the wake of the events of October 1, 2001, December 13, 2001 and May 14, 2002 leading to the longest ever military stand-off between the two countries, during which the two countries came close to the use of force. By initiating the Crisis and mobilising its military might, India tried to use its strengthened post-Cold War relationship with the United States as well as the new post-9/11 international environment and to compel Pakistan to reverse its policy on Kashmir.

Although India presented its demands in legal terms, it was primarily aimed at extracting concessions from Pakistan on Kashmir. India's demands were thus part of a broader Indian strategic objective: to achieve closure on the Kashmir issue by projecting the Kashmir struggle entirely as a 'terrorist' movement engineered by Pakistan. It demanded that Pakistan stop supporting Kashmiri insurgent groups and bring to an end the cross-border movement of the Kashmiri insurgents. Thus, by eliminating the Pakistani factor it hoped to strengthen its grip over the territory.

On the other hand, Pakistan tried to counter Indian pressure on Kashmir by its post-9/11 strengthened relations with the United States. After its decision to become an ally of the United States after 9/11, Pakistan was able to contain some of the Indian moves with the help of the leverage that it had been able to develop in Washington in the wake of the new international environment.

The 2001-02 Crisis is not a cause for much optimism. It was principally due to the concerns and actions of the United States that the two sides did not go to war. The US factor played the decisive role in influencing Indian calculations regarding any military action against Pakistan. The prospect of alienating Washington at a time when New Delhi was attempting to build a grand strategic partnership with America deterred India from going to war. Also the danger of hitting the American troops mistakenly during a war with Pakistan further complicated Indian calculations.

It can be safely concluded that nuclear weapons neither deterred India from initiating any military campaign against Pakistan nor did these prevent Pakistan from engaging in tit-for-tat responses during the Crisis. India was prepared to go to war, first across the LoC in Kashmir and later across the border in Rajasthan. If Indian forces had crossed either the LoC or the border, South Asia would very likely have

experienced a major war. It is wishful thinking to suggest that such a war would have remained just at the conventional level.

## **Chapter 5**

# **Post-2001-2002 Crisis Regional Instability and the United States**

### ***Introduction***

Following the 2001-02 Crisis, the regional situation continues to remain dangerously unstable. This has been highlighted by a fractured peace process between India and Pakistan and dangerous developments in the regional nuclear and military doctrines. Initiated with the strong encouragement of the United States, the peace process remained marred with considerable tensions. It came to a verge of collapse at a number of times in the wake of terrorist attacks in the region. On all these occasions the peace process was put back on track only with a strong nudge by the United States which continued to stress the need for talks between the two countries.

The peace process however failed to achieve any breakthrough in the India-Pakistan relations and finally came to a halt late in 2008 in the wake of the Mumbai attacks by suspected militant groups. Since 2008, the regional situation has entered into what can be described as a fresh mini-crisis mode. The post-2001-02 Crisis period has also witnessed a more assertive Indian approach to regional issues highlighted by the dangerous developments in its nuclear and military doctrines.

This Chapter highlights continued tensions and the tenuous nature of strategic restraint in the region in the post-2001-2002 Crisis period. In this regard, it describes important developments in India-Pakistan relations in the post-2001-02 Crisis period. It will first focus on the shaky dynamics of the peace process that followed the Crisis showing that the two players are not ready to normalize their relations by compromising on their respective stances on the key issues vis-à-vis each other. It will then lay out key developments in the Indian nuclear and military doctrines in the post-Crisis period to highlight the precarious nature of restraint in the region thus drawing a pessimist picture quite contrary to the expectations of the optimistic view.

### ***The Post-Crisis Regional Tensions***

Soon after the demobilization of forces, Pakistan called for immediate normalization and the start of talks to sort out contentious issues between the two

countries, especially Kashmir. India however announced that it was not interested in talks. On the other hand, while announcing the withdrawal from international borders along Pakistan, India termed its decision as ‘unilateral’ and announced that the deployment of its forces along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir would continue.

At the same time New Delhi made it clear that there was no question of initiating talks with Islamabad till it stopped supporting alleged ‘terrorism’ on Indian territory.<sup>1</sup> India kept Pakistan under military pressure with regular threatening statements by its leaders and certain military actions triggering counter statements by Pakistan. It was not until the completion of the election process in Kashmir that India announced its readiness to initiate talks with Pakistan.

### **Post-Crisis Nuclear Sabre-Rattling**

With the easing of tensions, Vajpayee claimed victory in the crisis in the absence of fighting. In an interview he remarked that war with Pakistan was averted only due to Islamabad’s guarantee that it would crack down on Pakistani-based Islamic militants crossing into Kashmir. He said that this was achieved through international pressure on Pakistan. In a clear indication that Pakistan’s nuclear deterrence had not worked, he stated that ‘If Pakistan had not agreed to end infiltration, and America had not conveyed that guarantee to India, then war would not have been averted.’<sup>2</sup>

Vajpayee’s remarks immediately received a tit-for-tat response from Musharraf the following day when he asserted that deterrence had, in fact, worked. At a dinner for Pakistani nuclear scientists and engineers, Musharraf stated that Pakistan’s nuclear weapons had brought a ‘strategic balance to the region. He remarked that ‘heightened international concerns of a nuclear conflict in South Asia, and the hesitation, frustration, and inability of India to attack Pakistan, or conduct a so-called limited war, bear ample testimony to the fact that strategic balance exists in South Asia and that Pakistan’s conventional and nuclear capability together deter aggression.’<sup>3</sup>

As expected, India was quick to denounce the Pakistani statement. Accusing Islamabad of ‘nuclear blackmail’, New Delhi urged the international community not to ignore the ‘continued manifestations of Pakistani irresponsibility, loose talk, and undiluted hostility towards India,’ along with the ‘continued concoction of doomsday theories to justify its use of nuclear blackmail.’<sup>4</sup>



This was followed by Vajpayee's comments while addressing the 57th Session of the UNGA a few months later when he remarked that 'dark threats were held out that actions by India to stamp out cross-border terrorism could provoke a nuclear war.' He said that nuclear blackmail had emerged as a 'new arrow in the quiver of state-sponsored terrorism.' Equating the situation in Kashmir to the problem of global terrorism he went on to say that to succumb to such 'nuclear terrorism' would mean 'forgetting the bitter lessons of the September 11 tragedy.'<sup>5</sup>

This was followed by another Pakistani statement towards the end of 2002. Addressing veterans of the Pakistan Air Force in Karachi on December 30, Musharraf made it clear that he was prepared to use 'unconventional weapons' in the event of an Indian attack during the Crisis. He stated that 'we have defeated our enemy without going into war.'<sup>6</sup> He went on to say that the Indian Prime Minister had been informed by visiting world leaders 'that if the Indian Army moved just a single step beyond the international border or the LoC then *Inshallah* [By the Will of God] the Pakistan Army and the supporters of Pakistan would surround the Indian Army and that it would not be a conventional war.'<sup>7</sup> Although Musharraf did not specifically mention 'nuclear weapons' in his speech it was quite clear that he was referring to little else. What is important to note here is that he also made it clear that Pakistan's nuclear threshold rests at 'a single step' across the LoC by the Indian armed forces.

New Delhi immediately responded with anger and the Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes issued a number of nuclear threats to Pakistan. First, he described Musharraf's statement as 'irresponsible.'<sup>8</sup> A week later, he vowed in an official meeting that 'we can take a bomb or two or more ... but when we respond there will be no Pakistan.'<sup>9</sup> Again in January 2003, he remarked that 'We have been saying all through that the person who heads Pakistan today has been talking about using dangerous weapons including the nukes. Well, I would reply by saying that if Pakistan has decided that it wants to get itself destroyed and erased from the world map, then it may take this step of madness, but if (it) wants to survive then it would not do so.'<sup>10</sup>

### **Rising Regional Tensions in 2003**

In early 2003, at a time of the start of the Iraq War, a new surge in tensions between India and Pakistan was witnessed in the wake of a violent incident on March 23 in Kashmir in which about 24 Hindus were massacred. India promptly accused

Pakistan of masterminding the attack while Pakistan condemned the attack and protested against Indian accusations. Renewed cross-LoC shelling between the two countries was reported at the time.

The deteriorating situation triggered calls for calm from world leaders and a joint US-UK statement called for ‘immediately implementing a ceasefire and taking other active steps to reduce tension.’ The statement further emphasized that the ‘differences between India and Pakistan can only be resolved through peaceful means and engagement.’<sup>11</sup> The statement also impressed upon Pakistan that the LoC should be strictly respected and Pakistan should fulfil its commitments to stop infiltration across it. It also called upon Pakistan to do its utmost to discourage any acts of violence by militants in Kashmir.<sup>12</sup>

The rising tensions in the region were also highlighted when on March 26 both India and Pakistan conducted their missile tests in a tit-for-tat response. Commenting on the timing of the test launch of the Prithvi missile by India, N K Sareen, a former chief of the Indian air force, said that the test of Prithvi appeared to be deliberately timed to coincide with the height of the conflict in Iraq. He remarked that the test gives the Americans a message that ‘You are sitting there in Pakistan but you have not squeezed Musharraf’s neck enough, which is not acceptable to us.’<sup>13</sup>

At the same time, State Department’s director of policy planning Richard Haass told an Indian TV channel in April 2003 that Washington had been urging Pakistan to halt incursions by Islamic guerrillas into Indian-ruled Kashmir and that ‘we have not succeeded, and we are at times, shall we say, disappointed and frustrated with that reality.’<sup>14</sup> This led to strong denials by Islamabad and a Foreign Office spokesman, while rejecting the criticism, remarked that Islamabad had taken all possible preventive measures and no infiltration was taking place and that ‘These allegations are baseless.’ He noted that Pakistan had repeatedly offered to allow the deployment of neutral observers to verify no incursions were taking place across the LoC.<sup>15</sup>

Things further deteriorated when on April 2, 2003, Indian External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha said that India will do ‘whatever it takes’ to end Pakistani ‘terrorism’ in Kashmir and asserted India’s right to take ‘preemptive’ military action against Pakistan along the lines of the coalition war against Iraq. He stated that ‘we derive some satisfaction ... because I think all those people in the international

community ... realize that India has a much better case to go for preemptive action against Pakistan than the US has in Iraq.’<sup>16</sup>

This prompted a counter-response from Pakistan. Pakistan’s Prime Minister Jamali vowed that ‘Any misadventure by India will be met with full force’ and warned of a ‘catastrophe.’<sup>17</sup> And in a blunt response, Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Kasuri remarked that ‘India is a more suitable case’ for pre-emptive strike on the basis of the charges levelled for human rights violations.<sup>18</sup> The United States also quickly questioned India’s rationale and Powell remarked that no parallels could be drawn between the situation in Iraq and the Indo-Pakistan face off on Kashmir.<sup>19</sup>

### ***A Stressful Peace Process***

It was not until April 18, 2003 when New Delhi had completed the election process in Kashmir that Vajpayee announced the desire to normalise relations with Pakistan. During a public speech in Kashmir he extended a ‘hand of friendship’ to Pakistan. Islamabad welcomed the gesture and Kasuri remarked that ‘A positive thing has come forth and it ought to be welcomed in a positive manner.’ He further said that ‘When you say where do we go from here, our position is very clear. We are prepared for a composite dialogue with India on all outstanding disputes including the Kashmir dispute...If India is serious about a dialogue, India will find that Pakistan is willing to go more than half the way to meet India.’<sup>20</sup>

The start of the peace process after the Crisis owed much to US influence. As the process of de-escalation of the 2001-02 Crisis began, the United States started reminding the two countries of the need to resume the bilateral talks while particularly referring to the need for tackling the Kashmir issue. Before his visit to the region on July 10, Powell remarked in the course of a hearing in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that ‘It is a very difficult issue. And what we are trying to do now is make sure that both the Indian and the Pakistanis understand that the US is interested in them beyond this crisis ... and see a dialogue begin between the two sides so that we can start to move forward to find a solution to the problem in Kashmir ultimately’.<sup>21</sup>

United States wanted Pakistan to stay focussed on Afghanistan and wanted India to refrain from adopting any policies that could distract Pakistan from the US war against terrorism. Washington thus encouraged India to enter into a dialogue process with Pakistan. India responded to the US influence in this regard because it

wanted to cement its growing relationship with the US in terms of trade, technology and military cooperation.

In May 2003, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage visited South Asia in an attempt to outline a roadmap to precipitate negotiations between India and Pakistan. On the occasion Armitage also remarked that Pakistan was not doing enough to control the cross-LoC movement of the Kashmiri fighters despite its pledges to do so.

It was in the wake of the Musharraf-Vajpayee meeting on January 6, 2004, on the sidelines of the SAARC summit, that the two leaders agreed to start the composite dialogue process in February 2004. In the joint statement issued at the end of the meeting between the two, it was hoped that the process would lead to ‘peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir.’ It stressed the need for greater flexibility and mutual trust for the process of normalization through confidence-building measures. While Vajpayee emphasised that ‘violence, hostility and terrorism must be prevented,’ Musharraf vowed that he would ‘not permit any territory under Pakistan’s control to be used to support terrorism in any manner.’<sup>22</sup> At the end of the summit, Musharraf remarked that ‘History has been made’ and that ‘In Agra, I was a disappointed man and today I’m a happy man.’<sup>23</sup>

The India-Pakistan decision to initiate comprehensive dialogue was welcomed by Washington. Powell described the decision as an ‘historic development’ and an official of the US State Department remarked on the occasion that ‘The US is pleased that Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and President Musharraf met today. We encourage them to continue this process.’<sup>24</sup> Describing the US role in helping the two countries to enter into a dialogue, Vajpayee remarked in an interview soon after the development that ‘Yes. In recent years, it has been making genuine efforts to promote peace in our subcontinent – as a friend, not a mediator.’<sup>25</sup>

With the passage of time, important steps were taken by the two countries to improve their mutual relations. Full diplomatic relations were re-established, overflights were permitted, cricket was allowed, and private goodwill visits by parliamentarians and business people from both sides were initiated. Islamabad announced a unilateral ceasefire along the LoC. The Lahore-Delhi bus service was also resumed after a suspension of nearly 18 months.

The peace process was based on the composite dialogue initiated between the two countries in 1997. The various areas of dialogue identified in the dialogue were

based on the seven Working Groups already identified during the foreign secretary level talks between the two countries in June 1997. These talks had broken down in September 1997 over the structure of how to deal with the issues of Kashmir, and peace and security, as Pakistan advocated that the issues be treated by separate Working Groups, while India responded that the two issues should be taken up along with six others on a simultaneous basis.

The Peace Process however remained quite strained and failed to break the regional deadlock. It came to the verge of collapse a number of times, only to be salvaged by the intense engagement of the United States. It finally came to an end in the wake of Mumbai Attacks of 2008. The following sections will provide an overview of the peace process.

## **First Round**

The composite dialogue between the two countries kicked off with their talks on February 16-17, 2004 at the Joint Secretary-Director General level which were followed by foreign secretary level meetings between the two countries on February 18. After three days of these talks in Islamabad, the two sides were able to chalk out the basic framework structure and modalities of the composite dialogue. The two countries identified eight items for inclusion in the composite dialogue framework. These consisted of: Jammu & Kashmir, peace and security including CBMs, Siachen, Tulbul Navigation Project/Wullar Barrage, Sir Creek, economic and commercial cooperation, promotion of friendly exchanges in various fields, terrorism and drug-trafficking.

A ‘basic roadmap’ for composite dialogue for peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues was announced and the two sides agreed to hold several meetings in coming months to tackle bilateral disputes including Kashmir. It was further agreed that the foreign ministers of the two countries would meet in August to review the overall progress. At the end of the talks, Pakistan’s foreign secretary Khokhar said that a no-war pact would be a logical conclusion if the issues were settled between India and Pakistan.<sup>26</sup>

In accordance with the agreed upon timetable, talks on the technical issues of the proposed Khokharapar-Munabao bus service were held in Islamabad on March 9-11, 2004. Similarly, talks on border security issues were held on March 24-27, 2004. Topics discussed were the fencing of the LoC, installation of electronic surveillance

equipment at different point along the LoC, cross-border drug trafficking, smuggling, and illegal immigration. The only difference between the two sides was regarding fencing of the LoC whereby Pakistan objected to Indian fencing plans.

Meanwhile India and Pakistan also remained engaged in what is described as back channel diplomacy to monitor the peace process, this time, through India's National Security Adviser Brajesh Mishra, and the Secretary-General of Pakistan's National Security Council, Tariq Aziz. Mishra and Aziz met in Lahore on March 2004. Mishra later also 'informally' met the Kasuri and the officials of Pakistan's FO.<sup>27</sup>

The process of talks continued after the Lok Sabha elections that resulted in the ouster of Vajpayee's BJP-led government. Nuclear related issues were discussed in New Delhi on June 19-20, 2004. The possibility of establishment of a 'dedicated and secure hotline' between the foreign secretaries of the two countries and the upgrading of the existing hotline between the Director General Military Operations (DGMOs), were discussed in the meeting. The two sides also explored the possibility of an agreement on pre-notification of flight testing of missiles under technical parameters.

On the issue of nuclear proliferation and nuclear risk reduction in South Asia, the two sides presented a complex posture. India reiterated its proposal of 'no first use' of nuclear weapons while Pakistan proposed the concept of 'strategic restraint regime', both in conventional and nuclear fields. Pakistan also called for both countries to refrain from building or deploying nuclear missiles and suggested the total elimination of nuclear weapons by both countries. While Pakistan offered a no-war pact between the two countries, India expressed its reservation regarding the offer. At the end, it was however agreed upon to continue discussions and meetings at the bilateral level.

More talks were held on June 27-28, 2004, in New Delhi. These covered peace and security, confidence building measures, and Kashmir, and took place between the foreign secretaries of the two countries. During the talks, the two sides agreed to continue their 'sustained and serious' engagement to find a 'negotiated final settlement' to the Jammu and Kashmir issue and announced several CBMs to carry the peace process forward. It was decided to immediately restore the strength of the high commissions of the two countries to 110. They also decided to free all arrested fishermen in each other's custody with immediate effect, and agreed upon the early

release of civilian prisoners. It was agreed in principle to re-establish their respective consulates in Karachi and Mumbai. During the talks Pakistan also called for a mechanism to include representatives of the Kashmiri people in future negotiations.<sup>28</sup>

Talks on the Wullar Barrage were held on July 29-31, 2004, in Islamabad. Though these talks did not reach any final decision, a joint statement was issued at the end reaffirming commitment to the Indus Basin Treaty. On August 3-4, 2004, the two countries held discussions on 'soft' issues, i.e. 'Promotion of friendly exchanges in various fields' aimed at promoting greater trust and confidence at the grassroots level. In this regard, the two sides discussed the exchange of visits by artists, promotion of performing art through joint ventures, visits to religious shrines in each other's country, relaxing visa regimes, and humanitarian dimensions of political issues (i.e. the issues regarding civilian prisoners and fishermen etc). At the end, the two countries agreed to expand the list of religious shrines their citizens can visit and increase the annual quota of pilgrims.

On August 5-6, 2004, talks were held on the Siachen dispute in New Delhi between the defence secretaries of the two countries. These discussed the modalities for the disengagement and redeployment of the troops to the 1972 status quo (when the Simla Agreement was signed) in the light of the understanding reached in 1989 between the two governments. The crux of the divergence on the issue was that India insisted that Pakistan authenticate the positions held by the two armies on the Siachen heights. Pakistan, however, rejected this demand, saying that such a move would mean legitimising the aggression by the Indian side. The differences on the issue thus could not be bridged but the two sides agreed to continue with the dialogue on the issue.

Similarly, on August 6-7, 2004, the two countries discussed the Sir Creek maritime boundary dispute, considered to be a relatively less complicated issue. Sir Creek is a strip of water between Sindh and the Rann of Kutch in India. The disputed coastal strip off Gujarat coast is said to be rich in oil and natural gas. The dispute related to the demarcation of the maritime boundary and the land boundary in the area. Pakistan and India had held several unsuccessful rounds of talks since 1969 on the issue. While Pakistan maintains that the boundary should start with the Eastern Bank on the basis of the Resolution Map of 1914, and the green dotted line indicated in that map, India says it should run through the middle of Sir Creek. Although no progress was witnessed, the two sides resolved to settle the issue amicably.

On August 10-12, 2004, talks were held on 'terrorism and drug trafficking' and 'economic and commercial cooperation.' The joint statement on 'terrorism and drug trafficking' vowed to work for the elimination of terrorism and to cooperate check drug trafficking and narcotics whereas the joint statement on economic cooperation sought to encourage the two countries to explore economic avenues for development of the two countries.

On September 4, 2004, the foreign secretaries of the two countries met in New Delhi to review and assess the progress of dialogue on the eight subjects. The joint statement issued at the end expressed satisfaction on the improvement in bilateral relations through constant dialogue. This was followed by the political review at the meetings between the FMs of the two countries on September 5-6, 2004, in New Delhi. One important progress indicator during these talks was the acceptance by India of a proposal to allow expert level talks to be held to consider CBMs in the context of the conventional capacities of their respective armed forces.

It was also agreed that a train service linking Khokrapar and Munabao would be taken up for urgent talks, while further discussions were scheduled to speed up the proposal for a bus service to link Srinagar and Muzaffarabad across the LoC. A new category of visas was agreed to for tourists, provided they travelled in groups. It was also decided to institutionalize a biannual meeting of the Pakistan Rangers and India's Border Security Forces (BSF) so that innocent farmers, children and stray cattle that lose their way on the deceptive borders, are not subjected to the avoidable rigours of police stations.

Pakistan's perspective regarding the negotiations was made clear by Kasuri during these talks when he highlighted the crucial importance of the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. He remarked that 'I would like to suggest to the entire international community, that regardless of the words that we use and the gloss that we put, we are all aware of what has been the cause of perpetual tension between our two countries and what has caused three wars between us, and a near-war in 2002. That was the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.'<sup>29</sup>

Stressing the need for resolving the Kashmir dispute, Kasuri said that while Pakistan was not imposing preconditions to resolve the Kashmir dispute 'But it is a matter of pure common sense, it is a matter of historical experience that if we want to push, or if we wish to put our relations on an even keel, we will have to tackle with the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.' He further said that 'In the past we have seen that



there have been areas where we have reached pretty good level of relationship. And then, we have seen things when they have deteriorated to the extent of wars. So, it is a matter of common sense, pure logic, that in order to ensure that there will be durable peace in South Asia, this issue would also be resolved hopefully sooner rather than later.’<sup>30</sup>

A Joint Declaration was also issued on September 8, 2004, simultaneously in Islamabad and New Delhi at the end of these talks. The Declaration announced the determination of the two countries to resolve the disputes according to the letter and spirit of the Shimla Agreement, and invoked the purposes and principles of the UN Charter to settle all bilateral matters.<sup>31</sup>

Late in December, 2004, the two held talks on security issues. The two countries started their talks by reaffirming their commitment to their traditional positions on Kashmir. New Delhi remained stuck in the position that Kashmir was an integral part of India and that there can be no re-drawing of boundaries in the quest for the settlement of the Kashmir dispute.

Indian perspectives on the issue of the resolution of the Kashmir dispute were put forward by its Minister for External Affairs Natwar Singh when he remarked as early as in December 2004 that ‘there are one or two problems which are very difficult and for which there are no answers and this [Kashmir] is one of them.’ He further said ‘But if our relations improve on all other fronts, then possibly when the people from both sides get involved in economic welfare, trade welfare, communication welfare and IT revolution, maybe political matters may also start getting their respective place (sic).’<sup>32</sup>

Meanwhile, the two countries held another summit when Musharraf and India’s new PM Manmohan Singh met in New York on September 24, 2004. A joint statement was issued at the end that reiterated the ‘commitment to continue the bilateral dialogue to restore normalcy and cooperation between India and Pakistan.’ The two leaders also agreed that CBMs of all ‘categories’ being discussed between the two governments should be implemented. Manmohan remarked that he would work together with Musharraf despite difficulties that might come ahead and that ‘We will succeed in writing a new chapter.’<sup>33</sup>

The first of round of talks thus failed to break the deadlock on sticky issues and ended up only in conveying to each other their respective positions on various

issues. It only laid the foundation for more discussions on the areas of divergence in the coming rounds.

## **A Stalemated Second Round**

The second round of the composite dialogue started when the foreign secretaries of the two countries met in Islamabad on December 28-29, 2004, to review the progress made up until then. Talks were held specifically on Kashmir and security issues but also discussed were other items of the composite dialogue. Both sides agreed to carry forward the process in light of the Musharraf-Manmohan meeting in New York. Although no progress was witnessed on the issue, the two sides vowed to resolve Kashmir.

Progress was however witnessed on certain peripheral issues. The two sides decided on some relief measures for apprehended fishermen, civilian prisoners and missing defence personnel. They decided to introduce a mechanism for early repatriation, without sentencing, of inadvertent crossers and decided on a similar mechanism for the early release of people under 16 apprehended by either side. Both sides also agreed that the meetings on the other six subjects would be held between April and June 2005. It was also decided that both foreign secretaries would meet in New Delhi in July-August 2005 to review the overall progress in the dialogue process.<sup>34</sup>

The Musharraf-Manmohan summit in New Delhi on April 17-18, 2005, provided further impetus. At the end of the talks, the two leaders issued the 'Delhi Joint Statement' and stated that the 'peace process was now irreversible.' The two leaders decided to open the Poonch-Rawalakot road and reopen the Khokharapar-Munabao rail link. The two sides also 'addressed the issue of Jammu and Kashmir and agreed to continue their discussions in a sincere and purposeful and forward-looking manner for a final settlement.'<sup>35</sup>

Talks on the Siachen issue were held on May 26-27, 2005, in Rawalpindi amid optimism for forward movement on the conflict. The talks however concluded without breaking any ice on the issue as the two countries remained held to their previous positions. The Pakistan delegation wanted an agreement on disengagement and redeployment, demilitarization, monitoring and verification mechanisms, however the Indian side made it clear that any forward movement or agreement on the issue would be conditional on the authentication of existing positions which was not

acceptable to Pakistan. The joint press release issued at the end of the talks however agreed 'to continue with their discussions to resolve the Siachen issue in a peaceful manner.'<sup>36</sup>

Talks on Sir Creek were held on May 28-29, 2005. The UN Convention on Law of the Sea to which both Pakistan and India were signatories also provided urgency to the two countries to resolve the issue as it required that all maritime boundary disputes be resolved by 2009 failing which UN would declare them as international waters. The talks however ended without making any headway as both sides stuck to their positions. The two sides however agreed to continue their discussions aimed at the early resolution of the issue.<sup>37</sup>

Important talks between India and Pakistan were held on the proposed \$4 billion Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline in June. The two countries decided to form a joint working group (JWG) headed by their petroleum ministries' secretaries to increase technical, financial and legal interaction at the expert level, and to work towards the project after the conclusion of talks. Indian Oil Minister Aiyar remarked during the press conference at the end of the talks that the two countries have sped up efforts not only to bring one gas pipeline from Iran but one also from Turkmenistan. Aiyar said India also wanted technical details on a possible pipeline from Qatar. He hoped that the Iran gas pipeline project would begin sometime the following year.<sup>38</sup>

On July 5, 2005, unidentified militants stormed the 'Ram Mandir' where Babri Masjid stood until 1992, setting off a gun-battle with the security personnel that left five attackers dead. The attack happened as Manmohan Singh was heading on his way to the G-8 summit in Scotland. He was also scheduled to visit Washington later on July 18, 2005, for three days of talks with the US leaders. The attack made relations between the two countries tense when New Delhi blamed these on Pakistan-based elements, and threatened 'to disrupt' the peace process.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, while rejecting Indian allegations, Islamabad asked New Delhi to 'hold an investigation to find the facts' while emphasising that 'the peace process is irreversible.'<sup>40</sup>

The process was however rescued when Musharraf and Manmohan Singh in a telephone conversation agreed to avoid statements that could endanger the ongoing peace process between both countries. Subsequently, India and Pakistan held talks on July 25-26, 2005, aimed at increasing people-to-people contacts. The two sides agreed to double the number of pilgrims, add more shrines to the list of shrines that people from both countries could visit. On August 6-7, 2005, India and Pakistan held talks on

nuclear CBMs ending with both sides finalising the text of an agreement on the pre-notification of flight-testing of ballistic missiles. Both countries also agreed to establish hotlines between their foreign secretaries and the DGMOs to prevent misunderstandings and reduce the risk of mishaps.

These were followed by parleys on conventional CBMs on August 8-9, 2005. The two countries decided to uphold their 20-month ceasefire, agreed not to set up new posts and defensive works along the LoC, and implement the 1991 agreement between them on air space violations in both letter and spirit. They also agreed to upgrade the existing hotline between their DGMOs. Both sides also agreed to hold monthly flag meetings between local commanders at the various sectors along the LoC. Despite these developments during the talks, India however rejected Pakistan's proposal of reducing troops along the LoC and in Siachen.

Subsequently, the two countries discussed economic cooperation on August 9-10, 2005. The talks concluded with a decision to expeditiously clear the opening of branches of scheduled banks in each other's countries to facilitate bilateral trade. The meeting also held a broad discussion on lifting non-tariff barriers but no decision could be taken. On August 30-31, 2005, the two sides held talks on terrorism, drug trafficking, the fate of border crossers, and issue of prisoners. During the talks India gave a list of some 30 'wanted' persons, while Pakistan submitted a list of 37 people allegedly hiding in India. At the end of the talks, the two sides agreed to expedite the release of fishermen and other prisoners who had completed their terms, held in each other's jails. It was decided that an agreement aiming at having 'a regular institutional mechanism in place to intensify mutual cooperation and liaison on drug control matters' would be signed shortly thereafter.<sup>41</sup>

In September 2005, the foreign secretaries of the two countries reviewed the entire gamut of the second round of composite dialogue. During the talks, Pakistan pushed for a forward movement on 'doable and achievable' issues such as Siachen and Sir Creek.<sup>42</sup> While the progress on the key issues remained stalemated during these talks, the two sides however agreed to take bilateral ties forward, implement more CBMs and formally agreed on a schedule for the next round of the dialogue.

Meanwhile the two countries had another summit on the sidelines of the UNGA session in September 2005. The meeting however ended without any breakthrough and the two leaders simply agreed to carry forward the peace process

while expressing their commitment to ensure a peaceful settlement of all pending issues, including Kashmir, to the satisfaction of both sides.<sup>43</sup>

Indian External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh visited Islamabad in November 2005 for a political review of the progress made in the second round of the composite dialogue and to attend the meeting of the revived Joint Commission. No progress on the key points of divergence between the two countries was witnessed during these talks and the foreign ministers simply reiterated their commitment to the ongoing peace process. The continued stalemate in the ongoing talks was highlighted when the joint statement echoed key concerns of both Pakistan and India i.e. Kashmir and terrorism. It said that 'The ministers reiterated that possible options for a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the issue of Jammu and Kashmir should be explored in a sincere, purposeful and forward-looking manner. The ministers reaffirmed their determination not to allow terrorism to impede the peace process.'<sup>44</sup>

The two sides however decided to exchange ideas on the Siachen issue so as to arrive at a common understanding before commencement of the next round of dialogue. They also agreed to undertake another joint survey of Sir Creek before the year's end so that its report could be considered in the next round of the composite dialogue. The two sides also finalized the schedule of further meetings. They agreed that expert-level meetings would be held by the end of this year to finalise modalities for the meeting points of divided families across the LoC and to initiate a truck service on the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar route. In their talks the two sides also signed an agreement on the pre-notification of flight-testing of ballistic missiles.

Some positive developments were witnessed in the relations between the two countries in the wake of their collaboration on the relief and rescue efforts during the October 8, 2005, earthquake in Kashmir. The UN Secretary General Kofi Annan remarked on the emerging cooperation that 'the international community would like to see that kind of understanding and goodwill between India and Pakistan to remove their differences over Kashmir.'<sup>45</sup>

All this quickly vanished in the wake of the October 29, 2005, bombings in New Delhi when India blamed the attacks on 'elements' in Pakistan. Pakistan rejected Indian accusations and Musharraf offered the conducting of joint investigations.<sup>46</sup> The period also witnessed the rise of another irritant in India-Pakistan relations when Pakistan levelled allegations of Indian hand in the ongoing low-key insurgency in its province of Balochistan. The dialogue process was however rescued in the wake of

the meeting between the Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and his Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh had on November 12, 2005, on the sidelines of the 13<sup>th</sup> SAARC summit. The two leaders discussed the ongoing peace process and the opening of crossing points along the LoC to help divided families meet each other in two parts of the quake-stricken Kashmir.

### **Third Round: The Continued Deadlock**

Islamabad and New Delhi went ahead with their third round of composite dialogue on January 17-18, 2006. These foreign secretary level talks in New Delhi were devoted to Kashmir, security issues and the other segments of the composite dialogue. No concrete progress was however witnessed during the talks. A joint statement issued after the talks however presented a wholesome picture of purposeful engagements ahead to bid for a final settlement of the Kashmir issue and other related differences.

The statement noted that the two sides ‘had a detailed exchange of views on Jammu and Kashmir’ and agreed to continue the sustained dialogue in a purposeful and forward looking manner to find a peaceful and negotiated final settlement. It noted with satisfaction the opening of the five crossing points across the LoC, and hoped that the process of promoting greater interaction between the divided families would get further impetus. The statement reiterated the commitment of the two sides to start a bus service between Poonch and Rawalakot and a truck service on Muzaffarabad-Srinagar route for trade in permitted goods as soon as the infrastructure damaged during the Oct 8 earthquake is restored.<sup>47</sup>

In February Pakistan and India agreed to start the Thar Express connecting Munabao in India’s western state of Rajasthan and Khokhrapar in Pakistani province of Sindh. In March 2006, the two countries agreed on the schedule of meetings for the remaining six items of the third round of the composite dialogue. Announcing the schedule at a weekly news briefing Pakistan’s Foreign Office spokesperson said, ‘The third round of Composite Dialogue is crucial in moving the peace process forward. Pakistan is committed to further build upon the momentum achieved in the last two rounds.’ Responding to a question on expectations from the next round, the spokesperson said, ‘We do expect that we will be able to move forward on a number of issues, particularly on Siachen and Sir Creek.’<sup>48</sup>

On March 21, 2006, talks were held on human trafficking, counterfeit currency and illegal immigration. On March 27, 2006, the two countries held the second meeting of the Pakistan-India Joint Study Group (JSG) on commercial relations. This was followed by talks on economic and commercial cooperation on March 28-29, 2006. On April 25, 2006, the two countries held the next round of expert-level talks on nuclear CBMs. In the joint statement, the two sides expressed satisfaction at the signing of an agreement on the pre-notification of flight tests of ballistic missiles, and the opening of the hotline between the two foreign secretaries. These were followed by talks on conventional CBMs whereby the two sides agreed that they would not set up any new military posts along LoC. However New Delhi rejected Islamabad's proposal to move heavy artillery outside the boundaries of Kashmir.

In May Pakistan and India talked about launching new CBMs to spearhead a trans-Kashmir trade route and to establish five new meeting points across the LoC. Both sides also agreed to start the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad truck service to facilitate cross-LoC trade in the first half of July 2006. It was agreed that delegations from the chambers of commerce from both sides of the LoC would undertake visits at the earliest possible time to discuss various aspects of the trade. The two sides agreed that Poonch-Rawalakot bus service would commence from June 19, 2006. On other fronts, India officially decided to join the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP) gas pipeline project on May 18, 2006, while on May 22, 2006, the Iran-Pakistan-India working group on IPI pipeline reiterated that the project should be implemented as soon as possible for mutual benefit.

Late in May 2006, the two countries held talks on Siachen that ended inconclusively. Later on Indian and Pakistani officials also toiled unsuccessfully to find common ground on the Sir Creek dispute. The two merely agreed to conduct a joint survey of the disputed region between November 2006 and March 2007. On May 30-31, 2006, home secretaries of India and Pakistan held talks on terrorism and drugs smuggling in Islamabad. These were followed by meetings on June 1 and 2, 2006, in New Delhi between the culture secretaries of the two countries on promoting friendly exchanges. The last meeting of the third round took place in Islamabad on June 22-23, 2006, on the contentious issue of the Wullar Barrage. The third round of talks thus also ended without making headway on key issues except for a second bus

service connecting the divided Kashmir, and a truck service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad.

## **Mumbai Bombings, Suspension of the Peace Process and the United States**

The peace process suffered a serious setback just before the scheduled review of the third round on July 21-22, 2006, in the wake of the bombings in Mumbai and Srinagar on July 11, 2006, leading to fresh strains in the relations between the two countries. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh accused unnamed elements in Pakistan of the bombings and remarked that the ‘blasts are bound to affect relations with Pakistan.’<sup>49</sup> Similarly, India’s foreign secretary Shyam Saran remarked that the blasts would weigh heavily on Manmohan’s mind when he would go to St Petersburg for the coming G-8 summit. Meanwhile India also postponed planned meetings with Pakistan.

Pakistan condemned the bombings as a ‘despicable act of terrorism’ and cautioned that any stalling of the peace process between Pakistan and India would be unfortunate. Musharraf remarked that ‘We must not allow such terrorist acts to undermine the historic opportunity for lasting peace between Pakistan and India.’<sup>50</sup> He further asked New Delhi to avoid the ‘blame game’ over the blasts and held out the assurance that Pakistan would extend fullest cooperation if any information about the elements involved in the terrorist act was shared with Islamabad.<sup>51</sup>

As the peace process seemed to be derailing, Washington impressed upon New Delhi and Islamabad to continue with the dialogue process while offering to help India investigate the blasts. It hoped that the suspension of the high-level peace talks between India and Pakistan would be temporary. Boucher reminded both countries on the occasion that their ‘cooperation over the long-term is very important’ for peace and prosperity in the South Asian region.<sup>52</sup>

The United States also took a more balanced view of the Mumbai blasts initially and remained reluctant to accept the Indian claim that groups based in Pakistan carried out the attacks. Boucher reminded India that ‘Some of the groups that are suspected in these bombings are actually outlawed in Pakistan.’ In an indirect reference to India’s claims that Pakistan-based groups were behind the attacks, he said that ‘We need to see if there are sources of terrorism in other countries ... we need to work with those countries and try and move things forward so that we can get to these



groups.’ He urged both countries to avoid the ‘discord of the past’ by working together to ‘really get to the group behind the Mumbai blasts.’ He further said that ‘We have seen a lot of progress in India-Pakistan relations and I hope that progress is maintained and when it comes to issues of terrorism they can find that they need to work together.’<sup>53</sup>

Also in a press briefing State Department spokesman Sean McCormack told a journalist that he was being ‘presumptuous’ when he suggested that the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice should discuss the terror attacks with the visiting Pakistani Foreign Minister. When the journalist insisted that the attacks were carried out by terrorists who had camps and bases in Pakistan, the spokesman said ‘I wouldn’t try to make any connection.’<sup>54</sup>

However later on Washington acknowledged that certain terrorist groups having ‘designs’ against India still exist in Pakistan but it also expressed the hope that peace talks between the two neighbours would resume at an appropriate time anyway. Going back on his earlier comments whereby he had said that that India had no evidence to accuse Pakistan for the Mumbai blasts, Boucher commented during his visit to India in August 2006 that ‘things have advanced’ since he made the remarks weeks ago. He said that ‘We all know there is terrorism in the region. Some of terrorism is in Pakistan. Some of the groups that have designs against India still have pieces in Pakistan.’ However, at the same time he delinked Kashmir from terrorism when he said that ‘I don’t see the issue of Kashmir and terrorism linked in anyway’ and that ‘We need all to fight terrorism for variety of reasons. But it is also good to see progress made on Kashmir. We would like to see that as well.’<sup>55</sup>

It was not until September 2006 that two countries decided to re-engage in the talks with the strong encouragement from Washington. On September 16, 2006, Musharraf and Manmohan Singh agreed to resume negotiations after talks held on the sidelines of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit in Havana. The leaders decided on the occasion to continue the joint search for mutually acceptable options for a peaceful negotiated settlement on all issues and directed their respective foreign secretaries to resume the dialogue.<sup>56</sup> The two leaders also agreed to set up a mechanism to jointly fight terrorism as a new element in the dialogue.

The formal composite dialogue resumed when the foreign secretaries of the two countries held talks in mid-November, 2006. The talks were preceded by comments by Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Kasuri, claiming that the Siachen issue was

ripe and ready for a resolution within days.<sup>57</sup> The delegations discussed almost all segments of the composite dialogue including Kashmir and the modalities of the newly set up joint anti-terrorism mechanism. There was however no substantive progress in the talks and these concluded with the usual statements to resolve bilateral disputes expeditiously through talks.

Late in November 2006, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Kasuri travelled to India on a 'private' visit where he met with a number of Indian leaders and officials. This resulted in the decision to hold a formal political review of the third round of composite dialogue and to start the fourth round of the composite dialogue. Subsequently, Indian Minister for External Affairs Pranab Mukherjee visited Islamabad in mid-January, 2007, for the political review of the dialogue. No major breakthrough on key issues was however seen during the visit, although it was agreed to launch the fourth round of composite dialogue on March 13-14, 2007, in Islamabad.

The resumption of dialogue was welcomed in Washington and other important capitals of the world. China also welcomed the resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan and initiation of the newest round of talks in the wake of Mukherjee's visit. Welcoming the positive progress in the talks Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said through a balanced approach to the region that 'China, as the common neighbor, friend and partner of India and Pakistan, sincerely hoped that the two nations would solve their disputes through friendly consultation, so as to jointly promote peace and prosperity in South Asia.'<sup>58</sup>

Meanwhile more bomb blasts occurred in India and this time the target was the Samjhota Express train service running between the two countries as agreed upon during the peace process. On February 19, 2007, bombs exploded inside the train from New Delhi to the border post of Attari sparking a fire in which at least 68 passengers, mostly Pakistanis, were burned to death. Musharraf said that 'We will not allow elements which want to sabotage the ongoing peace process and succeed in their nefarious designs.'<sup>59</sup> New Delhi called the incident an act of terrorism and rejected the Pakistan National Assembly's demand for a joint investigation into the train bombing and Mukherjee told that the bombing would be probed according to the 'law of the land.'<sup>60</sup>

However the two sides continued with the talks when Kasuri travelled to India on a four-day official visit late in February 2007, where he attended the meetings of

the joint commission. During his visit the two sides also reviewed overall progress in the peace process. They also discussed the Kashmir issue and the holding of the joint survey of the Sir Creek. The countries also signed a treaty on reducing the risk of nuclear accidents and another on preventing untoward incidents in the waters shared by the two countries. India and Pakistan also had the first meeting of the Joint Anti-terror Mechanism in early March 2007 in Islamabad. At the end of the talks, the two sides agreed to exchange specific information in order to facilitate terrorist act-related investigations on either side and help prevent such acts of violence in the two countries under the Joint Anti-Terrorism Mechanism.

#### **Fourth Round: The Continued Impasse**

The fourth round of talks started when foreign secretaries of the two countries met in early March 2007 in Islamabad. The talks dealt with Kashmir and security issues while also focussing on other agenda items of the composite dialogue. While agreeing on some minor aspects of the relations between the two countries, these talks ended with a mere decision to hold discussions on the respective security doctrines of the two countries. Early in March, 2007, the two countries also held meetings of the Pakistan-India Joint Anti-Terrorist Mechanism during which Islamabad handed over to India ‘a dossier on terrorist acts sponsored by Indian agencies in Pakistan, particularly in Balochistan.’<sup>61</sup>

Meanwhile Shaukat Aziz and Manmohan Singh had a one-on-one meeting on the sidelines of the SAARC forum in New Delhi on April 4, 2007, during which they agreed to carry forward the peace process and pursue decisively the IPI gas pipeline project. They also agreed to grant permission to their respective banks to open branches and increase air links between the two countries. Growing irritants in the peace process were highlighted when Aziz also raised the Samjhota incident with his Indian counterpart and underscored Pakistan’s interest in receiving the findings by Indian investigators as most of the victims were Pakistani nationals. He also discussed with India its concerns about outside involvement in a tribal insurgency in its restive Balochistan province.<sup>62</sup>

On April 6, 2007, the two countries held talks on the Siachen issue. This round of talks also concluded without making any headway owing to the traditional viewpoints of the two sides. At the end of the Siachen talks a brief statement declared yet again in the standard diplomatic jargon that the talks were held in a ‘candid and

constructive atmosphere.’ The two sides agreed once again to continue the discussions to resolve the issue in a ‘peaceful’ manner.

Similarly, on May 17, 2007, Pakistan and India conducted the next round of talks on Sir Creek issue. The two sides exchanged maps of the area marked with their respective claims over the marshy strip as well as maritime boundary in the area. Unlike the Siachen issue, over which the two sides could not make much headway, Sir Creek was now being increasingly seen by both sides as negotiable. They however failed to resolve the differences and the two sides merely vowed to continue discussions for an amicable settlement of the issue.

Late in June 2007, the two countries talked about the promotion of friendly exchanges, and this ended with both sides agreeing to work towards speedy implementation and institutionalisation of the ‘Programme of Friendly Exchanges’ in various fields. Similarly, the home secretaries of the two countries met on July 3-4, 2007, and discussed terrorism and drug trafficking. A joint statement issued after spoke of candid discussions ‘in a constructive and friendly atmosphere.’ However the two sides were able to agree only on some peripheral issues that included some measures towards visa relaxation between the two countries and the agreement to release by August 14-15, 2007, those prisoners who had been granted consular access, whose national status had been verified, and who had completed their prison sentences.

At the end of July 2007, India and Pakistan had talks on trade ties. Similarly at the end of August 2007 the two sides talked on Wullar Barrage project without it leading to any compromise on the issue. The two sides simply vowed to continue their talks on the issue. On October 18, 2007, talks were held on nuclear and conventional CBMs. However at the end the two sides agreed upon some invaluable measures. The next round for the discussion on joint anti-terrorism mechanisms was held on October 22, 2007. Meanwhile Pakistan and India agreed to increase the number of flights, destinations, and airlines operating between them.

The pace of the negotiation process slowed down owing to the arrival of scheduled elections in Pakistan. It was not until April, 2008, that the two countries decided to review the progress of the fourth round of composite dialogue in May 2008. Meanwhile the petroleum ministers of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India made ‘some headway’ in talks held to work out a framework for the

Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project. The meeting found the project 'bankable' and the parties vowed to proceed on the premise.

The fourth round was wrapped up by the two countries with meetings between the foreign secretaries and the foreign ministers of the two countries on May 20-21, 2008, without any breakthrough on the sticky issues. Indian foreign secretary Mr Menon merely said after the talks that there had been conversation of an 'unparalleled depth' on thorny issues like Jammu and Kashmir. He remarked that 'We are very much closer to settlement of some major issues.'<sup>63</sup> Pakistan's Foreign Minister Qureshi remarked after the talks with his Indian counterpart that Pakistan was ready for 'grand reconciliation' with India if India reciprocated. Qureshi said that Pakistan was open to innovative ideas that could facilitate the dialogue and create a more enabling environment and that 'We don't have a shut mind.' Similar diplomatic gestures were uttered by his Indian counterpart Mukherjee who said that India was equally determined to resolve all core issues and overcome hurdles in improving its ties with Pakistan and that he was 'going back with a sense of satisfaction.'<sup>64</sup>

Thus, despite these gestures, no substantial progress on major issues was made. The only highlight of the talks held after seven months was the signing of an accord to provide consular access to prisoners in each other's jails, and an agreement on some minor confidence-building measures. It was also decided that the next round of peace talks would begin in mid-July in New Delhi. June 24, 2008, witnessed the third meeting of the Pakistan-India Joint Anti-Terrorism Mechanism whereby the two sides agreed to improve the 'quality' of exchange of vital counter-terrorism information to assist each other in investigation of incidents of terrorism and in pre-empting attacks.

### **More Bombings and a Tense Final Round**

As the two countries prepared for the next round of talks in mid-2008, there also erupted a fresh wave of protests in Indian Kashmir raising concerns about the continuity of the ongoing peace process. A protest movement, mostly peaceful, erupted in Kashmir in the wake of the transfer of land to a Hindu shrine in what the Kashmiris perceived a plan to change the demographic balance in the area. These protests turned out to be the largest pro-freedom protests in the region in almost two decades. Noor Mohammed Baba, a professor at the political science department of Kashmir University, remarked on the new development that 'It's the people's

response to the failure of the peace process in resolving the Kashmir dispute' and that 'these unprecedented protests should be a signal to the government of India that a semblance of peace does not automatically mean the issue is resolved.'<sup>65</sup>

Also the bombing at the Indian embassy in Kabul on July 7, 2008, in which around forty-one people, including Indian military attaché and a political counsellor, were killed, led to further deterioration in the regional environment. The attack came as Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh prepared to meet President Bush on the sidelines of the G-8 summit in Japan. Pakistan condemned the bombing and Foreign Minister Qureshi said that 'Pakistan denounces terrorism in all its forms and manifestations as this menace negates the very essence of human values' expressing his 'profound condolences' to the bereaved families.<sup>66</sup>

New Delhi however blamed Pakistan for the incident and India's National Security Adviser (NSA) Narayanan remarked that 'The ISI needs to be destroyed. We [have] made this point, whenever we have had a chance, to interlocutors across the world.'<sup>67</sup> At the same time fresh accusations of violations of the ceasefire along the LoC by the Indian forces were raised both by Pakistan and India.

India and Pakistan however went ahead with the formal launching of the fifth round of the composite dialogue on July 21-22, 2008, as the foreign secretaries of the two countries talked on Kashmir and peace and security. With the start of the fifth round of composite dialogue in mid-2008, hopes were raised that this might result in the resolution of less contentious issues like Siachen and Sir Creek. Qureshi remarked at the start of the round that Sir Creek dispute was 'doable' and Siachen too could be resolved.<sup>68</sup>

However brewing tensions between the two countries were highlighted when Indian foreign secretary said at the start of the talks that India's peace process with Pakistan was 'under stress' repeating allegations that 'elements' in Islamabad were behind a suicide attack at the Indian embassy in Kabul.<sup>69</sup> At the end the two sides arrived only at some insignificant Kashmir-related CBMs. They announced that there would be an increase in the frequency of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalkot buses from fortnightly to weekly. Both sides also decided to take steps to reduce processing time for applications. They also agreed to increase the number of people per crossing to 60. Similarly no common ground could be found to resolve Siachen and Sir Creek also.

Meanwhile further strains developed in the India-Pakistan relations when there was more bombing incidents in India. Bombings occurred on July 25, 2008, in Bangalore and on July 26, 2008, in different parts of the western Indian city of Ahmedabad resulting in number of deaths. An Indian group named Indian Mujahideen accepted the responsibility for the attacks. Pakistan condemned the incidents and its new Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani ‘expressed deep sympathies with the bereaved families and the victims of these dastardly acts of senseless violence against innocent persons.’<sup>70</sup> The growing uneasiness in the relations between the two countries was also highlighted when fresh skirmishes between Indian and Pakistani troops across the LoC were reported in late July.

Things seemed to be coming back on track when Qureshi stated that he and his Indian counterpart Mukherjee had agreed mutually that the prime ministers of the two countries ‘will come out with a comprehensive statement on bilateral engagement.’ The remarks came as the two foreign ministers met on August 1, 2008, behind closed doors to lay the groundwork for talks between Manmohan Singh and Gilani on the sidelines of the upcoming SAARC summit in Colombo. Qureshi said that his talks with Mukherjee had helped ‘clear the air’ between the two countries.<sup>71</sup>

Later the PMs of the two countries on August 2, 2008, held talks in Colombo that marked the highest-level interaction between the two countries in 15 months. During the talks Gilani offered to investigate New Delhi’s charge that the ISI was involved in the attack on its embassy in Kabul.<sup>72</sup> At the end of the talks the two leaders merely agreed to keep the peace process alive without the hint of any major breakthrough.

Meanwhile protest movement triggered by the land dispute in Indian Kashmir continued. In August, 2008, Kashmir started facing a shortage of food, fuel and medicine as protesters in Hindu-dominated Jammu embarked upon attacking trucks ferrying food, drugs and other essential supplies to the Muslim-majority valley, seeking to impose an economic blockade. Omar Abdullah, head of the pro-India National Conference, remarked on the developing situation that this was ‘the most polarised situation I’ve seen in a generation.’<sup>73</sup> During the protest movement on August 11, 2008, Indian security forces shot to death five Kashmiris who were part of a huge protest demonstration headed for the LoC, including senior APHC leader Sheikh Abdul Aziz, a member of its apex executive council. More deaths of Kashmiris followed in other demonstrations across India-controlled Kashmir.

This led to rising anti-India sentiments in Pakistan and large demonstrations in the Pakistani part of Kashmir and wide condemnations by Islamabad. Qureshi while deploring the killing of Abdul Aziz called for immediate steps to end the ‘unwarranted use of force against the people of Indian Occupied Kashmir.’<sup>74</sup> Similarly Musharraf also strongly condemned ‘the acts of state terrorism by the occupation forces in Kashmir and the killing of APHC leader Shaikh Abdul Aziz and innocent protesters.’<sup>75</sup>

On September 13, 2008, five bombs exploded in quick succession in crowded markets and streets in New Delhi killing at least 22 people. The Indian Mujahideen militant group accepted the responsibility for the blasts. Pakistan strongly condemned the bomb blasts whereas India’s Defence Minister again blamed Pakistan when he remarked that ‘Militants are getting support from across the border and it is a matter of serious concern.’<sup>76</sup>

The mounting tensions between the two countries were highlighted by fresh skirmishes along the LoC in mid-September 2008. Meanwhile India also deployed its top fighter jets, Sukhoi-30MKI, capable of carrying nuclear weapons, in Kashmir. Moreover differences over the sharing of river waters entering Pakistan from Kashmir also created further stresses in the regional environment.

On September 25, 2008, Manmohan and Pakistan’s new President Asif Ali Zardari met on the sidelines of the UNGA meeting in New York to salvage the peace process. During the talks the two sides resolved to restart the stalled composite dialogue process and settle the water disputes in the spirit of the Indus Water Treaty. It was also decided that a special meeting of the Joint Anti-Terror Mechanism would be held in October 2008 to address mutual concerns including the bombing of the Indian embassy in Kabul. The statement noted that this would allow the continuation and deepening of constructive dialogue for the peaceful resolution and satisfactory settlement of all bilateral issues, including Kashmir. The two leaders also agreed that the foreign secretaries of both countries would schedule meetings of the fifth round of the composite dialogue in the next three months, which would focus on ‘deliverables and concrete achievements.’<sup>77</sup>

On October 21, 2008, modest symbolic trading across the LoC in Kashmir began for the first time in six decades. On October 24, 2008, Gilani and Manmohan met in Beijing on the sidelines of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) summit. At the meeting the two leaders showed willingness to address their common problems. They



resolved to move forward in a positive manner for resolving their disputes through composite dialogue.

The two countries held their next round of talks on terrorism and drug trafficking on November 25, 2008, with no significant outcomes. During the talks the Indian side sought the custody of Daud Ibrahim who was claimed to be in Pakistan, which was however denied by the Pakistani side. While the Pakistani side asked the Indian delegation to apprise Pakistan about investigations into the Samjhota Express blast. Information about the involvement of the Indian Army's Lt-Col P.S. Purohit in the attack was also sought.<sup>78</sup>

### **The Mumbai Mini-Crisis, Derailment of the Peace Process and the US Role**

The peace process was however called off by New Delhi in the wake of the Mumbai attacks on November 26, 2008. About 160 people, including tourists of various nationalities, were killed in the attacks. Those killed also included some US nationals. Blaming the incident on 'elements from Pakistan,' India took a belligerent posture towards Pakistan. As a result some of the trust that had been built between the two countries during the peace process was lost.

India alleged Jama'at ud Dawa (JuD) - a group formed by the affiliates of LeT after its banning by Pakistan - to be behind the Mumbai attacks. The UJC non-member JuD however denied involvement in the Mumbai attacks.<sup>79</sup> Describing Pakistan as the 'epicentre of terrorism,' India also despatched its envoys to important international capitals to seek support. India also demanded the extradition of persons involved in Mumbai attacks and other acts of violence in India believed to be present in Pakistan.

Pakistan rejected India's demand and urged it to share evidence proving that elements from this country territory had carried out attacks. Islamabad also condemned the attacks and in response to Indian allegations, Gilani as well as Zardari talked to Singh on phone and offered full cooperation from Pakistan in investigating the carnage.<sup>80</sup> While Qureshi asked India to provide evidence to substantiate its allegations that groups based in Pakistan had carried out the attacks it assured New Delhi that action would be taken against those found involved in 'this dastardly act.'<sup>81</sup>

Mounting tensions in the region were also highlighted by some military movements in both countries in the wake of talks in India of 'surgical strikes' on the

alleged militant camps in Pakistan. India moved part of its forces to the forward positions while describing it as 'normal winter exercises.' Pakistan was not ready to believe that and it also put its forces on high alert and moved some of these to the borders along India. Meanwhile Islamabad also hinted that if India keeps insisting on 'handing over the suspects of the Mumbai attacks, we will also ask it to hand over the accused of the Samjhauta Express blast.'<sup>82</sup>

Rising tensions and fears of escalation in the region soon after the Mumbai Attacks were highlighted when Indian Foreign Minister Mukherjee told his Pakistani counterpart Qureshi in tough talk over the telephone that 'they are leaving us no choice but to go to war.'<sup>83</sup> The situation became worse for Islamabad in the wake of a reportedly 'fake' call by the Indian Foreign Minister Mukherjee to President Zardari on 28 November, 2008, which said that India was preparing to attack Pakistan. According to reports in Pakistani media, 'as the telephone call ended many in the Presidency were convinced that the Indians had started beating the war drums.'<sup>84</sup> All this led to a panic response from Pakistan and Islamabad contacted important countries including China, Saudi Arabia and UAE in order to help present its concerns to the United States regarding the possible Indian moves. Heightened tensions in the region were also highlighted when two Indian warplanes violated Pakistani airspace at two different locations on December 14, 2008, leading to declaration of emergency at the Pakistani airbases.

As the peace process broke down in the wake of the Mumbai attacks of November 2008 and a new crisis emerged in the region, the Bush administration took a position similar to that during the 2001-02 Crisis. It urged calm while at the same time brought considerable pressure on Pakistan to act against those groups swiftly that were blamed by India of being involved in the attacks. It also got involved in hectic diplomatic activity to manage the evolving tensions in the region. Secretary Rice made a number of calls to regional leaders as the tensions soured and President Bush held an hour-long video-teleconference with US diplomats in India to assess the situation. Similarly, Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice and other important US officials also visited the region to manage the deteriorating situation between India and Pakistan.

As the regional situation worsened in the wake of the Mumbai attacks, a White House spokesman warned that 'In some ways that whole region is like a forest that hasn't had rain in many months and one spark could cause a big, roaring fire' and

‘That’s what we’re trying to avoid.’ He said that in a situation like this ‘the most important thing we can do right now is to try to foster dialogue’ between India and Pakistan.<sup>85</sup>

Responding to the deteriorating regional situation Washington despatched Secretary Rice and Chairman Joint Chief of Staff Mike Mullen to India and Pakistan. Mullen met with the Pakistani leadership on December 3, 2008, while Rice arrived in New Delhi on the same day. After that Mullen went to India while Rice visited Pakistan. During her visit to India Rice said at a news conference with her Indian counterpart that India should exercise restraint. She remarked that ‘Any response needs to be judged by its effectiveness in prevention and also by not creating other unintended consequences or difficulties.’<sup>86</sup>

In the wake of a deteriorating regional situation after the Mumbai attacks of 2008, Washington again became concerned about its objectives in Afghanistan when Pakistan told the United States that it was not involved in the Mumbai carnage, directly or indirectly, and that any aggression from the Indian side would compel it to move its forces fighting militants in the tribal areas to the Indian border. Pakistan’s position was conveyed by President Zardari during a meeting with the visiting US Joint Chief of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen. He made it clear that the ‘war on terror’ would not be Pakistan’s top priority if there was any unusual military build-up by India along the borders.<sup>87</sup>

It was in the context of the US concerns in Afghanistan that the US Defence Secretary Robert Gates, while urging restraint on both sides, remarked on the evolving situation that the United States needed to continue strengthening its partnership with Pakistan and ‘do what we can to enable them to deal with the problem on their side of the border.’ He however warned at the same time that the Mumbai attacks showed that the terrorist threat had shifted from Iraq to Afghanistan and Pakistan. He remarked on the occasion that ‘Now that we basically have our foot on the neck of Al Qaeda in Iraq, the safe havens in the Fata and that area are a great concern and do pose probably the greatest threat to the homeland, from Al Qaeda and other extremist organisations.’ When asked how he planned to deal with the threat, Gates said that the solution involved partnering with the Pakistanis, with the US and Afghan troops working from the Afghan side of the border, and the Pakistanis working it from their side.<sup>88</sup>

In an effort to balance its posture vis-à-vis India and Pakistan, the United States refused to endorse the Indian point of view that Pakistan's government was involved in the attacks. White House spokeswoman Dana Perino remarked that 'I've heard nothing that says the Pakistani government was involved.' She played down the suggestion that Pakistan or Pakistani intelligence agencies were involved in the Mumbai attacks or Pakistan cannot be trusted to investigate the attacks. She remarked that 'that is not what the Pakistanis have said, and we're going to hold them to it.' She further said that 'Remember, Pakistan has been the victim of terrorism, as well, and it is not even quite a year since Benazir Bhutto was assassinated by a terrorist. And so it's a fresh wound for them, as well.'<sup>89</sup>

At the same time the United States brought increased pressure on Pakistan to act against the Pakistan-based groups involved in the Mumbai attacks. During the visit of Indian foreign secretary Menon to the United States soon after the Mumbai attacks, State Department's spokesman Robert Wood told a briefing that 'Pakistan ... needs to give its full, complete and transparent cooperation with the investigation into the Mumbai attacks and to follow leads wherever they may go.'<sup>90</sup> Meanwhile, the US intelligence officials, while talking to the US media, confirmed India's claim that LeT was involved in the Mumbai attacks. They said that British intelligence agents had recorded conversations between the attackers and their backers in Pakistan.<sup>91</sup>

Increased US pressure on Pakistan to move against the militant networks accused by India of being involved in the Mumbai attacks was further revealed when during her visit to India, Rice remarked that 'The response of the Pakistani government should be one of cooperation and of action.' In an apparent reference to President Asif Ali Zardari's characterisation of the Mumbai attackers as 'stateless' actors, she added that even if 'non-state actors' had carried out the killings, it would still be Pakistan's responsibility to take 'direct and tough action' against them. She further said that 'I have said that Pakistan needs to act with resolve and urgency, cooperate fully and transparently' and 'That message has been delivered and will be delivered to Pakistan.'<sup>92</sup>

While in Pakistan she took the position that 'There is a lot of information and it needs to be used to get to the perpetrators and prevent them from doing it again.' She emphasised that 'There is urgency in getting to the bottom of it; there is urgency in bringing the perpetrators to justice; and there is urgency for using the information to disrupt and prevent further attacks.' In Islamabad, Rice also made a case for

international involvement in the investigation. She said that ‘the most effective way was through international cooperation involving India and any other willing partner, be it the UK or the US.’ Urging Pakistan to provide ‘unequivocal help’ to India, she stressed that ‘Pakistan should be seen acting sincerely and quickly.’<sup>93</sup> Later, on December 7, Rice claimed that there was ‘evidence’ to suggest that people living in Pakistan were involved in the recent attacks in Mumbai. Rice added that ‘Pakistan needs to cooperate transparently. They’ve said that they will. Clearly there are organisations that operate with longstanding involvement in this kind of activity [in Pakistan].’<sup>94</sup>

Rice’s visit to the region proved to be the key turning point in the crisis during which she was able to cool down the Indians and convince the Pakistanis to act against those individuals accused by India. Rice notes late in her memoir that after her visit to the region she ‘thought that a war could be averted.’<sup>95</sup> The impact of her visit was highlighted when soon after her visit Pakistani authorities started crackdowns against what it described as banned organizations and these steps were also welcomed by Washington as ‘positive’.<sup>96</sup>

The United States however continued with the follow-up pressure to keep things moving in Pakistan. For example, US Defence Secretary Robert Gates remarked that whereas ‘it’s important for there to be restraint on both sides ... but it’s also important to find out who was responsible.’<sup>97</sup> Similarly, during the visit of Pakistan’s NSA Mr. Durrani to Washington after the Mumbai attacks, he was reportedly told that ‘this is not 2002 and you cannot do what President Musharraf did after 9/11. In the past, you swept everything under the carpet while the problems were allowed to fester. No more.’ Equating the India focussed Jihadi groups in Pakistan with Al Qaeda, he was told that ‘Global terrorism is not just an India-Pakistan dispute. We see LeT and Jamaat-ud-Dawa at par with Al Qaeda.’<sup>98</sup>

an editorial of the Washington Post also backed India’s claim that the LeT was behind the attack and advised that ‘The best way to salvage Pakistani democracy, and to prevent a slide toward war between two nuclear powers, is for Islamabad to shut down LeT and similar organisations swiftly, permanently and verifiably.’<sup>99</sup> Also Robert Kagan, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment, even went as far as suggesting placing the tribal belt and the areas where terrorist groups allegedly had their bases under international control. He suggested forming an international force to invade those areas and destroy the bases. He urged the United States to convince

China and Russia not to oppose the creation of such a force if and when the proposal goes to the United Nations. He acknowledged that forming such a force to invade Pakistani territories would violate the country's sovereignty but argued that 'Pakistan and other states that harbour terrorists should not take their sovereignty for granted. In the 21st century, sovereign rights need to be earned.'<sup>100</sup>

The growing international pressure on Pakistan was highlighted when on December 11, UNSC added Pakistan-based JuD and four of its leaders to the list of entities and organizations known to support al Qaeda and the Taliban as a result of a joint Indo-US move. The Security Council listed JuD as an alias of the proscribed Lashkar-e-Taiba terror group. Hafiz Saeed was listed as the leader of the LeT. The UNSC also listed Lakhvi, Haji Mohammad Ashraf, and Mahmoud Mohammad Ahmed Bahaziq as senior members of the LeT, and Lakhvi was listed as the terror group's chief of operations.

Late in December 2008, in a speech at Council on Foreign Relations, Rice said that what Pakistan had done so far to catch those responsible for last month's terrorist attacks in Mumbai was not enough. She remarked that 'it's not enough to say these are non-state actors. If they're operating from Pakistani territory, then they have to be dealt with.' She said that the civilian government in Pakistan has thus far taken some positive steps but 'they're not nearly enough to this point.'<sup>101</sup>

The growing pressure on Pakistan was highlighted when State Department, spokesman Sean McCormack said that we are urging Pakistan 'every single day' to do whatever it can to prevent future attacks and to track down and get off the street those responsible for these attacks.'<sup>102</sup> Meanwhile Dawn, citing US and diplomatic sources, reported on December 31 that Pakistan faces tremendous pressure from the United States to extradite to India Lakhvi, the alleged mastermind of the Mumbai terror attacks. It was reported that the United States had given Pakistan a taped conversation that Lakhvi, a leader of JuD, allegedly had with the gunmen involved in the attacks. It said that American audio experts had checked the tape and concluded that it was genuine and that the speaker was Lakhvi and that the Pakistani authorities now needed to take steps to satisfy the international community.<sup>103</sup>

In response to growing pressure from New Delhi and Washington, Islamabad initiated a more vigorous countrywide crack-down against JuD, sealing its offices and putting its leadership, including its chief Hafiz Mohammad Saeed and Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi, wanted by India in connection with the Mumbai attacks, behind the

bars. Pakistan later also banned JuD when it was declared a terrorist organization, saying being a signatory to the UN charter, the government was under obligation to implement the decisions of the world body and take action against the Dawa. However, Qureshi said there was no evidence that JuD was engaged in any acts of violence but that 'If there is evidence (of terror activities) we will take action.'<sup>104</sup>

Islamabad meanwhile also reiterated its call for negotiations and de-escalation with India, spelling out two proposals for defusing tensions arising from the Mumbai attacks. The two proposals presented by Qureshi asked India to 'de-activate the forward airbases that have been activated' and 'relocate the troops back to peace time positions.'<sup>105</sup> Islamabad also pledged that investigations into the Mumbai carnage would be made under Pakistani laws by the Pakistani investigators while Indian investigators would also be more than welcome. It also asked New Delhi to provide tangible evidence and said that if anyone is found guilty of being involved in the heinous crime, he will be tried. In this regard, a case against those accused by India was also registered with the police in Pakistan.

Increased US involvement in managing the regional tension was highlighted when President Bush held separate conversations with Indian and Pakistani leaders late in December 2008. Speaking separately with Zardari and Manmohan, Bush 'urged both ... to cooperate with each other in the Mumbai attack investigation as well as on counter-terrorism in general.' The two sides agreed with President Bush on the occasion to avoid any moves that could escalate tensions between the two neighbours.<sup>106</sup>

Increased US pressure which led to the Pakistani actions against the persons accused by India of being involved in the attacks, including their arrest as well as start of the judicial proceedings against them, helped reduce tensions in the region. Signs of lowering tensions in the region were highlighted when Indian Foreign Minister Mukherjee told a television channel in mid-January 2009 that India would be satisfied if those involved in planning and executing the Mumbai attacks are tried in Pakistani courts, provided they are 'tried fairly.'<sup>107</sup> This was opposed to his previous demand of handing them over to India.

With the passage of time, rhetoric decreased on both sides and by the end of January 2009 threats of any dramatic escalation were over. Things settled down further when New Delhi welcomed an official Pakistani announcement in mid-February 2009 that a 'First Information Report' based on the information provided by

India had been lodged with the local police.<sup>108</sup> The Pakistani Interior Minister, who announced the decision in a press conference, admitted that according to the initial inquiry report a 'part' of the conspiracy of Mumbai attacks was hatched in Pakistan and that links have been found in other states, including the US, Austria, Spain, Italy and Russia. The formal acknowledgment came on the final day of the visit to the country by Richard Holbrook, special envoy of President Obama to the region, who raised the issue with top Pakistani government officials.<sup>109</sup>

Although the intensity of the regional crisis ensuing in the wake of the Mumbai Attacks was not as severe as its two predecessors, i.e. the Kargil Crisis and the 2001-02 Crisis, it did contain seeds of escalation and the spiral could lead to intentional or inadvertent outbreak of war between the two countries. The two countries were not only involved in a heightened rhetoric but also undertook significant military movements which if unchecked could spiral out of control.

It is important to note that India did not rule out the option of going to war with Pakistan during the crisis period, i.e. starting from the day of the attacks (November 26, 2008) up to mid-January 2009. On December 22, 2008, Mukherjee warned Pakistan that 'We have kept our options open.'<sup>110</sup> This was again highlighted when on January 14, 2009 Indian army chief Deepak Kapoor remarked that 'It must be clearly understood that we are keeping all our options open whether diplomatic, economic or as a last resort, the military one.'<sup>111</sup> India was thus willing to show restraint only if the United States was able to extract concessions from Pakistan. Rice recalls in her memoirs: 'When I arrived at Prime Minister Singh's home that night, it was easy to see how much pressure he was under. But he was determined to avoid war. The foreign minister felt the same, 'But you have to get Pakistan to do something'.'

The escalatory potential of this mini-crisis thus cannot be ruled out. Pakistani scrambling in response to India's tough talk of going to war and the reportedly 'fake' phone call from the Indian Foreign Minister that New Delhi was preparing to attack Pakistan only highlights that things could go out of control in the region. Describing Pakistani response at the time, Condoleezza Rice, the US secretary of state at the time, notes in her memoir that 'terrified' Pakistan told 'everyone that India had decided to go to war.'<sup>112</sup> Pakistan thus heavily relied on the United States not only to restrain Indian military moves but also to get reliable information about them.



The Mumbai mini-crisis was thus managed as a result of intense US engagement with the leadership of India and Pakistan whereby the two countries relied heavily on the US assurances during the Crisis. The United States played a role of reliable communicator during the crisis and used its influence to pull back the two sides from the brink. Nayak and Krepon in their detailed study of the US role during the 'Mumbai mini-crisis' describe it as 'exemplary.'<sup>113</sup> It can be thus safely concluded that in the absence of the American diplomacy at the highest level during the peak time of tensions things could spin out of control in the region.

### **The Post-Mumbai Tenuous Restart of the Peace Process**

The Mumbai plunge caused a long interruption of more than a year in the regional dialogue process. However the two countries have slowly resumed dialogues since February 2010 when foreign secretaries of the two countries held talks in New Delhi. This was followed by an interaction between the prime ministers of the two countries during the SAARC summit in Bhutan in April 2010. At the end of their meeting the two sides formally announced the resumption of dialogues, however without describing it as the 'peace process.' This was followed by the talks between the foreign ministers of the two countries in July 2010 in Islamabad. President Zardari's visit to India in April 2012 can be termed as the highest point in this trend.

Under the resumed composite dialogue process the two sides have so far held about two rounds of talks. The two countries discussed the Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation project on May 12-13, 2011 which ended, however, without any breakthrough on the issue. During the talks, two sides merely emphasised the need for an early and amicable resolution of the issue within the ambit of the Indus Waters Treaty. The next round of these talks held late in March 2012 has also failed to resolve the issue.

In May 2011, the two countries talked on Sir Creek which also failed to achieve any breakthrough on the issue. In June 2012, the two sides again discussed the dispute. This has been so-far the 12<sup>th</sup> round of talks over the issue. The two sides however again failed to arrive at any breakthrough and merely reiterated their position and a desire to find an amicable solution through 'sustained and result-oriented dialogue.' Meanwhile the two countries have also held two rounds of talks on Siachen. These talks have been held in May 2011 and June 2012. During these talks

New Delhi has continued to insist that the line beyond NJ 9842 be delineated before any disengagement or withdrawal.

In June 2011, talks were held between the foreign secretaries of the two countries. These talks covered peace and security, including conventional and nuclear-confidence building measures. The talks however ended without any breakthrough and the two sides merely exchanged their ideas on different segments of the dialogue. Similarly Pakistan's Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani visited India in July 2011 to hold parleys with her Indian counterpart. During these talks the sides failed to make any progress regarding resolution of the bilateral disputes while the progress was witnessed only in the domain CBMs. In this regard, the two sides agreed to expand the cross-LoC travel and trade. The two sides also decided to relax the bilateral visa regime by introducing a system of six-month multiple entry permit.<sup>114</sup>

In September 2011, the two sides signed 'MoU on Drug Demand Reduction and Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotics' during the Eighth Director General level talks between Narcotics Control Bureau of India and Anti-Narcotics Force of Pakistan. Similarly, Indian and Pakistani home secretaries have also held two rounds of talks since 2011 on terrorism and issues regarding increased people-to-people contacts between the two countries. During their latest round held in May 2012, the two sides have agreed on measures to increase people-to-people contacts between the two countries and have decided to relax the visa regime in this regard. During talks, Pakistan provided an update on the on-going trial and investigation in Pakistan on the Mumbai Attacks while India provided information on the on-going Samjhauta Express blast case investigation. During their talks, Pakistan also agreed in principle to receive a Judicial Commission from India. The two sides also discussed about establishing a hotline between the home secretaries of the two countries.

Under the resumed dialogue, the two sides have shown more interest in liberalizing the trade regime. Bilateral engagements in this respect began through commerce secretary-level talks at Islamabad in April 2011. In September 2011, Pakistan's commerce minister Makhdoom Fahim visited India. In February 2012, Indian commerce minister Anand Sharma visited Pakistan with a high-powered delegation. In these talks the two sides have agreed on a number of measures including opening up of two branches of State Banks of the two countries, the liberalization of the visa regime for businessmen, reopening of trading posts along the

borders that were closed following Mumbai and a gradual expansion of the tradable items between the two countries.<sup>115</sup>

However, these developments are quite preliminary in nature and the two countries are yet to take concrete steps to put them into reality. Already the two countries are accusing each other of going back on the commitments made during these talks. Pakistan has also expressed resentment that progress on trade issues is not accompanied by a matching positive movement towards resolution of the territorial disputes between the two countries.<sup>116</sup>

India-Pakistan relations continue to experience low-intensity crisis and tensions between the two countries remain high. The dialogue process between them remains deadlocked and prone to unforeseen incidents while their relationship is characterized by aggressive nuclear and military doctrines aimed towards each other. The period has been aptly described by some analysts as the ‘unfinished’ Mumbai crisis.<sup>117</sup> The regional situation thus remains dangerously calm and a fresh crisis between the two countries can emerge at any time.

### ***India-Pakistan Discord during the Peace Process: Kashmir and Terrorism***

The peace process failed to break the crucial deadlock between India and Pakistan owing to their opposing positions on the modalities of engagement. The two countries had a different focus during the talks and took conflicting stances on the key disputes. Pakistan considered Kashmir as the ‘core issue’ and held that substantive movement on other issues were hostage to the progress on resolution of the Kashmir dispute, although it did move toward a certain threshold point on the issues of trade and CBMs. For Pakistan, other disputes were of minor importance and could be easily tackled once the ‘core issue’ was resolved. Although Pakistan admitted the importance of other disputes between the two countries, it emphasized the need to resolve the Kashmir dispute for a sustainable peace in the region. It emphasised the tangible movement on Kashmir along with the measures aimed at confidence building.

On the other hand, India regarded the issue of ‘cross-border terrorism’ as the ‘core issue,’ and also pursued the general normalization of bilateral relations like opening up of trade, removal of visa restriction between the two countries etc, and

evaded any concrete steps towards the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. India also refused any concessions on some other key security issues like Siachen and Sir Creek during the process while remaining firm on its core issue of 'cross-border terrorism.'

Pakistan's focus on the Kashmir dispute was highlighted time and again during the talks. For example, during his visit to India on April 17-18, 2005 Musharraf counselled India's senior editors of influential newspapers to press New Delhi to work for a genuine resolution of the Kashmir dispute because 'If you brush issues under the carpet it doesn't work.' Putting things in more detail, he further said that 'We reached the Tashkent Accord, Shimla Agreement, Lahore Declaration and all those things. But still the tension remained ... because we didn't resolve the issues, we didn't go to the core of the issues.'<sup>118</sup>

While emphasising that the time has never been so ripe to work for a good solution to Kashmir, Musharraf issued a veiled warning during the same talk that 'Nobody is permanent in the world. Permanent is India and Pakistan. Therefore, when the time changes ... the environment may be different, the leadership may be different, and, therefore, the same issues which we are discussing with harmony, if they are not resolved they will erupt again. There's no guarantee of permanence of solutions without having resolved the dispute.' He said that compared to the main issue of Kashmir, 'other aspects of bilateral difficulties were mostly technical in nature. These include the Sir Creek and Baglihar Dam issues. Siachen too was a technical issue that could be easily resolved.'<sup>119</sup>

Similarly, while expressing Pakistan's concerns on Kashmir, Musharraf again urged in May 2005 that confidence-building measures and composite dialogue should move in tandem. He warned that the quest for Kashmir settlement could not go on indefinitely and there is a growing realization in India and the international community that the long-standing Jammu and Kashmir dispute must be resolved permanently for lasting peace and progress in South Asia. He said that the world had also realized that coercive diplomacy cannot lead to the durable settlement of lingering disputes, including Kashmir. He further said that 'The international community views Kashmir as a flashpoint in the post-2002 stand-off between Pakistan and India and feels that a peaceful resolution to the problem is imperative.'<sup>120</sup>

Similar concerns were expressed by Shaukat Aziz who while addressing the delegates of South Asian Parliaments Conference, said that Pakistan had 'entered the

dialogue process with firm commitment that it would result in a just and durable solution to all issues with India, particularly the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.’ He said some progress had been achieved in the form of CBMs and people-to-people contacts, but both countries ‘have reached a juncture’ where they must move beyond dispute management to dispute resolution.<sup>121</sup>

Musharraf again expressed Pakistan’s anxiety in October 2005 when he remarked that ‘too many resolutions, joint declarations and joint statements ... had resulted in more conflicts and eruption on the border’ and two sides failed to ‘reach an ultimate peace and harmony’ between them. He said that he believed now was the time of conflict-resolution and ‘not of conflict-management.’<sup>122</sup> Similarly before his meeting with Manmohan Singh in November 2005 Kasuri remarked that ‘I do not undermine (sic) the importance of CBMs in carrying forward the peace process but people on both sides must be able to see there is also movement forward towards dispute resolution.’<sup>123</sup>

The contrast in the India-Pakistan positions was highlighted when at the end of the second round of dialogue, Musharraf emphasized during his meeting with the visiting Indian foreign secretary the need for progress towards an ‘acceptable’ solution of the Kashmir problem. Musharraf ‘hoped that [an] end to human rights violations and [the] withdrawal of troops’ from Kashmir would help a great deal in raising the comfort level of the Kashmiri people. He further said that ‘Progress on this issue [Kashmir] would facilitate progress on other issues.’ On the other hand, the Indian foreign secretary remarked at the end of the meeting that he drew the President’s attention to ‘continuing guerilla infiltration and violence’ in Indian-held Kashmir.<sup>124</sup>

Musharraf again clarified Pakistan’s policy on the Kashmir dispute within the parameters of the peace process during his speech at the 60<sup>th</sup> session of the UNGA in September 2005. Musharraf remarked on the occasion that Pakistan was pursuing a composite dialogue with India in the spirit of conflict resolution. He said that Pakistan wants the dialogue process to be ‘result-oriented’ and warned that to end confrontation between Pakistan and India, it was essential to find a just solution of the dispute over Kashmir.<sup>125</sup>

On the other hand Manmohan Singh told President Bush during their meeting on the sidelines of the UNGA meeting that Pakistan still controlled ‘the flow of terror’ into Kashmir. He said that although he was ‘satisfied’ with the peace process with

Pakistan, for ‘any realistic progress the flow of terror from Pakistan should stop.’<sup>126</sup> Commenting on such opposing positions on the Kashmir dispute during the peace process, Stephen Cohen remarked in November 2005 that ‘The Indians don’t want to make concessions and don’t think they have to; the Pakistanis feel that after investing fifty-five years trying to get a change in Kashmir, they should get some concessions.’<sup>127</sup>

This continuous emphasis of Islamabad on the need to resolve the Kashmir dispute was again highlighted during the SAARC summit in November 2005 when Pakistan’s Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz stressed the need to address the Kashmir dispute in dialogue process. He said that as far as Pakistan was concerned, the core dispute with India was over Kashmir. He emphasized that ‘We must make progress on Kashmir and then we can move in parallel on other issues.’ He further said that ‘We do not subscribe to the view that let’s do everything else and Kashmir will resolve itself (sic). For sustainable peace, we must address Kashmir.’<sup>128</sup>

Similarly, right at the start of the third round of the composite dialogue Pakistan’s foreign secretary remarked that ‘We should move beyond learning to live with the problems.’ Warning about the slow pace of progress on Kashmir, he said ‘That would be living dangerously.’ He said that the two countries have come to a stage where, given the improved relations, given the CBMs, the people-to-people contacts, it is time that ‘we start discussing the problems that are as old as the independence of the two countries.’<sup>129</sup>

Again as the two countries started the fourth round of talks in March 2007, a spokesman of Pakistan’s Foreign Office specified the need for resolution of the Kashmir dispute for any meaningful movement in the bilateral relations and remarked that ‘On Jammu and Kashmir it is important that we now move from CBMs to dispute resolution. We believe that an early resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir issue will pave the way for durable peace in this region and bring about greater cooperation in South Asia.’<sup>130</sup>

Meanwhile 2008 also witnessed domestic political change in Pakistan whereby Musharraf’s military regime was replaced by the democratically elected government led by Pakistan People’s Party. While pledging itself to the ongoing peace process, Pakistan’s new President Asif Ali Zardari also described the Kashmir dispute as a core issue for Pakistan. Referring to the pro-freedom Kashmiri protests in the wake of the land dispute in Kashmir, he noted that the current uprising in the

valley was ‘an indigenous uprising’ and that the ‘initiative has moved from the hands of the government to the hands of the people of India and Pakistan, a move I welcome.’<sup>131</sup>

Similarly, when India conducted its next round of elections in Kashmir in late 2008, Pakistan dismissed the elections and a spokesman of the FO said that ‘the ongoing elections cannot be construed as authentic expression of the real aspirations of the Kashmiri people.’<sup>132</sup>

Bilateral trade between India and Pakistan and general regional trade among the South Asian countries remained an important issue during the period. Kashmir however hampered any significant move in this respect. India particularly showed keen interest in developing trade relations with Pakistan and wanted a vigorous movement towards achieving the goal of free trade in the region. A South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) was envisioned at the SAARC level and some progress in this regard was also witnessed during the period. New Delhi which had already designated Pakistan a Most Favoured Nation (MFN) in 1996, now pressed Pakistan to reciprocate similarly. New Delhi also pushed for a speedy movement towards the implementation of SAFTA.

Pakistan took a very cautious approach on the issue of trade with India during the period and moved slowly on a liberalizing trade regime with India. In July 2005, Pakistan scrapped import duties on some 13 commodities from India that were scarce in local markets. In August 2005, it allowed duty free import of sugar from India while in June 2005 it allowed duty free import of four items including meat and potatoes. Pakistan also slashed duties on more than 700 items that it imported from India. Meanwhile Pakistan’s trade deficit with India rose by 201 per cent to \$288.687 million during the fiscal 2003-04 against \$95.845 million in the preceding year.

Islamabad took the position that unless tangible progress was visible on the core issues of conflict between the two countries, formal trade channels between Pakistan and India could not open. While speaking at a function in Singapore, Pakistan’s Prime Minister Aziz pointed out that while Pakistan was open to foreign investment, trade with India, it was not possible at this point because of the history of trust deficit and that ‘Progress on trade and investment between Pakistan and India will move in tandem with progress on other issues.’<sup>133</sup>

Similarly when a group of leading Indian businessmen visited Pakistan in August 2005, they were told by the Chairman of Pakistan’s Board of Investment that

business with India was subject to progress on the political front. The Chairman remarked on the occasion that ‘they were politely told that unless there is a simultaneous progress on the political front and on the resolution of all outstanding issues including Kashmir, Pakistan cannot open its doors to Indian investment.’<sup>134</sup>

Again in November 2005, Aziz told Manmohan that Pakistan believed in free trade with India but this was not possible unless there was progress on the Kashmir issue.<sup>135</sup> A similar position was taken by Pakistan’s new government under Gilani. Foreign Minister Qureshi remarked in April 2008 that ‘There are areas where we feel we need to move on to the mutual benefit of both the countries - like trade’ but, he quickly added that the new approach should not be construed as putting the Kashmir issue on the back-burner.<sup>136</sup>

Throughout the peace process Pakistan also kept on reminding the United States that the sustainable strategic stability in the region was at stake as India is unwilling to address the core issue of Kashmir in the talks. For example, during a meeting with visiting US National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley in September 2005, Musharraf underscored the importance of moving towards a settlement of the Kashmir dispute in the interest of durable peace and stability in the region and urged the United States to support efforts aimed at resolving the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.<sup>137</sup>

Similarly, Musharraf raised the Kashmir issue during his meeting with the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in September 2005 and emphasized the need for the resolution of the issue.<sup>138</sup> Again signalling that all is not well on the Pakistan-India front, Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri made it clear to the visiting US Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca that durable peace could not be achieved in the region without the settlement of all outstanding disputes, including Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>139</sup>

Again on the eve of the visit of President Bush to the region in 2006 Musharraf remarked that Kashmir was ripe for solution and that the ‘US must contribute.’ He hoped that Bush would understand the reality and play a facilitating role.<sup>140</sup> He again remarked that he expected President Bush to use his influence to help settle the Kashmir dispute. ‘My expectations are that he should be talking of Kashmir, and resolution of Kashmir and putting his weight behind resolution of the issue.’ He further said that ‘All that I expect is his [Bush’s] weight, his voice, pressurising all three groups: me, the Indians, and Kashmiris, to resolve the dispute



now.’ He remarked that ‘when I say weight really it means he must use all influence that we sit at the table and resolve the dispute.’<sup>141</sup>

India and Pakistan have maintained their incongruent position in the post-Mumbai resumed negotiation process. While India emphasises the need to tackle the issue of terrorism, Pakistan continues to adhere to its ‘Kashmir-First’ policy of understanding meaningful progress in its bilateral ties with India. In a public address in Azad Kashmir in June 2011, Pakistan’s Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani promised complete political, diplomatic and moral support to the people of Kashmir for their right of self-determination and termed the territory as the ‘jugular vein of Pakistan.’<sup>142</sup>

## ***Post-Crisis Developments in India’s Nuclear and Military Doctrines***

### **India’s War-fighting Nuclear Doctrine in the Post-Crisis Period**

Soon after the Crisis, India issued its first detailed official nuclear doctrine in January 2003. A week later after issuing its nuclear doctrine, India also carried out another test of its nuclear-capable *Agni* ballistic missile on January 10. The doctrine came after a long process of internal debates and evaluations since India made available its first Draft Indian Nuclear Doctrine in August 1999 soon after the Kargil Crisis.

According to this official doctrine, the objective of the nuclear capability for India is to build and maintain a ‘credible minimum deterrent.’ The statement puts the Indian nuclear posture as ‘no-first-use’ but declares that nuclear retaliation to a first strike would be massive and designed to inflict unacceptable damage.

It maintains that the nuclear retaliatory attacks can only be authorized by the civilian political leadership through the National Command Authority. It underlines the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon state. It also stresses the continuance of strict control on export of nuclear and missile related materials and technologies, participation in the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) negotiations, and continued observance of the moratorium on nuclear tests.

The statement also emphasises the continued commitment to the goal of a nuclear weapon free world, through global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. It also notes satisfaction with the state of readiness, the targeting strategy for a retaliatory attack, and operating procedures for various stages of alert and launch.<sup>143</sup>

Indian government officials claim that there were no major changes in the 2003 nuclear weapons doctrine when compared to the previous statements of Indian officials on the issue and the earlier Draft Indian Nuclear Doctrine of 1999. They claim that the 2003 official doctrine merely codifies long-standing, existing Indian government policy. For example, Defense Minister George Fernandes maintained that ‘as far as our nuclear doctrine is concerned there is no change. It remains as it was post-1998.’<sup>144</sup>

However significant shifts can be noted in its 2003 nuclear doctrine.<sup>145</sup> First, it has moved away from the traditional interpretation of a minimum deterrent posture to a more flexible posture of ‘credible minimum deterrent.’ The shift is important because a strict ‘minimum deterrent’ posture means building only a limited number of nuclear weapons and targeting them against an enemy’s cities. A minimum deterrence posture also envisages that if these weapons are not vulnerable to an enemy’s first strike, it does not respond to an adversary’s arms build-up with any increase in the size of the nuclear arsenal of one’s own.<sup>146</sup>

These doctrinal shifts have also been corroborated by the subsequent statements and actions of the Indian leadership. Thus, despite the repeated insistence that New Delhi will not enter into an arms race with either Islamabad or Beijing, Indian officials have clearly stated that ‘credible’ deterrent forces must consider the arsenal size and posture of both of India’s nuclear neighbors while devising its own nuclear strategy. This was highlighted when in May 2003 the Vajpayee government rejected diplomatic initiatives by Pakistan to explore a nuclear-free zone in South Asia, noting that ‘we have to keep in mind developments in other neighboring countries as well.’ Vajpayee remarked that ‘Pakistan’s atomic program is India-specific. But India’s nuclear program is not Pakistan-specific.’<sup>147</sup>

Similarly, Vajpayee stated in July 2005 that ‘though we believe in a minimum credible deterrent, the size of the deterrent must be determined from time to time on the basis of our own threat perception. This is a judgment which cannot be surrendered to anyone else.’<sup>148</sup> The 2003 doctrinal statement thus makes it clear that

India has nuclear weapons requirements beyond those needed simply to destroy a minimum number of Pakistani or Chinese cities.

Another important shift in India's nuclear doctrine is the explicit threat of first-use of its nuclear forces by New Delhi. India has traditionally maintained a stricter no-first-use policy while emphasising that its nuclear weapons are defensive in nature and are not meant for war-fighting. A senior Indian official remarked soon after the 1998 tests that there is 'a defensive orientation for India's nuclear forces and a commitment to avoid a nuclear arms race.'<sup>149</sup>

Similarly, the 1999 Draft Indian Nuclear Doctrine also envisaged that the 'fundamental purpose of Indian nuclear weapons is to deter the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons by any state or entity against India and its forces. India will not be the first to initiate a nuclear strike but will respond with punitive retaliation should deterrence fail.'

However, the 2003 Indian nuclear doctrine explicitly threatens nuclear first use in response to biological or chemical weapons use. It also notes that nuclear weapons would not only be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian territory but also in the event of a major attack on Indian territory and 'Indian forces anywhere' with chemical or biological weapons.

Interestingly, this change had not been supported by all members of the first National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) in its formulation of 1999 recommendations. For example, K. Subrahmanyam, the NSAB chairman, called for 'a totally uncaveated policy, with no reservation whatsoever about no-first-use.'<sup>150</sup> Similarly, Jasjit Singh, a member of the NSAB in 1999, had argued that the draft doctrine was a sign of Indian exceptionalism in adopting a strict no-first-use doctrine and explicitly ruled out threats to counter biological and chemical weapons. He said:

*The doctrine does not adopt the conventional wisdom of other nuclear weapon states. To that extent this is not only in contrast to the acknowledged wisdom of the main nuclear powers but seeks to chart a new path.... Unlike most other nuclear weapon states, India's nuclear weapons are not meant to deter the use and threat of use of conventional weapons, chemical weapons, biological weapons or a generalized formulation of protecting national interests any time anywhere.*<sup>151</sup>

This new clause thus abandoned the strict interpretation of no-first-use. Indeed, in December 2002, the NSAB reportedly recommended a complete

abandonment of no-first-use by the Indian government.<sup>152</sup> It also went a step further when the NSAB strongly recommended to the government ‘to lend political, diplomatic and moral support to the people of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, including Gilgit and Baltistan’.<sup>153</sup>

The 2003 official Indian nuclear doctrine thus does not adhere to a strict interpretation of no-first-use while continuing to use such a label because of its political benefits. While highlighting the benefits of such ambiguous stance for New Delhi, Scot Sagan notes that such pledges of no-first-use ‘provide at least some assurance to international allies and to Indian domestic audience, who might not object to New Delhi’s policies regarding its nuclear arsenal provided they believe that India is behaving as a responsible nuclear power.’ He maintains that ‘In short, the no-first-use doctrine has become part of the politics of nuclear legitimacy and responsibility in India.’<sup>154</sup> Similarly Ganguly and Hagerty also note that today ‘India’s ‘no-first-use’ pledge is mainly a rhetorical device aimed at making its peacetime nuclear stance appear unthreatening to its potential adversaries.’<sup>155</sup>

These doctrinal shifts thus show that India has moved towards a more flexible posture on the use of its nuclear capability. It will be more appropriate to say that through its 2003 statement New Delhi has given an official sanction to the already existing thinking in the Indian strategic circles regarding the need for flexibility in India’s no-first-use policy. For example, a spokesman of the Indian Ministry of Defence claimed soon after the 1998 tests that a doctrine of no first use does not constrain India’s options during a conflict: ‘Even a unilateral no first use declaration by India will not take away our fundamental right to defend ourselves by all means at our disposal if our very survival is in jeopardy.’<sup>156</sup>

Similarly, in early 2001 an Indian Air Force planning study, Vision 2020, had also reportedly called for the creation of an Indian nuclear ‘first strike capability.’<sup>157</sup> This already existing uncertainty about the Indian pledge of no-first-use was also highlighted more explicitly in 2001 when Indian foreign ministry official remarked:

‘No first strike’ policy does not mean India will not have first strike capability. The foundation of the policy of deterrence, of which the Nuclear Air command will be the key component, is based on having overwhelming superiority over the enemy to launch nuclear strikes. I would say that we (India) are working towards having a first strike

capability, but how to exercise this option within the ‘no first strike’ policy will be the subject of political decision-making.’<sup>158</sup>

Another important shift in the 2003 Indian nuclear doctrine undermining claims of a purely defensive nature, can be seen when it says that nuclear weapons will not only be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian territory but also in case of such an attack ‘on Indian forces anywhere.’ Interestingly, the word ‘anywhere’ at the end of the sentence does not appear in the 1999 draft nuclear doctrine. The addition of the word ‘anywhere’ underlines the possibility that Indian troops can fight a conventional war inside Pakistan. The change is thus designed to counter the Pakistani threat of using tactical nuclear weapons, or other weapons of mass destruction, first inside Pakistan against advancing Indian armored divisions.<sup>159</sup>

### **India’s New Military Doctrine of *Cold Start***

Soon after unveiling its detailed but ambiguous nuclear doctrine in January 2003, the Indian Army adopted a new conventional Pakistan-specific military doctrine named *Cold Start* in April 2004. The Indian Army’s doctrine of *Cold Start* has evolved out of inter-related concepts of ‘coercive diplomacy,’ ‘hot pursuit’ and ‘limited War under [a] nuclear umbrella’ in Indian strategic circles. Such Indian strategic thinking vis-à-vis Pakistan is aimed at justifying the legitimacy of conventional war under the nuclear shadow to achieve its objectives on Kashmir.

Since the early 1980s, India’s conventional war fighting plans were based on what was called the *Sundarji Doctrine*.<sup>160</sup> The *Sundarji Doctrine* was quite defensive in nature and had envisioned seven ‘holding corps’ deployed near the border region with Pakistan. These consisted of infantry divisions for static defense, mobile mechanized divisions and a number of armored units. The primary role of the ‘holding corps’ during a war was envisioned as a check on the enemy advance though these corps also had the limited demonstrated capacity for offensive operations.

Along with the defensive ‘holding corps’, the offensive power of India was organized in the form of three strike corps each of which was built around an armored division with mechanized infantry and extensive artillery support.<sup>161</sup> While the ‘holding corps’ were deployed close to the border, the strike corps were stationed in Central India at a significant distance from the Pakistani borders with the first corps in Mathura, the second one in Ambala, and the third one in Bhopal.

The war plans according to *Sundarji Doctrine* had envisioned that after the holding corps had halted a Pakistani attack, the strike corps would counterattack in the Rajasthan sector. These strike corps will penetrate deep into Pakistani territory and would destroy the Pakistan Army's own two strike corps i.e. the Army Reserve North and the Army Reserve South through 'deep sledgehammer blows' in a high-intensity battle of attrition.<sup>162</sup> It was also envisioned that the strike corps would operate under the protection of the IAF. The role of IAF was seen as first gaining air superiority over Pakistan and then providing close air support to ground operations of India's three strike corps.

The efficacy of *Sundarji Doctrine* was seriously questioned in the Indian strategic circles in the wake of the yearlong 2001-02 Crisis. It was perceived in New Delhi that the decisiveness of its message was undercut by the inability of the Indian army to present a timely threat to Pakistan. It was noted that from the time the mobilization order was given, the armored columns of the strike corps took nearly three weeks to make their way to the international border area and that in this intervening period, the Pakistan Army was able to counter-mobilize on the border. Even those in the Indian government who claimed that the objectives of the Operation Parakram were not anything more than an exercise in coercive diplomacy became wary of the long delay between policy decisions and military action.

It was in the wake of such perceived 'flaws' in the *Sundarji Doctrine* during *Operation Parakram* that it was argued that in order to meet Pakistan-specific contemporary security challenges, a new doctrinal approach was needed. India thus has come up with the new military doctrine of *Cold Start*. The new doctrine argues that mobilizing the entire military was not an appropriate policy to pursue 'limited' objectives and that that a war-fighting strategy calling for massive armored penetrations to dismember Pakistan was too crude and inflexible of a response to terrorist attacks and other indirect challenges.<sup>163</sup>

According to Ladwig, three shortcomings were identified by the Indian leadership with the operationalization of *Sundarji Doctrine* during *Operation Parakram*. First, the enormous size of the strike corps made them difficult to deploy and maneuver. By the time the strike corps had reached their forward concentration areas, President Musharraf had given his 'about turn' speech, and the United States was putting significant pressure on India to restrain its response. In the eyes of many senior Indian officers, Pakistan had outplayed them. It was perceived in New Delhi

that Pakistan had not only managed to inflict a high-profile attack on the Indian capital via its proxies but was also able to exploit the Indian Army's long deployment time to internationalize the crisis in a manner so as to escape any Indian retribution.

India's strategic community considers the long delay between the mobilization order and the actual deployment of the strike corps as the main factor that made it possible for Pakistan to reach to its allies, particularly the United States, to intervene before India could actually engage in military operations against it. It has also been argued that the delay created enough of a gap between mobilization and commencement of military operations for India's political leadership to lose its nerve. Such weakened resolve was regarded as an important variable responsible for India's decision to back down in the face of international pressure.<sup>164</sup>

A second perceived flaw, according to Ladwig, was with the performance of the strike corps. It was calculated in New Delhi that the strike corps had a lack of strategic surprise. Pakistan had its intelligence agencies focused on the three strike corps, so that any action on their part would be quickly noticed— particularly given their large, lumbering composition. Furthermore, once the strike corps mobilized, their progress and destination could be easily deduced by Pakistani forces, which could move to counter any intended attack.

Finally, the holding corps' lack of offensive power came up as a cause for concern. These units were forward deployed in the border regions, yet could carry out only limited offensive tasks. In the eyes of Indian Army strategists, the total dependence on the strike corps for offensive power hindered India's rapid response to the December 13 attacks.<sup>165</sup>

Thus, in order to meet Pakistan-specific challenges, India has come up with a new conventional military doctrine. This new Indian doctrine of *Cold Start* aims at correcting the deficiencies in India's conventional war-fighting plans. The doctrine enables India to mobilize its conventional forces swiftly in order to undertake retaliatory attacks in response to Pakistan's 'proxy war' in Kashmir.

The main objective of this military doctrine is thus to demonstrate that India has the capacity to launch retaliatory conventional attacks against Pakistan army inflicting significant harm before the international community could intercede. At the same time it aims at pursuing objectives that New Delhi perceives as narrow enough to deny Pakistan any justification to escalate the engagement to the nuclear level.<sup>166</sup>

India's limited war concept of *Cold Start* aims at making use of India's conventional superiority in conventional forces vis-à-vis Pakistan. The doctrine reorganizes the Indian Army's offensive three large strike corps into eight smaller division-sized 'integrated battle groups' (IBGs) that combine mechanized infantry, artillery, and armor on the lines similar to those of the Soviet Union's operational maneuver groups.<sup>167</sup> The eight IBGs will launch multiple strikes into Pakistan along different axes of advance. It has been planned that the operations of the IBGs would be integrated with close air support from the IAF and naval aviation assets to provide highly mobile fire support.

*Cold Start* reorganizes the 'holding corps' of the *Sundarji Doctrine* into new 'pivot corps' which would be bolstered by additional armor and artillery. These 'pivot corps' would not only hold defensive positions but will also undertake limited offensive operations as necessary. It envisions that all the elements would engage in continuous operations, day and night, until their military objectives were achieved. According to stated Indian position, *Cold Start* does not seek to deliver a catastrophic blow to Pakistan, for example cutting the country in two. Rather, it aims to make limited territorial gains, 50–80 kilometers deep. These gains will then be used in post-conflict negotiations to extract concessions from Islamabad.

The prime feature of *Cold Start* is to undertake both deployment and operations in a speedy manner. Explaining the aims and objectives of *Cold Start*, Ladwig notes that 'By moving forces into unpredicted locations at high speeds and making decisions faster than their opponents can, the IBGs seek to defeat Pakistani forces in the field by disrupting their cohesion.'<sup>168</sup>

Through *Cold Start*, the Indian army seeks to take advantage of surprise at both the strategic and the operational levels to achieve a breakthrough before outside powers such as the United States could intervene on behalf of Pakistan as happened during *Operation Parakram*. It is also perceived that the rapidity of operations as envisaged by *Cold Start* would also prevent India's civilian leadership from halting military operations in progress, lest it has second thoughts or possesses insufficient resolve.<sup>169</sup>

Highlighting the various features of the new doctrine, Patel notes that *Cold Start* aims at 'The unpredictability, increased pace of deployment, employment of massive firepower, and initiation of unrelenting combat operations aids in retaining political and military initiative by controlling the decision making and response cycle



of the opponent as well as concerned international opinion.<sup>170</sup> Ladwig describes five perceived advantages of the *Cold Start* doctrine over its predecessor *Sundarji Doctrine*.

1. Forward-deployed division-sized units can be alerted faster and mobilized more quickly than larger formations. If the battle groups and the pivot corps start closer to the international border, their logistics requirements are significantly reduced, enhancing their maneuverability and their ability to surprise.
2. Second, even though division-sized formations can “bite and hold” territory, they lack the power to deliver a knockout blow. In the minds of Indian military planners, this denies Pakistan the “regime survival” justification for employing nuclear weapons in response to India’s conventional attack. Furthermore, under Cold Start, the Indian Army can undertake a range of responses to a given provocation rather than the all-or-nothing approach of the Sundarji doctrine.
3. Third, multiple divisions, operating independently, have the potential to disrupt or incapacitate the Pakistani leadership’s decision-making cycle, as happened to the French high command in the face of the German blitzkrieg of 1940. Indian planners believe that when faced with offensive thrusts in as many as eight different sectors, the Pakistani military would be hard-pressed to determine where to concentrate its forces and which lines of advance to oppose.
4. Fourth, having eight (rather than three) units capable of offensive action significantly increases the challenge for Pakistani intelligence’s limited reconnaissance assets to monitor the status of all the IBGs, improving the chance of achieving surprise.
5. Finally, if Pakistan were to use nuclear weapons against Indian forces, divisions would present a significantly smaller target than would corps.<sup>171</sup>

Since 2004 India has held about eleven military exercises of varying sizes close to Pakistani borders in order to test and demonstrated capabilities required by *Cold Start*. Starting from *Divya Astra* (Divine Weapon) held in March 2004 exercise, the latest one named as *Vijayee Bhava* was held in the deserts of Bikaner and

Suratgarh just 70 kilometers away from Pakistani border. Being the largest in the series, almost 50,000 troops participated in the *Vijayee Bhava* military exercise.

## **Conclusion**

Following the 2001-02 Crisis, India and Pakistan entered into the peace process with strong encouragement from the United States. The process however remained caught up in traditional animosities. It was steered through various rounds only as a result of the strong engagement of the United States and finally came to halt in the wake of Mumbai attacks of 2008.

The peace process had some success in lowering of tensions, rather than in the establishment of a genuine peace between the two countries. Pakistan primarily entered into the peace process with a hope and ambition that it would contribute to resolution of Kashmir dispute what it considered to be the 'core' reason for its troubled relations with India. However India perceived it as an opportunity to gain concessions from Pakistan at a time when it was under pressure on the western front. Throughout the course of dialogue, Islamabad perceived the process as sluggish and there remained a disappointment that it had yielded no tangible progress on substantive issues.

Kashmir remained the central sticky issue of India and Pakistan throughout the negotiation process. Pakistan made the positive movement towards the resolution of the Kashmir dispute as a pre-condition for any substantial normalization of relations between the two countries. The two countries took opposing positions on the issue during the negotiations. In response to Pakistan's calls for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute and violations of the human rights in the area, India put forward the issue of alleged 'terrorism' by the Pakistan-based elements and infiltration of fighters from across the LoC. Whereas Islamabad described Kashmir as the 'core' issue that could not be sidelined, New Delhi's focus remained on alleged Pakistani-sponsored terrorism in India and Kashmir, on CBMs, and other normalization issues.

The process could not succeed even in resolving the smaller conflicts between the two countries, like Siachen and Sir Creek. Progress on liberalization of regional trade was also blocked by the key political differences between the two countries that mainly revolve around the Kashmir dispute. Most of the CBMs agreed between the two countries could not withstand the fall-out of the Mumbai attacks.

Although the two countries have made some contact since the termination of the peace process, tensions between the two countries remain high. The two countries are not ready to compromise on key issues, especially on the issue of Kashmir. Meanwhile India has taken a more aggressive posture in the region which has been highlighted by important shifts in its nuclear doctrine and the adoption of its new military doctrine of 'Cold Start.' It highlights once again that nuclear weapons have not induced much needed caution in the behavior of the regional players. This chapter has shown that the developments in the India-Pakistan relations during the period do not suggest that deterrence stability has improved in South Asia and the presence of strategic nuclear weapons has not eliminated the possibility for war in the region.

## Chapter 6

# Deterrence Stability in Nuclear South Asia: An Assessment

### *Introduction*

The previous chapters were devoted to illustrating the precarious nature of deterrence in the region after the overt nuclearization of the region in 1998. This chapter will discuss the problem of instability in the region by highlighting the important differences between the Cold War experience and the post-1998 South Asian scenario. It contends that the key variable here is the strategic cultural identities of the two countries whereby the territory of Kashmir plays a key role in defining these actors. The chapter will then discuss the specific conditions under which there is a strong possibility of deterrence failure in the region. This will be followed by a discussion on the ways to enhance the prospects of stabilizing deterrence between India and Pakistan.

### ***Strategic Instability in the Shadow of Nuclear Weapons: Comparing Cold War Precedent and post-1998 South Asia***

Whereas the acquisition of nuclear weapons by the superpowers led to a stabilization of their relationship during the Cold War, such an optimistic view regarding South Asia is a dangerous oversimplification. The regional scenario after 1998 amply demonstrates that the acquisition of nuclear weapons by these countries has not led to any stabilization of deterrence in the region. Important differences exist between the Cold War situation and the South Asian scenario. These differences can be summed up as following:

#### **The Geophysical Variable**

An important dissimilarity between the Cold War situation and the South Asian scenario is the geophysical proximity in case of India and Pakistan. The United States and the Soviet Union never had any common border between them. On the other hand, India and Pakistan share a long border between them coupled with the close proximity of the capitals and other major urban centres such as Lahore.

Moreover there is a stark lack of strategic depth particularly in the case of Pakistan. This lack of strategic depth has always been the worst nightmare of the security managers of Pakistan as it makes it highly vulnerable to Indian conventional military moves.

## **A Multi-Polar Setting**

During the Cold War the United States and Soviet Union dominated the international strategic landscape. However in case of South Asia the nuclear dynamics are set in a multi-polar context. The super-powers had a strategic autonomy and were able to set aside the concerns and pressures of others while pursuing their national and bilateral objectives. These also included the avoidance of nuclear war and the enhancement of their respective advantage over other states.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, the South Asian players do not dominate the international strategic landscape. They have to accommodate the national interests and objectives of other powers to a greater or lesser extent, and in particular those of the United States, even within their own region, as shown by the US Global War on Terror (GWOT).

It may be argued that a multi-polar context can be a positive factor contributing to strategic restraint. However such a situation can also work other way round as any side may feel encouraged or enabled by the support of a major ally to initiate a crisis to pursue its objectives. While highlighting this point, Scott Sagan notes:

Some observers believe that the possibility that other nuclear powers - such as the United States or China - can intervene in future crises in South Asia may be a major constraint on undesired escalation. I fear the opposite: the possibility of intervention may encourage the governments of India and Pakistan to engage in risky behavior, initiating crises or making limited uses of force, precisely because they anticipate (correctly or incorrectly) that other nuclear powers may bail them out diplomatically if the going gets rough.<sup>2</sup>

## **Disparity in Relative Military Power**

During the Cold War the United States and Soviet Union generally enjoyed a sustained parity in conventional and nuclear forces. Although the Warsaw Pact gave a relatively favorable force level to the Soviet bloc compared to NATO, the Soviet

Union however never achieved the necessary numerical superiority for an all-out victory. Moreover a number of factors mitigated the numerical edge of the Warsaw Pact forces. NATO had important qualitative advantages in key technologies and weapons systems. Also the quality of the armed forces of NATO and the morale of these forces worked to offset the numerical edge of the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup>

However in case of South Asia, India enjoys a growing conventional and nuclear edge vis-à-vis Pakistan. India has demonstrated in all wars with Pakistan that it has an overwhelming conventional superiority that can produce convincing results. This asymmetry is also steadily increasing in favor of India which has embarked on a comprehensive modernization of its military in recent years. On the other hand, India is also making significant progress in important defense-related advanced technology that may work to further enhance its numerical edge over Pakistan. Pakistan is at a disadvantage both qualitatively and quantitatively, and the disparity in both is growing.

### **Absence of a Shared Objective of Stability**

During the Cold War both the United States and Soviet Union soon agreed to look for the common objective of stability in order to avoid nuclear war and were able to discover each other's redlines quickly. As noticed by Michael Quinlan, 'East and West began with a shared recollection of what an immense calamity major war was, even for the victorious and even without extensive use of nuclear weapons... The two sides came fairly soon to a working understanding of where dividing lines ran and limits lay.'<sup>4</sup>

In case of South Asia, both the countries have a long history of instability marked by sub-conventional violence, the presence of direct military confrontation at various conventional levels, including 'hot wars.' However none of these clashes reached a point which created deep memories of the pain of war equivalent to that borne by the Cold War adversaries. Interestingly it was only during the Kargil encounter that Indian casualties reached as high as one thousand. As a result, in the case of South Asia there is an absence of an agreed upon vision, and stability is not a shared objective for India and Pakistan. There is no agreed upon definition of the status-quo in South Asia. While the US and the USSR competed through numerous proxies in the developing world, the status quo, for example in Europe and in the Americas, was upheld by both superpowers. The one time any of these powers

challenged the tacit status quo, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the fear of war, including nuclear war, greatly increased.

### **Asymmetric Perceptions of Loci of Instability**

The United States and the Soviet Union had shared perceptions of the loci of instability during the Cold War. They agreed that this existed in key unresolved problems areas such as Berlin and in nuclear weapons technology developments such as cruise and Pershing which threatened to undermine the mutual deterrence relationship.

In South Asia there is less agreement on this. India claims that Pakistan does not care about the nuclear dangers in continuing to support cross-border infiltration and promote instability, especially in Kashmir. India thus considers the locus of instability as located around the issues of sub-conventional violence, including terrorism. Pakistan on the other hand considers India's conventional military build-up as the locus of instability as it squeezes Pakistan's conventional options. Pakistan also considers India's advancement in the ballistic missile defence technology as undermining Pakistan's deterrence confidence.

Similarly, despite sharing the view that Jammu and Kashmir is an important locus of instability, the two countries differ on the priority to be accorded to the necessity of its resolution, and for the genuine normalization of their relationship. Pakistan regards the resolution of the Kashmir dispute *a priori* while India thinks that it is an issue which should be marginalised and only addressed after Pakistan stops supporting destabilizing forces in India. Pakistan feels threatened militarily and economically because of India's continued hold over Kashmir. Being a source of water for its rivers which are the life-line of Pakistan's economy, Islamabad is wary of Indian control over the territory.

### **Lack of Internal Political Stability**

The United States and Soviet Union were politically stable and experienced almost no major internal threats. On the other hand, India and Pakistan face noteworthy internal threats and violence to varying degrees and in different parts of the two countries. Both countries face a number of secessionist movements of varying intensity which have also been sometimes actively aided by the other. The two countries regularly accuse each other of fomenting and encouraging these separatist

movements. This has grave implications for the way crises emerge and develop in South Asia. These internal dynamics sometimes connect directly to the dynamics of crisis escalation as well as to the capacity of the two states to manage these crises.

### **Kashmir as an Issue of Identity in South Asia**

Perhaps the most important difference between the Cold War conditions and the South Asian scenario is the continued importance of territories for India and Pakistan. Proliferation optimists argue that the presence of nuclear weapons enhances the territorial security of a country more and makes the conquest of territory less attractive as it involves enormous risks due to the possibility of escalation of any such undertaking to the nuclear level.<sup>5</sup> However such a view is questionable in situations where territories involved in the disputes are not merely pieces of land but are considered an issue of state identity.

During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union had no claims on the territories directly held by each and did not try to conquer any territory directly. At the end of the World War II there were fairly clear lines of demarcation between the armies of two powers. On the other hand, India and Pakistan not only have territorial claims on the lands held by the other but the situation becomes more complex when territories involved here are also an issue of state identity, adding an emotional touch to any conflict.

An investigation into the strategic cultures of India and Pakistan reveals that the territory of Kashmir has an extreme significance in the formation of the state identity of the two countries. The importance of Kashmir in this regard is more critical in case of Pakistan. India-Pakistan tensions over Kashmir cannot be explained by mere 'revisionist' tendencies or 'irredentism' of either of the states. Kashmir continues to remain important enough for Pakistan which is willing to take any risk including that of going to war, even after the nuclearization of the region. Pakistan is unwilling to forego its claims on Kashmir and any nuclear threat from India in pursuit of such an objective is thus unable to deter Pakistan. The willingness of India and Pakistan to escalate their contest over Kashmir despite the presence of nuclear weapons thus makes wars in South Asia more likely and more dangerous.

Pakistan was created as a homeland for the Muslims of South Asia. It was envisioned on the basis of two-nation theory that declared the Muslims of South Asia as a separate nation entitling them a separate state in the post-Colonial South Asia.



The idea of Pakistan is thus based on the concept of as a Muslim-majority state claiming all the Muslim-majority areas of South Asia. In this way of thinking the areas of Kashmir had a special significance. The Muslim-majority Kashmir formed the part of Pakistan's name where 'K' stands for 'Kashmir.' Kashmir is thus central to Pakistan's Muslim identity and the two-nation theory.

Pakistan considers India's hold over Kashmir as a negation of its state identity. It believes that a failure to integrate Kashmir into Pakistan makes the rationale for the rest of state questionable because of the basic principle underlying the process of partition. Pakistan also believes that the Indian leaders have long oppressed the Muslim majority of the area and have denied them the right of self-determination whose legitimacy also rests on the UNSC's demand for a 'free and impartial plebiscite.' Kashmir is therefore symbolic of the unjust historical domination of the Hindu people over the Islamic people in South Asia.

Pakistan thus believes that the status quo in Kashmir is illegitimate that must be changed. Pakistan looks at the Indian control over Kashmir as characterized by a long history of brutal tactics including vote rigging, arrests, tortures and rapes by an occupying Indian military. The political, strategic, economic and ideological necessity, when embedded in a strong sense of moral righteousness, thus justifies the use of any means on part of Pakistan to seek the incorporation of the territory into Pakistan.

On the other hand, the Indian elite perceive India as the embodiment of the secular Indian civilizational identity and as not only a past great power but a regional hegemon marching to a 'deserved' great power status. India looks at Pakistani attempts to wrest Kashmir as a threat to its position as a regional hegemon and its secular values. India looks at its hold over Kashmir as a proof of its secular credentials in the face of Pakistan's religious identity. It was in this context that while highlighting the centrality of Kashmir within the parameters of Indian secularism, Mahatma Gandhi remarked that 'Muslims all over the world are watching the experiment in Kashmir.... Kashmir is the real test of secularism in India.'<sup>6</sup>

The Indian leadership believes that India is destined to play a role not only on the subcontinent but ultimately in the Indian Ocean and on the world stage. New Delhi sees the South Asian region as its legitimate sphere of influence. For India, South Asia is a strategic entity whose outer boundaries form its natural defense parameters. Such thinking has been highlighted time and again by Indian security

managers. For example, the Indira Doctrine, enunciated at the start of the Sri Lankan civil war in 1983, unambiguously stated that India was entitled to be the security manager of the entire subcontinent.<sup>7</sup> Highlighting the Indian attitude towards the other countries of South Asia, George Tanham argues that Indian strategic culture has historically viewed the world as a series of geographic concentric circles, with the closest neighbour looming largest. Such a way of looking at the world puts Pakistan at the center of Indian strategic calculation. New Delhi perceives that Pakistan aims to disrupt India by funding and instigating organized violence in India and is viewed as a thorn that is permanently lodged in India's western side.<sup>8</sup>

India thus views any concession on Kashmir as unworthy of its destined status as a 'great power.' On the other hand, while India perceives itself as the regional leader and hegemon something which should be endorsed by the other countries of South Asia, Pakistan is the only state in the region which not only challenges the Indian dominance but seeks important concession from it on Kashmir. Resistance to the Indian dominance has been ingrained in Pakistan strategic culture since its establishment. Pointing towards India, its founder Jinnah stated in an address to the armed forces of the nation: 'Pakistan has been created and its security and defense is now your responsibility. I want them to be the best soldiers in the world, so that no one can cast an evil eye on Pakistan, and if he does we shall fight him to the end until either he throws us into Arabian Sea or we drown in the Indian Ocean.'<sup>9</sup>

### ***Deterrence Failure in South Asia: An Assessment***

As shown in the previous chapters, a war between the two countries in the post-nuclearization period has only been averted by the timely intervention of the United States. During all the regional crises in the post-1998 period Washington got involved extensively in the management of these crises both publicly and behind-the-scenes.

There is however no guarantee that such positive and restraining US influence will always be available in any future crisis. Future crises can erupt under different regional and international circumstances. The conditions under which Washington will be willing and able to play such a role in the nuclear South Asia may change depending on the circumstances of the crisis.

Thus, it can be safely concluded that despite the presence of nuclear weapons there does exist a reasonable probability of deterrence failure in South Asia making

India-Pakistan extremely dangerous because of the possibility of use of deadly nuclear weapons. Such a likely scenario can be envisaged in the context of ongoing tussle between India and Pakistan over the territory of Kashmir.

Pakistan faces a much bigger and stronger competitor over Kashmir and Pakistan's security managers have always faced great difficulties in compensating for its acute structural asymmetries. Pakistan has tried to resolve this dilemma by resorting to risk taking behavior. In this regard it has repeatedly made daring and dangerous efforts to wrest Kashmir from India by force and liberate the Kashmiris.

An important tool in the hand of Pakistan in this regard is the material support of the Kashmiri militant groups to put pressure on India. The tolerance and use of Islamic militant groups in pursuit of the national agendas is part of the strategic cultures of India and Pakistan, more importantly for that of the later. The experience of the Afghanistan conflict (1979-89), whereby Pakistan's ISI and the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) transferred weapons to Afghan resistance groups and advised them on strategy against Soviet troops in Afghanistan, played a critical role in this regard.

The success of the Afghan campaign convinced the Pakistani leadership, especially its military, that the Afghanistan experience could be replicated elsewhere in order to advance Pakistan's national agenda. The Afghanistan experience thus created a close link between Islamic militancy in the region and Pakistan's foreign policy. The resistance groups themselves were also encouraged by their success in Afghanistan and wanted to carry forward the spirit of the Afghan *Jihad* to help Muslims fight anti-Muslim forces anywhere in the world.

The linkage of Pakistan's national security agenda with the objectives of the militant groups that developed in the region in the wake of Afghan war soon became a salient dynamic in the Indian-administered Kashmir where an insurgency had just erupted in 1989. The initial links of the Afghan insurgent groups with the Kashmir insurgency were established in 1990 but their active involvement began after the collapse of the pro-Moscow Najib government in Kabul in April 1992. Later on a number of Pakistani groups also joined their Kashmiri and Afghan counterparts. The infusion of these militant groups with a common cause of unyoking the 'Hindu occupation' of the Muslim Kashmir was an important development in the Kashmir insurgency.

These developments were quite in line with the Islamic content of Pakistan's strategic culture and also allowed Pakistan to bring the required military pressure on India over Kashmir without incurring any heavy material or manpower losses for its military. Pakistan's ISI started providing material support including weapons and training to these groups and started managing the insurgency as it did during the Afghan experience. These groups subsequently inflicted considerable losses on the Indian military forces in Kashmir during the 1990s which had dramatically increased in the post-Kargil period.

Pakistan's decision to support the operations of the Islamic militants in Indian-administered Kashmir however led to strains in Pakistan's relations with the West, especially the United States, because of the extremely anti-Western rhetoric of these organizations. Soon after the departure of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan, Washington started pressing Pakistan to wind up the structures of these militant organizations.

The situation became quite acute for Pakistan after the 9/11 terrorist attacks when President Bush delivered a virtual ultimatum to Islamabad to join hands with the international alliance for eliminating the transnational terrorism led by Osama Bin Laden's *Al Qaeda* organization based in Afghanistan, and tolerated by the Taliban regime. As a result Islamabad decided to cooperate with Washington on military action against *Al Qaeda* and the Taliban government in Afghanistan. Subsequently, Pakistan also took action against some of the Pakistan-based militant Islamic groups active in support of the Taliban government in Kabul, arrested a number of key leaders of *Al Qaeda*, and handed them over to the United States.

However, in the post-9/11 period Islamabad has endeavoured to keep Afghan and Kashmir fronts separate. It has allowed the militant Islamic groups active in Kashmir to carry on their activities in a low-key manner especially after the 2001-02 Crisis, and is unwilling to move decisively against these Kashmir-focussed militant groups such as LeT and JeM, as demanded by New Delhi. India however has regularly accused these groups of launching terrorist attacks on high-profile targets, such as the Indian parliament and an Indian military camp in Kashmir in 2001-02, triggering a major crisis, and more recently in Mumbai in 2008, placing Pakistan in an embarrassing situation because of previous claims by Islamabad that it had actually contained the activities of these groups.

A provocative terrorist strike in India like that of the Mumbai attacks of 2008 may once again lead to a major crisis in South Asia, thereby leading to deterrence failure. Indeed the Indian leadership has hinted a number of times since the Mumbai attacks of 2008 that New Delhi may respond militarily to another such attack. Indeed, Indian Minister of State for Defence M M Pallam Raju recently told a high profile Asian security conference in Singapore in June 2011, also attended by defense ministers from the United States, China and the UK, that 'If the provocation is to happen again, I think it would be hard to justify to our people such a self-restraint,' as has been exercised following the 26/11 Mumbai attack.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, an Indian military response to such attacks in future, along the lines of its 'Cold Start' military doctrine, where the United States may be bypassed or may not have sufficient time to diplomatically intervene, cannot be ruled out. In such a scenario, Washington may not find enough time to act and confrontation may already be at an advanced stage. Even if such help does come, it may be too late to change the calculations of war. An Indian military action against Pakistan in such a scenario can result in tit-for-tat military escalation by the two countries due to the cultural imperatives of their relationship. This deterrence breakdown in the region may even escalate to the nuclear level because of the strong possibility of Islamabad going for the nuclear option first at quite early stages of the start of hostilities.

Pakistan's unofficial nuclear doctrine is based on the 'first-use' of its nuclear arsenal.<sup>11</sup> Pakistani views on the appropriate uses of nuclear weapons were outlined in a detailed description of Pakistani nuclear doctrine given by Lieutenant General Khalid Kidwai who was then the head of the Strategic Plans Division, which is responsible for nuclear plans as well as the command and control, and the physical security of the arsenal. According to him, Pakistan's 'Nuclear weapons are aimed solely at India.' He has described a range of conditions that would trigger such a use. In case deterrence fails, according to Kidwai, they will be used if: a) India attacks Pakistan and conquers a large part of its territory; b) India destroys a large part either of its land or air forces; c) India engages in the economic strangling of Pakistan; and d) India pushes Pakistan into political destabilization or creates a large scale internal subversion in Pakistan.'<sup>12</sup>

The developments and the statements of the Pakistani officials during the Kargil Crisis and the 2001-02 Crisis however also suggested that there may be other red-lines in Pakistan's nuclear policy. Pakistan might also consider using its nuclear

capability if India crosses the LoC to the extent that threatens Pakistan's control over Azad Kashmir. Another 'unofficially' postulated red-line by Pakistani officials is the case of an Indian attack on any of Pakistan's power generation facilities or its nuclear assets.

Apart from its asserted first-use policy, Islamabad has maintained a degree of uncertainty regarding precisely when it might use its nuclear weapons during a given war situation. Describing Pakistani assumptions in this regard, Lieutenant General Javed Hassan, the commandant of Pakistan's National Defense College, indicated during a briefing in the United States during the 2002-02 Crisis that 'Pakistan [would] not escalate the conflict; it would force India to escalate to a point where Islamabad gets a reason to go nuclear.' He said that if India did escalate the conflict, it would have to be 'on Pakistan's terms', and 'if India's escalation crosses Pakistan's thresholds, it will have cause and justification to escalate to the nuclear level. India will have been shown to have behaved irresponsibly and forced Pakistan to take extreme measures.'<sup>13</sup>

Pakistan's conventional force asymmetry with India thus can force Pakistan to look for a nuclear response in case of an Indian 'Cold Start' response. In the absence of a timely international intervention as a result of swift Indian military response, Islamabad could resort to the nuclear option early in a conflict to halt the perceived advance of Indian armor units towards its major urban centers located quite close to the border.

Pakistan's nuclear response may be undertaken in a variety of ways. It may use tactical nuclear weapons on the advancing columns of the Indian army on its own territory to halt their movement and provide lesser justification for an Indian nuclear retaliation. It may also respond in a gradual way by targeting selective Indian military and command and control centers. Pakistan may also respond in a massive way against all major targets including military (counterforce targeting) as well as urban population centers (countervalue targeting) in order to cripple Indian nuclear response to the maximum level.

However, given that Pakistan starkly lacks strategic depth, a situation that has further deteriorated in the wake of Islamabad's loss of Afghanistan as a strategic asset after 9/11, it seems most likely that Pakistan will undertake massive nuclear retaliation in response to an Indian conventional blitzkrieg. Such a response becomes more probable as Pakistan does not believe in Indian pledges of 'no-first-use' thus

making the situation one where, in case of a deterrence failure, the use of nuclear weapons by Pakistan becomes a 'now-or-never' scenario. Moreover, in the fog of military escalation, a conventional attack by any one party may also be misperceived as a pre-emptive attack on nuclear installations, possibly triggering a nuclear response. The geographical proximity of the two sides makes things even worse as the decision-makers on both sides will have considerably less time before reaching any fateful nuclear decision point when compared to the Cold War example.

Another factor that could potentially affect Indian strategic calculations regarding the military option against Pakistan is the future trajectory of US-Pakistan relations. New Delhi may feel less restrained in taking any military action against Pakistan in any future crisis if the problems in the US-Pakistan relationship culminate in a strategic breakdown. New Delhi may not worry about the impact of its military action against Pakistan on its strategic relationship with the United States in such a scenario. The future course of US-Pakistan relations thus also has the potential to further complicate the issue of deterrence stability in the region.

The ongoing problems in US-Pakistan relations are the result of a host of factors.<sup>14</sup> These are the result of the unique post-9/11 situation in the region in the wake of US war against terrorism in Afghanistan. In the course of time, Washington has started looking at Pakistan's cooperation regarding its objectives in Afghanistan as sluggish and duplicitous while Islamabad is wary of the increased influence of New Delhi in Kabul in the wake of the growing US-India strategic partnership during the period. Growing problems in the US-Pakistan relations have been highlighted by the US raid on Osama's hide-out in Pakistan.

In the post-9/11 period, Pakistan's links with the regional militant movements have come under increased scrutiny in Washington. Whereas Washington initially had been able to distinguish between the Kashmir-focussed militant organizations and those affiliated with Al Qaeda, such a distinction is increasingly getting blurred in the wake of the problems that the United States is facing in its efforts to stabilize Afghanistan.

This has not only led to a decreasing sympathy for Pakistan's Kashmir cause in Washington but there is also a growing perception in the United States that Islamic militancy in the region, whether in Afghanistan or in Kashmir, is an inter-related problem. Washington has thus increasingly started viewing militant organizations

such as LeT not just a problem for India but as a global threat on par with Al Qaeda, and also believes LeT may be involved in attacks against US forces in Afghanistan.

Highlighting such US concerns regarding Kashmir-focused militant organizations based in Pakistan like LeT, American military commander Admiral Mike Mullen not only warned of another 26/11-type attack (2008 Mumbai attacks) during his visit to India in July 2010 but also remarked that the militant outfit was emerging as a ‘larger, regional and global threat.’<sup>15</sup> A study by the RAND Corporation also noted in the wake of the Mumbai attacks that ‘LeT has emerged, not as a subsidiary of al-Qaeda, but as an independent constellation in the global jihad galaxy. Indeed, with al-Qaeda central operational capabilities reduced, the Mumbai attack makes LeT a global contender on its own.’<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, in a testimony before the House Homeland Security Committee in March 2009, C. Christine Fair, a political scientist and professor at Georgetown University, Washington D.C., said that ‘LeT threatens U.S. interests irrespective of its formal ties—or lack thereof—to al Qaeda. LeT has well-established linkages to international terrorism and it espouses goals that are similar to those of al Qaeda as the foregoing discussion illustrates.’ She remarked that ‘LeT poses a number of concerns for the United States, not the least of which include ongoing operations against U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan, the likelihood of future attacks in India with the ever present possibility of prompting yet another Indo-Pakistan military crises, and ‘copy-cat’ attacks in the United States or elsewhere.’<sup>17</sup>

Such thinking in Washington was further highlighted when during an address in June 2011 at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based think-tank, US Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano also mentioned LeT. She specifically said that ‘It is Al-Qaeda-like in its strength and organization.’ She remarked again in her visit to India in 2011 the assertion that LeT was in the same league as Al-Qaeda in US eyes and that ‘LeT is a potent terrorist organization. It could be construed as a threat to the United States. It certainly is to India.’<sup>18</sup>

In fact, Admiral Robert Willard, commander of the US Pacific Command testifying before the armed Services Committee of the US Senate in April 2011, spoke about the threat from the LeT and US efforts to contain it. He remarked ‘We know that Lashkar-e-Taiba is currently laid down throughout South Asia. We’re currently working in Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives and India in order to build those nations’ capacities or assist in building their capacities to attempt to



contain LeT in those areas.’<sup>19</sup> While highlighting the threats that LeT poses to the US and western interests, Willard further remarked that there was evidence of LeT’s presence in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. Participation of LeT has been observed in conflicts in Bosnia, Chechnya, and the Philippines too. While linking activities of the LeT directly to the US objectives in Afghanistan, he said that the LeT ‘deliberately targets Westerners and specifically engages coalition forces in Afghanistan.’<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, during a testimony before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee in January 2011, a US defense analyst Ashley J. Tellis remarked that ‘Of all the terrorist groups present in South Asia—and there are many—LeT represents a threat to regional and global security second only to al-Qaeda. Although LeT is linked in popular perceptions mainly to the terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, the operations and ideology of this group transcend the violence directed at the Indian state.... to diverse places such as Palestine, Spain, Chechnya, Kosovo and Eritrea.’<sup>21</sup>

At a hearing on Al Qaeda, the Taliban and other extremist groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan in May 2011, Senator John Kerry, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee also remarked that ‘Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad continue to launch attacks that risk sparking war between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan.’ He said the ‘group, responsible for the vicious Mumbai attacks of 2008’ is capable of ‘destabilising the region with another attack against India.’ He further said that ‘Through its extensive alumni organization and network of training camps throughout Pakistan, it could threaten the United States homeland’ also.<sup>22</sup>

In a more recent development, a key House panel of the US Congress, the House Appropriations Committee, while showing frustration with Pakistan’s fight in the war on terrorism and the long-running war in Afghanistan, imposed limits on US aid to Islamabad in June 2011. The defense spending bill would withhold 75 percent of the \$1.1 billion in U.S. aid to Pakistan until the administration reports to Congress on how it would spend the money. The committee also went a step further, adopting an amendment by Rep. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., that would give Congress 30 days to review the report before deciding whether the money should be spent.<sup>23</sup>

Thus there is growing perception in Washington that Islamabad’s links with the militant organizations are a hurdle in achieving its global objectives. The future developments in US-Pakistan relations thus may also affect regional deterrence

stability. Growing resentment about what is perceived in Washington as Islamabad's half-hearted cooperation in its war against terrorism in Afghanistan has the potential of affecting New Delhi's war calculus against Pakistan. Thus if Pakistan is increasingly viewed as a part of the problem in Washington, leading to a break-down in US-Pakistan relations, New Delhi may feel less restrained by its considerations of any negative impacts on its strategic relationship with the United States during any of its future crisis with Pakistan. Thus, in the short-run, it is the complexity of the US-India-Pakistan triangular relationship that will determine the stability of deterrence in the region.

In a post-Afghanistan regional situation when US forces have withdrawn from the country, as announced by the Obama Administration, in the wake of any political settlement, India and Pakistan can feel less restrained in advancing their agendas on Kashmir. Pakistan might do so by increasing the level of material support to the insurgency while India might take a more relaxed view of any of the US concerns thus further complicating the problem of deterrence stability in the region.

### ***Stabilizing Deterrence in South Asia***

A stable regional deterrence relationship thus may not be achievable merely with the introduction of nuclear weapons. As described by Sir Michael Howard, 'deterrence rests on a combination of accommodation and reassurance, not on nuclear threats alone.'<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Colin S. Gray also argues that 'deterrence is unreliable' ... and 'that (nuclear) deterrence is an effect in a mixed coercive and cooperative relationship. To attempt to deter is to offer the intended deterree the choice either to cooperate or not to cooperate.' He highlights further that 'The elegance and sophistication of the theory of deterrence, especially of nuclear deterrence, stands in sharp contrast with the difficulties that can impede the successful practice of deterrence.'<sup>25</sup>

The two sides should undertake all measures that can contribute towards the objective of stabilizing deterrence in the region including various kinds of CBMs, measures towards nuclear risk reduction and steps towards controlling arms race in the region. While there have been no initiatives directed at controlling the arms race in the region, the two sides however did involve themselves in a number of nuclear risk reduction measures and CBMs, though sluggish, during the period following the

nuclear tests of 1998 and during the peace process following the 2001-02 Crisis. Any progress in these areas has however failed to break the deadlock in the region.

A top-down approach focussing on the key sticky issues may be more helpful. India-Pakistan relations are locked in a deadly identity-infused emotional conflict over the territory of Kashmir with each side showing no compromise on the issue. Progress in the resolution of this issue may contribute a great deal towards ensuring a stable deterrence in the region. The two sides can be expected to behave more rationally should security policy be less influenced by this particular identity contest. It can thus be concluded safely that deterrence stability in the region in the long-run will rest upon the resolution of the Kashmir dispute to the satisfaction of all the parties in the dispute, including the people of Kashmir.

The two sides should engage in a continuous dialogue process on the issue while also including the representatives of the people of Kashmir. The international community should also involve itself in the process in an appropriate way as the problem cannot be merely put aside as merely a regional matter, as much is at stake for everyone in case of nuclear catastrophe.

### ***Conclusion***

The introduction of nuclear weapons cannot be said to have led to the stabilization of deterrence in South Asia. There exist a number of differences between the Cold War example and the South Asian case, most important being the one revolving around cultural, historical and identity factors. As this chapter has shown, the territorial dispute over Kashmir in South Asia is not merely an issue of a piece of land but is related to the cultural identities of the two sides.

Deterrence stability in the post-1998 South Asia has been mainly a function of a powerful third party, the United States. Deterrence in the region thus may fail under certain circumstances peculiar to the region in a future crisis, as the United States may not be there always, or may not be available in time.

Such a scenario can be envisioned in the context of the ongoing India-Pakistan tussle over Kashmir whereby Pakistan allowed the Kashmir-focussed militant groups to operate in a low-profile manner in the post-9/11 period. Any provocative attack in India, like the one in Mumbai in 2008, which New Delhi is able to trace to militant groups based in Pakistan, could trigger a 'Cold Start,' leading to tit-for-tat responses

from Pakistan. Such an eventuality does contain the possibility for the use of nuclear weapons, thus making the India-Pakistan conflict highly dangerous.

Hence, in the post-nuclear South Asia there is more need than ever for compromise and dialogue to resolve the pressing conflicts. The two sides must do everything to lessen the possibility of such dangerous outcomes including engaging in sustainable dialogue processes to resolve sticky issues. Most important are Kashmir, effective CBMs, and arms control measures. Important world capitals, especially Washington must encourage the two sides in this regard.

## Conclusions

Proliferation optimism is based on the rational deterrence model as conceived according to the realist understanding of state behaviour, and draws largely from the example of the US-USSR confrontation during the Cold War period. Realism looks at the planet as being composed of a host of actors or units, called nation-states who are, albeit with varying degrees of national power, engaged in an endless struggle for their survival. All strands of 'realism' regard the pursuit of wealth and power as the only means of surviving in this anarchic world.

In this regard, war is regarded as a legitimate or at least inevitable means to pursue such objectives. States are tempted to go to war against others whenever they find an opportunity to do so. As the states have to operate under the conditions of anarchy with no higher authorities, the only way of avoiding a war is to deter the enemy through the threat of punishment or the extraction of unacceptable costs. This deterrence model, based on realist conceptions, regards states as rational and consistent actors in pursuit of their national interests and objectives. According to this rational deterrence model, war can be avoided by acquiring and communicating the capability for inflicting a maximal level of punishment by the defender.

Nuclear weapons are considered to be an ideal instrument in this regard, whereby the threat of use of these weapons makes the occurrence of war between two nuclear rivals almost zero. According to rational deterrence model, the prospects of unacceptable losses as a result of a nuclear exchange far outweigh any contemplated gains through war between two nuclear states. Nuclear deterrence is thus established, making war highly unattractive between any two nuclear rivals.

The nuclear deterrence model not only speaks about the absence of war between the nuclear rivals but also expects them not to engage in nuclear threats to gain any territory. It also believes that the rivals will refrain from initiating crises or escalating them dangerously. It predicts durability of the territorial status quo and it regards the balance of power in terms of conventional military forces as irrelevant. It also expects that the rivals will pursue credible arms control measures to stabilize their mutual relationship.

The theory thus posits that the advent of nuclear weapons fundamentally alters the relationship between the use of military force and objectives of national security.

It says that the attainment of nuclear capability leads to mutual vulnerability of an unacceptable level forcing the warring states to cooperate to ensure their national security and even the ultimate goal of survival.

The empirical evidence presented in this regard rests on the US-USSR precedent where the two players were able to avoid any direct clash between them during the Cold War, chiefly due to the fact that these two powers were nuclear-armed rivals. It is generally believed that the two rivals were able to do so because of the presence of the nuclear weapons on both sides which brought huge caution in the behavior of these states while conducting their mutual relationship so as not to allow any misstep that could have led to the ultimate catastrophe.

However the evidence from the mutual conduct of the South Asian nuclear dyad in the post-1998 period presents a different and alarming picture. It shows that the presence of nuclear weapons on the sub-continent has failed to induce enough caution in the behavior of the two players. During the period following the overt nuclearization of India and Pakistan in the summer of 1998, the two sides have been involved in a number of crises. The developments during these crises and in the following period amply demonstrate the unwillingness of the two players to behave along the lines expected by nuclear deterrence theory.

The two sides engaged in a mini-clash in Kargil in 1999 and then the dangerous year-long military stand-off during 2001-02. They escalated these crises to dangerous tipping points only to be pulled back by the effective role played by an interested third party, the United States. The sides behaved in these crises as if it was just another clash in the long history of their conflict seemingly with little regard for the presence of nuclear weapons. Similarly, the developments after the 2001-02 Crisis also provide insufficient evidence for deterrence stability in action in the region.

Any analysis of the regional situation solely from the realist conception of state behavior is thus highly problematic in the case of South Asia and cannot fully explain the dynamics of the India-Pakistan conflict. A mere reliance on nuclear weapons to promote the stability of deterrence in the region is thus dangerous. Realism thus tells only part of the story in the South Asian stand-off. Instead of attempting to fit the regional data to the expectations of the dominant theory of Realism in an unconvincing way, insights from other theoretical perspectives should be applied not only to explain the India-Pakistan conflict but to evaluate the prospects of the regional deterrence relationship.

The India-Pakistan conflict is also deeply mired in the emotional issues of culture and the nation-state. In this regard, Kashmir is not just a territorial dispute in the region but is also a symbol of identity for India and Pakistan. The argument of proliferation optimists that nuclear weapons are a guarantee of deterrence stability may be true when the boundary lines between the states do not come into conflict with the demands of national identity. However in situations where territorial disputes are deeply embedded in the cultural dimensions of inter-state conflicts, such optimism may be far-fetched. In such scenarios, the urge to get hold of such territories is equally strong on both sides, leading to dangerous and risky moves by the players involved which have the potential to get out of control. A deterrence relationship in such a case is thus hard to establish. Miscalculations thus may still occur and even the use of ultimate weapons in such eventualities cannot be ruled out, thus making the situation potentially more catastrophic.

Whereas the fundamental explanation of the instability in the post-nuclear South Asia lies in the cultural dimensions of the conflict, other structural variables, when compared to the Cold War example, only work to further compound the situation in South Asia. The two countries' close proximity, including those of their major urban centers, the conventional force imbalance between the South Asian players, and lack of strategic depth in case of Pakistan, has further exacerbated the volatile situation in the region.

Deterrence between India and Pakistan thus can fail in the future. Such an eventuality can escalate to an all-out war including the use of nuclear weapons due to the cultural imperatives of their relationship as the stabilizing role played by an interested third party (i.e. the United States) may not be always available in a future crisis or may not be there in time.

A scenario of deterrence failure in South Asia can be envisioned in the context of Pakistan's strategy of sub-conventional warfare in pursuit of its objectives on Kashmir. In the post-9/11 period, Pakistan has allowed Kashmir-focussed militant groups to operate in a low-key manner and has refused to move decisively against these groups, regarding such a policy to be a bargaining chip to compel India to concede on Kashmir. Any high-profile attack in India by these militant groups which can be traced to their bases in Pakistan by New Delhi may trigger an Indian 'Cold Start' response. Such an Indian mobilization can escalate as Islamabad is expected to respond tit-for-tat to Indian advances in this scenario.

Miscalculations and misperceptions in the fog of war can lead to the use of nuclear weapons. In this regard, Pakistan may feel more hard-pressed due to the wide gap in the conventional forces of the two countries, which favors India, leading Pakistan, culturally motivated to resist India perhaps to suicidal levels, to use the ultimate weapons in its arsenal. In this regard, given the lack of its strategic depth, Pakistan is likely to retaliate massively engaging in both counterforce and countervalue targeting against India.

The South Asian case thus shows that deterrence is not automatically achieved with the acquisition of nuclear weapons by adversaries. India and Pakistan will have to do much more in order to attain such a stable relationship. Significant focus should be aimed at lessening the identity dimension of the regional conflict. A satisfactory resolution of the dispute over the territories of Kashmir may be the first giant step towards the achievement of this goal. It can be expected that a satisfactory resolution of the Kashmir dispute may induce the two players to behave more rationally by lessening the identity conflict between them.

A provocative implication of the present study is that the 'rationalist' mindset should not hinder a more 'enlightened' approach towards resolving some of the issues that involve huge stakes. Given the long history of attempts for the resolution of the dispute over Kashmir, violent as well as non-violent, this may seem to be a hopeless cause. However the stakes involved here are so high that this may be the only viable road to be taken. In this regard, India and Pakistan will have to move away from their stated positions on the issue and will have to enter into continuous dialogue in order to resolve the dispute. This should also be strongly endorsed and encouraged by key international players. The representatives of the Kashmiri people should also be involved in such a process so as to find a satisfactory and durable solution of the issue.



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## Introduction

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## Chapter 1

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## Chapter 2

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### Chapter 3

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## Chapter 5

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## Chapter 6

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*The China Daily*

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*The Times of India*  
*The Hindustan Times*  
*The Indian Express*  
*The Independent*  
*The Statesman*  
*Pioneer*  
*India Today*  
*Outlook*  
*Indian Express*  
*Frontline*  
*The New York Times*  
*The Washington Post*  
*The Asian Age*  
*BBC News*  
*Rediff News*