

## **Paradox of deterrence: India-Pakistan strategic relations**

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Nuclear weapons have transformed military power into a very expensive and dangerous tool of statecraft; it should not be exercised without a great deal of wisdom. That germinated a realization in the nuclear-capable adversaries' military establishments that their chief purpose was to avert nuclear wars instead of winning them. The realization that war is not a rational alternative to accomplishing political objectives had substantiated deterrence as a dominant concept of nuclear strategy since the beginning of the nuclear age in the military doctrines of nuclear weapon States.

India and Pakistan do share the long-standing and highly developed theory of deterrence that emerged from the Cold War. Nevertheless, the cost-benefit calculus that underpins deterrence may be clouded by the introduction of a new kind of weapon — missile defence systems — or varying perceptions and strategic cultures/mindsets of security elites in New Delhi and Islamabad. The missile defence systems, for example, in India's arsenal may lead it to adjust deterrence with compellence in its nuclear strategy. It is important to recognize the difference between deterrence and compellence. The distinction, according to Robert Art, "is one between the active and passive use of force. The success of a deterrent threat is measured by its not having been used. The success of a compellent action is measured by how closely and quickly the adversary conforms to one's stipulated wishes."

In the aftermath of the Mumbai terrorist attacks in November 2008, the Indian leadership articulated the possibility of surgical strikes against Pakistan. The Indian Air Force conducted flights on India-Pakistan international border on December 14, 2008. Subsequently, India's External Affairs Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, warned Pakistan on December 19, 2008, by stating: "All our pleas have been ignored till date. Pakistan's inaction will force us to consider all option." These actions of New Delhi introduced a new variable in India and Pakistan strategic discourse, i.e., the former might have a lesser confidence in the Cold War deterrence concept of nuclear strategy.

The purpose of this study is to critically examine the role and puzzles of nuclear deterrence theory in the strategic relationships of India and Pakistan. Does nuclear

deterrence sustain the status quo and prevent war between India and Pakistan? What is the impact of non-State actors' activities on the India-Pakistan strategic relations?

### Conceptualizing nuclear deterrence

In international relations literature, deterrence is usually discussed in terms of the relations between adversaries in which one attempts to frighten the other into inaction. These attempts to deter undesirable acts are essentially psychological in nature instead of obstructing or preventing physically a particular course of action. Phil Williams points out: "Deterrence is an attempt by one government to prevent an adversary from undertaking a course of action (usually an attack on itself or its allies) that the government regards as undesirable, by threatening to inflict unacceptable costs upon the adversary in the event that the action is taken." Strategies of deterrence aim to influence the adversary's perceptions or structure one's image in such a way that the enemy believes that refraining from attack is in its best interests. Henry Kissinger points out: "The Nuclear age turned strategy into deterrence, and deterrence into an esoteric intellectual exercise." Deterrence encourages the view that only the prospect of retaliation in kind — an eye for an eye — could act as any sort of restraint. Nuclear deterrence is the threat of nuclear attack as retaliation, to prevent the opponent from using violence against the vital interests of the one who deters.

Hence, nuclear weapons challenge the Clausewitzian view of war as an instrument of politics. With nuclear weapons, strategy has become an instrument to prevent war; the sole purpose of nuclear weapons is deterrence, which is the prevention of military conflict. Rifaat Hussain points out: "Nuclear weapons appear to have had three general effects on inter-State relations. First, nuclear weapons provide the nuclear State with an 'infrangible guarantee of its independence and physical integrity'. Second, mutual deterrence among antagonistic nuclear States places limits on violence and in turn acts as a brake on total war. Third, by altering the 'offence-defence' balance in favour of defence, nuclear weapons have made it possible for weaker States to defend themselves effectively against larger power countries." More precisely, nuclear weapons give confidence to its owner in the construct of its defensive fence. Simultaneously, however, these lethal weapons demand rationality from their proprietor.

Importantly, in practice, the deterrence theory is synonymous with neither strategy nor conflict resolution. It employs passive use of force to preserve the status quo and prevent war between strategic competitors. Moreover, deterrence sustainability

depends on the transparent war preparations or verifiable arms control arrangements between or among the strategic competitors. These actions, while diminishing the chances of miscalculations and misperception, would increase predictability of the adversary's behaviour. Scott D. Sagan while discussing the contours of deterrence stability opines: "There are three requirements for stable nuclear deterrence: prevention of preventive war during periods of transition when one side has a temporary advantage; the development of survivable second-strike; and avoidance of accidental nuclear war."

The theory of nuclear deterrence rationalizes the development of Indian and Pakistani nuclear arsenals. Both sides articulated that a triad-based minimum nuclear deterrence was essential for their sovereign defences. Many scholars and defence analysts — proliferation optimists — following the logic of rational deterrence theory, argue that South Asian nuclearization has narrowed the number of strategies that might permit India and Pakistan to exploit a temporary military advantage to achieve a more permanent and favourable distribution of power without risking unprecedented and prohibitive self-destruction. Statesmen and soldiers in Islamabad and New Delhi understand that a nuclear exchange in South Asia would create devastating damage and therefore would be deterred from starting any military conflict in which there is a serious possibility of escalation to the use of nuclear weapons. Conversely, the 'nuclear pessimists' believe that nuclear weapons proliferation in India and Pakistan would increase the likelihood of crises, accidents, and nuclear war. These two theoretical perspectives and a history of nuclear-India and nuclear-Pakistan relations germinate a debate about the paradox of deterrence in India and Pakistan strategic relations.

#### India-Pakistan: nuclear postures

India and Pakistan jealously guard their strategic autonomy and nuclear weapons capability. They rejected UN Resolution 1172 which urges India and Pakistan, in conjunction with other States that have not yet done so, to become party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty without delay and without conditions. New Delhi and Islamabad have been convinced that through nuclear deterrence they would accomplish various objectives, i.e., dissuade the adversary from contemplating aggression; deter potential enemies; increase bargaining leverage; reduce dependence on allies; and acquire military independence by reducing dependence on external sources of military hardware.

Islamabad, however, has been advocating its nuclear restraint regime proposal since the overt nuclearization of India and Pakistan. The proposal was based on credible nuclear deterrence at the minimum possible level, including non-induction of anti-ballistic missiles and submarine-launched ballistic missiles in the region. That reflects that Islamabad has been in pursuit of three objectives: recognition of strategic parity between India and Pakistan by the former, upholding strategic stability in the subcontinent with recessed-deterrence capabilities, minimizing war-fighting preparations expenses. In theory, Islamabad's Nuclear Restraint Regime proposal qualified to be labelled arms control proposal. Arms control reduces the probability of war, the costs of preparations for war, and the death and destruction if control fails and war comes. New Delhi rejected this bilateral arms control proposal citing threat emanating from the Chinese military muscle. In addition to the supposed Chinese threat, New Delhi has other reason to turn down the proposal, i.e., the Indians are not willing to concede parity to Pakistan and the missiles build-up was meant to engage Islamabad in the spiral of a costly and self-destructive arms race.

Islamabad's official stance with regard to the global nuclear non-proliferation regime is that it would consider whatever New Delhi agrees to first. India remains an outlier to treaties that constitute the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The international community's benign approach towards Indian nuclear programme encourages New Delhi to remain outside the framework of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Samina Ahmed points out: "Since the 1950s, the international community has deliberately ignored India's nuclear ambitions because of India's geostrategic importance, its democratic credentials and its economic potential."

The Indo-U.S. nuclear deal, ratified by the United States Congress and signed into legislation by President Bush on October 8, 2008, ended entirely the possibility of New Delhi's joining the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The deal granted New Delhi's much sought after de-jure nuclear weapon State status; enhanced India's prestige and repute as being a responsible nuclear weapon State in the region; cemented the Indo-U.S. strategic partnership that would entail bolstering in India's strategic capabilities, including nuclear weapons, and offensive and defensive missiles potential.

Although these arrangements did not explicitly recognize India as a Nuclear Weapons State (NWS) on a par with the United States, the Russian Federation, Britain, France and China; for all practical purposes, India would be treated on a par with other nuclear weapon States with no obligation to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. That means that India can have its cake and eat it too. That is, get nuclear reactor technology and fuel from the U.S. and other Nuclear Supplier Group States, while retaining its capability to build up fissile material and assembled bomb stockpiles without restrictions on further

testing of missiles or curbs on deployment. On March 31, 2009, for example, the Indian Nuclear Fuel Complex received the first consignment of natural uranium of 60 tones from French nuclear supplier AREVA Inc. The overall strategic outcome of the deal would be increasing both conventional and non-conventional military might of India and boosting the Indians' perceptions that India, like the United States, is an exceptional country and exceptional countries prefer to lead rather than to join. The factors which constitute and boost such perceptions have a potential to undermine the deductive logic of rationality implicit in the deterrence theory which averts war between India and Pakistan.

Pakistan is viewed by the United States and its like-minded States as a nuclear maverick. The Nuclear Supplier Group members, except China, are reluctant to assist Pakistan in its peaceful nuclear use pursuits. Pakistan's nuclear industry requires foreign input to modernize and economize the complex of laboratories and production plants that make up the country's nuclear complex. On July 24, 2008, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, stated that his country desired a similar nuclear deal with the U.S. as it had concluded with India. Instead of negotiating a similar deal, the United States and its like-minded States have been pressuring Islamabad to cap, roll back and ultimately eliminate its nuclear programme. This environment would be disadvantageous to Pakistan's national prestige as also security.

Indian and Pakistani nuclear postures proves that both States are engaged in strategic modernization programmes of considerable breadth, building nuclear-tipped cruise missiles as well as ballistic missiles to be carried by their land, sea, and air forces. In addition, both sides have also been steadily upgrading their respective air forces. India and Pakistan's current nuclear postures — including the acquisition of delivery systems with greater range, accuracy and flexibility — amount to an affirmation of the utility of nuclear weapons, and thereby contradict efforts to downgrade their importance and promote nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament in South Asia. In other words, underscoring the utility of nuclear weapons incites proliferation and undermines the non-proliferation regime in the India-Pakistan strategic environment. Consequently, at present, each side possesses nuclear capability sufficient to constitute a credible deterrence to action by the other threatening vital interests, and that neither has within reach nor early prospects a dependable capability to deprive the other of that sufficiency.

Nuclear deterrence puzzle

The realist school of thought has been dominating the policy-making mindset in New Delhi and Islamabad. Like Cold War era realists, they derive their national interest from the balance of power, and assess the utility of both military and economic instruments of statecraft. New Delhi and Islamabad, without discounting the concept of regional unification and overlooking the deeper set of connections between economic prosperity and mutual cooperation within the South Asian regional context, have failed to resolve or at least freeze contesting issues in their bilateral relations. In simple words, both India and Pakistan define their respective security in military terms. Military security is primarily about the two-level interplay between the actual armed offensive and defensive capabilities of States on the one hand, and their perceptions of each other's capabilities and intentions on the other.

The works of McGeorge Bundy and Kenneth Waltz suggest that nuclear weapons ensure greater peace in conflict-ridden regions. In June 2004, the foreign secretaries of India and Pakistan also voiced a shared view that the nuclear capabilities of both States were a factor for stability. The nuclear deterrence theory confronts a situation in South Asia that is very different from the context in which such theorization developed; namely, the United States-Soviet Union confrontation during the Cold War. Unlike the U.S. and USSR, India and Pakistan have a common border and very short missile flight times limiting reaction time to almost nothing; remembrance of four wars and unlimited border skirmishes; the perennial Kashmir dispute; active involvement in each other's intra-State conflicts; contesting regional and global outlook; and, above all, power asymmetry. More precisely, the nuclear deterrence theory was not engaged with a strategic environment like that of the India-Pakistan strategic environment. The outcome of this disparity (to-date) is that the balance of terror alone is not enough to guarantee the functioning of the deterrence theory; there is a need for benign external intervention for deterrence operability between India and Pakistan.

New Delhi always cites the threat emanating from Beijing's military muscle for justifying its nuclear weapons programme. In 1998, some Indian ministers placed declaratory emphasis on the security interface with China as the prime rationale for realizing the nuclear capability. The neo-realist or structural realism theory, while qualifying this assertion, necessitates India's nuclear deployment or other appropriate actions which communicate India's desire to use nuclear weapons to deter Chinese aggression. The Indians nuclear posture in practice, however, contradicts deterrence and neo-realist theories in explaining the objective of India's nuclear weapons to solidify its defensive fence against China.

In reality, India, even after 45 years of Chinese nuclear test in 1964, lacks nuclear-capable delivery systems which are essential for its central nuclear deterrence against

China. If India is to attempt to threaten China with nuclear deterrence, it could not use manned aircraft to deliver the nuclear weapons since China's cities and major industries lie beyond the operational range of Indian aircraft. To date, it has neither developed nor purchased intermediate-range ballistic missiles. This contradiction demands an alternative explanation for India's nuclearization, particularly when India has only deployed Pakistan-specific, short-range, surface-to-surface nuclear capable Prithvi and Agni-1-A missiles. This is certainly not in consonance with India's nuclear deterrence perception vis-à-vis China. In the context of South Asia, that generates the impression that India's nuclear weapons are either for coercion or compellence and aggression. E. Sridharan argues: "India has adopted a very slow process of weaponization or recessed-deterrent approach and altogether eschewing attempts at compellence or the development of the compellent capabilities. This again is hard to explain by the logic of deterrence theory or neo-realism."

Deterrence capability vis-à-vis India's nuclear and superior conventional capability was the prime mover of Pakistani nuclear program since early 1970s and nuclear tests in May 1998. Pakistani decision-makers since the early 1970s have considered nuclear capability as the best option for counterbalancing India. That is because the conventional means are expensive, have a short shelf-life, and their availability is dependent on the goodwill of foreign powers. Pakistan thus concluded that nuclear weapons were the cheapest, most effective and reliable route to national security. Nuclear Deterrence is meant for non-action that sustains the status quo. In India-Pakistan strategic relations, nuclear weapons have been used not only for deterrence purposes. But, more than that, by virtue of these weapons, the stability-instability paradox was instituted as an integral component of South Asian strategic vocabulary. Moreover, it is wrong to assume that a nuclear deterrent is a substitute for conventional war-fighting.

Rasul Bakhsh Rais argues: "No country can make an abrupt transition from border clashes to nuclear strikes, particularly when the adversary is also armed with nuclear weapons. What we expect from a nuclear deterrent is the prevention of the outbreak of a total war because of the inherent risks of escalation to nuclear exchanges, which in the case of India and Pakistan, would be suicidal." Secondly, the dependence on the external deterrence stabilizer(s) not only gives an initiative to the outsider in the crisis management, but also limits the choices of deterring power.

In theory, among the requirements for deterrence are extraordinary measures of protection for the retaliatory force so that it might survive a surprise attack. In 2009, the Pakistani defence community could look with satisfaction on its retaliatory forces which appeared secure by virtue of being, for most part, either underground in silos or

dispersed; and the technological backwardness of the Indian nuclear infrastructure (lack of satellite monitoring capability, lack of knowledge of Pakistan's nuclear assets numbers, types, location at any given time, a recessed posture, few deployed missiles of insufficient range and questionable accuracy, etc.).

This situation will soon change because India is moving up the technological ladder with the assistance of the United States, Israel and the Russian Federation. It is developing more accurate missile capabilities, and other infrastructure, including spy satellites, airborne early warning and theatre missile defences, fuller deployment of weapons, and rapid-reaction command, control, and communication systems. The annual increases in the Indian defence budget authenticate its technological pursuits. Pakistan's insecurity factor reveals that it must be vigilantly following the Indians military build-up and consciously adjusting its deterrence requirements accordingly. But the annual defence budget figures indicate that its modernization process is either non-existent or very slow.

India has been endeavouring to develop and acquire anti-ballistic missile defence systems, which necessitate Pakistan to reinforce its deterrence capabilities or retaliatory striking forces with more employable weapons. In addition, the defensive systems have inbuilt features to lower the nuclear threshold. The lowering of nuclear threshold deteriorates nuclear deterrence stability in the subcontinent by increasing the likelihood of nuclear use in various ways.

If deterrence fails, how do India and Pakistan fight a nuclear war? Though one lacks the nuclear strategy operational precedents, yet one can answer the question hypothetically, i.e., one launches preemptive nuclear strikes to knock out the adversarial offensive potential. That means that it is better to strike first than to be struck first, or be an ardent supporter the maxim that the best defence is a good offence. Unfortunately, if one is struck first, one launches massive retaliatory nuclear strikes to decimate benefits of the nuclear aggressor. Secondly, either side could target the adversary's capacity to act instead of striking the enemy's power centres. In this case, the aggressor State would explode a nuclear weapon at high altitude (between 100 and 200 kilometres) and thereby create an electromagnetic pulse (EMP) that could jam, cripple or destroy all of the enemy's non-EMP-hardened computers and communications systems. David S. Yost argues: "Depending in part on the altitude and magnitude of the EMP, all electronic systems within a radius of hundreds of kilometres could be affected, and 'the country attacked would be on its knees for years', although the nuclear explosion would not produce fatal blast, heat or radioactive effects."



## Non-State actors and brinksmanship

Non-State actors have posed a grave threat to nuclear deterrence stability in South Asia. They had brought nuclear-armed India and Pakistan to the brink of war, which could have escalated to the nuclear level. Following the terrorist attack on India's parliament in New Delhi on December 13, 2001, calls intensified among the Indian politicians and the attentive public to attack 'the terrorist sanctuaries' in Pakistan. India mobilized conventional forces along the border to pose a physical threat to Pakistan. New Delhi demanded Islamabad cease support to insurgents in the Indian-held Kashmir and hand over leading militants residing in Pakistan. In addition, New Delhi tried to convince the Bush Administration to treat the Kashmir insurgency on a par with terrorism in Afghanistan and elsewhere. In response, Pakistan also deployed its forces. The attack on Indian Army camp in Kashmir in May 2002 further aggravated the crisis and took the belligerent neighbours to the brink of war. Realizing the gravity of the worsening situation, Islamabad gave a public commitment to New Delhi to refrain from supporting militants in Kashmir.

New Delhi again held Islamabad responsible for Mumbai terrorist attacks in November 2008. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh indirectly warned Pakistan in his address to the nation following the attacks by stating: "We will take up strongly with our neighbours that the use of their territory for launching attacks on us will not be tolerated, and that there would be a cost if suitable measures are not taken by them." External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee was more explicit in his allegations. He stated: "There is no doubt that the militants who attacked Mumbai came from Pakistan and were coordinated from Pakistan." Words are actions in their own right and significantly affect a State's perception of the nature and intensity of the threat it faces. Careless or ill-considered remarks, even those directed at an altogether different audience, can easily and dramatically exacerbate bilateral tensions. In addition, the Indian Air Force flights on the India-Pakistan international border on December 14, 2008 indicated that New Delhi could launch surgical strikes against selected targets inside Pakistan. The deliberate violation of Pakistani airspace by Indian fighter jets was a tactical move to test Pakistan's alertness and response. Though the instant response of Islamabad was lenient, subsequently it increased air surveillance. It was a clear message that if the Indian air force crossed the border, it would be challenged with full force.

These crisis demonstrated grave foreign and domestic threats to the Indian national interests which Indian leaders believed could only be overcome through an aggressive foreign policy towards Pakistan. Many analysts opine that the political weakness of leaders as distinct from instability of the political system as a whole provided the incentive for brinkmanship in both these crisis. The Indian ruling elite used brinkmanship

to seek a foreign policy victory in order to buttress their domestic position. The brinkmanship, however, contains the potential to destabilize nuclear stability between India and Pakistan.

The US role: deterrence and compellence

During the 1999 Kargil crisis, the 2001-2002 military deployment, and the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks, the Americans mediated to deescalate the conflict between the belligerent neighbours. For instance, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbot in 1999, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage in 2001-2002 and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in 2008 were directly engaged with New Delhi and Islamabad in lowering the temperature. The United States was incrementally involved in stabilizing the nuclear deterrence in the subcontinent. Importantly, the United States' intervention was considered benign by both New Delhi and Islamabad, and thereby welcomed by both despite having different expectations from the mediator and diverse outcomes of the settlement. In the Pakistani perspective, the mediator would communicate India the possibility of escalation of conflict to the level of nuclear exchanges. In other words, Americans mediation exhibits the balance of terror between India and Pakistan which discourages New Delhi from initiation of an escalatory military course of action. This expectation was accomplished in all the three crises.

The Indians desired that the United States' mediation ought to facilitate Indian compellence strategy. Importantly, India also achieved its policy objectives. Pakistan announced reversal of actions that had already occurred in the first case, and it also ensured India publicly to not allow its territory to be used against it in 2002 and 2008. On July 4, 1999, Islamabad agreed to vacate the Kargil heights. Farzana Shaikh points out: "The United States responded angrily to this latest military adventure [Kargil 1999] by Pakistan and ordered an immediate end to hostilities. It also warned Pakistan against any further disturbance of the LOC and reportedly threatened to tighten nuclear-related sanctions which would have jeopardized Prime Minister Sharif's ambitious programme of economic reform." Scott D. Sagan wrote that President Clinton had told Sharif that he could not come to Washington unless he was willing to withdraw the troops back from the Line of Control. The Indian ruling elites' interpretation, however, was that Indian threats of military escalation, that a counterattack across the international border would be ordered if necessary, forced Pakistan to retreat. In 2002, President Musharraf on various occasions stated to not allow Pakistan's territory to be used against India. In both cases, Islamabad had to call off some overt and covert actions which were underway.

The foregoing discussion brings out that in the case of Kargil, Pakistan visibly succumbed to compellent actions which caused a loss of prestige and national humiliation. However, in 2001-2002 Islamabad took some steps to accommodate Indian concerns without compromising on its prestige. In response to the Mumbai terrorist attacks, Islamabad adopted an explicitly accommodating policy. It accepted that its territory was used by the terrorists to engineer attacks in Mumbai in November 2008. It immediately arrested some members of the alleged and already banned militant organization Jamat-ul-Dawa and closed down its offices in Pakistan.

The discussion also proves that non-State actors have a potential to spoil strategic stability in the subcontinent. In addition, India and Pakistan failed to avoid conventional armed conflict that could have precipitated into nuclear exchange. In the words of Feroz Hassan Khan: "In the case of India and Pakistan, nuclear weapons are entangled with bitter regional disputes, exacerbating the instability half of the original stability-instability paradox. Yet, the other half—stability—is still evolving and has yet to mature. Because the issues concerned are critical to India's and Pakistan's core national identities, the two States have exercised force and coerced each other several times, pushing crises to the brink." Nevertheless, nuclear deterrence thwarts total war, but fails to prevent deliberate military adventurism at a lower level to alter the status quo.

### Probability of crises

Transnational terrorists and increasing military asymmetry between the belligerent neighbours could endanger deterrence stability between nuclear India and Pakistan. This premise is based on four interlinked factors: First, the possibility of preventive war; that is, attacks based on the belief that an enemy's use of nuclear weapons is imminent and unavoidable. The Indians have frequently reiterated the possibility of conducting 'hot pursuit' of the insurgents and terrorists into Pakistan. Raju G. C. Thomas raised a question that, "If the United States could use massive conventional force to eliminate terrorist bases in faraway Afghanistan from whence terrorist operations were planned and conducted in the United States, then why cannot India launch attacks on terrorist bases in Pakistan and further afield across the Hindu Kush?" Immediately after the launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003, the then External Affairs Minister of India, Yashwant Sinha, stated that India would go for preemptive operations against Pakistan. He said: "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 U.S. has in Iraq."

Second, despite Islamabad's rational-cum-apologetic efforts at de-escalation in the aftermath of the Mumbai terrorist attacks in November 2008, the danger of war remains high because transnational Islamist militants in India have the potential to reignite tensions between New Delhi and Islamabad by doing something so outrageous and provocative that India would feel compelled to retaliate.

Third, a critical examination of India-Pakistan relations in the post-May 1998 reveals that Pakistan, despite having nuclear weapons, backed down when challenged or at least adopted a policy to pacify the adversary's anger to avoid war. In the Mumbai crisis, the Indian leadership successfully compelled Islamabad without even military deployment, simply using rhetorical threats and convincing the international community, particularly the Americans. That contributed positively to the Indian perceptions that they have space to wage a limited conventional war to coerce the enemy. The capability to win a limited war gave a dangerous confidence to the Indian leadership that it would be able to achieve its respective policy objectives through a strategy of compellence. This mindset of the Indian ruling elite is counterproductive for nuclear deterrence stability in the region because compellence strategy has an inbuilt characteristic to provoke the adversary to retaliate in kind.

Fourth, New Delhi has been endeavouring to keep the limited conventional war option open and negate Pakistan's nuclear weapons capability as a force multiplier in both the conventional and nuclear theatres. Therefore, it is procuring and developing its own missile defence systems to reverse the prevailing strategic equilibrium between India and Pakistan which was rectified by the nuclear explosions at Chaghi on May 28, 1998. The calculus of real-politic holds that India, behind the safe missile shield, might be more likely to adopt military adventurous policies against Pakistan. The missile defences in India will encourage the decision-makers to operationalize its preventive war strategy or at least it would assume a more aggressive posture in its dealing with Pakistan. Such an environment compels Pakistan to develop more robust deterrence which may be the likely response or increasing the number of nuclear delivery systems and fissile material. A strong Islamabad nuclear response to changes in its strategic balance with India would inevitably raise the strategic temperature between India and Pakistan, something that would have an adverse impact on nuclear deterrence stability in the region. Accordingly, a more aggressive and unstable nuclear relationship may emerge in South Asia.

## **Conclusion**

Indian and Pakistani nuclearization has not deterred sub-conventional warfare or limited conventional war (1999 Kargil), eyeball-to-eyeball military deployments in 2001-2002 and the possibility of Indian surgical strikes inside Pakistan in the aftermath of the Mumbai terrorist attacks. The composite dialogue also failed to germinate trust in India-Pakistan relations. That reveals that in an atmosphere of heightened-cum-protracted bilateral tensions, there would be increased chances of armed conflict between India and Pakistan. Even if such a conflict is restricted to the conventional realm, Pakistan's conventional inferiority places it at a distinct disadvantage which would be a counterproductive variable for nuclear deterrence stability.

The positive factor for deterrence optimists is that India and Pakistan had agreed to some confidence-building and nuclear risk-reduction measures, such as non-attack on each other's nuclear installations and notifications regarding certain missile flight tests and military exercises. Trends in the regional and international politics indicate that in the near future, the composite dialogue between India and Pakistan would resume, perhaps yielding more agreements that reducing the possibility of unintended escalation. The realistic account is that deterrence in South Asia is dynamic rather than static, contingent on the opponent's moves and technologies advances. The pessimistic wrapping up is that nuclear deterrence between India and Pakistan is very much vulnerable to non-State actors, India's ethnocentrism-cum-superiority obsession, increasing conventional asymmetry between the belligerent neighbours, Pakistan's political and economic instability and, above all, its insufficient investment in modern conventional weaponry. Hence, deterrence may well fail in preventing war despite New Delhi's and Islamabad's recognition of the vast devastation of nuclear war. That necessitates the need for both the belligerents to exercise caution in their words and deeds.

## Notes & References

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- [6] Rifaat Hussain, "Deterrence and Nuclear Use: Doctrines in South Asia", in Sridharan, E. ed., *The India-Pakistan Nuclear Relationship: Theories of Deterrence and International Relations*, op. cit., p. 151.
- [7] Scott D. Sagan, "The Perils of Proliferation in South Asia", *Asian Survey*, Vol. 41, No. 6, November-December 2001, p. 1065.
- [8] *Ibid.*, pp. 1064-1065.
- [9] The UNSC resolution 1172, passed soon after the South Asian nuclear tests, had, among other things, condemned the tests as well as urged India and Pakistan to immediately stop their nuclear weapon development programmes, to refrain from weaponisation or from deployment of nuclear weapons. Resolution 1172 (1998), adopted by the Security Council at its 3890th meeting on 6 June 1998. <http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1998/sres1172.htm>
- [10] Feroz Hassan Khan, "The Independence-Dependence Paradox: Stability Dilemmas in South Asia", *Arms Control Today*, October 2003. <http://www.armscontrol.org>, accessed on April 3, 2009.
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- [14] Samina Ahmed, "Security Dilemmas of Nuclear-Armed Pakistan", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 5, October 2000, p. 783.
- [15] India has a shortage of natural uranium, the raw material for most of India's power and research reactors. This shortage had alarmed India that its entire nuclear programme will halt within a couple of years. In fact, the impending exhaustion of the ores of Jaduguda mines and the perceived inadequacy of the mines yet to be developed in Nalgonda and Meghalaya, is often said to be the key driver of the nuclear deal with the United States. E. Sridharan, "Introduction: Subcontinental Perspectives on Deterrence Theory, International Relations Theory and South Asia", in Sridharan, E. ed., *The India-Pakistan Nuclear Relationship: Theories of Deterrence and International Relations*, op. cit., p. 19.
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- [17] Michael Krepon, "Looking Back: The 1998 Indian and Pakistani Nuclear Tests", *Arms Control Today*, May 2008.
- [18] "Pakistan wants N-deal a la Indo-US", *The News International*, July 25, 2008.
- [19] This impression was very much articulated in the national debate in parliament and in the print and electronic media discussions on the subject of the U.S. Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009 (the Kerry-Lugar Bill) during the first two weeks of October 2009.
- [20] So long as the global nuclear environment remains similar to what it is now, India and Pakistan would not move in the opposite direction towards denuclearization. That is because India's traditional stance that the status of nuclear weaponry is a global rather than a regional problem determines the direction, level, and pattern of both India and Pakistan's future nuclear policy. Ashley J. Tellis, *India's Emerging Nuclear Posture: Between Recessed Deterrent and Ready Arsenal* (US: RAND, 2001), p. 21.
- [21] External threats range from the fear of complete obliteration of the State, society, and people to gunboat diplomacy-style coercion and intimidation on particular issues of policy. Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework For Analysis* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), p. 51.

- [22] McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years* (New York: Random House, 1988). Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better", *Adelphi Paper*, No. 171 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981).
- [23] Joint Statement, India-Pakistan Expert-Level Talks, New Delhi, June 21, 2004.
- [24] India is in advantageous position in almost all important material factors — especially, military, economic and manpower — essential for the political power of a nation vis-à-vis Pakistan.
- [25] Michael Quinlan, "India-Pakistan Deterrence Revisited", *Survival*, Vol. 47, No. 3, Autumn 2005, p. 106.
- [26] Michael Sheehan, *The International Politics of Space* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 154. The all weather SU-30 multi-role fighter has a range of 3,000 km.
- [27] E. Sridharan, "International Relations Theory and the India-Pakistan Conflict", in Sridharan, E., ed., *The India-Pakistan Nuclear Relationship: Theories of Deterrence and International Relations*, op. cit., p. 29.
- [28] "A national consensus has emerged on nuclear deterrence that is close to historical consensus on Muslim nationalism in the subcontinent. The bomb is seen as the absolute weapon with which to defend the territoriality of the subcontinental Muslim nationalism that Pakistan as a nation-state embodies." Rasul Bakhsh Rais, "Conceptualizing Nuclear Deterrence: Pakistan's Posture", in Sridharan, E., ed., *The India-Pakistan Nuclear Relationship: Theories of Deterrence and International Relations*, op. cit., p. 54.
- [29] *Ibid.*, p. 57.
- [30] David S. Yost, "France's new nuclear doctrine," *International Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 4, 2006, p. 704.
- [31] Feroz Hassan Khan, op. cit.
- [32] During the terror attacks on Mumbai, around 195 people, including 26 foreigners and 20 policemen, were killed and over 350 injured at the two five-star hotels; the Taj Mahal and Oberoi-Trident; a Jewish centre; the Chhatrapathi Shivaji railway station; etc.
- [33] Nikita Khrushchev's famous boast, "We will bury you," caused an instant sensation in the West where it was interpreted by many as an admission of Soviet willingness to resort to nuclear war to spread communism. Richard Ned Lebow, "The Deterrence Deadlock: Is There a Way out?" *Political Psychology*, Vol. 4, No. 2, June 1983, p. 352.
- [34] Farzana Shaikh, "Pakistan's Nuclear Bomb: Beyond the Non-Proliferation Regime", *International Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 1, January 2002, p. 37.
- [35] Scott D. Sagan, "The Perils of Proliferation in South Asia", op. cit., p. 1072.
- [36] Feroz Hassan Khan, op. cit.
- [37] Raju. G. C. Thomas, "Whither Nuclear India?" in D. R. Sar Desai and Raju. G. C. Thomas, ed. *Nuclear India in the Twenty-First Century*, op. cit p. 14.
- [38] "Indian FM hints at pre-emptive strike against Pakistan", *The News International*, April 3, 2003.