

# Challenges to Strategic Stability in South Asia: An Analysis

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## Abstract

*The South Asian security environment is in a state of flux due to the rivalry of two nuclear powers, India and Pakistan. The acquisition of nuclear weapons by both the states cannot be retracted; however, it is critically important to maintain a stable and credible deterrence at the lowest possible level. Pakistan has often proposed India to develop a “strategic restraint regime” to avert the possibility of a total war that could culminate in a nuclear war. To establish such a regime, there is a need to improve bilateral relations and increase cooperation in the nuclear domain. To avoid chances of nuclear use, India and Pakistan should reduce their reliance on nuclear weapons by spending less on nuclear weapons development. This paper tries to examine the challenges to strategic stability in South Asia from domestic, regional and global perspectives and also explores that how the interplay of these challenges is undermining the South Asian strategic stability. The role of major powers, especially the US, has also been analysed for a thorough understanding of an already fragile security situation in the region.*

**Keywords:** Stability Instability Paradox, South Asia, Pakistan, India, Nuclear Weapons, Strategic Stability Challenges.

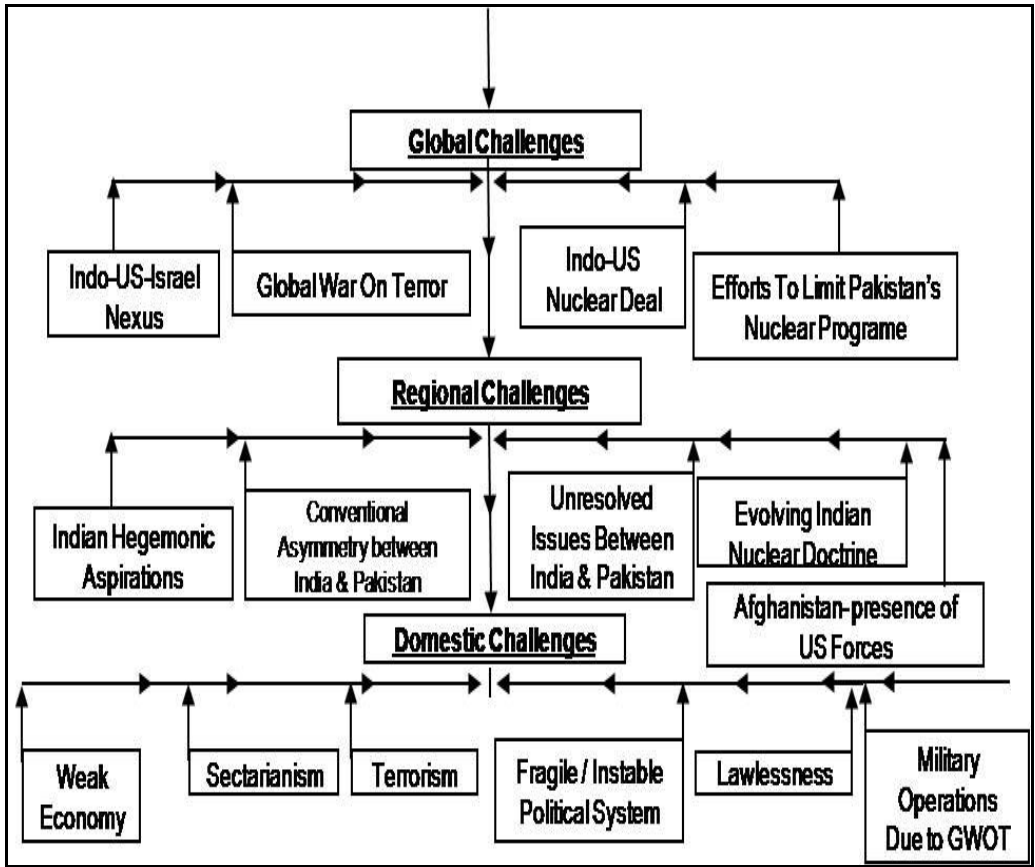
## Introduction

The South Asian region received an immediate attention of the international community when India and Pakistan conducted their nuclear tests in May 1998. The main concern of the international community was the introduction of nuclear weapons into the India-Pakistan existing deep rooted traditional hostility. In reality, security in South Asia is challenged by the interplay of several factors functioning at numerous levels: domestic, regional and global. The diagram below elucidates the linkages that exist between these levels.

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**Diagram No.1.**  
**Challenges to Strategic Stability in South Asia**



Source: Author's personal analysis.

Since independence in 1947, Pakistan has been trying to persuade India to agree to discuss resolution of disputes created after the partition of the subcontinent. As the region proceeded to nuclearisation, the efforts by Pakistan also took a shift. Like pre-test phase, in the post-nuclearisation period, Pakistan proposed a number of steps to keep the region stable. In order to analyse how successful or unsuccessful the endeavours have been, this paper aims to take into account the initiatives taken by Pakistan in this direction at domestic, regional and global levels.

## Domestic Factors

The political structure of both nuclear-armed states of South Asia is grounded in their domestic politics. Their behaviour is also determined by the emergence of numerous challenges to security in the post-Cold War era. In this context, strategic stability of South Asia, along with the gravity of Pakistan-India bilateral disputes make them the most important states in the region. Pakistan identifies India as its competitor and India considers Pakistan as its rival. India's aggressive policies heighten Pakistan's sense of insecurity. Pakistan wishes to coexist peacefully as a worthwhile state while staying away from the hegemonic pursuits of India. Since independence, Pakistan has been striving hard to balance its foreign and security relations with India.

In a changing security environment, a strong military capability along with nuclear weapons capability is considered an out-and-out weapon.<sup>1</sup> Since the 1980s, the covert development of nuclear weapons was considered as a powerful shield in the security calculus of Pakistan. At that time, Pakistan's ambiguous nuclear deterrence capability highlighted the significance of an absolute weapon in the South Asian politics.<sup>2</sup> India Pakistan distressed relationship has seen the viability of deterrence in such a tension prone security environment coupled with constant state of mutual acrimony, when India got overtly nuclearized in 1998 forcing Pakistan to follow suit by overtly demonstrating its nuclear potential. Since then, Pakistan and India are aligning and adjusting themselves to the changing security dynamics.

While on the other side, both South Asian nations remain caught in a vicious cycle of poverty, deprivation, and underdevelopment. Economic deprivation, illiteracy and unemployment provide a fertile ground for intolerance and extremism, which in turn promotes conflict and violence within the South Asian societies. Consequently, tensions abound within and frequently reinforce tensions between the countries. As a result, the inherited legacy of conflict persists, constraining each country's ability to bring peace for the people.

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Brodie, ed., *Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1946).

<sup>2</sup> Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structures of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

The overwhelmingly dominating Indian posture continues to generate insecurity and instability, which enhances the prospects of conflicts. Likewise, the two states are too constrained to engage in an arms race, or to take counter-measures, including revisiting their strategies, thereby spending less on their socio-economic sector that has eventually generated more poverty, illiteracy and all other socioeconomic ills.<sup>3</sup> Keeping in view all the domestic factors, Pakistan is facing grave security threat from its eastern neighbour. It sees strategic stability in the region as evolving and fragile due to the asymmetrical military growth, which is directly linked to contrasting economic growth under the hangover of internal instability. Regional factors, primarily the US war against terrorism in Afghanistan and Indo-US nexus have also contributed to the internal instability in addition to the unresolved issues of the region. This has also resulted in the spread of militancy and terrorism in the region and beyond.<sup>4</sup>

## **Regional Factors**

### *Strategic Restraint Regime*

Although the acquisition of nuclear weapons capabilities by Pakistan and India cannot be retracted, yet it is important to develop a stable and credible deterrence at the lowest possible level for maintaining a peaceful environment in the region. In October 1998, Pakistan suggested India to develop a strategic restraint regime, vital to maintain strategic stability in the region.

Although India rejected this proposal, however, Pakistan remains committed to stabilise the regional security.

Before May 1998, the existential deterrence promoted strategic stability in the region. After the nuclear tests, the deterrence remained there despite India Pakistan turbulent relationship, including the 1999 Kargil conflict. Even if missiles are not overtly equipped with nuclear warheads, the

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<sup>3</sup> Alexander H. Rothman and Lawrence J. Korb, "Pakistan Double its Nuclear Arsenal, is it Time to Start Worrying?," *Bulletin*, February 11, 2011, <http://thebulletin.org/pakistan-doubles-its-nuclear-arsenal-it-time-start-worrying>.

<sup>4</sup> Buzan and Waever write that the end of the "Cold War" affected a dramatic transformation in the security dynamics of South Asia, in Buzan and Waever, *Regions and Powers*. 105-106.

perceived threat of a pre-emptive strike can be best addressed by an agreement prohibiting missile deployment. However, after the Indian plans of Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) the incentive to multiply the numbers of offensive missiles is justified for Pakistan to avoid the destruction of these assets in a pre-emptive strike. This rationale would be entirely incompatible with the concept of minimum nuclear deterrence, which both India and Pakistan have declared as a vital component of their respective nuclear doctrines and posture.

However, in case, if India moves ahead with nuclear weapons deployment, Pakistan will be obliged to increase its arsenal and other counter measures. In that event, risk reduction mechanisms will be required to prevent unauthorised or accidental use of nuclear weapons. Such measures could involve setting up a nuclear coordination and risk reduction centres. These steps are more effective in evolving strategic stability than a mere announcement of No First-Use (NFU). According to the revised nuclear doctrine in any conflict, India would abandon NFU even on the threat of use of nuclear weapons against its forces/territory. Hence, a first use or first strike option may be exercised. Therefore, such doctrinal shifts could undermine strategic stability in the region.

### *Conventional Arms Control in South Asia*

In order to augment strategic stability, conventional arms control is equally important. Ensuring a certain force ratio between India and Pakistan, increased Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and actions to eliminate the danger of pre-emptive strikes by either country will improve strategic stability in the region.

Instead of responding to the needs of strategic stability in the nuclearised South Asia, India is further complicating the security situation of the region. During the last decade, it has increased its defence budget by more than 55 per cent, spending on an average of US\$15 billion per year. It maintains the fourth largest army in the world and continues to purchase all types of conventional weaponry from different foreign sources, particularly from Israel. Pakistan's conventional capabilities have been seriously hampered due to frequent unjustified and unfair sanctions. One inevitable result of this growing conventional inequality is Pakistan's increasing reliance on nuclear means. It is increasing number of missiles and

improving its operational readiness. Such developments might result in continually lowering the nuclear threshold, which could undermine strategic stability.

### *Indian Hegemonic Designs*

In pursuit of a grand strategy at the regional level, India's quest of the regional hegemony further weakens the existing strategic stability. Unprovoked escalation along the Line of Control (LoC) and targeting of civilian population along the border can incite war hysteria in the disputed Jammu and Kashmir region. The prevailing asymmetry between the largest country in South Asia, India and its smaller neighbours, Pakistan, is one of the most significant factors, which aggravates the acrimony between the two warring countries and propelling India's regional hegemonic ambitions. In view of this growing asymmetry, Pakistan is left with no choice except to increase its reliance on its nuclear capabilities.

In this scenario, Pakistan was pushed to maintain a credible nuclear deterrent to safeguard its security against India's growing nuclear and conventional capabilities.<sup>5</sup> Within a year of the nuclear tests, India revealed an ambitious nuclear doctrine. To achieve its national objectives, it also increased its defence budget by 12 per cent. This increase in defence budget is alone greater than the entire defence budget of Pakistan. While, apparently aimed at securing a minimum nuclear deterrent, the Indian nuclear doctrine advocates a troika of land, air, and sea-based delivery systems. The Indian nuclear weapons development programme is not only aimed against Pakistan but it also aimed at neutralising the nuclear threats perceptions it harbours against China. The growing conventional asymmetry and further military procurements from the United States (US) and other European countries coupled with the ostensible Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) is perceived as an omnipresent threat by Pakistan.

The former Indian External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh, emphasised to re-evaluate the country's nuclear doctrine of NFU. He cited various security concerns, confronting India, to justify his suggested review of the NFU policy. In his opinion, the NFU is obsolete; therefore, India should not cling to yesterday's policy. However, another former External

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<sup>5</sup> Zulfikar Khan, "South Asian Nuclear Equation: A Perspective," *Strategic Studies*, vol. 33, no. 2 (Summer), <http://issi.org.pk/south-asian-nuclear-equation-a-perspective-article/>

Affairs Minister, S. M. Krishna, was quick to clarify that there was no proposal to revise the NFU policy.<sup>6</sup> An Indian scholar, Reshmi Kazi, questions the “efficacy of the NFU policy, on the ground that it has little relevance as a strategic tool against Pakistan.” He further said, “Pakistan views India’s NFU doctrine as a paper policy that cannot be depended upon in a situation where the stakes are high. Since India’s nuclear doctrine is a unilateral decision, it can be revoked anytime, if the situation demands so.”<sup>7</sup> This probably is the true reflection of India’s nuclear doctrine, which on the surface is based on a declared policy of NFU. On the other hand, its revocation or its smart utilisation in conjunction with other strategic and conventional tools during the crises also appears to be on cards. It suggests that India is gradually restructuring its posture of active deterrence to dissuasive deterrence with a view to build up its “infrastructure along the border and improving the surveillance and warning capabilities, the mobility of land-based missiles, survivability of the airborne retaliatory force and increased force levels.”<sup>8</sup> While the Indian efforts advance rapidly, Pakistan’s endeavours to replace and modernise its old conventional weapons inventory have been seriously affected by its economic constraint.

The 1999 Kargil crisis is an example of escalatory exchange along the LoC despite existence of nuclear deterrence. It is concluded that low intensity conflict along the LoC may continue at the cost of erosion of strategic deterrence in South Asia. The Kargil crisis followed nuclear sabre-rattling over the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir by the senior Indian leaders who, immediately after the nuclear tests, demanded that Pakistan should accept “new realities” in Kashmir. One lesson of Kargil is that nuclear deterrence ultimately compelled restraint, de-escalation and disengagement on both sides. However, another lesson is that there is a little reason to be confident about the future in a nuclearised environment characterised by peace. In addition, the 2008 Indo-US nuclear agreement, from Pakistan’s perspective, is a greatest undermining factor in the South Asian nuclear equation, which had rendered India a *de-facto* acceptability as

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<sup>6</sup> Reshmi Kazi, “Why India Should Retain its No-First-Use Policy?,” *Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*, April 11, 2011, [www.eurasiareview.com/11042011-why-india-should-retain-its-no-first-use-policy-analysis/](http://www.eurasiareview.com/11042011-why-india-should-retain-its-no-first-use-policy-analysis/)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

a Nuclear Weapon State (NWS).<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, Pakistan was branded as a failed state along with Afghanistan under the tag of “Af-Pak” to fight the war on terror.<sup>10</sup> The Indo-US strategic cooperation also heightened Pakistan’s insecurity and fear of hegemonic ambition that had close strategic, economic and political engagements with the influential countries such as the US, Russia, France, the UK, Japan and Germany.<sup>11</sup>

The South Asian nuclear equation gained even more significance in the altered political configuration of the world after 9/11. Time and again, the threatening statements by various Indian leaders have had provocative effects such as during the 2001-2002 crisis, the then Defence Minister of India issued an alarming statement that “we could take a strike, survive and then hit back. Pakistan would be finished.”<sup>12</sup> Such words heightened the tension, resultantly in a spiral effect. Both the countries accelerated their nuclear and missile programmes, which further added lethality to their military capabilities and credibility. India has much advanced and larger conventional weapons capability as compared to Pakistan. Therefore, Pakistan considers the nuclear weapons as essential parts of its defence system to counterbalance Indian conventional superiority.<sup>13</sup> The Indian military planners innocently believe that they can “engage in and win a limited conventional conflict without triggering a nuclear exchange even though the Pakistani army’s strategy relies on nuclear weapons to offset India’s overpowering conventional superiority.”<sup>14</sup> This perception appears to be an effort to weaken the sustainability of deterrence in the wake of India’s growing industrial, economic, diplomatic and strategic capability.

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<sup>9</sup> See the statement of Raja Zafarul Haq, leader of the House in Senate, concerning the Indo-US nuclear deal and promotion of India in the international nuclear order, “Speakers Highlight Reservations, Double Standards,” *Express Tribune*, June 28, 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Satish Kumar et al., “India’s Strategic Partners: A Comparative Assessment,” *Foundation for National Security Research* (November 2011): 2.

<sup>11</sup> For more detail on strategic, economic, political, and diplomatic collaboration, see Kumar, “India’s Strategic Partners,” 1-15.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Krepon, “Pakistan’s Nuclear Requirements,” *Arms Control Wonk*, May 10, 2011.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Daryl G. Kimball, “South Asia is a More Dangerous Place after the 1998 Nuclear Tests,” *Arms Control Wonk*, May 13, 2011.



The relationship between the two countries is apparently balancing on a fine line of mutual vulnerability to avert war. However, now it is changing towards the policy of pre-emption based on a possible victory in a limited war under the nuclear umbrella as perceived in the Indian “proactive strategy.”<sup>15</sup> The aggressive posture of India has enhanced security concerns for Pakistan,<sup>16</sup> which is compelling it to adjust a strategy to counter the adversary’s hegemonic tendencies. Additionally, their mutual mirror imaging<sup>17</sup> is quite a dangerous and complex proposition.

India-Pakistan nuclear postures and expectations that the other party would behave in a similar way cannot, of course, be taken for granted in the existing asymmetrical strategic and political equation between the two. Furthermore, the states do not necessarily retain a set pattern of conduct in a crisis environment.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, formulating hostile doctrines of dominance such as CSD, which is also known as “proactive strategy” to fight a limited war.<sup>19</sup> Exercising such doctrines will definitely instigate an action-reaction process, which would be prone to accidents. The conception of such a plan has a tendency to deliberately initiate a conflict that has the potential to increase the tendency to take competitive risk-taking.<sup>20</sup>

In the post-1998 era, the two South Asian adversaries have constantly started a series of crises on various justifications, which can explain the testing of each other’s nerves. The commencement of such crises has been increasing the dynamics of stability/instability paradox in South Asia that is contrary to the principles of stable nuclear deterrence.<sup>21</sup> Hence, frequent escalation of crises would continue to weaken the South Asia strategic stability.<sup>22</sup> The growing military asymmetry has enhanced Pakistan’s

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Jervis, “Cooperation under the Security Dilemma,” *World Politics* 30, no.2 (1978): 167-214.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Walter C. Ladwig III, “A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army’s New Limited War Doctrine,” *International Security* 32, no.3 (Winter 2007/08).

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 94.

<sup>21</sup> Glen H. Snyder, “The Balance of Power and the Balance of Terror,” in *The Balance of Power*. ed., Paul Seabury (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1965).

<sup>22</sup> Lynn E. Davis, “Limited Nuclear Options: Deterrence and the New American Doctrine,” *Adelphi Paper* 121 (1975-76).

vulnerabilities against India. In such an environment, Pakistan is constrained to induct a host of measures, including induction of short-range nuclear delivery systems and the development of Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNWs) to counterbalance India's offensive strategy to enforce its primacy. As both the countries have divergent offensive and counter-offensive strategies, it would increase the probability of escalation at a time of crisis. Therefore, the prospects of risks are high on both sides, and further intensifying the unpredictability.<sup>23</sup>

Pakistan plans to integrate the strategic and TNWs into its security calculus along with maintenance of sufficient conventional force ratio in order to deter India's provocative designs. India's proactive strategy has destabilising tendencies and could lead to promotion of a strategic culture based on risk of a surprise attack.<sup>24</sup> Clearly, such strategies are dangerous and subverting. Therefore, if a stronger state accumulates instruments of war, including making of offensive doctrines and obtaining of state-of-the-art weapons for different stated underlying principles and purposes; it is predictable to induce suitable response from the other state as well.<sup>25</sup> Thus, Pakistan cannot afford to neglect its critical national security interests, since inattentiveness or an error is often paid with a heavy price.<sup>26</sup> Pakistan's appropriate response cannot be categorised as an overreaction rather, it would be a realistic, flexible and balanced counter-strategy in order to counteract its adversary's overestimated and damaging plan.<sup>27</sup>

Pakistan's sensitivity to the Indian interference is rooted in historical facts i.e. the Indian conspiracy to manipulate demarcation of boundary in Jammu and Kashmir region, dismemberment of eastern wing of Pakistan in 1971 and destabilisation through Afghan and domestic proxies after 9/11. For that reason, any distraction or inaccuracy would be costly for state's security.<sup>28</sup> As observed earlier, in the present situation, an offensive-defensive strategy of Pakistan would convince the other state not to go to

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<sup>23</sup> Robert Jervis, *The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 134 and 153-157.

<sup>24</sup> Sagan, *The Origins of Military*, 44.

<sup>25</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory," in *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*. eds. Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 43.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

war on dangerously conceived strategies.<sup>29</sup> Nuclear weapons are likely to prevent many of the conventional origins of war.<sup>30</sup> In Pakistan's arsenal, there is insufficient conventional power to effectively counter the offensive plans of the opponent. Therefore, nuclear power is the best strategy to hold adversary from pursuing provocative strategies.<sup>31</sup>

In a chaotic world, the conflicts flourish once there is no suitable force to stop them.<sup>32</sup> As the world system is so volatile, Pakistan would tend to formulate its counter-strategy and other relevant policies in the light of the statements, emitted by policymakers of its adversary. Since 9/11, fear and insecurity, too, have increased due to the offensive policies of its rival.<sup>33</sup> "Above all, overestimation and underestimation of hostility have led to war in the past. This perceptual dynamics could still cause statesmen to see policies as safe when they actually were very dangerous and seeing war inevitable which impels them to strike first in order to limit destruction."<sup>34</sup> Jervis's statement is also relevant for South Asia, for instance, India, due to its huge conventional, political and economic clout, could overrate its capabilities and plan to induce submission from Pakistan without crossing the latter's threshold.

Alternatively, with a view to limit the destruction of a looming war, Pakistan may resort to first-strike in a crisis, which comes with inbuilt prospects of triggering a catastrophic crisis. It could start from termination of diplomatic relations to other retaliatory actions like embargoes.<sup>35</sup> Fortunately, the previous crises between the two countries have been limited to hardening of aggressive postures to gesturing of intense military readiness.<sup>36</sup> Deterrence's practicality has more reliability in possession of a capability instead of threatening to use nuclear weapons in a rhetorical

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis: With a New Preface* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

<sup>33</sup> Robert Gilpin, "The Theory of Hegemonic War," in *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*, 17.

<sup>34</sup> Jervis, "War and Misperception" in *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*, 101.

<sup>35</sup> See Herman Kahn, *Thermonuclear War* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1960), 83-93.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 66-67, and 74.

fashion.<sup>37</sup> In fact, the threat of use of force and credibility of deterrence are built on the premise that the rivals would avoid display of offensive military capabilities to achieve their political objectives, or to employ asymmetrical forces for such goals.

According to Kenneth Boulding, “little threats that are fairly sure to be carried out are much more effective in deterring adverse human behaviour than large threats that are unlikely to be carried out.”<sup>38</sup> In the asymmetric strategic environment between India and Pakistan, it is likely that the weaker side may resort to employment of all the available resources at its disposal, including nuclear arsenal, more so if it does not possess capacity to sustain first strike. For instance, when a state is confronted with an alternative that is suicidal in their national perspective such as allowing adversary to attack and occupy its territories, in such a frantic situation, history shows that the other state, in spite of being rational, cannot be discounted from employing suicidal pre-emptive or ‘tit-for-tat’ measures to strike first. Such a security dilemma needs to be avoided for a smooth functioning of deterrence narratives. Naturally, sovereign states consider survival as their primary existential condition<sup>39</sup> and that in order to safeguard their interests; they can resort to extreme decisions.

### *Unresolved Issues*

The Jammu and Kashmir dispute remains a festering wound between the nuclear neighbours. The Pakistani and Indian troops continue to antagonise each other on the LoC in Kashmir and along the Siachen. Both sides recognise the dangers of nuclear confrontation arising from the dispute, but the risks of escalation through accident or miscalculation cannot be discounted. This uncertainty underscores the urgency of finding a peaceful resolution to the Kashmir conflict. The Indian approach to the dialogue with Pakistan on Kashmir has been aimed at formalising the status quo, instead of ascertaining the wishes of the Kashmiri people. Kashmiris are engaged in a genuine freedom struggle to exercise their right of self-determination,

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<sup>37</sup> T. V. Paul, “Power, Influence, and Nuclear Weapons,” in *The Absolute Weapon Revisited*, eds. T. V. Paul, Richard J. Harknett and James J. Wirtz (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2000), 27.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ken Booth, *Theory of World Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 102.

promised to them though the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. The ongoing spate of the events in the Indian held Kashmir is indicative of the fact that their right to defend themselves against the Indian oppression is being denied.

### *Peaceful Resolution of Outstanding Disputes*

The peaceful resolution of all outstanding bilateral disputes is another proposal by Pakistan. In October 2000, former President, General Pervez Musharraf, offered a “No War Pact” at the UN Millennium Summit and presented India with an option to engage in dialogue any time, at any level and any place. From Pakistan’s perspective, a multilateral approach is preferred whereas India continues to maintain that the two countries should resolve their differences bilaterally. Pakistan has always approached the dialogue with an open mind.

Essentially, the nuclear equation in South Asia is already under considerable over-shadow of India’s excessive procurement of conventional weapons, flawed doctrines, which in the absence of arms control and conflict resolution mechanisms and inadequate confidence and security building measures, are destabilising developments. The improvement of the bilateral relations in foreign and security policy domains would go a long way to provide greater security to South Asia.<sup>40</sup>

### **International Factors**

America’s discriminatory attitude towards Pakistan has undermined security and thus has a weakening effect on the existing strategic stability. The idea to develop India as a counterbalance to China has proved to be destabilising and counterproductive for the region and even for the US interests in a larger context. The challenge is posed by decisions being made by the US about the deployment of BMD and TMD, at the international level, which could, therefore, further obscure and worsen the security environment in South Asia. The Indo-US nuclear energy cooperation agreement and the increasing Indian military capability are strong motivating factors in furthering Pakistan’s sense of insecurity and driving it to bolster its nuclear

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<sup>40</sup> Buzan and Waeber, *Regions and Powers*, 449.

programme in order to sustain qualitative and quantitative developments vis-à-vis India.<sup>41</sup>

According to an estimate, the deal is expected to increase India's capability to produce up to 240 nuclear weapons in a year.<sup>42</sup> Besides, in the post-9/11 world, the concept of security, being propagated by the powerful states, is increasing the sense of insecurity in other states.<sup>43</sup> India has been persistently modernising its military equipment. It has already signed US\$42 billion worth of defence deals with different countries and the amount is expected to exceed US\$100 billion in the next decade.<sup>44</sup> In fact, it is one of the largest buyers of sophisticated conventional weapon systems in the world. In this connection, it has spent US\$80 billion by 2015 on its armed forces modernisation programme in accordance with its "Defence Procurement Plan" of 2002.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, it possesses the capability, technology and indigenous resources to manufacture various types of defence equipment and weapons. Incidentally, it is already working on a programme to manufacture light combat aircraft, *Tejas*, which is expected to be inducted in the Indian Air Force.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, France is also assisting India in missile development and up-gradation of its Mirage fleet. In 2012, India signed a contract with the French Dassault Aviation for the purchase of Rafael fighter aircraft.<sup>47</sup>

Similarly, Russia is also a traditional supplier of sophisticated weaponry to India. Moscow is also cooperating in the production and development of fifth-generation fighter aircraft, 250-300 stealth fighters, Sukhoi-30 MKI combat aircrafts and T-90 tanks. In 2001, it had agreed to supply 80 Mi-17V-5 transport helicopters to India.<sup>48</sup> Besides, India and Israel, too, have established a research and development programme to manufacture

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<sup>41</sup> Krepon, "Pakistan's Nuclear Requirements."

<sup>42</sup> Tariq Osman Hyder, "Strategic Restraint in South Asia," *CISS Insight* (April-May, 2013): 11.

<sup>43</sup> Booth, *Theory of World*, 96-97.

<sup>44</sup> Rida Zeenat, "India-Pakistan: Deterrence to Compellence," *Eurasia Review*, March 10, 2011, <http://www.eurasiareview.com/10032011-india-pakistan-deterrence-to-compellence/>

<sup>45</sup> Iskander Rehman, "The Military Dimensions of India's Rise," *LSE Research*, May 4, 2012, <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43444/>

<sup>46</sup> Zeenat, "India-Pakistan," 1-2.

<sup>47</sup> "India Rises Quietly and Steadily," *Nation*, February 22, 2013.

<sup>48</sup> Zeenat, "India-Pakistan," 1-2.

medium-range surface-to-air missile systems. India has already reportedly procured three “Phalcon” Airborne Early Warning Radar Systems (AWACS) and A-50 Airborne Early Warning (AEW) aircraft from Israel.<sup>49</sup>

For its blue water navy, India has earmarked US\$11 billion for the construction of six new generation diesel electric submarines.<sup>50</sup> Apparently, these submarines are reported to be equipped with Air Independent Propulsion System (AIP) with stealth and land attack capabilities, which would qualitatively enhance its military capability at sea and enable it to secure a second-strike capability. This procurement plan is considered by its neighbours, especially Pakistan, as an aggressive development and India’s scheme to intimidate and occupy its territory in a blitzkrieg-type conventional attack under its obvious offensive plan of CSD.<sup>51</sup> According to Robert Jervis, excessive military capabilities are dangerous and can lead to conflicts.<sup>52</sup> He further writes, every war involves at least one serious misunderstanding. Similarly, in the context of strategic stability of South Asia, it is impacting Pakistan’s security concerns, which strengthens its perceptions about India.<sup>53</sup> In such a volatile environment, states have a tendency to pick war because of domestic politics, honour, or international reputation.<sup>54</sup>

The only rational option left for Pakistan is to strengthen its strategic-cum-tactical arsenal in order to face the emerging challenges to its security. India’s access to dual-use technologies would augment its space programme and consequently negatively impact regional stability, increases insecurity for the other states and further hamper the bilateral deterrence architecture. In such an environment, Pakistan would be forced to take necessary measures to improve its defence systems to enhance its national security. The dual-use technological acquisition plan of India suggests that it is replicating the US policy of regional security architectures.<sup>55</sup> That would

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ladwig III, “A Cold Start,” 163-167.

<sup>52</sup> Robert Jervis, “War and Misperception” in *The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars*, 102.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> According to 2010 “Nuclear Posture Review” of the US, the “regional security architectures include effective missile defence, counter-WMD capabilities, conventional power-projection capabilities, and integrated command and control —

facilitate India in expanding its strategic outreach beyond the frontiers of South Asia and as a result put the regional states under a perpetual disadvantage.<sup>56</sup> It would lead to a relationship of disparity, which is based on a pattern of compulsion. Thus, deterrence stability is the only feasible and rational key to ensuring strategic stability.

Conversely, India's overwhelmingly dominating posture would continue to generate instability, insecurity and enhance the prospects of conflicts. Likewise, the regional states would be constrained to engage in an arms race, or to take counter-measures, including revisiting their strategies in relation to India's, thereby spending less on their socio-economic sectors that would eventually generate more poverty, illiteracy and other socioeconomic ills.<sup>57</sup> In the diplomatic realm, Pakistan is pursuing a holistic stance in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on the proposed Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). In the CD, Pakistan's stance is being criticised while little attention is paid to the fact that Pakistan has genuine security concerns that require urgent attention, before it could consent to the treaty, which should possess a well-charted verification, accounting and non-discriminatory mechanism. This disregard of Pakistan's concerns is further complicating the environment in the CD and consequently, inciting pressure on Pakistan to mellow-down its policy on these critical national security issues.<sup>58</sup>

### **Economic Progress: The Means to Achieve Peace**

The achievement of long-lasting strategic stability will not be possible without sustainable and continued economic progress. The economic and social deprivation provides the fodder for the thirsty terrorist networks

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all underwritten by strong political commitments," in James M. Acton, "Low Numbers: A Practical Path to Deep Nuclear Reduction," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (Washington DC., 2011).

<sup>56</sup> David Albright, Paul Brannan and Andrea Stricker, "Keeping US Dual-Use Goods out of India's Nuclear Weapons Programme," *ISIS Report*, January 26, 2011.

<sup>57</sup> Alexander H. Rothman and Lawrence J. Korb, "Pakistan Double its Nuclear Arsenal."

<sup>58</sup> For example, Sharon Squassoni, Director, Center for Strategic and International Studies, commenting on Pakistan's internal situation and terrorism, writes that in Pakistan "a disaster is waiting to happen," Andrew Bast, "Pakistan's Nuclear Surge" *Newsweek*, May 15, 2011, <http://www.newsweek.com/2011/05/15/fourth-nuclear-reactor-at-pakistan-s-khushab-site.print.html>



that use religious extremism as an instrument to weaken the state. It is high time that Pakistan and India make an atmosphere that enables jointly favourable economic and trade relations. Pakistan has repeatedly called for cooperation among the countries of South Asia on economic development and social progress, particularly through the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which can be used as a free trading area.

### **Balancing Role of the US**

The US relations with the South Asian states should not be characterised by a zero-sum outlook. This relationship ought not to be pursued with one state at the expense of another. The improvement in the Indo-US relations can be instrumental in encouraging a responsible Indian behaviour and in constructing effective security architecture in the region. The US can assist the region by broadening and balancing the scope of its economic engagement with all the South Asian countries, in order to promote an overall economic growth and prosperity in the entire region. The Trump administration should take a long-term strategic view of the American interests in South Asia and its adjacent regions. Both the US national security and economic interests are dependent primarily on promoting and preserving structures of peace and stability at the global and regional levels. The US can play an active role in promoting durable peace and stability in the world's major crisis areas, including South Asia. The essence of the matter is that peace and stability in South Asia will remain elusive unless addressed comprehensively. India and Pakistan must develop some sort of strategic restraint regime, eliminate the conventional imbalance and resolve the core conflict over Kashmir. The CBMs between India and Pakistan could strengthen nuclear restraint agreements.<sup>59</sup>

### **War Against Terrorism**

The 'war against terrorism' has become a cliché in the 21st century. In the post-Cold War period, the US is the sole superpower; therefore, the balance of power in the world suits the US. It should not go against any other nation. Contrary to this, it is waging war against weaker nations and spreading terror by killing, hurting and threatening innocent people of Afghanistan

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<sup>59</sup> Maleeha Lodhi, "Security Challenges in South Asia," *Defence Journal*, 2002.

and Iraq. Apart from geo-political domination, the US foreign policy objectives also pursue world economic resources. To ward off fear of becoming impoverished economically in the future, the US is preparing itself to have a sustainable economic development that is based on fulfilling the needs and demands of the present generations without depleting the needs and demands of the future generation. Pursuing such ventures may adversely impact smaller countries of the South Asian region.

## **Conclusion**

Nuclear weapons have become a powerful instrument of foreign and security policy of Pakistan in order to counter India's huge military superiority. However, the growing significance of geo-economics and geo-political factors in the post-9/11 phase has also enhanced Pakistan's insecurity and threat perceptions against India. It is that India has forged well-knitted strategic, science and technology partnership arrangements with different developed countries, including the US, UK, France, Germany and Russia to procure state-of-the-art weapon systems and nuclear and other conventional weapons related technologies. This has further widened the gulf of asymmetries and nurture India's designs to operationalise its "dominance doctrine" with a view to enforcing its primacy on Pakistan, thereby putting the latter's nuclear deterrence posture under tremendous stress. This has created a precarious geo-strategic environment, which exacerbates the eventualities of overestimations, underestimations and misjudgements, especially during the crises.

In such circumstances, Pakistan's induction of short-range nuclear delivery systems and TNWs to counterbalance India's offensive strategy is its strategic imperative, which would assist it to deal successfully with the emerging multi-dimensional threats and challenges to its security. In short, the only viable and rational solution to understanding the objective of strategic stability in the absence of bilateral trust, growing military, economic and political asymmetries, non-existent conflict resolution mechanisms and properly established confidence and security building framework is to craft an offensive-defensive doctrine in harmony with conventional, strategic and non-strategic nuclear forces with the intent to contain the Indian scheme to operationalise its CSD. Pakistan's unmistakable articulation of its doctrine and resolve to effectively harness all its available resources to ward-off future emergence of critical and

perilous crises would go a long way in restraining India's huge war machine from employing it against Pakistan.

On the domestic front, the most potent threats to Pakistan's security and stability are: socio-economic, law and order, terrorism, energy scarcity, political divergence and other institutional deterioration issues.<sup>60</sup> The priority should be to take an all-comprehensive in-house institutional reforms in order to contain, if not to eliminate, further deterioration. Otherwise, the huge economic, political and military asymmetries are expected to negatively impact the entire structure of the state. In this context, essentially, the "polemological (Greek word for war) causation theory of study of war elucidates a number of inter-related factors that are invariably responsible for the outbreak of conflicts and wars."<sup>61</sup>

In this context, Hall Gardner and Oleg Kobtzeff comprehensively explain these causes, "The polemological approach to war causation represents an essentially inter-disciplinary and historical approach to the study of war. It seeks to explore the interacting strategic, military technological, political-economic, legal (including domestic and international laws and norms), socio-cultural (including religion and values), bio-political (including ethnic identity, age, gender and demography), ideological (including conceptions of justice and peace), dialogical (including diplomacy, media and propaganda), natural-environmental and psychological factors (including alienation) that influence and impact upon the causes of conflict and war."<sup>62</sup>

All these factors, identified by Gardner and Kobtzeff brilliantly demonstrate the linkages of different societal aspects upon the relative position of a state in the international system. Therefore, the required lens to understand the dynamics and causes of society's degeneration process also permits looking beyond the military and political reasons behind Pakistan's comparative position in relation to India. Therefore, by overcoming these domestic issues and restructuring and redirecting these dynamics to its advantage, would go a long way in underpinning the country's potentials at

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<sup>60</sup> Alex Rothman and Lawrence J. Korb, "Pakistan Double its Nuclear Arsenal: Is It Time to Start Worrying?," Centre for American Progress, February 11, 2011.

<sup>61</sup> Hall Gardner and Oleg Kobtzeff, "General Introduction: Polemology," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to War*, 3.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

grass-root level, which would ultimately improve and influence its situation in relation to India. However, an immediate reorganisation of the country's strategic policy is a critical requirement in order to confine India to its home ground, instead of providing it an opportunity to come and ploy on Pakistani territory in accord with its perceived strategy.