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India and Pakistan have had a strained relationship since Independence. Their relations have been marred by wars and a series of crises. This is owing to several reasons such as: a territorial dispute, power asymmetry, differing political systems, identity related issues, external power manipulation and a growing economic disparity. While the two states have a 'peace process' ongoing between them, this is subject to buffeting caused by events such as the terrorist action of Mumbai 26/11. In light of nuclearisation in 1998, this continuing distrust may prove costly and dangerous in case of future hostilities. This paper suggests an approach towards building conditions necessary for peace between India and Pakistan. Identifying the Pakistani army as a power centre in Pakistan, the hypothesis is that a strategic dialogue with it would achieve doctrinal balancing and help mitigate its threat perception.

The Pakistani army, operating with a realist mindset - as is the wont of militaries - takes a negative view of the power asymmetry with India. Consequently, it has resorted to strategies of external and internal balancing such as relying on external powers, going nuclear, waging proxy war and resorting to terror as a 'strategic tool'. India, for its part, has attempted to address Pakistan's sense of insecurity by addressing outstanding issues through the composite dialogue process and instituting confidence building measures. Despite gains, these are yet to compensate for the trust deficit between the two states. This paper suggests an additional measure to directly address the perception of asymmetry held by the Pakistani military which is main reason for the 'trust deficit'.

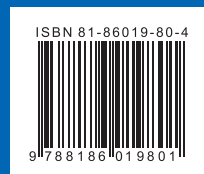
The recommendation is for a 'doctrinal balancing' between India and Pakistan on a strategic dialogue forum. A mutual and balanced doctrinal drawdown, involving Pakistan discontinuing its proxy war at the sub-conventional level, and India moving towards a defensive doctrine on the conventional level, is presented in this paper as the prerequisite for peace in South Asia. To make the nuclear overhang recede further, changes are necessary in the nuclear doctrine of both states also. This would foster conditions of security and managing of perceptions necessary for tackling outstanding issues between the two states.

## **RECONCILING DOCTRINES : PREREQUISITE FOR PEACE IN SOUTH ASIA**

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*For Grandfather  
Lt Col Moin-ud-din Ahmed  
Hyderabad State Forces*

'22.1 million people in India and Pakistan would be exposed to lethal radiation doses of 600 rem or more in the first two days after the attack. Another 8 million people would receive a radiation dose of 100 to 600 rem, causing severe radiation sickness and potentially death, especially for the very young, old or infirm. As many as 30 million people would be threatened by the fallout from the attack, roughly divided between the two countries.'

- Natural Resources Development Council, USA



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**Ali Ahmed**



# Introduction

In the popular narrative, regional instability over the past two decades is attributed to a military-dominated, revisionist Pakistan posing a strategic challenge to 'status-quoist' India's natural growth to regional and great power status. At the sub-conventional level, Pakistan has waged a proxy war in Kashmir and fostered growth of minority perpetrated terrorism elsewhere in India. It has sought to limit India's advantages at the conventional level through an ambiguous nuclear doctrine not ruling out nuclear 'first use'. Pakistan's perception of threat is dictated by its army which is at the centre of its power structure. The army, being realist oriented, is inclined to focus on the power asymmetry as a 'threat'. Understanding this as the central problem helps in arriving at possible 'solutions'.

India has, over the past decade, shifted to an offensive and potentially 'compellent' strategic doctrine at the conventional level.<sup>1</sup> This is to deter and, if required, compel Pakistan to discontinue the proxy war. At the nuclear level, its doctrine posits 'massive' nuclear retaliation to inflict 'unacceptable damage' in case of enemy nuclear 'first use'.<sup>2</sup> Simultaneously, it has attempted to engage Pakistan peaceably. In the period since nuclearisation, India's strategy of restraint has ensured absence of conflict. However, the possibility of conflict remains. This is useful in so far it helps limit Pakistani provocation. Nevertheless, given the brazen nature of provocations such as Mumbai 26/11, threats persist. Since escalation dynamics are inherent to conflict, nuclearisation entails efforts at conflict prevention and limitation. This paper suggests one such direction in terms of a strategic engagement with Pakistan on terms its military best understands doctrinal balancing.

The paper draws on the Ashokan tradition of Indian strategic culture for making this innovative suggestion. The idea is to take India's strategy of restraint that draws on this tradition of thinking articulated by its foreign secretary below - further to its logical conclusion:

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1. Ali Ahmed, 'The Interface of Strategic and War Fighting Doctrines in the IndiaPakistan Context', *Strategic Analysis*, 33 (5), Sep 2009
  2. Cabinet Committee on Security (2003), "Press Release of the Cabinet Committee on Security on Operationalisation of India's Nuclear Doctrine 04.01.03", <http://meaindia.nic.in/pressrelease/2003/01/04pr01.htm>

'In Kautilya, the third century BC author of the *Arthashastra*, India has the oldest "realist" strategic tradition in the world. But he was followed in less than a century by Ashoka, the Mauryan emperor who renounced war for conquest by persuasion, an idealist who inspired many subsequent Indian leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru. It is natural and clear that the primary purpose of independent India's foreign policy is to enable the domestic transformation of India from a poor and backward economy into one which could offer its people their basic needs and an opportunity to achieve their potential.'<sup>3</sup>

The paper develops India's approach along these lines on the issue of vexed relations with Pakistan. India's Pakistan strategy has been beset by the problem posed by the Pakistan army. Identifying the Pakistan army as being at the heart of the India-Pakistan problem, the paper makes the case that any improvement in relations would require engaging with the army. This would involve understanding that the Pakistan army has a realist world view, sensitive to the power asymmetry with India. Addressing the army on its own terms necessitates a focus on doctrine.

The paper makes the case that India and Pakistan have offensive doctrines at the sub-conventional and conventional levels respectively. Their nuclear doctrines are also offensive. Pakistan's more obviously so, since it does not subscribe to 'No First Use'.<sup>4</sup> However, in India's case - though a key tenet of its nuclear doctrine is 'No First Use' the nuclear retaliation, termed as 'massive,' suggests levels of violence of a higher order, possibly including counter value targeting. This is why it is taken here as 'offensive', since alternatives - otherwise available for nuclear retaliation - are seemingly ruled out. Discussing the doctrines in their interrelationship and in contrast with those of the adversary, the paper apprehends avoidable nuclear dangers. There is a potentially escalatory dynamic in their conflictual relations.<sup>5</sup> Pakistani provocations at the sub-conventional level could result in a conventional level counter by India. This could eventuate into a conventional confrontation that has the nuclear overhang intrinsic to it. The possibility of 'early' nuclear 'first use' by Pakistan could result in unthinkable

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3. The foreign secretary made these remarks at a seminar on India's Foreign Policy at IFRI, Paris, on 4 February 2009.
  4. Sardar F.S. Lodhi, 'Pakistan's Nuclear Doctrine', *Defence Journal* <http://www.defencejournal.com/apr99/pak-nuclear-doctrine.htm>.
  5. The relations have been interrupted by a series of crisis over the past three decades. See P.R. Chari, P.I. Cheema and Stephen Cohen, *Four Crisis and a Peace Process: American Engagement in South Asia*, New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2008

consequences.<sup>6</sup> While alarmism assists Pakistan in shoring up its deterrence capability, the dangers cannot - and should not on this count - be dismissed entirely and out of hand. The paper identifies dangers emanating from each doctrine and suggests not only a doctrinal movement to avert these for India, but more importantly, recommends a wider doctrinal reconciliation for both states. It argues for a negotiated, mutual and balanced drawdown from respective offensive strategic doctrines. The very discussion of doctrines and their impact on threat perceptions in a forum constituted for the purpose is taken as a mitigating measure for bridging the 'trust deficit'.<sup>7</sup>

The proposal here draws on the liberal school,<sup>8</sup> known as the Nehruvian paradigm in Indian strategic culture. The tradition discernible in both the Ramayana and Mahabharata and can be observed in positions sceptical of conflict such as those held by Bheeshma and Arjun. Its tenets have been enriched by the Bhakti-Sufi strain in Indian spiritual canon with contributions of the likes of Kabir and Nanak. The Gandhian interpretation of the Bhagwad Geeta indicates that the tradition is intrinsic to the human condition in South Asia.<sup>9</sup> It has informed politics and strategy in Indian history ever since the Ashokan era and can be seen in the security doctrines of historical figures such as Akbar, Dara Shikoh and Chhatrapati Shivaji. In particular, India's freedom movement distilled and sharpened this amorphous tradition, honing its insights into a unique strategy of

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6. 'First use' implies introduction of nuclear weapons into a conflict. This term is used here as against the term 'first strike', that is also used in the same context elsewhere. 'First strike' instead 'refer(s) to a strike that was not only the opening volley of a nuclear war but was also directed against the nuclear capability of the enemy with the intention of crippling his means of retaliation' (Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, Macmillan Press, London, 1989, p. 135).
  7. The current phase in India-Pakistan relations is on meliorating the 'trust deficit'. It involves steps towards resumption of the peace process stalled since 26/11 with the visit of the Home Minister to Islamabad in end June 2010 and of the Foreign Minister in mid July. This is the outcome of the Thimpu initiative between the two prime ministers at the sidelines of the SAARC summit of April 2010.
  8. The basic liberal assumptions are a positive view of human nature, belief in the promise of cooperation and in the possibility of progress. Differing emphasis is placed by theorists making for distinct strains within this school. Sociological liberals alight on human behaviour for their analysis; interdependence liberals on economic ties; institutional liberals on organised cooperation; and republican liberals on the importance on liberal democratic forms of government for inducing cooperation between states (Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen, *Introduction to International Relations*, New Delhi: OUP, 2008, p. 97). In international relations theory the leading contributors include Jeremy Bentham, Immanuel Kant, John Locke, Karl Deutsch, James Rosenau Keohane and Nye.
  9. Note the debate in the contrasting writings Gandhi and the revolutionaries of the freedom movement such as Aurobindo and Bhagat Singh.

challenging the imperial power. The Nehruvian decades later established the tradition as a valid and useful approach to security.<sup>10</sup> The school has been developed by thoughts of Tagore and Amartya Sen and currently commands a wide constituency among the intelligentsia. The paper relies on this tradition for its legitimacy and persuasive power.

The argument favours a negotiated drawdown of offensive strategic doctrines as a prelude to peace in South Asia. The paper makes this case by first taking a look at the concept of 'security through peace'. The following two chapters discuss - albeit with a degree of unavoidable subjectivity - conflict strategies as evidenced from doctrines of Pakistan and India respectively. Thereby, it attempts to make the case that dangers of conflict include that of it turning nuclear. Given these escalatory possibilities, the following chapter reflects on the imperatives and limitations in conflict, to include its nuclear dimension. Since prevention is better than cure, in the last chapter the paper suggests doctrinal balancing to bring about, in first place, conditions for conflict avoidance, and secondly an enduring peace.

## The Approach

India's national aim is sustenance of its economic trajectory.<sup>11</sup> This would help enhance its great power credentials and bring prosperity. Towards this end, continuing estranged relations with Pakistan are potentially disruptive. A situation of 'democratic peace' in South Asia would be preferable. Innovative ideas are necessary to bring this about. A prerequisite for this is abdication of state control by the Pakistan army. This paper suggests defusing the threat perception that provides the army with the rationale to stay atop the internal political equations. Displacing the military from power could usher in democratic peace in South Asia. A reconciliation of the

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10. Kanti Bajpai ('Indian Strategic Culture and the Problem of Pakistan' in Swarna Rajagopal (ed.) *Security and South Asia*, New Delhi: Routledge, 2006, pp. 61-62) describes the school thus: 'Fundamental to Nehruvianism is the argument that states and peoples can come to understand each other better and thereby make and sustain peace...Nehruvians believe that this state of 'anarchy' can be mitigated, if not eventually supervised. International laws and institutions, military restraint, negotiations and compromise, cooperation, free intercourse between societies, and regard for the well being of people everywhere and not just one's own citizens, all these can overcome the rigors of the international system.'

11. The finance minister P Chidambaram in his Field Marshal KM Cariappa Memorial Lecture on September 18, 2008, articulated the point in this manner: "It is faster economic growth that will secure a place for a country in, and command the respect of, the region and the world...Our policy on external security is built on the principles of non-interference and non-aggression, resolution of disputes through peaceful means, and maintaining a strong force of deterrence. And because of these enduring principles our defence expenditure has been modest." See text at <http://pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=42889>.

strategic doctrines of India and Pakistan is a necessary condition for this. This implies that Pakistan draws down its offensive strategic doctrine at the sub-conventional plane, while India does the same at the conventional plane. Both states move towards less offensive doctrines on the nuclear plane. In this manner the move away from offensive doctrines is mutual and balanced. By making demands on both, to the extent warranted, the proposal has the potential to command greater acceptability, within recalcitrant Pakistan in particular.

Negotiating to this end would require setting up of a dual-tasked standing strategic consultative mechanism between the two states, which is insulated from any buffeting from strained relations. The proposed mechanism to be set up over the short term, would be tasked to suggest 'doctrinal balancing' over the middle term. It would in the long term be empowered to monitor implementation of 'strategic balancing', the physical manifestation of the drawdown to less threatening postures. The result could be a *détente* in the middle term and an *entente* over the long term in which South Asia would emerge as a single strategic entity with its states sharing a strategic vision. The second - equally significant task - would be that of crisis management and limiting conflict escalation.

The idea of a doctrinal exchange dates to the Lahore MOU in which the very first point is worded thus: 'The two sides shall engage in bilateral consultations on security concepts, and nuclear doctrines, with a view to developing measures for confidence building in the nuclear and conventional fields, aimed at avoidance of conflict.'<sup>12</sup> The sixth point in the MOU envisages the setting up of consultative mechanisms. It reads: 'The two sides shall periodically review the implementation of existing Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and where necessary, set up appropriate consultative mechanisms to monitor and ensure effective implementation of these CBMs.' Operationalising these two points could be done through the means suggested here. Presently, talks are being held on nuclear confidence building and some of the measures instituted.<sup>13</sup> The last round of talks was in October 2007. The hiatus since then - that also

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12. 'Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Indian Foreign Secretary, Mr. K. Raghunath, and the Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Mr. Shamshad Ahmad, in Lahore on February 21, 1999', [http://www.indianembassy.org/South\\_Asia/Pakistan/mou\(lahore01211999\).html](http://www.indianembassy.org/South_Asia/Pakistan/mou(lahore01211999).html) (Accessed 31 Mar 2010).

13. 'South Asia Confidence Building Measures (CBM) Timeline', <http://www.stimson.org/southasia/?SN=SA20060207948> (Accessed 29 June 10).



included a period of crisis in wake of 26/11 - indicates that more could be done.

The conceptual backdrop to the recommendation is that 'peace begets prosperity';<sup>14</sup> prosperity being taken as the national aim. In the security model, efforts are required in order to arrive at peace and prosperity; in other words 'security begets prosperity'. The problem is that such exertions contribute to the relative insecurity of neighbours, because of the 'security dilemma'.<sup>15</sup> Measures, even defensive, taken to enhance a state's security are taken as 'threats' by states in the vicinity, particularly if adversarial relations exist as obtain in the India-Pakistan case. Consequently, actions and reactions of neighbours constitute 'threats' to security; in turn prompting further efforts for security. Such security behaviour results in a heightening of a neighbour's threat constituting behaviour; leading to a self-reinforcing cycle. Thus, the promise of attaining 'peace through security' is to chase a receding horizon.

Instead, a 'security through peace' model is recommended. It is cognizant of the underside of the existing security model. It attempts to undercut the security rationale of the neighbour by reconciling the efforts towards security made by both states. Emphasis is thus reversed: with peace begetting security. *This approach privileges 'security through peace' over 'peace through security'.*

## The Argument

Pakistan's military has used the 'bogey' of Indian 'hegemony' to retain praetorian control over its state and perpetrate a provocative sub-conventional strategy. India's actions, both in the exercise of power in keeping with its self image as a regional power and in reaction to Pakistan's proxy war, have contributed to a convergence between perception and reality in Pakistan. The nuclear overhang has had the dual influence of both enabling this strategic competition at the sub-conventional - level, even

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14. The Prime Minister's statement in the Lok Sabha on 29 July 2009 on the Sharm el Sheikh Joint Statement included a reference to peace: "our objective, as I said at the outset, must be a permanent peace with Pakistan where we are bound together by a shared future and a common prosperity... In the interest of our people and in the interest of prosperity and peace in South Asia, ... I hope and pray that the leadership in Pakistan will have the strength and the courage to defeat those who want to destroy not just peace between India and Pakistan, but the future of South Asia." (<http://pmindia.nic.in/parl/pcontent.asp?id=43>)

15. For the concept, please see, Ken Booth and N. Wheeler, *The Security Dilemma: Fear, Cooperation and Trust in World Politics*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. The paradox can be defined as the threats emerging for states consequent to their security imparting actions to preserve themselves from such threat.

while ensuring restraint at the mid-conventional level. The self-serving argument of the military in Pakistan can be dispelled through a mutual retraction of respective offensive strategies at various levels. This would strengthen democracy in Pakistan, reduce Pakistan's propensity to intensify internal problems in India and enable a rethink of its nuclear use philosophy.

India's two other options have some drawbacks. The 'status quo' option of managing Pakistan from crisis to crisis is predicated on awaiting favourable developments in the internal politics of Pakistan. It keeps South Asian security on the edge. The other option of 'upping the ante' carries unaffordable risks. Efficacy of these options would be dependent on how the Pakistan military perceives them. The military there can intuitively be expected to align against any perceived pressures. It would then lend itself and its captive state, Pakistan, to serve the larger geopolitical interests of external powers. Over the long term, Pakistan would allow China to balance India in any future contest for strategic space in Asia. Pakistan would lean towards a nuclear first use doctrine of asymmetric escalation, negating any advantage held by India's expanded military power. Since India has no extra-territorial designs on Pakistan and the proposed balancing would not undercut India's conventional deterrence, there is a case for the third option discussed here. This involves countenancing engagement for reconciling military strategies. The fallout would be better internal security at the subconventional level and a reduced nuclear salience.

Progress in the peace process is predicated not so much on the improved conditions in Kashmir, but is instead dependent on arriving at a stable 'balance of power'. Eliminating the reasons for the security dilemma in interstate equations can enable this. The interpretation favoured here regarding Pakistan's interest in Kashmir is that it is less on account of identity issues but more to redress the military balance. Pakistan's proxy war aims to tie down India's conventional superiority, perceived as a threat by Pakistan, in any subconventional engagement in J&K. A change of perception would help create conditions for peace. Meaningful intervention for peace entails discussing Pakistan's security perceptions that give a central position to India's conventional edge. The recommended trade-off is a Pakistani drawdown on the subconventional plane for Indian reciprocation on the conventional plane. This can be done by India since the doctrines adopted at various times so far—defensive, offensive, compellent—have at best succeeded only partially. Therefore strategic innovation is called for. It does not lessen the deterrent value of either the conventional or nuclear option.

Military strategic equations between India and Pakistan are considered on three planes: subconventional, conventional and nuclear. Balancing would involve all three. The requirement being a mutuality in 'give and take' at the subconventional and conventional levels. The impact of this at the nuclear level would be a Pakistani amenability to 'No First Use'. In the light of this, India can shift from 'massive' punitive retaliation to 'flexible' punitive retaliation. This would first require working out an agreement with Pakistan in a strategic dialogue forum. Given the trust deficit, this appears to be a tall order. However, the contention here is that such an engagement is the sole road to building trust that can then have a knock on effect on aspects such as the composite dialogue and later help in the monitoring of the mutual and balanced drawdown.

### **The Advantages**

The advantages of an India-Pakistan rapprochement are obvious enough to undertake without inordinate reflection. A sense of these drives India's overtures towards Pakistan.<sup>16</sup> However, it bears elaboration that better relations with Pakistan would have a major strategic fallout and dividend for India. In the main, it would make South Asia emerge as a single strategic space. Presently, the state structure in the subcontinent makes each state privilege its respective security interest. A vision of security at the regional level of a composite subcontinent is understandably absent. Nevertheless, if history is any guide, every great empire in all three periods of history ancient, medieval and modern - saw South Asia as one, including the last, the British. Reverting to this image implies a reconciliation of the security compulsions of its two major states, India and Pakistan. This can be done by doctrinal balancing.

Removal of Pakistan as a major strategic preoccupation for India would leave India with considerable attention spans and resources for the China front. It would eliminate the threat of Pakistan being leveraged by China against India. This gain in relative weight by India will help in easing relations with China. This would be useful in tempering the competition between the two that may occur in the future. This would dispel the propensity of such competition towards conflict in favour of cooperation. The regional agenda and problems that only brook regional solutions would gain a boost. As it is the region lags behind other regions in terms of economic integration.

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16. MOD Annual Report, 2009-10 (p. 7) says on India's Pakistan policy: 'India has never shut the door for dialogue with Pakistan, and is of the view that meaningful dialogue with Pakistan is possible only in an environment free of terror or threat of terror.'

In the light of the continuous 'ups and downs' in India-Pakistan relations, any reconciliation predicated on a balancing of strategic doctrines may appear as an idea 'ahead of its times' an analysis of this is nevertheless both warranted and timely. It helps explore alternatives that have been missed in strategic discourse. The main theme in any strategic discussion on Pakistan is how to prevail upon it to discontinue a policy that is not only causing it harm, but also decelerating the pace of regional integration. Many commentaries focus on how instruments of power – diplomatic, economic, political and military – need to be employed better, in some cases coercively, to bring about this result.<sup>17</sup> However, the argument here is to the contrary. It posits that coercion has its limitations. Not only is it not succeeding, but increased or 'better' application of resources would lead to innovative counter strategies by Pakistan given its internal political complexion. This would imply further security exertions entailing higher costs and risks. While costs can be borne by an economy that is doing well, the risks necessitate reflection. The very prosperity that the economy is yielding would be at risk in case the leveraging of power were to 'go wrong'. The major finding in this study of the doctrines of the two states is the potentiality of escalation in their strategic competition.

Additionally, three other factors make innovative thinking necessary. Firstly, it will provide a workable agenda in case of 'outbreak of peace' at an indeterminate future. The ideas advanced here are intended to initiate the process, but could also serve to lend momentum, in case of a positive trend in relations. Secondly, they serve to energise the peace process. Presently, it is known that some problems in the composite basket are ripe for resolution. It had been envisaged that the trust developed in tackling the easier and less vexed issues, would translate into good will for tackling the more complex issues. The promise has been belied, with more complicated issues like Kashmir holding the resolution of other issues as hostage. Therefore, there appears to be a need for fresh thinking on how to go beyond the present juncture. The idea of doctrinal balancing advanced here engages with Pakistan's core security interests as envisaged by its military. The military – at the heart of the Pakistani establishment – can be made amenable through addressing its strategic concerns by doctrinal balancing. Since it determines

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17. For instance, A Malhortra writes: 'Left with limited options, India needs to exploit the prevailing fissures within Pakistan and inflict a degree of pain that compels Pakistan to abate its nefarious acts, if not stop them completely.' (CLAWS website, [http://www.claws.in/index.php?action=master&task=535&u\\_id=119](http://www.claws.in/index.php?action=master&task=535&u_id=119))

the security, Kashmir, nuclear and India policies, it would not be averse to progress on other issues if its concerns were addressed. Lastly, no harm is done if alternatives are explored. They energise debate and deepen India's strategic culture.

Militarily, *détente* with Pakistan makes sense. India's military is stretched by deployments in Siachen, the 'Siachenisation' of Kargil<sup>18</sup> and the manpower intensive counter insurgency grid across J&K and elsewhere.<sup>19</sup> This requires it to keep its conventional edge honed through acquisitions and exercise of its retributive capacity to deter. The Chinese challenge; possible deployment against left wing extremism in central India; and continuing counter insurgency commitments in the Northeast are additional concerns. While each of these is being tackled with characteristic competence by the military, the cumulative burden could do with mitigation.

Nuclearisation has been a major impetus for generating a limited war doctrine.<sup>20</sup> The requirement of three strike corps that collectively constitute an existential threat to Pakistan can be reconsidered.<sup>21</sup> Strategic relocation could be a starting point in the build down, particularly of mechanised forces. The surplus manpower released can be retrenched and perhaps used for enhancing the quality of the central police forces set to take on the Maoists in central India. The military would also like to be at the forefront of the revolution in military affairs. Presently, its operational commitments compel its continuing as a 'mass' army, configured for wars of the previous

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18. A term used in the Executive Summary of the Kargil Review Committee Report (<http://nuclearweaponarchive.org/India/KargilRCA.html>) in its recommendation on how to manage the post Kargil War LOC: 'The country must not fall into the trap of Siachenisation of the Kargil heights and similar unheld unpopulated "gaps" in the High Himalaya along the entire length of the Northern border. The proper response would be a declaratory policy that deliberate infringement of the sanctity of the LOC and wanton cross-border terrorism in furtherance of proxy war will meet with prompt retaliation in a manner, time and place of India's choosing.'
19. Vijay Oberoi in 'Need for Holistic Restructuring of the Indian Military' (*Journal of Defence Studies*, 2 (1), Summer 2008) writes: 'Excessive involvement of the defence forces, particularly the army, in internal security duties adversely affects their combat potential.'
20. It is axiomatic that in a nuclear era, war can only be a limited one since embarking on Total War would imply introduction of nuclear weapons into the conflict at some stage. Despite this, it is interesting that both the Army (2004) and the Maritime doctrines (2009) have General and Total War as a category in the conventional war spectrum below Nuclear War. Nuclear War is depicted as distinct and above the conventional level.
21. For thinking on reconfiguration of the strike corps, see Gurmeet Kanwal (2008), *Indian Army: Vision 2020*, New Delhi: Harper Collins, p. 309.

century.<sup>22</sup> Progressive 'transformation' is difficult in a mass military.<sup>23</sup> *Détente* could enable the process of change and modernisation.

The advantages of an *entente* for Pakistan as a state are self-evident.<sup>24</sup> It would undercut the internal salience of the army by removing India as a convenient 'bogey'. It is for this reason that the idea mooted here is likely to be interpreted by the Pakistan army as yet another attempt to undercut its primacy. Fearing its institutional interests are being scuttled, it would not come on board, as was the case during the Lahore process because then it would have to totally reform itself. While an *entente* is also in its own interest, such a reform would amount to *bara-keeri* for that army.<sup>25</sup> This seeming contradiction needs spelling out of the advantages that would accrue to it.

Firstly, the army's institutional interests would be preserved- in that the commercial and welfare foundations that it runs would gain a wider market. Secondly, a growing Pakistani economy, latching on to the Indian one, would enable a larger resources cake for the army to access, even though the proportions currently for defence are not reduced. It is unlikely that external largesse would decrease, since the US would like to continue to incentivise the army to proceed with political reform.<sup>26</sup> Thirdly, a declining Indian threat would enable military right sizing and a larger concentration of resources for military modernisation. The military would no longer require terror organisations as 'strategic assets'. The recent backlash of the strategy indicates that these have become too powerful and could do with a rollback.

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22. Charles Moskos ('Armed Forces in a Warless Society' in Lawrence Freedman (ed.), *War*, Oxford: OUP, 1994, p. 136) observes that 'mass' is a characteristic of 'war readiness' militaries, while a 'war deterrence' military is a 'professional military'. The former is low technology military with an institutional ethos; while the latter has high technology weapons and an occupational ethic. See Sunil Dasgupta, 'Indian Army and the Problem of Military Change' in Swarna Rajagopalan, *Security and South Asia*, New Delhi: Routledge, 2006, pp. 107-08.
23. Ali Ahmed, 'The New Chief and Transformation', IPCS, <http://www.ipcs.org/article/india/the-new-chief-and-transformation-3080.html>
24. Musharraf had acknowledged as much stating, 'There is so much to gain mutually', in an interview to AG Noorani, *Frontline*, Aug 12-25, 2006.
25. Lt Gen (Retd) Vijay Oberoi ('Need to address Pak Army's security concerns', *The Tribune*, 8 May 2010) puts the position in these words: 'The Pakistani Army wields power on account of only one shibboleth, which is that India is out to gobble up Pakistan and it is only the Pakistani Army that is preventing it. ... Obviously, no one in the Pakistani Army would like to relinquish such a premier position, which abounds with power and pelf.'
26. The Kerry-Lugar Bill (Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009) promising \$ 7.5 billion over the next five years in addition to money for the Pakistani military is designed to keep Pakistan on even keel and encourage democratisation.

In case it is militarily required to do so, the army could proceed to do this with the support of the civilians. Obviously, Pakistan would not forego the instrumentality of terror until it is adequately compensated in terms of Indian 'concessions' in Kashmir. India has reportedly discussed modalities for an amicable outcome in Kashmir via the back channels. Therefore, it is not impossible to countenance a Kashmir 'solution' in return for Pakistani good behaviour. Fourthly, nuclear assets would be preserved from harm both in conflict or from the growing internal threat of a takeover by extremists. Lastly, politically, since the army would control the opening up thus benefiting many sectors, societal regard for it would grow. This would restore its professional status, respect and self-worth.

Operationalisation of the proposal would find detractors not only in Pakistan, but also in India. The anticipated criticism of the idea of doctrinal balancing would have it that the Pakistan army, liable to lose internal power, would not permit it. This makes the idea stillborn. The advantages discussed indicate that the idea has possibilities and, therefore, could be tried out. Antecedents of the criticism also require factoring in. There is a large constituency in India that favours an expanded defence sector. The existence of a difficult adversary in Pakistan provides the rationale for higher defence spending in the 'here and now', in addition to the existence of China as a future challenge. Managing Pakistan as a strategic problem through the proposed strategic balancing would undercut their design for India's ascent as a muscular 'great power'. The argument against Indian critics is that military power will not necessarily be undercut. The proposal enables military 'right sizing', a matter held up by the proxy war and 'Pakistan fixation'. Military 'transformation' and modernisation in desired 21st century directions requires moving beyond Pakistan. It requires releasing of resources human, material, financial, logistical currently deployed in a 'ready to use' posture. Defence budgets are not under threat; only spending profiles would change towards a more desirable, less risk prone, direction.



Lord Palmerston's observation that there are no permanent enemies has achieved the unfortunate status of a cliché. Nevertheless, it is useful for challenging the thesis of a 'civilisational' conflict,<sup>27</sup> deployed to undermine advances in India-Pakistan relations. The logic given is that even if the Kashmir issue is resolved, adversarial relations will continue. Such thinking gained ascendance with Huntington's questionable thesis on the 'Clash of Civilisations',<sup>28</sup> coinciding with the rise of militancy in Kashmir and of religious extremism in both states in late last century. The problem with such thinking is that it leaves just the 'parabellum' alternative as the sole manner of approaching Pakistan. This paper points out that this is potentially prohibitively costly. It suggests an alternative in the liberal paradigm of engagement and reconciliation. It bears noting that the German-French bonhomie of today and the present day relations between the two erstwhile cold warriors were equally difficult to imagine at one time. It is therefore possible to look forward to and work towards better India-Pakistan ties. That it took two world wars to bring about the Franco-German rapprochement and the Cold War only narrowly missed getting 'hot' on occasion, means that such an endeavour needs embarking on and advanced with a sense of urgency.

Mainstream security thinking is largely in the realist framework concentrating on how to wield a policy mix of 'soft' and 'hard' lines. The hard line is to pressurise Pakistan and sensitise it to its vulnerabilities, while the soft line is to incentivise compliance. The aim is to get it to discontinue its policy of proxy war, so that the two states can proceed to solve their problems. However, Pakistan has been reluctant to oblige. This raises questions about the efficacy of the Indian policy. Incentives have not worked largely because Pakistan's India policy is military determined. Realism is a characteristic of the 'military mind'.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, the Pakistani military takes

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27. In an interview to BBC, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had said that the India-Pakistan problem was a 'thousand years' one.

28. Samuel Huntington, *Clash of Civilisations and Remaking of the World Order*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998. Also see, JN Dixit (ed.), *Future conflict, clash of civilizations, validity of Huntington's thesis, and the security challenges of this paradigm to India*, New Delhi: USI, 1998.

29. Samuel Huntington in *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil Military Relations* (New York: Belknap Press, 1981, pp. 90, 94) writes: 'The military man emphasises power in human relations; liberalism normally either denies the existence of power, minimises its importance, or castigates it as inherently evil....inherent similarity and compatibility exist between the military ethic and conservatism.'



cognizance mostly of the 'stick' end of India's 'carrot and stick' policy. In doing so it acts to negate the 'threat' the stick poses. A cycle of action and reaction thus is set in motion: India works to increase the efficacy of its Pakistan strategy, while Pakistan acts to undercut the same. Breaking out of this requires seeking insights and importing ideas from paradigms other than realism.<sup>30</sup>

In realist logic, security begets peace. The international arena is one of anarchy. States have to be mindful of their own security in a 'self-help' system. Security efforts such as military spending, organisational initiatives and doctrinal movement, however, trigger the 'security dilemma' for the neighbour. Even if these initiatives are taken with the purpose of reducing the perceived security deficit, these result in enhancing the perception of 'threat' for the. Its reaction leads to a cycle of insecurity. In the liberal understanding, mitigating the security perception of the neighbour can advance the peace process. Addressing the threat perception brought on by the defensive initiatives can bring about the security intended by taking these original steps. Reversing the realist logic to 'peace begetting security' requires drawing down and, if necessary, giving a pronounced defensive twist to security doctrines. With the security dilemma displaced, the neighbour does not require making a counter. This means greater security for both.

Applying this logic to the subcontinent requires first an understanding of Pakistan. There are multiple vantage points to view Pakistan. These include: its religious orientation; its ethnic imbalance; its problems over national identity and the importance of Kashmir; its feudal social system with its elite-mass divide; and lastly, its current position in a global cleft stick etc.<sup>31</sup> However, this paper takes the army as central to any understanding of Pakistan. Fundamental to Pakistan is the fact that it has a praetorian military.<sup>32</sup> As in many developing states earlier, the military entered politics for reasons that included the altruistic one of preserving the state and helping with nation building. However, the difficulties Pakistan encountered

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30. For a discussion on realism and liberalism, see Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*, New Delhi: OUP, 2007, pp. 59-128

31. For insightful perspectives on Pakistan, see Ayesha Siddiqua Agha's *Military Inc. : Inside Pakistan's Military Economy* (London: Pluto Press, 2007); Ayesha Jalal's *Partisans of Allah: Jihad in South Asia*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), and *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: a Comparative and Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995; and Farzana Sheikh, *Making Sense of Pakistan*, London: C Hurst and Co Ltd, 2009.

32. Gurmeet Kanwal, 'Pakistan's Long Tradition of Military Rule: Ayub Khan to Zia ul Haq', *CLAWS Journal*, Winter 2008.

such as in East Pakistan and the superimposition of the Cold War in the region, led to Pakistan's military entrenching itself in the national scheme to the detriment of other institutions. This was due largely to the 'institutional interest': the corporate interest and vested interests of the military as a class.<sup>33</sup> This has to be factored into any analysis of national interest and class interest when viewing Pakistan, along with the influence of Islamists. While the dominance of the Pakistani army in Pakistan is known, the implications need elaboration.

The significant features of the 'military mind' have been captured by Samuel Huntington in his book, *Soldier and the State*:

'...the military ethic emphasises the permanence, irrationality, weakness and evil in human nature...It accepts the nation state as the highest form of political organisation and recognises the continuing likelihood of wars among nation states. It emphasises the importance of power in international relations and warns of the dangers to state security. It holds that the security of the state depends upon the creation and maintenance of strong military forces...It holds that war is an instrument of politics...The military ethic is thus pessimistic, nationalistic, militaristic, pacifist, and instrumentalist in its view of the military profession. It is, in brief, realistic and conservative.'<sup>34</sup>

By this yardstick, Pakistan, led by its army, would privilege the power asymmetry in viewing India. According to Rajesh Rajagopalan:

'India has overwhelming conventional military superiority over Pakistan, at least in the bean count of major indices. India spends about five times as much as Pakistan on defence and has an army that is twice as large, with twice as many tanks. The Navy has twice as many submarines and seven times as many main surface combatants as the Pakistani navy. And India's air force has almost three times as many combat aircraft as that of Pakistan. India was

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33. Scott Sagan observes, 'military organisations, like all other organisations, have parochial interests. Their leaders and members are not only concerned with the security of the state they are employed to protect but also with protecting their own organisational strength, autonomy and prestige. These parochial interests do not always conflict with the state's national security interests, but there is no reason to believe the two are always consistent' ('The Origins of Military Doctrine and Command And Control Systems', in Lavoy, Sagan, and Wirtz, eds., *Planning the Unthinkable: How New Powers Will Use Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Weapons*, Cornell University Press, 2000, p. 18). Also See Hilary Synnott, *Transforming Pakistan: Ways out of instability*, London: IISS, 2009, pp. 17-25

34. Samuel P Huntington, 'The Military Mind' in his *Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil Military Relations*, New York: Belknap Press, 1981, p. 79.

also the developing world's largest arms importer...<sup>35</sup>

The army, being realist, will attempt to undercut Indian military power. Its actions such as proxy war and using the nuclear card in turn constitute threats for India. Indian attempts to negate these through military and intelligence led pressures along with incentives. This sets up the cycle of insecurity, since Pakistan focuses only on the former.

India has tried a multiplicity of approaches in dealing with Pakistan, of which three approaches are noteworthy and spring from the three salient problems of Pakistan. The first is that Pakistan has a guardian USED TOO OFTEN military.<sup>36</sup> This being an internal structural factor of the Pakistani state, India can exercise limited influence. The power asymmetry and the India 'bogey' serve as a major rationale for the Pakistani military to control the power structure in Pakistan. That this is a self-serving is self-evident, in that the power asymmetry is used as excuse to legitimise its position at the top of the power hierarchy in Pakistan and its privileged access to the resources of that state. Institutional interest is collapsed neatly into national interest making India's overtures ineffective. India has been attempting to widen the democratic constituency in Pakistan through initiatives as the 'people to people' contact which are part of its two pronged policy of reaching out to that state. A major initiative was the Lahore process, but was truncated at the outset by the Pakistani army's Kargil intrusion.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, India persisted and resumed the peace process once again in 2004. India is yet again poised to resume the dialogue that has

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35. Rajesh Rajagopalan, 'India: The Logic of Assured Retaliation' in Muthaiah Alagappa (ed.), *The Long Shadow: Nuclear Weapons and Security in the Twentieth Century*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 192.

36. JP Morgan defines a praetorian military as 'a military that seeks higher levels of involvement in a nation's political sphere while using more aggressive forms of intervention' in 'Praetorians or professionals? Democratisation and military intervention in communist and post-communist Russia', *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 15 (2), June 1999. With respect to Pakistan, see Hasan Askari Rizvi, 'Pakistan: Civil-military Relations in a Praetorian State' in R.J. May and Viberto Selochan (eds.), *The Military and Democracy in Asia and the Pacific*, ANU epress, 2004; and Brian Cloughley, *A History of the Pakistan Army*, Oxford University Press, 2000 and his *Wars, Coups and Terror: Pakistan Army in Years of Turmoil*, Sky Horse Publishing 2009.

37. On this score, the Kargil Review Committee Report opines: 'There is no clear evidence on the basis of which to assess the nature and extent of Nawaz Sharif's involvement in the Kargil adventure. Those who know Nawaz Sharif personally believe that he has a limited attention span and is impatient with detail. Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume that Nawaz Sharif was at least aware of the broad thrust of the Kargil plan when he so warmly welcomed the Indian Prime Minister in Lahore.' (<http://nuclearweaponarchive.org/India/KargilRCA.html>)

understandably been 'paused' since 26/11.<sup>38</sup>

The second is Pakistan's problem of identity. The fear is that opening up to India would lead to being culturally over-whelmed at the cost of the Pakistani identity. This apprehension is partially behind Pakistan's emphasis on its Islamic and West Asian connections. India has attempted to assuage this by reassuring Pakistan of India's respect for its sovereign existence. The then Prime Minister, Vajpayee, demonstrated this by paying homage at the Minar-e-Pakistan during the Lahore summit. The BJP leader L.K. Advani's praise for the Quaid e Azam, Jinnah, while at Karachi was meant to allay Pakistani concerns. Jaswant Singh, another BJP leader has written a complimentary tome, *Jinnah: India-Partition Independence*.<sup>39</sup> Further, India has been consistent in its role as a status quo power uninterested in territorial or ideological expansion. It has negotiated with all the regimes in Pakistan, even of the military variety, to allay Pakistan's fears regarding its identity.

The third problem is of the Pakistani perception of asymmetry with respect to India.<sup>40</sup> Its significance increases in light of the first problem, that of Pakistan being a military dominated state. The suggestion here is that this perception of power asymmetry can be changed by creating the perception of relative power. The contention here is that the Pakistani army is central to its power structure.<sup>41</sup> It takes this power imbalance seriously, since armies traditionally favour the realist paradigm. Changing the power asymmetry as a first step would be difficult. Instead changing the perception of the asymmetry is a feasible first step. The former can then follow at an appropriate interval as a peace 'dividend'.

Of the three, the 'identity' factor has instrumental value. The Islamic factor and 'Kashmir' serve the purpose of internal balancing; generating power

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38. Sandeep Dikshit, 'Pause in composite dialogue: India', *The Hindu*, 25 Feb 2009. However, as a follow-up of the meeting of the two Prime Ministers in Thimphu on the sidelines of the SAARC summit of 2010, it was decided that the Foreign Ministers and the Foreign Secretaries will work out the methodology as to how the dialogue between the two countries can be carried on so that all outstanding issues between our two countries could be discussed in an atmosphere of mutual trust and mutual respect.

39. Jaswant Singh, *Jinnah: India-Partition Independence*, New Delhi: Rupa, 2009. LK Advani resigned as chief of the BJP and Jaswant Singh had to leave the party for their opinion of Jinnah.

40. Hilary Synnott, *Transforming Pakistan*, p. 147.

41. See Cohen, S. (1998), *The Pakistan Army*, Berkeley: University of California Press, Siddiqua, A., *Military Inc: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy*, 2007 and Pasha, S., *Crossed Swords: Pakistan, its Army and the Wars Within*, Oxford, OUP, 2008 on centrality of Pakistani Army in Pakistani polity and economy.

through national cohesion and coherence. Therefore, two issues of consequence emerge: the Army's salience in Pakistani polity and the power imbalance. India can do little with respect to the former. However, it can address the latter to a considerable extent by managing Pakistani perceptions of Indian 'intentions' that contribute to its heightened 'threat perception'.

The perception of 'threat' is a function of relative 'capability' and 'intent'. Capabilities comprise force in its quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Intentions, usually difficult to perceive and taken as dependent on the strategic circumstance, are discernible from doctrines. Capabilities are less amenable to direct manipulation. Intentions on the other hand are more amenable to manipulation. For addressing the perception of threat, it is easier to manipulate intentions than capabilities. Therefore, a change of strategic doctrine can bring about a change in perception of intention and in turn threat perception.

India has three options for addressing its Pakistan dilemma: status quo; 'up the ante' by enhanced asymmetry; and arriving at 'symmetry'. The viability of the last can be viewed favourably, in case efficacy of the first two is assessed as limited.

It is quite obvious that 'status quo' has its limitations. Noted French strategist Andre Beaufre states, 'The further nuclear strategy develops and nearer it gets to establishing the balance, however precarious, of overall deterrence, the more indirect strategy will be used. Peace will be less and less peaceful and will get nearer and nearer to 'war in peacetime...'.<sup>42</sup> This is virtually the situation that has obtained in the subcontinent ever since nuclearisation, incipient since the late eighties and overt since May 1998. S. Paul Kapur has made an insightful modification to the stability/instability paradox by restating it to read as the 'instability/instability' paradox in the South Asian setting.<sup>43</sup> The stability/instability paradox in nuclear literature states that stability, i.e. stable deterrence at the strategic level can lead to instability at the conventional level. This has been used to explain the South Asian situation, with the variation that the instability is not at conventional but at the sub-conventional level. Kapur's position is that instability at the nuclear level encourages conflict propensity at the conventional level. This indicates that conventional war is a possibility with its attendant escalatory connotations,

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42. A Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy*, London: Faber and Faber, 1965.

43. S Paul Kapur, *Dangerous Deterrent: Nuclear Weapons Proliferation and Conflict in South Asia* New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2008.

belying the promise of the peace dividend of the nuclear era. Saira Khan's thesis, that nuclearisation leads to protraction of conflict, is a timely warning.<sup>44</sup>

The second option has many votaries in a strategic community peopled largely by realists.<sup>45</sup> The question they deal with is: 'How can India exhaust Pakistan by 'upping the ante'? An analogy is drawn with the demise of the Soviet Union through competing with US during the Reagan era. This they consider feasible in light of India's economic trajectory and Pakistan's straitened economic and political circumstances. A consequence of this strategy would be that Pakistan, on its part, would continue to play the asymmetric card and lend itself to the Chinese game plan for boxing India into South Asia. Consequently, India would be forced into the American camp in any future strategic face off in Asia between the super power and the rising power. India would be hard put to balance China, since it requires at least a generation to marshal its power credentials. Therefore, it would be preferable to manage the neighbourhood so as to keep the security situation under control.

Towards this end, the third option presents itself. This involves doctrinal balancing by means of a strategic dialogue. Threat is constituted by capability and intention. Tackling capability is the next step; the stage at which this is done is reached by first influencing perception of intention. Perception of intention can best be managed by balancing strategic doctrines of the two states.

Defining 'strategic doctrine' at this stage is in order. In the words of the arch realist theoretician and practitioner, Henry Kissinger, the task of strategic doctrine is, "to translate power into policy. Whether the goals of a state are offensive or defensive, whether it seeks to achieve (*compel*) or to prevent (*deter*) a transformation, its strategic doctrine must define what objectives are worth contending for and determine the degree of force appropriate for achieving them."<sup>46</sup> As seen from the discussion on 'security dilemma' earlier, both states in a conflictual dyad and apprehending a threat, are through their strategic

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44. Saira Khan, *Nuclear Weapons and Conflict Transformation: The Case of India-Pakistan*, London: Routledge, 2008.

45. Kanti Bajpai, 'Indian Strategic Culture and the Problem of Pakistan', in Swarna Rajagopalan, *Security and South Asia: Ideas, Institutions and Initiatives*, New Delhi: Routledge, 2006, pp. 72-74.

46. Kissinger, H., *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957 (parenthesis added).

doctrines responding to the threat. Therefore, in effect and interestingly so, the response originating at the structural level is defensive even though 'offensive' in its manifestation as both doctrine and strategy. The problem is structural with Pakistan's offensive at the subconventional level being a defensive response to the power asymmetry; and likewise India's offensive doctrine at the conventional level being a reaction. Both can then be said to be operating in a 'defensive-offensive' (structural-strategic) mode.<sup>47</sup> The implication is that in case the former is addressed, the latter - downstream - can be moderated.

The strategic doctrines of India and Pakistan can be taken at the sub-conventional, conventional and nuclear planes. On the sub-conventional level, that Pakistan has resorted to proxy war has been evident from the past quarter century.<sup>48</sup> On the conventional level, India has relied on a conventional doctrine of deterrence by punishment over the same period, beginning in the early eighties. It tried out its strike corps in a counter-offensive during *Exercise Brasstacks*<sup>49</sup> and has since acquired a third strike corps. Increase in the offensive content at the conventional level was owing to the Indian need to deter Pakistan's proxy war through the promise of an offensive response in case Pakistan breached India's 'tolerance threshold'. Of late, with India's adoption of the 'Cold Start' doctrine positing a proactive and offensive posture in 2004,<sup>50</sup> India's strategic doctrine at the conventional level can be deemed to be moving from deterrence with an offensive bias to compellance.<sup>51</sup> At the nuclear level, Pakistan has avoided making a 'No First Use' commitment. In not having ruled out 'first use', it can be said to be relying on ambiguity for deterrence. While this does not imply a 'first use' policy, it does not rule out nuclear first use either.<sup>52</sup> Though India subscribes

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47. The author is grateful to Professor Kanti Bajpai for this insight.

48. Shalini Chawla, 'Pakistan's strategy of covert war', *CLAWS Journal*, Winter 2008.

49. Kanti P Bajpai et al., *Brasstacks And Beyond: Perception And Management Of Crisis In South Asia*, Delhi, Manohar Books, 1997.

50. *The Army Doctrine*, HQ ARTRAC, Shimla, 2004.

51. G Kampani, "India's Compellance Strategy: Calling Pakistan's Nuclear Bluff Over Kashmir", at <http://cns.miis.edu/stories/020610.htm>.

52. Then President Musharraf had made a statement in May, 2002, that Pakistan did not want a conflict with India but that if it came to war between the nuclear-armed rivals, it would "respond with full might." This statement has been interpreted by the Federation of Atomic Scientists to mean that if pressed by an overwhelming conventional attack from India, Pakistan might use its nuclear weapons ('Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons', FAS, <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/pakistan/nuke/>).



to NFU, the two states can be deemed to be equally offensive at this level, since Indian nuclear doctrine posits 'massive punitive retaliation'.<sup>53</sup> It bears noting that the implication of 'massive' is 'assured destruction'. This appears to be directed at staying Pakistan's nuclear hand in order to enable bringing India's conventional advantage to bear.

The doctrinal dialectic goes thus: 'in order to keep the LIC (Low Intensity Conflict) within sub-tolerance threshold, India requires a viable conventional capability; in order to redress the conventional imbalance, Pakistan deems it requires a nuclear deterrent; in order to prevent operational employment of the Pakistani nuclear capability, India posits 'unacceptable damage'.<sup>54</sup> Since the two states are operating in the realist paradigm, power balancing can be taken as the key feature. Undercutting the need for 'balance of power' could lead to its discontinuance or *détente*.

To sum up, Pakistan has an offensive strategic doctrine at the sub-conventional level, while India has an offensive strategic doctrine on the conventional level. At the nuclear level both states are quits, with both having seemingly offensive doctrines. It follows therefore that in case the two states were to retract the offensive bias in their strategic doctrines at the various levels, their mutual perception of 'intention', that contributes towards threat perception would be greatly assuaged. Absence of a perception of threat implies peace. Peace would then beget security. This reverses the current model for getting to peace through security exertion by undercutting the security dilemma. The resulting *détente* would help provide the setting for a build down in 'capabilities'. *Entente* can be the eventual result.

The changed model is therefore one of 'security through peace', with peace yielding security. Security is at best an absence and at worst manageability of threat. This can happen were India to retract the offensive bias in its strategic doctrine at the conventional level. This would entail a move away from the military conventional doctrine, Cold Start. Consequent to a reduced threat perception, Pakistan could drawdown its proxy war. Proxy war is taken here as a measure to redress asymmetry and manifestation of Pakistan's attempt at strategic balancing. Since India's emphasis on conventional power is to deter Pakistan's proxy war, it can countenance a downgrading in the same in case the proxy war winds down. At the nuclear level, Pakistan could adopt

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53. 'Press Release of the Cabinet Committee on Security on Operationalisation of India's Nuclear Doctrine 04.01.03', at <http://meadev.nic.in/news/official/20030104/official.htm>.

54. Ali Ahmed, 'Doctrinal Challenge', *USI Journal*, Jan 2000.



NFU, not needing the nuclear card to deter India's conventional power any more. Since Pakistani first use is no longer to be deterred, India can move away from its nuclear doctrine promising 'massive' retaliation.

These changes can be arrived at through a negotiated balancing of strategic and military doctrines. Towards this end a standing consultative mechanism needs to be established. In this forum a strategic dialogue can proceed in which the threat perceptions of the two sides are discussed. This mechanism requires to be insulated from the periodic buffeting that the composite dialogue process appears vulnerable to. Strategic experts from the two sides representing their National Security Council and militaries can meet. The agenda can, to begin with, be restricted to threat perceptions. It can expand to countenance peace strategies leading to a mutually verifiable turn round in offensive strategic doctrines at identified levels.

Doctrinal balancing *could* serve as an entry point to political entente. Peace is brought about through manipulating perceptions of 'intentions' in order to reduce the threat perception. With the Pakistani military's core concerns addressed, it no longer needs to be a hurdle in the normalisation of relations. Détente sets the stage for an eventual balancing of forces addressing of 'capabilities'. Entente with its shared security perceptions then becomes possible as the step after next.

# Pakistan and Conflict Strategy

## 2

The salient characteristic of the Pakistani state is the dominance of the military.<sup>55</sup> The key feature in this primacy of the military is 'institutional interest'.<sup>56</sup> In Pakistan, institutional interest has been misread as the national interest with the army seeing itself as the bulwark against Indian 'hegemony' that it assumes would over-whelm Pakistani identity. By maintaining adversarial relations with India, it seeks to obviate this and maintain control of the state. The impulse behind this is less concern for the Pakistani state and society, but continued access to Pakistan's resources for the benefit of the institution and its members. Since internal balancing relies on a limited resource base confined to a resource-scarce country, Pakistan also resorts to external balancing in which it lends its strategic location for self-interested geopolitical use by external powers, such as China and the US. What are the implications of this understanding of the Pakistani state and its military on possible conflict strategy?

The conflict aims of the military need to be viewed through the lens of the institutional interest that it is habituated to. The larger interests of Pakistan would be factored in only so far as the 'golden goose' for its military - the state of Pakistan - is not lost in the process. In conflict, the primary aim will be for the military to outlast the war. This is to enable it to retain control of the state, post-conflict. This would be quite like Saddam Hussain's Republican Guard attempting to outlast the Kuwait conflict in order to retain control over Iraqi state and society. Emerging intact to the extent possible after the conflict would have the added benefit of continuing to ward off India. This is the lesson of the 1971 war. The Bhutto years post-war were the nadir of the Pakistani army. Its weakness then permitted Bhutto an autonomous political agenda that it managed to quash later through its coup in 1977. The army is also perhaps fearful that the civilian leadership would not take into account the Pakistani 'national interest', defined by the military in its interface with India. Bhutto's 'secret' Shimla agenda<sup>57</sup> and Nawaz Sharif's reaching out to India, when he had managed greater power for himself after displacing

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55. Satish Nambiar, 'The Pakistani Military's Mindset' in Satish Kumar (ed.), *India's National Security Annual Review 2006*, New Delhi: Knowledge World, 2006, pp. 390-93.

56. See Ali Ahmed, *Institutional Interest*, MEA Chair Project 1999-2000, USI (unpublished monograph).

57. PN Dhar, Top Article, *Times of India*, 3 Apr 1995

both the chief justice and the Army chief, were seen as internal threats to the army's position as a 'guardian military'. To retain its coherence for internal political utility post conflict would, counter intuitively, be a defining parameter for conflict aims.

The conflict aims of the Pakistan army would be impacted by two contradictory impulses. One is self-preservation for post conflict political primacy. This implies that the military would attempt to avoid attrition to the maximum extent possible. In particular it would prefer to preserve its strategic reserves and nuclear assets. This it could try to do by avoiding over-commitment of these; to use them would amount to endangering them. Retaining these intact would help limit the war and, thereby, preserve the army's post conflict interests. In case the Indian military were to eke these out through degradation operations by missiles and air power application, then under a 'lose them-use them' rationale, Pakistan would unleash them. Nevertheless, the army may be compelled to use these to avert defeat. India's conflict strategy would not permit the use of these in terms of restricting the space available for making offensive gains and ensuring that the conflict is of too short a duration to permit their application.

The second contradictory - factor is the imperative of a reasonable showing militarily in war, even if it was eventually lost. The showing of the Pakistani army in the conflict would be crucial in determining its political image. Remaining intact would not help in case the perception is that it is a defeated army. Therefore, it would prefer to commit its forces in a riposte, but not in counter attacks, so as to avoid defeat. This may have the impact of expanding the war, but this would be to take on board the major lesson of the 1971 war. The defeat then was ignominious and having largely untested troops in the west was of no consequence. The political standing of the army suffered. It lost control of the state, despite preserving itself from attrition. This time round the army would use its conventional power to avert 'defeat'. Avoiding defeat would amount to denying 'victory' to India. For a weaker power and military, this amounts to a perception of victory. This is in keeping with the Egyptian showing in the 1973 war in which its military display was adequate for it to create the perception of a 'draw' against the more credible Israeli forces.

The aim would be to maintain its internal political primacy post conflict. It would see this as in Pakistan's interest since a strong military would prevent 'humiliating' peace conditions being imposed on or being accepted by Pakistan. This it can do firstly by self-preservation and, secondly, by a reasonable showing in conflict. The tension between the two is resolvable

along the lines that Pakistan would commit the resources necessary to avoid defeat. This would be in relation to India's aims in the conflict. If they are manifestly along the lines of the limited war concept in which India modulates the levels of forces committed, Pakistan would likewise commit just enough to avoid defeat. *Pakistan's conflict aims would depend on Indian war aims and how expansive these appear to be.*

### Doctrine

Strategy is influenced by: aim, doctrine and circumstance.<sup>58</sup> The aim is binding. Doctrine acts as guide; while the circumstance permits autonomy of strategy from the dictates of doctrine. Strategic rationality is in a correspondence between conflict aims and relative power equations.<sup>59</sup> Strategy in the nuclear age requires keeping in mind nuclear risks.<sup>60</sup> It needs to factor in imponderables that always attend a clash of arms.<sup>61</sup> It has to be cognisant also of possible internal political developments, consequent to war outbreak.

### Conventional

The known Pakistani military doctrine is of considerable vintage dating back to the late eighties. It was tested in the Exercise Zarb-e-Momin held in 1989 under its then chief, Mirza Aslam Beg.<sup>62</sup> It was dubbed 'offensive defence' since it posited an offensive with one or both of Army Reserve formations.

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58. See *Indian Army Doctrine*, Shimla: HQ ARTRAC, 2004, pp. 3-4.

59. Rationality is the conscious balancing of ends and means and engagement in value maximizing behaviour. The state is taken as a unitary actor that formulates the 'vital, essential, and desirable'; conceives alternative courses of action, evaluates courses for consequences; exercises the power of choice; caters for contingencies; apportions resources; and, thereafter, directs and controls its instruments. The process involves an extensive search for relevant information; a through canvassing of a wide spectrum of views; conscious inclusion of expert opinion to the contrary of the conventional view point; reexamination of assumptions for their validity; and detailed provisions for execution of chosen course to enable judgment of practicability. (Janis, I., *Victims of Groupthink*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972, p. 142).

60. The Indian Army is cognisant of the linkage. Its doctrine (p. 17) states: 'A conventional war may escalate to a nuclear war when any of the belligerents decide to use nuclear weapons through any means of delivery to avoid defeat in the sphere of conventional warfare or to safeguard its vital national interests or even with the aim to bring the war to a decisive end.'

61. Clausewitz, *On War*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 25-26.

62. P.R. Chari, Parvez Cheema and Stephen Cohen, *Four Crisis and a Peace Process: American Engagement in South Asia*, New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2008, p. 86. The doctrine of 'offensive defence' was tried out in Exercise Zarb e Momin in 1989. It envisages offensives by Pakistani strike corps at the outset of the war so as to fight the war on Indian territory. Also see, RSN Singh, 'Pakistan's Offensive Defence Strategy', *CLAWS Journal*, Winter 2008.

As befits a weaker power in a weak-strong Pakistan-India dyad, the offensive was designed to compensate Pakistan not only for lack of conventional parity but also for its lack of strategic depth. It would also enable Pakistan to take advantage of internal strife in India fostered first in Punjab and later in Kashmir. The territorial gains made would signify the extent of 'victory' and would be useful in negotiations subsequent to the conflict. Insurgent fighters and a disaffected populace in the border states, disturbed by the proxy war, would prove to be a force multiplier. Nuclear cover, available, since at least 1987, with Pakistan, was seen as providing impunity for the offensive. While the doctrine was logical in the context of its times, there have been developments since that have impacted the offensive intent, the most significant of which has been overt nuclearisation of 1998 and the coincident offensive turn taken by India's conventional doctrine.

Firstly, India did not remain static but acquired an additional strike corps in the nineties. It has since given itself an offensive doctrine with the intention of being 'proactively' off-the-blocks in the next conflict.<sup>63</sup> Given its appreciation that it would likely be a short, sharp war,<sup>64</sup> India's doctrine relies on the earliest application of maximum combat power. This implies that Pakistan's strike corps would likely lose the opportunity to make offsetting territorial gains as intended. Secondly, India has managed to control insurgency in the Punjab and lately even in Kashmir. This deprives Pakistan of its trump card of extending its depth, beyond its territory. Thirdly, since the declaration of the global war on terror in Pakistan's backyard, a second front has opened up on its western border. Operations against the Taliban have since 2007 have tied down an increasing proportion of the troops of offensive formations,<sup>65</sup> thereby depriving Pakistan of its earlier advantage of the proximity of its cantonments to operational locations. Lastly, nuclear developments and arms acquisitions by India over the decade enable escalation dominance by India. The cumulative impact of these developments makes the original doctrine of offensive defence less credible for Pakistan.

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63. 'Cold Start' to new war doctrine', *TOI*, April 14, 2004.

64. *The Indian Army Doctrine* (p. 7) describes these as: 'Future wars are likely to be characterised by:- Emerging at short notice, being of short duration and being fought at high tempo and intensity...'

65. Harinder Singh, 'Tackling or Trailing the Taliban: An Assessment', IDSA Issue Brief, [http://www.idsa.in/issuebrief/TacklingorTrailingtheTaliban\\_hsingh\\_200709](http://www.idsa.in/issuebrief/TacklingorTrailingtheTaliban_hsingh_200709)

## *Nuclear*

More is known about Pakistan's capability than its doctrine. The capability came into focus due to the safety and proliferation issues post 9/11. It reputedly has about 60-90 warheads and these are likely to be predominantly missile delivered.<sup>66</sup> Its missile inventory is fairly variegated and is said to be in advance of Indian capability,<sup>67</sup> no doubt to compensate for the relative shortcomings in its air force. The Pakistani nuclear doctrine is ambiguous. The doctrine is not a written document available in the public domain. It has to be inferred from official statements and actions. The most significant of these has been that of the Director General of the Strategic Plans Division indicating four nuclear 'thresholds' territorial, attrition, economic strangulation and internal stability.<sup>68</sup> Vipin Narang states that Pakistan has 'adopt(ed) an asymmetric escalation posture that fully integrated nuclear weapons into its military forces to credibly and directly deter Indian conventional attacks.'<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, nuclear rhetoric periodically has inclined towards conveying Pakistani resolve to use the capability. It has even been implied in a statement by former President Musharraf that it would at best be a 'last resort'.<sup>70</sup> As intended, the effect is that of an uncertain nuclear threshold. The aim is to constrict the space India needs for launch of credible conventional offensives. By declaring a low nuclear threshold, the gain is to reduce Indian combat power being brought to bear on its forces for fear of crossing the threshold. What is clear is that in not having subscribed to 'No First Use' it has retained the option of 'first use'. This is in the NATO tradition of ambiguity, in that, not subscribing to NFU does not imply a 'first use' doctrine either.

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66. See 'Pakistan Profile', Nuclear Threat Initiative, [http://www.nti.org/e\\_research/profiles/Pakistan/Nuclear/index.html](http://www.nti.org/e_research/profiles/Pakistan/Nuclear/index.html)

67. At a seminar at IPCS, on this score Raja Menon mentioned: 'Pakistani nuclear policy became aggressive and changed to escalation dominance. This change was registered first when they fired Shaheen-II, and later with the cruise missile firing in August 2005...the Indian nuclear response, which has been so weak as to lead to the establishment of a missile gap in Pakistan's favor - a gap exploited by Pakistan.' (<http://www.ipcs.org/article/nuclear/indo-pak-nuclear-tests-ten-years-after-2580.html>)

68. 'Nuclear safety, nuclear stability and nuclear strategy in Pakistan: A concise report of a visit by Landau Network - Centro Volta', <http://www.pugwash.org/september11/pakistan-nuclear.htm>

69. Vipin Narang, 'Posturing for Peace? Pakistan's Nuclear Postures and South Asian Stability', *International Security*, 34 (3), pp. 47, 55- 64.

70. Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, 'Nuclear doctrine, declaratory policy, and escalation control', Henry L Stimson Center South Asian Regional Security Project, April 2004

## Strategy

Strategic rationality implies a war avoidance strategy by Pakistan. This has the advantage of preserving Pakistan and its military from punishment. Crisis, serving as substitute to conflict, has the advantage of focusing attention on the Pakistani agenda involving Kashmir and the nuclear risks associated with war between nuclear states. The crisis having abated, Pakistan can then continue its proxy war in a reversion to status quo ante.

While Pakistan has not been known to be averse to initiating war in the past, Indian conventional forces (as they shape up over the future) would continue to robustly thwart any future plan to do so. Pakistan would prefer that the onus of being the aggressor lies with India. Even if India has a strong *casus belli*, it would have to contend with the stipulation against aggression in the UN Charter era. This would compensate for the political deficit that Pakistan starts the conflict with since the *casus belli* would not only comprise the immediate provocation but the series of provocations over the past two decades. India's restraint thus far, has given it the advantage of building up its moral and political reserves to contemplate launching a war. Pakistan would prefer to whittle India's political advantage to the extent possible by refraining from initiating war. Nevertheless, in case there are operational gains to be had, it may still be tempted to be the first off-the-block. However, in the light of the changed Indian doctrine of proactive offensives and the resulting forward movement of its mobile forces, this may not, in the event, be possible because currently nearly a hundred thousand of Pakistani troops are countering insurgency to its west.<sup>71</sup> The concept of the Azm-e-Nau is a pointer to the emerging form of the Pakistani counter. The exercise had an initial 20000 troops tackling Indian Cold Start offensives, while another 20-30000 troops, presumably depicted as committed in the west in counter insurgency, arrive to take up the gauntlet.<sup>72</sup>

In case conflict is unavoidable, in light of importance of 'saving face', the military can be expected to take the necessary actions on the conventional plane. Pakistan would react with its defensive formations as necessary.

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71. See Dhruv Katoch, 'Ex Azm e Nau III: An Assessment', CLAWS, [http://www.claws.in/index.php?action=master&task=550&u\\_id=82](http://www.claws.in/index.php?action=master&task=550&u_id=82). He writes: 'In addition to the troops deployed by the Pakistan Army in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and Baluchistan, close to 1,00,000 troops are currently engaged in fighting a sub-conventional conflict in South Waziristan, Orakzai and Khyber regions.'

72 Ahmed, 'The Message from Mock Battles', IDSA Strategic Comments, [http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/Themessagefrommockbattles\\_aahmed\\_070510](http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/Themessagefrommockbattles_aahmed_070510)

Actions, *where possible*, would include launching offensives with its strike formations. The scope for offensives may be restricted by India's own proactive offensives. It would prefer to tackle India's offensive formations with its defenders, rather than use its offensive formations that otherwise form its strategic reserves. The offensive formations would be useful, if not employed in riposte, in fending off Indian strike corps in case these were also launched in wake of or in tandem with Indian limited offensives by pivot corps resources. The importance of the nuclear card would in such circumstance recede. The Pakistani air force would act to the limits of its capacity with the Indian air force attempting to gain air dominance.<sup>73</sup> The Pakistan navy would rely on submarines to the extent possible for sea denial and to offset India's naval advantage. Its surface ships would be unlikely to play a role of any significance, though its surveillance capabilities would be deployed to follow Indian naval and amphibious movements. Resort to missiles for heightening international concerns and compensating for the aerial disadvantage will also be witnessed.

At the nuclear plane, Pakistan can be expected to be wary of its vulnerabilities, as also the risks of escalation. But it would like to use its nuclear capability to effect. Nuclear signalling for political effect could be through declaratory statements, nuclear tests, demonstration strikes and a heightened nuclear warning status.<sup>74</sup> Directed at the minds of Indian decision makers, its purpose would be to sensitise India to the compulsions of limiting war aims in a nuclear environment. However, its more effective constituency would be external.<sup>75</sup> Heightened nuclear dangers through nuclear signalling, would serve to attract foreign attention. The US-led West and Pakistan's supporters would attempt to intercede with their individual and collective political and diplomatic resources. The intention would be to persuade India to respect nuclear 'redlines' by limiting its political aims, military objectives and operational action. Pressure would also be exerted to restrain India at the nuclear level. In case of presence of US forces on Pakistani soil, the US may mount air patrols to ensure their safety and security and require India to respect its concerns. VR Raghavan is of the view

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73. The Pakistan Air Force conducted Exercise High Mark in early 2010.

74. Ali Ahmed, 'Demonstration strikes, in an Indo-Pak conflict', CLAWS, [http://www.claws.in/index.php?action=master&task=500&u\\_id=94](http://www.claws.in/index.php?action=master&task=500&u_id=94)

75. Vipin Narang characterises this as 'catalytic' nuclear posture in which the state exploits the fears of other states to compel intervention so as to defuse a crisis. See his, 'Posturing for Peace? Pakistan's Nuclear Postures and South Asian Stability', *International Security*, 34 (3), pp. 47, 49-55.



that the introduction of nuclear weapons into the conflict cannot be ruled out.<sup>76</sup>

In addition to the conventional and nuclear options, in a future India-Pakistan conflict, Pakistan can be expected to rely on irregulars as a major operational asset. It has already indicated as much. President Musharraf had promised an 'unconventional war'.<sup>77</sup> While clarifying whether he meant 'nuclear' by 'unconventional', the spokesperson mentioned that it was a reference to irregulars. That this would happen is borne out by the Tehrik-e-Pakistan statement in the wake of 26/11 that its irregular fighters would join forces with the Pakistan army against a common foe. There are reportedly five hundred thousand potential irregulars with some degree of training obtained in the terror assembly line in Pakistan. Civil society is also said to be flush with small arms. The example of the Iraqi and Afghan insurgencies against US troops is very current.<sup>78</sup> The Israeli experience in Lebanon against the Hezbollah in 2006 and the Hamas in Gaza in 2009 is also relevant here.<sup>79</sup> Pakistan would attempt to complicate and weaken Indian forces in areas occupied by offensives. It would encourage provocative actions by insurgents and then term the measures taken to control them as war crimes and human rights violations by Indian troops. This would be a political and military minefield, particularly in heavily populated areas. In the event, capturing these areas would prove easier controlling them as an occupying power. Holding on to these as a negotiation chip could exact a prohibitive price. As in the case of Israel, India may pull out early. This may be built into the design of the campaign 'punish and pull out'. However, the political result would be that of Pakistan claiming 'victory'. This amounts to a 'win-win' situation for both.

### **Nuclear War**

Reasonably, Pakistan can be under no illusions that nuclear war is in its interest. Therefore, for it to have a high nuclear threshold at the outset of war

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76. VR Raghavan, 'Limited War and Nuclear Escalation in South Asia', *The Nonproliferation Review*, Fall-Winter 2001, p. 10.

77. 'Musharraf had warned of n-war', *The Hindu*, 31 Dec 2002.

78. See Anthony Cordesman and E Fitzgerald, 'Resourcing for defeat: Critical Failures in Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Resourcing the Afghan and Iraq Wars', CSIS Report, <http://csis.org/publication/resourcing-defeat>; Also Martin van Creveld, *The Changing Face of War*, New York: Ballantine Books, 2007, pp. 246-256.

79. See David Johnson, 'Military Capabilities for Hybrid Wars: Insights from the Israel Defense Forces in Lebanon and Gaza', RAND Occasional Papers, Arroyo Center, [http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional\\_papers/2010/RAND\\_OP285.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/2010/RAND_OP285.pdf)

is a reasonable assumption. This is how it may be at the start of the war. However, conflict dynamics being uncertain and pressures and tensions being high, there can be no certainty regarding nuclear use. Even if Pakistan enters into a conflict with a 'high' nuclear threshold, it can be unhinged and become a dynamic one, dependent on the operational circumstance. Michael Howard had described such a possibility in the Cold War context as follows: 'However, reluctant a state might be to use its nuclear forces at the beginning of a conflict with another nuclear power, this reluctance would be likely to diminish the closer it approached defeat...'<sup>80</sup>

This can occur in three situations. One is that Pakistan is stampeded into a nuclear decision against its better judgement by the quick unfolding of an Indian offensive in all its ferocity with cumulative impact on all dimensions of war land, sea, air, covert, cyber and psychological.<sup>81</sup> A military dominated National Security Council may take a strategic-operational view of the situation as opposed to a political-strategic view. Secondly as has been discussed extensively in nuclear security related literature, this may occur due to accidents, misperceptions and misinformation.<sup>82</sup> Pakistan's technical resources of monitoring, surveillance and analysis may not be of the order to sustain the 'fog of war'. Its nuclear complex is also under extremist threat. This feared eventuality could materialise taking advantage of the uncertainty in conflict, especially when nuclear assets are being relocated to operational sites.

However, the most significant is the third factor- the sociology of Pakistan. The social dimension of strategy requires factoring in. A growing popular involvement in war has been witnessed since the end of the Age of Absolutism.<sup>83</sup> Drawing on Clausewitz's 'Trinity',<sup>84</sup> Pakistan can be taken as comprising its army, its people and the civilian government. On this social landscape is superimposed religious radicalism. Extremist forces are active in society and are believed to have a presence within the armed forces also. They have political parties subscribing to their political philosophy and even

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80. M Howard, 'The Relevance of Traditional Strategy', *Foreign Affairs*, 51 (2), January 1973, p. 261.

81. VR Raghavan, 'Limited War and Nuclear Escalation in South Asia', *The Nonproliferation Review*, Fall-Winter 2001, p. 9.

82. See Scott Sagan, *The Limits of Organization and Safety: Organization, Accidents and Nuclear Weapons*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999

83. Michael Howard, 'The forgotten dimensions of strategy', *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1979, p. 977.

84. Clausewitz, *On War*, Oxford: OUP, 2007, p. 30.

mainstream parties are wary of taking on these forces head-on. For instance, the Pakistani state is chary of proceeding against the Jamaat-ud-Dawa and its chief, Hafeez Saeed.<sup>85</sup> The power of this organisation stems from the street power it commands and the charity work it has done in the underbelly of society. Thus, in case of an attack by India, a turn towards right wing ideology by the nation is not an impossibility. The state may manipulate this to an extent so as to retain control, as also use to acquire cannon fodder for the irregular warfare campaign. Nevertheless, these forces would exert political pressure and extract a political price for their lending their resources to the war effort. These forces would be vocal in their demand for playing the nuclear card in case of Pakistani reverses in the millenarian belief that Islam would emerge victorious. In any case, this would be a self-interested resort to Islam, since they would stand to gain politically in the chaos and turmoil that would certainly follow nuclear use of any kind. Therefore, internal political dynamics have the potential to force the hand of even a rational decision maker.

Nevertheless, rationality could equally influence Pakistan's nuclear use. For one, return to the status quo ante would be simpler after a non-nuclear conflict. Secondly accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity at the international level through the International Criminal Court may be invoked by the international community. At the national level, this would be pursued post conflict in case nuclear weapons are used. The army in Pakistan would be displaced from the centre stage in case it is found guilty of taking this decision, particularly in case Pakistan has suffered considerably. A negotiated end to the conflict will be easier in case of non-use, enabling the army to retain control of the state. Secondly, Indian deterrence being credible, the inability to predict the nature of the Indian reaction would favour nuclear restraint. In any case, given the pros and cons of each state, India may suffer proportionately less harm and may yet survive an extended conflict as a functioning state. In the light of their relative strengths, even if escalation dominance is elusive for both states, it would certainly not be unambiguously so with Pakistan. This would increase as the decade progresses with India acquiring an unassailable second strike capability.<sup>86</sup> The attendant fear of resort to the nuclear weapon include :

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85. Wilson John, 'Resurgent Radicalism: A Case Study of the Jamaat ud Dawa', *CLAWS Journal*, Winter 2008.

86. Raja Menon, 'Launch Of The Arihant: Relevance For India', NMF, <http://www.maritimeindia.org/pdfs/Commentry05Aug09.pdf>

being in unknown territory, global opprobrium and follow up action and fear of rejection by civil society. Inability to exercise nuclear option optimally due to attrition suffered in the course of the conflict would also be a consideration. Finally there are the personal fears and values of the key decision makers in final authority. Despite the compelling logic against nuclear first use, Pakistan's lack of strategic depth<sup>87</sup> and a shortfall in its military resources may compel its leadership to compensate with the 'ultimate' equaliser.<sup>88</sup> The credibility of India's doctrine of 'massive' punitive retaliation is questionable since India may be self-deterred from an expansive nuclear counter.<sup>89</sup> It may then resort to a quid pro quo level counter. This may encourage Pakistan to take nuclear route, because knowing it will not suffer may embolden it to venture into the nuclear level. International pressures for war termination would increase once the war turns nuclear. Next, the 'have them-use them' logic may inform nuclear considerations. Lastly, even though Pakistan will leverage its irregular army of extremists, it may find an extended Iraq-style counter undesirable for internal political reasons. Islamists would gain ascendance as a result and this may be unacceptable to the otherwise largely secular army and establishment. Within the army, Islamists may attempt an internal coup. To forestall such a scenario, nuclear use may be seen as a way to let off steam, in the hope of an early conclusion to the conflict.

Since there will be several advantages of 'late' nuclear use in a 'high threshold' mode, it is not unlikely that this may be the original intent. Firstly, last resort nuclear use when the state is itself endangered has credibility. It would also have legitimacy in not being impermissible in international law. It could force a military pause on Indian forces, thereby gaining military breathing space for beleaguered Pakistani forces. Islamist pressures could be released through this measure and the military could demonstrate its importance and control. Nevertheless, the key drawback lies in its using this potent capability that would degrade with duration of conflict. Finally, there would be no gain to the regime, since it would have little capability at the late stage to take

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87. MS Chowdhury, 'Pakistan's Strategic Depth', *USI Journal*, Jul-Sep 2009.

88. Vipin Narang categorises the Pakistani strategy as one of 'asymmetric escalation', 'Posturing for Peace? Pakistan's Nuclear Postures and South Asian Stability', *International Security*, 34 (3), Winter 2009.

89. Ali Ahmed, 'Reviewing India's Nuclear Doctrine', Policy Brief, at [http://www.idsa.in/policy\\_briefs/AliAhmed24042009.htm](http://www.idsa.in/policy_briefs/AliAhmed24042009.htm). Also Robert McNamara has said on this issue, 'Credibility is not aided by the threat of incredible action.' (*The Essence of Security: Reflections in Office*, Harper and Row, New York, 1968, p. 60)

military advantage. The only satisfaction would be the punishment administered to India; but this would be no compensation for losses it would subsequently suffer.

In light of the problems related with late use, 'early' use in a 'low threshold' mode acquires credence. The effectiveness of nuclear use would be highest in the early period of the conflict when least attrition - psychological and physical - has been faced by nuclear weapons and delivery systems, the organisation and the decision makers. It would invite international pressures for war termination at the earliest; thereby denying India its conflict aims. This way maximum territory and resources would be preserved for post conflict recovery. Internal political equations would remain unchanged since the impact of the conflict on these would not have yet played itself out. Nevertheless, it would be illegitimate in every sense and would extract a heavy political price. It would make war expansion inevitable, particularly since the Indian attack would be forced to expand beyond the limited war ambit. It would not give enough time to conventional forces to expend themselves or for leveraging other elements such as nuclear rhetoric.<sup>90</sup>

In so far as the quantum of nuclear ordnance in the first introduction of the weapons into a conflict - first use - is concerned, the imperative of survival as a state and of the Army as an institution after the exchange will come to the fore. Clearly, the military leadership would be required to do considerable amount of explaining since Pakistan too would be inescapably hurt in a nuclear exchange. As in the aftermath of 1971 war, they would be displaced from their position of predominance. A second but more stringent Hamood ur Rahman commission could result.<sup>91</sup> While this may be done by mainstream democratic parties, the prospects of Islamists gaining prominence in the melee following an Indian nuclear retaliation is not impossible to visualise. They would take advantage of their cadre base, charity work, street power and indispensability in irregular warfare to launch their coup. In order to preserve itself and the Pakistani state, therefore, the likelihood of first use is remote.

The possible options in terms of the quantum of warheads or intensity of attack are largely two. One is a 'lower order' attack, limited to one or a few

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90. See Ali Ahmed, 'Pakistani Nuclear Use and Implications for India, *Strategic Analysis*, July 2010 (forthcoming).

91. The Hamood ur Rahman Commission was tasked with investigation into the 1971 debacle of the Pakistan Army and the atrocities in East Pakistan that preceded it.

warheads giving the least possible provocation and with the lowest 'opprobrium quotient'<sup>92</sup> with the added advantage of influencing Indian retaliation considerations. Responding with 'massive' retaliation would be questionable in terms of legitimacy and credibility. Even infliction of 'unacceptable damage' may come under question, since it would appear disproportionate. This implies India may end up considering a lower order counter so as not to escalate. The second are 'higher order' attacks that are extensive in aim and quantum involving decapitation, first strike, counter value targeting or repeated attrition salvos. Higher order attacks without simultaneously taking out India's counter strike capability would be suicidal for Pakistan. Since it does not have 'first strike capability' in terms of numbers required for the substantial degradation of India's counter strike capability, accuracy of missiles and intelligence, it would not be able to sustain the counter that would decidedly be very violent indeed.

### Conventional-Nuclear Interface

Pakistan therefore would be wary of the escalation. However much India was to suffer in an exchange, Pakistan, being smaller, would be *proportionately* more hurt. Therefore, its 'first use' considerations would be influenced by this risk. Limiting of the damage can be ensured in three ways. One is by destroying enemy nuclear retaliatory capability. This is not possible for Pakistan to do, since India by all accounts has a second strike capability with respect to Pakistan. The second is through a decapitation strike, hoping to degrade the violence of the Indian reaction by taking out its decision making capability. There is no guarantee this would succeed since the leadership is likely to be in nuclear hardened command posts during war. It would only increase the violence of Indian retaliation. Third is by launching a strike with a low 'opprobrium quotient', such as in a defensive mode on a tactical target in its own territory. Through this it may hope to ensure a lower order nuclear retaliation by India. A lower order strike in a low threshold mode cannot be ruled out. This has implications for India's conventional and nuclear doctrines (dealt with in the next chapter).

The logical and sustainable utility of nuclear weapons possession is that these deter nuclear weapons use. Moreover, the possibility of escalation of conventional war due to the possession of these weapons by the other side is useful in deterring conventional war also. Nuclear weapons are relied on by

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92. K. Sundarji, *Vision 2100 A Strategy for the Twenty First Century*, New Delhi: Konark Publication, 2003, p. 110

Pakistan as was the case with NATO earlier, to avoid war as well. However, since India subscribes to the view that nuclear weapons deter nuclear weapons and not war itself, deterring war may not be possible. In keeping with this understanding, India has given itself an offensive conventional doctrine but one in keeping with the limited war concept. Pakistan's nuclear use would enter the equation at best to avoid grave losses in war or at worst the loss of the war itself. The problem it faces is that it would lose the nuclear war also, since there are no 'winners' in a nuclear war, given the levels of damage sustained by both sides. Therefore, while refraining from introducing nuclear weapons into the conflict makes sense, in the extreme case of 'first use' the only reasonable aim that can be envisaged for them is the termination of war by the intervention of the international community. This implies risking escalation for the seemingly reasonable political purpose of ending the war. This is possible with the first use being of the lower order and could even take place early in the war.

Therefore, *the considerations for Pakistan at the nuclear decision juncture will include:*

- *The choice is between losing the war to risking escalation.*
- *Losing the war is preferable to risking escalation if Indian aims limited*
- *Risking escalation is preferable to losing the war if Indian aims expansive.*

*The choice of nuclear resort would be depend on India's war aims or more accurately Pakistani perceptions of India war aims. The chances of nuclear resort are reduced if Pakistan perceives Indian war aims to be moderate. Likewise, expansive Indian aims in Pakistani perception will likely make it resort to nuclear weapons more likely. Of consequence therefore are not only the nature of Indian war aims but more importantly how they are perceived by Pakistan.*



# India and Conflict Strategy

# 3

India is a status quoist power. It has no interest in territorial or ideological expansion. Though some of its territories such as Aksai Chin and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir are in adverse possession, it has a pragmatic non-military approach to these. Its present concentration is on building up its power indices by preserving its economic trajectory. It prefers a period of stability to enable the fruits of development, to reach its people. On the foreign policy front, its major challenge is taken to be China. It has over the recent past attempted to de-hyphenate itself from Pakistan in the perception of other states, in particular the US. The prime minister has made clear that the government does not countenance waging war for pursuing strategic objectives by saying, "I have also said publicly...that Pakistan faces no threat whatsoever from our country and that is the stated position of the government of India. Any other statement distorted out of context should not carry the weight when I have stated categorically that Pakistan faces no threat whatsoever from our side."<sup>93</sup> An economy focused grand strategy demands no less.

Nevertheless, being aware of the possibility of conflict has the advantage of being prepared for it and thereby working to avoid it. Being guided by Vegetius' dictum, 'If you want peace, prepare for war', is not necessarily the sole approach to peace. Peace, as conceptualised here, can be better served by building conditions that avert war. The utility of the logic has been degraded by the unambiguous transition of South Asia into the nuclear age. Cognizance of the nuclear overhang now requires a more than perfunctory acknowledgment that it exists. It requires incorporation into thinking on how conflict would shape up. This is attempted in this chapter. There is no escaping arriving at a strategic *modus vivendi* with Pakistan, through a strategic dialogue on doctrinal balancing.

## Strategic doctrine

There has been a movement towards 'proactive' and 'offensive' doctrines. This is owing to three factors: structural, political and institutional.<sup>94</sup> At the structural level are the national security considerations. The movement in

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93. PM's remarks at a press conference in Washington, D.C. on 25 Nov 2009. See [http://www.indianembassy.org/newsite/press\\_release/2009/Nov/30.asp](http://www.indianembassy.org/newsite/press_release/2009/Nov/30.asp)

94. The author's PhD thesis at SIS, JNU titled: 'India's Limited War Doctrine: Structural, Political and Organisational factor', examines this in greater detail.



doctrine led by the United States in last decade has been markedly tilted towards the offensive. This was played out in Operation Enduring Freedom launched after 9/11. A closer association with the US in military exercises has influenced the Indian military.<sup>95</sup> The Indian military has also of late interacted closely with the Israeli military that has had first hand experience in proactively prosecuting war.<sup>96</sup> The influence of modern professional militaries through observation and mimesis can but be expected and the manner of dealing with existing and emerging threats militarily would change. This is true in the Indian case also. Pakistani aggressiveness on the subconventional plane has been met by India through doctrinal innovation on the level of its advantage at the conventional level.

In the region, offensive strategic doctrine was necessitated by the need to manage Pakistan's proxy war.<sup>97</sup> Pakistan launched the proxy war not only taking advantage of India's largely self inflicted internal predicament, but also emboldened by the nuclear factor since 1987. The conventional deterrent based on retaliating by punishment was exposed as insufficient to deter proxy war. The idea had been to launch counter offensives by taking advantage of the 3:2 lead in strike corps possessed by India. This assumed Pakistan launching an offensive first at the conventional level. Pakistan instead merely kept the 'pot boiling' at the subconventional level. This was owing to its interest in keeping India's surplus military power tied down in manpower intensive tasks such as countering insurgency,<sup>98</sup> as also because of India's conventional and nuclear strength ruling out conventional attacks by Pakistan. India's deterrent worked only to prevent Pakistan crossing the 'threshold of tolerance', but, as demonstrated by the terror attacks on Parliament in 2001 and 26/11 later, even in this it was only partially

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95. See Cherian Samuel, 'Indo-US Defence Cooperation and the Emerging Strategic Relationship', *Strategic Analysis*, 31 (2), March 2007, pp. 209-36.

96. 'India, Israel decide to step up defence ties', *The Times of India*, December 23, 2009; Government of India, Ministry of Defence, 'Joint development of missiles', Press Release, December 14, 2009.

97. A. Vinod Kumar, 'A Cold Start: India's Response to Pakistan-Aided Low-Intensity Conflict', *Strategic Analysis*, 33 (3), May 2009.

98. Lt Gen Oberoi in his article, 'Dialogue with Pakistan' (*The Tribune*, 8 May 2010) identifies Pakistan's game plan as being: 'Its second aim is to keep the Kashmir pot simmering and bring it to a boil off and on, to keep India and especially the Indian Army committed in costly, time-consuming and futile counter-terrorist operations, with the twin aim of slowing down the economic growth of India and reducing the war waging capabilities of the Indian Army.' Ved Marwah ('India's Internal Security Challenges', *Strategic Analysis*, 27 (4), Oct 2003) attributes wider intent to Pakistan stating: 'So it has started a proxy war since 1989. Waging of a proxy war fits into the Pakistani designs of bleeding India.'

successful. The Kargil intrusion demonstrated that it was not robust against aggressive probes either. This prompted a rethink, leading up to more offensive doctrines, such as the concept of limited war in a nuclear backdrop.<sup>99</sup>

At the political level, India's growing power indices consequent to its economic rise have impacted its strategic doctrine. Militarily, India has the finances for the material advantages it needs for prosecuting offensive operations. An offensive strategic doctrine helped in building the perception of India as a regional power, comfortable with its growing power credentials. India has thus far had, and projected, a self-image of a defensive and benign military power. This had emboldened Pakistan and led up to India being bracketed with it as merely a regional power, rather than a potential great power. To acquire a higher profile, India adopted a more offensive strategic doctrine. Internally, there has been an ascendance of right of centre nationalistic politics in India since the late eighties. The BJP-led NDA government was in power at the turn of the last decade. It promoted greater felicity and comfort levels in India regarding the strategic use of instruments of force. This was achieved by exercising the nuclear option<sup>100</sup> and reforming the higher defence organisation along with the intelligence, border management, internal security structure and the National Security Council.<sup>101</sup> It conducted a limited war to evict the Pakistanis from Kargil in 1999 and

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99. VP Malik, 'Limited War and Escalation Control I and II', IPCS, <http://www.ipcs.org/article/nuclear/limited-war-and-escalation-control-i-1570.html>

100. Kanti Bajpai, 'BJP and the Bomb' in Scott Sagan (ed.), *Inside Nuclear South Asia*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009.

101. Extract of the press release of 23 May 2001 on the GOM report is reproduced below:

“Group Of Ministers' Report On "Reforming The National Security System”

A comprehensive systemic overhaul of the country's security and intelligence apparatus in keeping with the technological revolution and the need for integrated management structures was unfolded by the Group of Ministers (GOM) in a report submitted by them to PM on February 26, 2001. The GOM had been set up in April 2000 to review the national security system in its entirety and in particular to consider the recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee and formulate specific proposals for implementation. The GOM under the Chairmanship of Shri L.K. Advani also included the Defence Minister, External Affairs Minister and Finance Minister.

The GOM held 27 meetings in all. In order to facilitate its work, it had set up 4 Task Forces one each on Intelligence Apparatus, Internal Security, Border Management and Management of Defence. These Task Forces were multi-disciplinary in character and were made up of acknowledged experts.

The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) considered the GOM report on 11th May, 2001 and decided that the recommendation in respect of the institution of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) be considered later, after Government is able to consult various political parties. It accepted all other recommendations contained in the GOM report.’

conducted the 2001-02 exercise in coercive diplomacy. An offensive turn to doctrine was in keeping with its programme as a party more concerned with issues of national security. The trend has been kept up by the present regime since all parties fear the political costs of being 'soft' on issues of security. Criticism of the tacit agreement at Sharm-el-Sheikh is indicative of potential political costs. Lately, with the terror footprint having expanded across India's hinterland, there is greater awareness regarding in security matters among the public and the media, to which the government has to be, and also appears to be, responsive.

The organisational response has been in favour of the offensive, since militaries institutionally prefer offensive doctrines.<sup>102</sup> The need is to seize and maintain the initiative so that its own plans are implemented while those of the enemy are disrupted. Offensives require more troops and greater resources. This is good from the corporate point of view in terms of higher budgets and resource access. In the case of the Indian military, there has been a movement towards offensive doctrines also to break out of a 'defensive and reactive' mindset.<sup>103</sup> The move was from an 'attritionist' mindset to a 'manoeuvrist' one. The offensive mindset also serves to maintain the balance between the various fighting arms of the army. Involvement in counter insurgency and the expansion this entailed in terms of the raising of the Rashtriya Rifles in the nineties was offset by the raising of the third strike corps in the same period. Mechanisation required a matching offensive doctrine. Balance therefore was maintained within the service between the two professional preoccupations—infantry-heavy counter insurgency and mechanised forces-heavy offensive land warfare doctrines. A professional need was felt to refurbish the conventional deterrent, given its seeming inefficacy against Pakistani action at the subconventional level as also the advent of the nuclear era. The nuclear era in particular had the effect of dampening the resort to conventional forces given fears of escalation. Therefore, the military had to reinvent itself for continuing relevance in the nuclear era.

### Conventional doctrine

In the India-Pakistan equation, India is the stronger, power. It has been

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102. Scott Sagan, 'The Origins of Military Doctrine and Command And Control Systems', in Lavoy, Sagan, and Wirtz, eds. *Planning the Unthinkable: How New Powers Will Use Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Weapons*, Cornell University Press, 2000, p. 18.

103. Ali Ahmed, 'India's Strategic and Military Doctrines: A Post 1971 Snapshot', *USI Journal*, Oct-Dec 2009, pp. 494-507.

continually challenged by its weaker, military led opponent. It has had to constantly innovate doctrinally. Since incipient nuclearisation in the seventies, there has been a turn towards mechanisation. Through the eighties, the Army was inspired by the possibility of fighting under conditions of nuclear asymmetry.<sup>104</sup> This further spurred developments in armoured warfare. In the nineties, the military grappled with depleted budgets and internal security situations. Yet the momentum of the mechanisation in the eighties culminated in the third strike corps. The logic was that the ability to prevail over Pakistan was necessary to deter Pakistan from waging 'proxy war' since the mid eighties.

This conventional build up, itself a response to US support for Pakistan through the eighties, in turn triggered a 'security dilemma' in Pakistan. Pakistan countered by further external and internal balancing. This explains, among other reasons, Pakistani reliance on external powers, conduct of proxy war and resort to the nuclear card. From this action-reaction cycle emerges the coupling between the sub-conventional, conventional and nuclear planes. This is in keeping with the logic of the 'stability/instability' paradox that analysts have observed as operating in the subcontinent.<sup>105</sup> Along side, 'recessed deterrence' made an appearance with both states having existential deterrence capabilities through the nineties.<sup>106</sup> While Pakistan used nuclear cover to proceed with proxy war, it could not take it to its logical conclusion by launching an armed attack to exploit internal troubles in J&K.<sup>107</sup> Likewise India too could not bring to bear its conventional capability by taking the war to the enemy as envisaged in the 1998 Indian army doctrine (written prior to the tests) of 'apply(ing) a sledgehammer blow to achieve decisive victory' and 'belief in fighting in enemy territory'.

The overt weaponisation of both states translated into greater focus on doctrine on part of the services. The limited war concept made an

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104. The postal seminar organised by Lt Gen Sundarji as Commandant College of Combat, Mhow in 1981 was titled, "Effects of Nuclear Asymmetry on Conventional Deterrence" (*Combat Paper No 1*, Mhow: College of Combat).

105. M Krepon, *The Stability-Instability Paradox: Misperception and Escalation Control in South Asia*, Washington DC: Henry L Stimson Center, 2003.

106. The term is attributed to Jasjit Singh, then Director IDSA.

107. This was the concept attributed to Pakistan in the influential article on the semi-fictional piece of scenario writing, 'Op Topac', in *Indian Defence Review*, July 1989. Many authors have mistaken this piece of scenario-writing for a fact, such as K Subramanyam, who later admitted this in *Strategic Analysis*.

appearance in strategic thinking in January 2000 at a seminar at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.<sup>108</sup> The idea was to exploit the window between the sub-conventional level and the nuclear threshold for application of combat power. The military objectives would likely be capture of terrain, particularly in POK, and attrition.

The army doctrine of 2004 - dubbed 'Cold Start'<sup>109</sup> - has implications for Pakistan. It reflects the offensive strategic doctrine. However, the second, more consequential, part of the doctrine is classified. It is believed that this strategy involves offensive operations in an immediate timeframe. This incorporates the lessons of Operation Parakram - principally the need for early application of offensive combat power in order to take out the first crust of defences of an underprepared state. In case time is given for the defenders to build up then deliberate operations would be required, thereby offering a nuclear target to the enemy in terms of concentrations of offensive formations and bridgeheads across obstacles. The 'Cold Start' idea has to do with making quick territorial gains to be used as post conflict bargaining chips, since the understanding appears to be that nuclear deterrence would hold.<sup>110</sup> Conventional offensives are presumably in keeping with the limited war concept, while the debate on the employment of strike corps continues.<sup>111</sup> On the preparedness levels of the army since, the army chief has said, "A major leap in our approach to conduct of operations has been the successful firming-up of the Cold Start strategy."<sup>112</sup>

The doctrine of the air force is classified.<sup>113</sup> However, it can be expected to reflect the current tendency towards 'Shock and Awe'. The key doctrinal question is whether it is necessary to win the air war prior to the launch of

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108. Swaran Singh, 'Indian Debate on Limited War', *Strategic Analysis*, XXIII (12), March 2000.

109. The Indian Army Doctrine war released in 2004. It has two parts. The first part in the public domain is very general, while the second classified part perhaps has reference to the nuclear level. For a detailed analysis, see Walter C. Ladwig III, 'A Cold Start to Hot Wars? The Indian Army's New Limited War Doctrine', *International Security*, 32 (3), Winter 2007/08, pp. 158-190.

110. M Sabharwal, 'Joint Operations in Modern Warfare', *Air Power Journal*, 3 (1), Spring 2006, p. 9.

111. See for instance, Gurmeet Kanwal, 'Pakistan's Nuclear Thresholds and India's Options', *Airpower Journal*, 1 (1), Monsoon 2004; Bharat Karnad, 'Sialkot Grab' and Capturing the 'Corridor': Objectives and tactics in a Nuclear Battlefield', *War College Journal*, 34 (2), Autumn 2005; and, Manpreet Sethi, 'Conventional War in the Presence of Nuclear Weapons', *Strategic Analysis*, 33 (3), May 2009.

112. Rajat Pandit, 'Army reworks war doctrine for Pakistan, China', *TOI*, 30 December 2009.

113. Rajat Pandit, 'IAF plans war doctrine to expand 'strategic reach'', *Times Of India*, 2 Aug 2007.

ground offensives or can these be coincident in duration. The extent of air dominance achieved and ability for inflicting attrition on India's air force would be critical in determining Pakistani decision making on the nuclear threshold. The classified joint doctrine released by the HQs Integrated Defence Staff has perhaps adjudicated on this and ruled on the land-air mix for the next campaign. The lack of a chief of defence staff nevertheless handicaps such an exercise. The maritime doctrine is in the public domain, among other reasons, also due to the felt need for developing a maritime consciousness to balance India's continental bias.<sup>114</sup> If naval moves during Operation Parakram are a pointer, naval conflict strategy would involve sensitising Pakistan to its underbelly and the Pakistan army to its blind side in the Arabian Sea.

The political gains expected from the conflict are the whittling of the Pakistan army to an extent that it loses its sway in post war Pakistani polity. The dividend of a democratic peace is also hoped for. The least gain would be the punishing Pakistan for its proxy war, thereby influencing its cost-benefit calculus in favour of discontinuing it. With an expansive formulation of nuclear deterrence staying Pakistan's nuclear card, it is calculated that India's conventional superiority can be brought to bear.

### **Nuclear doctrine**

The changing nuclear reality in the late eighties led to India developing a nuclear doctrine. The debate largely concentrated on the necessity of keeping the 'option' open to go nuclear in face of external pressures that India forego the option. Such pressures culminated in the mid-nineties with calls that India join the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, then being negotiated.<sup>115</sup> At that time, the doctrine, though officially unarticulated, was based on 'existential deterrence', since a 'recessed deterrent' was assumed to

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114. MDCC, *India's Maritime Doctrine*, New Delhi: Naval HQs, 2009, p. 11.

115. India's approach to the CTBT and its influence on India's option was given out by the external affairs minister to the Lok Sabha on 15 July 1996 as, 'Yet, as has been stated in this House by previous governments, we continue to maintain our option so that we are able to take all necessary measures to cope with any threat that may be posed to the security of the nation. We cannot allow this option to be restricted in any manner if other countries remain unwilling to accept the obligation of eliminating their nuclear arsenals. We are deeply conscious of the fact that other countries in our region continue their weapon programs, whether openly or in a clandestine manner. On the basis of recent statements and developments, we have been obliged to conclude that the nuclear weapon states have no intention of giving up their nuclear weapons. This makes it inescapable that our national security considerations will be the governing factor in our decision making.' ([http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/CTBT/gujral\\_ctbt\\_june\\_15\\_96.htm](http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/CTBT/gujral_ctbt_june_15_96.htm))

be in place.<sup>116</sup> The nuclear capability was not 'weaponised', but was capable of being fielded at short notice. Nuclear weapons were taken as 'political weapons', meant primarily for deterrence of the enemy.<sup>117</sup> India stood by 'No First Use' and for minimum deterrence. The weapons were to be used in a counter value mode in case of enemy nuclear first use.<sup>118</sup> The aim was to avoid the stockpiling as was the case among nuclear weapon powers during the Cold War. The advantages of this posture were: a nuclear arms race was prevented; India's conventional superiority could continue to count; the US-led international non-proliferation agenda could be kept at bay; and, lastly, technological capability for nuclear weapons, missiles and other platforms could continue to be built up without undue controversy and cost in terms of sanctions. Nuclear ambiguity was finally ended by the Shakti tests of 11 May and 13 May 1998.

In a letter written by the prime minister to the US president, India justified the tests as being compelled by the presence of nuclear armed neighbours with whom it had strained relations and collusion between the two.<sup>119</sup> It simultaneously attempted to defuse concerns by laying out the broad principles of its doctrine in a *suo moto* statement made to parliament by the prime minister on 27 May 1998.<sup>120</sup> The expectation of peace having 'broken

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116. Sumit Ganguly ('Behind India's Bomb: The Politics and Strategy of Nuclear Deterrence', *Foreign Affairs*, Sep-Oct 2001) reviewing Ashley Tellis', *India's Emerging Nuclear Posture: Between Recessed Deterrence and Ready Arsenal* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001), writes: 'Indian decision-makers view the arsenal as a pure deterrent rather than as an instrument of war. In effect, then, the principal role of India's nuclear force is to protect the nation from the prospect of nuclear blackmail and coercion at the hands of China or Pakistan, and the country's policymakers appear confident that a small nuclear force capable of surviving a first strike will do the job.' Also see, Rajesh Basrur, *Security in the New Millennium: Views from South Asia*, New Delhi: India Research Press, 2001, p. 95.

117. Manpreet Sethi, *Nuclear Doctrine: India's March Towards Credible Deterrence*, New Delhi: Knowledge World, 2009, p. 205.

118. Sumit Ganguly ('Behind India's Bomb: The Politics and Strategy of Nuclear Deterrence', *Foreign Affairs*, Sep-Oct 2001) describes the situation in the early period of nuclearisation as: 'As for targeting strategy, finally, it appears that India is developing a modified countervalue approach -- putting an adversary's civilian assets at risk. This strategy involves making a virtue out of necessity, because a counterforce capability (i.e., one that targets an opponent's military forces) will be both technologically and fiscally beyond India's grasp for the foreseeable future. Tellis aptly sums up India's strategy, therefore, as a "lite" version of the Cold War doctrine of mutual assured destruction.'

119. Text of the PM's letter to US president Bill Clinton, 13 May 1998; <http://www.indianembassy.org/indusrel/pmlletter.htm>

120. *Suo Motu* Statement By Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee In Parliament On 27th May, 1998; <http://www.indianembassy.org/pic/pm-parliament.htm>. Also see, Ministry of External Affairs, 'Draft Report of National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine', 1999, <http://meadev.nic.in/govt/indnucl.htm>



out' in light of risks associated with going to war in a nuclear environment, were, however, belied by the Kargil War.

The first National Security Advisory Board of the National Security Council set up in 1998 and charged with preparing a nuclear doctrine, came out with a draft Nuclear Doctrine (hereafter Draft) for the government's approval in August 1999.<sup>121</sup> The Draft was a unique, if controversial, document. It was a departure from the Indian tradition of not articulating its strategic thinking. The contribution of the Draft was to the debate that followed and its contribution to strategic culture thereafter. Eventually, the government approved many of the provisions of the Draft in its approving a nuclear doctrine in January 2003. Ambassador Satish Chandra, earlier with the NSC secretariat, in an interview to the nuclear watcher Bharat Karnad, said that the tenets of the Draft were incorporated 'in to-to' into the official doctrine.<sup>122</sup>

The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) met on January 4, 2003 to review the progress in operationalising India's nuclear doctrine.<sup>123</sup> Key features constituting India's nuclear doctrine, include:

- Building and maintaining a credible minimum deterrent;
- A posture of “No First Use”: nuclear weapons will only be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian territory or on Indian forces anywhere;
- Nuclear retaliation to a first strike will be massive and designed to inflict unacceptable damage (*italics added*).

The doctrine is taken as one of 'assured retaliation'<sup>124</sup>, with the proviso that this would be 'massive' in case of enemy 'first strike'. In Indian thinking 'first strike' is equated with 'first use' or the introduction of nuclear weapons into a conflict.<sup>125</sup> Thus, any nuclear attack resulting in Indian casualties anywhere is

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121. HV Pant, 'India's Nuclear Doctrine and Command Structure Implications for Civil-Military Relations in India', *Armed Forces and Society*, 33 (2), 2007, p. 244-46.

122. Bharat Karnad, *India's Nuclear Policy, Westport*: Pentagon Press, 2008.

123. Cabinet Committee on Security (2003), 'Press Release of the Cabinet Committee on Security on Operationalisation of India's Nuclear Doctrine 04.01.03' <http://meadev.nic.in/news/official/20030104/official.htm>.

124. Rajesh Rajagopalan, "India: The logic of Assured Retaliation" in Alagappa, M. (ed.), *The Long Shadow: Nuclear Weapons and Security in 21st century Asia*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008.

125. See Ali Ahmed, 'The Need For Clarity In India's Nuclear Doctrine', *IDS.A Strategic Comment*, <http://www.idsa.in/publications/stratcomments/AliAhmed111108.htm>



to result in 'massive' punitive retaliation. How the term 'massive' was introduced into the doctrine is not known, given that it did not find mention in the NSAB draft of 1999. However, Jasjit Singh and Gurmeet Kanwal had advocated such a response in their writings prior to 2003.<sup>126</sup>

### Thinking through conflict strategy

India, well aware of the compulsions of the UN charter, does not contemplate conflict for pursuing strategic ends. Committed to the principles of non-aggression embodied in the charter, India would only initiate a conflict in self-defence. With respect to Pakistan, India follows a twin-track policy of reaching out while at the same time bringing pressure to bear such as by stalling the composite dialogue - so that Pakistan is responsive to its concerns.<sup>127</sup> It has instituted confidence building measures with Pakistan and maintains a peace process centred on a composite dialogue. It has repeatedly exhibited considerable restraint in face of Pakistani action of dubious provenance. It has not escalated the subconventional engagement in J&K through the last two decades. It restricted its military actions to its own side of the line of control through the Kargil War despite grave provocation and extensive cost in lives, reputation and material. It once again responded with circumspection to the provocative attack on the symbol of India's democracy, the parliament. Though it mobilised its forces, it took care not to provoke war. This is best exemplified by the removal of a senior military commander for overzealous preparatory action.<sup>128</sup> The restraint was in evidence in the aftermath of 26/11 also.

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126. Jasjit Singh, 'Nuclear Command and Control', *Strategic Analysis*, XXV (2), May 2001. He wrote: '...the proposed strategy of "no-first-use" would require a single massive retaliatory punitive strike...'

127. The foreign secretary gave out India's position on the stalled dialogue thus: 'In January 2004, the then Pakistani leadership had made such an assurance on the basis of which we resumed our Composite Dialogue to discuss various outstanding issues in our relationship. Today, Pakistan claims that it is in no position to give us such a guarantee that terrorism can be controlled by its authorities. In such a situation, the people of India who are already bitterly affected by the series of terrorist attacks directed against them, can hardly be expected to support the resumption of a full-blown Composite Dialogue with Pakistan.' (Address by Foreign Secretary at the Woodrow Wilson Centre on "Two Democracies - Defining the Essence of India-US Partnership", Washington, DC, 15 March 2010, [http://www.indianembassy.org/newsite/press\\_release/2010/Mar/4.asp](http://www.indianembassy.org/newsite/press_release/2010/Mar/4.asp))

128. S Kalyanaraman, 'Operation Parakram: An Indian exercise in coercive diplomacy', *Strategic Analysis*, 26 (4), Oct 2002, p. 485.

The 'strategy of restraint' has much to recommend it.<sup>129</sup> Managing the Pakistan problem through conflict has drawbacks. Strategy has to flow from the grand strategy; itself an outcome of national vision and aims. Since the grand strategy is for maintenance of the economic trajectory, conflict rightly cannot figure very high among strategic choices. Nevertheless, thinking through the conflict strategy is useful as it would bring the advantages, dangers, risks and options that may accrue in such situations. Preparing for these in time may help avert conflict. Since the future is always uncertain, conflict may figure ahead even though unintended. Conflict may even be thrust on a state.

Take, for instance, the scenario of escalating terror attacks originating in Pakistan against India, in the tradition of Mumbai 26/11. In case of increasing radicalism in Pakistan, terror attacks may grow in intensity, spatial spread and provocation. India may be compelled to respond if these have links with the Pakistani intelligence and military establishment. As was observed by US Defence Secretary, Robert Gates, during his visit to New Delhi, India is already at the limit of the threshold of tolerance.<sup>130</sup> It may be compelled to resort to military means to sensitise Pakistan and, if necessary, punish the perpetrators. Strategising about such a conflict is useful for bringing into sync the multiple instruments of power used by the state along with military power.

A low intensity violent engagement with Pakistan in the form of 'surgical strikes' is not being discussed here.<sup>131</sup> These may end up, much against the original intent, as being the prelude to a conflict in case Pakistan, disregarding the message in the strikes, chooses to escalate. This may happen due to its internal political compulsions, brought on by a lurch of the state and society towards the Right. The possibility of conflict even in such a circumstance cannot be ruled out and has possibly been factored in by Indian planners, given the continuation of the strategy of restraint even against such a grave provocation as the Mumbai 26/11 attacks.

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129. The foreign secretary (See footnote 109) said, 'India's approach has been to deal with this challenge with restraint. Despite the brazen and malignant nature of the threats we face, India has made several genuine efforts to restore trust and confidence... However, our restraint should not be confused with weakness or unwillingness to act against those that seek to harm our people, create insecurity, and hamper our developmental goals... We have, time and again, made genuine attempts to address outstanding issues, most importantly, the issue of terrorism through dialogue with Pakistan.'

130. 'India may lose patience in case of another 26/11', *Indian Express*, 20 Jan 2010.

131. Rajat Pandit, 'Armed forces capable of 'surgical strikes' in Pak, PoK', *Times Of India*, 8 Dec 2008; 'Pak's counter strategy prevented Indian surgical strikes', *Times Of India*, 27 Mar 2010.

Essentially, a rational conflict strategy would comprise the following elements:

- The clearly articulated aims must be worth the cost of conventional conflict and the attendant risk of nuclear escalation, but be well below the risk of incurring grievous losses in their pursuit.
- Degrading the risk of escalation by an appropriate information campaign and war waging strategy needs to be undertaken. This implies communication of the intent of limitation to the enemy through strategic communication and avoidance of provocative actions.
- Even while the risk of escalation can be used to deter, there can no longer be any pursuit of 'decisive victory'. Mission creep and expansion in war aims and military objectives is to be consciously avoided.
- In case of nuclear conflict, then the resulting exchange needs to be informed by the need to restrict damage to the least possible. This may influence the decision of inflicting 'unacceptable damage' on the adversary. Termination of the war to preclude further escalation may be necessary even without achieving its aims. This way the original intent of limitation would be maintained in spite of severe compulsions for total war.

### **Assessing escalatory potential**

Deciding on the appropriate aims for a limited conflict in keeping with the limited war concept is the primary challenge. A desirable peace is one in which Pakistan becomes a status quo power, giving up its revisionist aims. Even if it were not to do so, it needs to use non-violent means to achieve these ends. Translating such political aims into military objectives is difficult. Military punishment may need to be administered to dispel the myth of the elasticity of Indian tolerance levels. This would sensitise Pakistan to the costs of its policy, as also extract a price for its proxy war. The Pakistan army would be able to get the message, realise its own limitations and the horrific possibilities of escalation. Therefore, a negotiated end, in which Pakistani concerns are also considered, would be a satisfactory conflict outcome.

Despite this, escalation possibilities of conventional and nuclear conflict need to be studied. As stated earlier India's conventional operations would face an irregular counter right from the outset. This would only increase as the conflict progresses. This would be particularly more so in the plains and also in heavily populated zones along the line of control. Since operations

would be time critical, the response of offensive troops and follow on forces could be a liberal use of firepower. The political impact of this would be considerable, particularly if media-fanned and manipulated by an innovative perception management strategy. The images, along with those of the massive numbers of displaced people, would generate an emotive response among the people. Aberrations in following the law of armed conflict in terms of discrimination and proportionality would lend themselves to hype. Islamists can be expected to prosper, given that their networks are already known for providing succour even as the Pakistani state remains incapable. These would add to the political pressure on decision makers. In India too, conflict has been known to have a uniting and emotive impact on people. War hysteria may breakout, making the public demand more expansive operations. This may further encourage decision makers, even in face of in-conflict deterrence and international pressures. Fear of appearing 'weak', particularly in face of right wing pressures in both states, and overcompensating is a danger.

As observed by Clausewitz, conventional operations are subject to the fog of war, friction and chance.<sup>132</sup> In short, they are unpredictable. The effect on India will be greater since, being the bigger power; it needs to be seen to be visibly 'winning'. Pakistan instead can afford to play for a mere 'draw' and in case it achieves this then, for a smaller power, it's equivalent to a 'win'. Besides, as Clausewitz pointed out, defence is the stronger form of war.<sup>133</sup> The Indian military may end up placing a premium on achieving objectives in a time critical situation. This may result in 'mission creep'. The upshot of this could be an expansion in the scope of the conflict from being originally limited in terms of spatial spread, weapons used and troops employed. Pakistan's nuclear threshold, being unknown, would not be clearly discernible. It may be nudged and crossed inadvertently or by over-zealous action. The autonomy of the military in combat may preclude requisite political oversight. As things stand, India has institutional deficiencies in this regard.<sup>134</sup> Self-regulation may get contaminated by institutional interest, in

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132. Clausewitz, *On War*, Oxford: OUP, 2007, pp. 89, 61-63, 26.

133. *Ibid*, pp. 24, 161.

134. Vijay Oberoi writes ('Need for Holistic Restructuring of the Indian Military', *Journal of Defence Studies*, 2 (1), Summer 2008: 'Within the Ministry of Defence, there is neither integration, nor any methodology for analysing issues jointly. The Ministry of Defence asks service headquarters individually or jointly to submit their views on issues, whether they are on operational, intelligence or administrative matters or relating to personnel, and thereafter the Ministry deliberates on them, despite having little or no competence to analyse such military matters.'; Also see, Rajat Pandit, 'Govt says no to defence officers in MoD', *TOI*, 10 May 2010.

which the military self-image may require to be preserved, particularly if operations are not proceeding as well as desired.

The nuclear overhang to conventional conflict is a principal argument against resort to conventional operations as a strategy option. As was observed by Bernard Brodie at the very advent of the nuclear age, the principle utility of military force is no longer to win a war but to deter.<sup>135</sup> The problem is that in case deterrence fails, as may happen in the circumstance that obtain in South Asia, then conflict may be contemplated. However, its escalatory potential into the nuclear domain needs to be carefully factored in. As mentioned, the cumulative impact of force application on the military mind of the Pakistani decision maker may bring nuclear weapons into play. The Indian army has adopted a 'Cold Start' doctrine that envisages swift administration of retribution. Though the doctrine of the Air Force is classified, it no doubt has a degradation operations component. A joint air-land doctrine for synergising the two services has been published by the HQ IDS, but understandably as a classified document.<sup>136</sup> Naval posturing off Pakistan's most important city and port, Karachi, would further impact Islamabad's calculus. Internal instability generated by the Islamist 'wild card' can be apprehended. Concerted in-conflict pressures could impact the nuclear threshold, unhinging it from an initially 'high' threshold to a lower level. This may eventuate in early nuclear first use, making Indian nuclear retaliation critical to the future course of the conflict. Since currently the nuclear doctrine posits 'massive' nuclear retaliation, India's is a 'one step' escalatory ladder. At one go, India is set to jettison the limited aims that informed the conflict in first place.

### **The nuclear dimension**

#### ***Evaluating 'massive' punitive retaliation***

Brodie had posed the question: 'If deterrence fails, how do we fight a nuclear war and for what objectives?'<sup>137</sup> India has done its thinking to arrive at the formulation that nuclear retaliation would be 'massive'. There are however two possible interpretations of 'massive'. One is infliction of pain in terms of counter value targeting; and, second, is in terms of degrading the adversary's nuclear retaliatory capability.

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135. Bernard Brodie, *The Absolute Weapon*, New York: Harcourt, Inc, 1946, p. 76.

136. The HQ IDS has in mid June 2010 taken out a publication on joint air-land doctrine. See, 'Armed forces release two doctrines on joint warfare', PTI, 16 June 2010.

137. Bernard Brodie, 'Development of Nuclear Strategy', *International Security*, 7 (4), Spring 1983, p. 66.

In the first case, if Pakistan was to resort to restricted nuclear first use, such as targeting advancing military forces on its territory with a single or few warheads, then India in accordance with its doctrine - would have to launch a 'massive' nuclear retaliatory attack. In case inflicting pain is the aim, counter value targeting may result. In case Pakistan's ability to retaliate is not 'taken out' simultaneously, Islamabad is likely to target population centres to the extent it can. This could result in India finally attempting to 'take out' Pakistan's ability to retaliate by launching attacks similar to a first strike with a mix of counter force, decapitation and counter value strikes. This would leave Pakistan with a scattered nuclear capability, capable only of intermittently target Indian population centres indiscriminately; leading to repetitive attrition attacks by India. This would of course 'finish' Pakistan, but at grievous cost to India, in that India would itself have suffered 'unacceptable damage'.

In the second case, nuclear first use by Pakistan not amounting to an expansive strike, would require that India respond with 'first strike' levels of retaliation with a mixed counter force, decapitation and counter value targets. This would leave Pakistan with little to counter strike with other than a limited capability. It would likely therefore respond with vengeance attacks to the extent possible. These would be suppressed by India with nuclear or conventional means but only after the fact. Thus, it would eventually suffer considerable counter value damage amounting to 'unacceptable' levels. Even if India would have 'won' the 'nuclear war', it would have lost the war politically. Therefore, even if Pakistan does not exist as a coherent nation state thereafter, it would be of little consolation to India and this self-evidently is not in the Indian national interest.

### *Nuclear decision making*

That a 'nuclear taboo' exists indicates the divide between conventional and nuclear war. It is no wonder then that India - though a nuclear weapons power - deems nuclear weapons as not being for military use but for deterrence purposes. These are therefore taken as 'political weapons'.<sup>138</sup> Seeking only to deter employment of nuclear weapons by adversaries against India or its forces anywhere, India's nuclear doctrine promises 'massive' punitive retaliatory strike in case of nuclear use by the enemy. India's political leadership is cognisant of the special status of nuclear weapons. It is for this

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138. Rajesh M. Basrur, "Nuclear Weapons and Indian Strategic Culture", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol.38. No.2. (March 2001) p.5

reason that the Political Council of the Nuclear Command Authority, which is solely authorised to take decisions on nuclear employment, is headed by the prime minister.<sup>139</sup>

There is little awareness regarding the political aspects that would undoubtedly inform discussions in the Political Council. While the National Security Advisor is tasked to input the deliberations of the Council, the incumbent is likely to restrict such input to strategic aspects. It is therefore understandable that little reflection has gone into what should inform political decision making on deployment of nuclear weapons.<sup>140</sup> There is necessarily a divide between strategic and political levels of decision making in nuclear matters. This has been best articulated by McGeorge Bundy, who was special assistant on national security affairs to two US Presidents, Kennedy and Johnson, in his well known formulation:

'In the real world of real political leaders, a decision that would bring even one hydrogen bomb on one city of one's own country would be recognised in advance as a catastrophic blunder; ten bombs on ten cities would be a disaster beyond history; and a hundred bombs on a hundred cities are unthinkable.'<sup>141</sup>

Consider, for instance, the inflicting of 'unacceptable damage' as amounting to destruction of six to ten cities of India's adversaries.<sup>142</sup> In the 'real world', it is unlikely that such recommendations would appeal to political decision makers, even if it is undeniable that such a loss would be 'unacceptable'. Such destruction visited upon a nuclear power, even when prompted by its prior nuclear 'first use', would prompt a similar response from it. The unwillingness to put one's own nation under such nuclear risk would ensure 'self-deterrence' in a political decision maker. To undercut this real world possibility, analysts suggest the inculcation of a 'will' for nuclear use, and

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139. Cabinet Committee on Security (2003), "Press Release of the Cabinet Committee on Security on Operationalisation of India's Nuclear Doctrine 04.01.03", <http://meaindia.nic.in/pressrelease/2003/01/04pr01.htm>

140. Ali Ahmed, 'Re-visioning the Nuclear Command Authority', IDSA Strategic Comments, [http://www.idsa.in/strategiccomments/RevisioningtheNuclearCommandAuthority\\_AliAhmed\\_090909](http://www.idsa.in/strategiccomments/RevisioningtheNuclearCommandAuthority_AliAhmed_090909)

141. Freedman, L., *Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, London: Palgrave MacMillan, 1989, p, 344.

142. Gurmeet Kanwal, 'India's National Security Strategy in a Nuclear Environment', *Strategic Analysis*, XXIV (9), December 2000, p. 1062; Manpreet Sethi thinks destroying five to six cities would be 'unacceptable damage' from planning purposes; see M Sethi, *Nuclear Strategy: India's March Towards Credible Deterrent*, pp. 251-52.



projection of the same, to bolster credibility.<sup>143</sup> This implies changing the complexion of India's political culture in order to adapt it to the nuclear doctrine. It should instead be the other way round.<sup>144</sup> Doctrine should instead flow from the nature of the political and strategic culture or at worst be compatible to it. No Indian leadership would, or should, be willing to commit genocide; nor instigate such a possibility. The political responsibility of a democratic state is to preserve its constituents and citizens from such harm. On this score, it is worth quoting Bundy in full to reiterate the gap between the doctrine generated by the security establishment and what is politically acceptable:

'There is an enormous gulf between what political leaders really think about nuclear weapons and what is assumed in complex calculations of relative 'advantage' in simulated strategic warfare. Think tank analysts can set levels of 'acceptable' damage well up in the tens of millions of lives. They can assume that the loss of dozens of great cities is somehow a real choice for sane men. They are in an unreal world.'<sup>145</sup>

The members of the Executive Council, charged with tendering advice, are also heads of services and departments, and their advice would be influenced, to an extent, by their representative function. Their advice is likely to be along lines of strategic logic. Follow through with the punishment promised in the nuclear doctrine may be recommended for keeping up in-conflict deterrence. This would be to enable in-conflict deterrence. Since such retaliation increases risk of damage being received in turn, the political head needs to focus on the national interest rather than the parochial interests that contaminate the advice he receives.

The political decision maker would have to answer the question: *What constitutes the national interest in such circumstances?*

*The national interest lies in keeping the nuclear threat at the lowest possible threshold. An imperative for nuclear employment in a democratic state is to limit the risk and receipt of nuclear damage in a nuclear conflict.*

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143. This is phrased in the Draft Report of National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine ([http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/CTBT/nuclear\\_doctrine\\_aug\\_17\\_1999.html](http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/CTBT/nuclear_doctrine_aug_17_1999.html)) thus: 'Deterrence requires that India maintain... (e) the will to employ nuclear forces and weapons'

144. See Ali Ahmed's review (*Journal of Defence Studies*, 2 (2), Winter 2008) of Gurmeet Kanwal's book *Indian Army: Vision 2020*, New Delhi, Harper Collins, 2008.

145. *Ibid*, p. 344.



The decision maker's answer to the question: '*Can India withstand 'unacceptable damage?'*' would dictate his retaliatory choices. This is contrary to current deterrence thinking in which the foremost criteria is the 'will' to inflict 'unacceptable damage'. Self-deterrence is to be studiously ignored. The promise of punishment is useful for deterrence, but is superseded by *the need to limit damage in case of a breakdown in deterrence*. The choice would be between inflicting punishment on the enemy and limiting the risk of retaliation on India's population centres and critical infrastructure. *The political leadership in the Political Council of the Nuclear Command Authority would require foremost to contain nuclear risks.*<sup>146</sup> This may well be through manipulating levels of nuclear retaliatory strikes in exchanges forced on India. However, this is different from having a doctrine that restricts nuclear options only to higher order attacks that have the underside of inviting like counter strikes of equally damaging portents for India.

*In a nuclear war, the primary responsibility of the political head in a democratic polity would be to ensure that there is no unwarranted increase in the nuclear risk to the nation.*

The logic is that India is not in a position to ensure that nuclear retaliatory capability of its adversary is adequately neutralised. Attempting to do so in terms of building up to the numbers necessary implies an arms race, since the adversary would not be static. Besides, it would impact the numbers equation with China and upset the 'minimum' in India's doctrine of 'credible minimum deterrence'. It follows that in case India inflicts 'unacceptable damage' on the enemy, it would receive equivalent damage right back. Even if the enemy is not able to withstand 'unacceptable damage', India cannot guarantee that it can sustain such an onslaught either.<sup>147</sup> Therefore, avoiding being a recipient of 'unacceptable damage' is important. It is interesting that the Indian doctrine has received an explicit political imprimatur in 2003, late in the tenure of the NDA government but prior to the possible changeover. There is a case for its revision in light of Michael Howard's questions on the social dimensions of strategy:

'But the question insistently obtrudes itself: in the terrible eventuality of deterrence failing and hostilities breaking out between states armed with nuclear weapons, how will peoples concerned react, and how will their reactions affect the will and the capacity of their governments to

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146. Ali Ahmed, 'Averting Nuclear War: Stretching the Limits of Democratic Political Rationality', *Journal of Peace Studies*, 16 (3-4), Jul-Dec 09.

147. Ali Ahmed, 'The Political Factor in Nuclear Retaliation', *Strategic Analysis*, 34 (1), Jan 2010.

make decisions? And what form will military operations take? What, in short, will be the social and operational dimensions of nuclear war?<sup>148</sup>

Towards this end, *avoiding* inflicting 'unacceptable damage' is recommended strategy. Inflicting 'unacceptable damage' makes sense only in case of retaliation to enemy counter value targeting or higher order targeting. For instance, in case India is recipient of a counter value strike, a counter value response is in order not only to punish but also to deter further such strikes. But, even in such cases, undue escalation is not desirable since it would expose India to like retaliation.

It has been argued that Pakistan does not have the 'assured destruction' capability since India is huge and diverse. Therefore, the argument goes, the status of '*mutual* assured destruction' does not exist. This is taken as giving India escalation dominance that it can leverage to inflict 'unacceptable damage'. Given the asymmetry not only in the number of nuclear weapons but in the capacity for sustaining punishment - Pakistan would be deterred from equivalent retaliation. This argument overstates India's capacity as a nation-state and its national power.<sup>149</sup> It brings about a situation in which Sun Tsu's aphorism, 'Do not press a desperate foe too hard', is ignored at inordinate cost. It ignores the scepticism of Lawrence Freedman: 'Why would you implement a nuclear threat when this would lead to equally devastating retaliation?'<sup>150</sup>

*In the Indian scheme of balancing ethnicities, India's future as a coherent nation-state after receipt of 'unacceptable damage' is not assured.* The experience of Partition, over sixty years ago, when the state had just been born would suggest that India has the requisite resilience. While that is a legitimate analogy to draw on, it may not be entirely accurate given the exponentially more psychological and physical impact of nuclear targeting. But the dangers foreseen here are of a different order. Loss of a city with a significant population of any of India's constituent ethnic groups would unacceptably cripple its relative power. Cities as Pune, Jaipur, Secunderabad and Chandigarh are valuable not only in themselves and their role in the national

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148. Michael Howard, 'The forgotten dimensions of strategy', *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1979, p. 982.

149. This is admittedly a subjective assessment, but there are no scientific studies on the issue of India's post nuclear conflict resilience. Inter-disciplinary expertise from fields of public administration, political science and social psychology would be required for such a study. Even if a positive assessment is arrived at, India cannot chance being proved wrong.

150. L. Freedman, 'Framing Strategic Deterrence: Old Certainties, New Ambiguities', *The RUSI Journal*, 154 (4), p. 47.

economy, but also for their status in relation to the hopes and narratives of the ethnic group that constitutes a majority of the inhabitants. While the enemy leadership that ordered the strike would be held directly accountable, the extent to which India political leaderships actions resulted in such vulnerability would come under critical scrutiny. No political decision maker can be oblivious to likely allegations of culpability resulting from overly provocative nuclear use, even if in retaliation. More portentously, what the ramifications would be for India as a state as it is presently constituted and on the 'idea of India', are in the realm of the unknown.

Even if a 'massive' nuclear strike against the enemy does 'finish' it along with any possibility of counter value retaliation, India is unlikely to be spared the ecological aftermath. During the Cold War, K Subrahmanyam had written that India would suffer from the environmental effects even in case of a nuclear war as far away as Europe.<sup>151</sup> Multiple strikes even if not 'massive' in the Indo-Gangetic plain would render the entire north India with maximum population concentration, vulnerable to the environmental after-effects. A recent study, reminiscent of the studies on nuclear winter of the eighties, has it that in an all out nuclear war, 20 million would die in South Asia and over a billion people worldwide would be put at risk due to the agricultural collapse caused by smoke and dust cloaking the sun. Smoke would cover the region in five days and extend round the earth in 49 days in case of attacks using 100 warheads.<sup>152</sup> This may be the quantum approximating 'massive' from both sides. Likewise, nuclear attacks not necessarily targeting cities, but affecting cities indirectly by letting loose dangerous forces by targeting nuclear installations and dams, are also equivalent to 'disasters beyond history'. Vulnerable sections in particular would be most adversely affected. The volcanic explosion in Iceland is indicative of the likely environmental and economic fallout.<sup>153</sup> In India, unlike in Iceland, human and social costs would be exponential. It would be an understatement to say that the political ramifications would be dire, particularly in growth of both right wing and left wing sentiment. Only a demagogue would be able to survive the aftermath. This could mean a turn away from democracy for India. Unintended consequences and post conflict futures cannot be overlooked in in-conflict considerations, even if the 'here and now' in wartime has an immediacy all its own.

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151. Subrahmanyam, K. (ed.), *India's Nuclear Challenge*, New Delhi: Lancer International, 1986, p. 286.

152. Alan Robock and Owen Biran Toon, 'Local Nuclear War', *Scientific American - India*, pp. 54-55.

153. 'Iceland's Volcano Disrupts Air Travel', *New York Times*, 16 Apr 2010.

There is a persuasive case for self-deterrence even though it is a much maligned term. Michael Howard writes: 'For the military planner must never leave out of his calculations the fundamental fact that his political masters, however brave in their rhetoric, will grasp at every excuse not to authorise nuclear release or to delay doing so for as long as they possibly can.'<sup>154</sup> The antidote is seen to be a political 'resolve' to use nuclear weapons purely for strengthening the credibility of deterrence. However, on deterrence breakdown, it would be a liability to demonstrate resolve in a perverse ability to take casualties. Self-deterrence is not a negative phenomenon on the political plane, and is distinct from the plane at which nuclear strategists pitch their analysis. The difference between the two planes is that of accountability since the proverbial 'buck' stops at the political level. McNamara has written: 'At that time, in long private conversations with successive Presidents Kennedy and Johnson I recommended without qualification, that they never initiate under any circumstances the use of nuclear weapons. I believe they accepted my recommendation.'<sup>155</sup>

With respect to Pakistan, it may be argued that an extremist regime, intoxicated with millenarian ideology that it would finally prevail, may not be self-deterred. Pakistan under such a regime may be willing to suffer asymmetric damage in return for the satisfaction of inflicting 'unacceptable damage' on India. India does not need to compel this reaction from Pakistan by promising 'unacceptable damage' as the only manner of using its nuclear capability. Even if such a regime ends as a result of nuclear exchange, or if India were to be changed immeasurably as a result there is no gain for India. However, in case Pakistan were to go for a higher order 'first use' that causes 'unacceptable damage' to India, then India could exercise the option and go 'massive' in return.

### *Nuclear rationality*

Admittedly nuclear war would not play out to a set of 'Marquess of Queensbury rules'. However, not to attempt limitation, even in a nuclear war, would amount to arguing that there is no firebreak between breaking of the nuclear taboo and 'spasmic' nuclear war. Even if, in the event, this turns out to be true, not planning for limitation, and attempting it in the unfolding

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154. Michael Howard, 'The relevance of Traditional Strategy', *Foreign Affairs*, 51 (2), January 1973, p. 262.

155. Robert McNamara, 'The Military Role of Nuclear Weapons: The Perceptions and Misperceptions', *Foreign Affairs*, Fall 1983, p. 79.

circumstance, is not rational. Therefore, even if India has the capacity to 'finish' a nuclear armed foe, the national interest at the juncture would be to ensure an ending of the nuclear confrontation at the lowest possible levels. Clausewitz's observation that, 'War is only a branch of political activity; it is in no sense autonomous... It cannot be divorced from political life...' needs heeding.<sup>156</sup>

The late General Sundarji provides an option in his perceptive writings. The first stipulation governing targeting philosophy - in his words - should be, '*The desire to terminate the nuclear exchange at the lowest level with a view to negotiating the best peace that is politically acceptable*' (italics added).<sup>157</sup> The yardstick of political responsibility proposed implies that a nuclear exchange be terminated at the lowest possible level, if required through enlightened political compromise. If necessary, termination of war to preclude further escalation may be required, irrespective of political costs and non-attainment of war aims. This strategy is influenced by the critical difference made by advent of the nuclear age as captured by Bernard Brodie early on in his classic, *Strategy in the Missile Age*:

'Clausewitz's classical definition that the object of war is to impose one's will on the enemy, must be modified, at least for any opponent who has a substantial nuclear capability behind him. Against such an opponent one's terms must be modest enough to permit him to accept them, without his being pushed by desperation into rejecting both those terms and the limitations in war fighting.'<sup>158</sup>

Nuclear deterrence presently envisaged involves 'massive' punitive retaliation to possibly include counter value targeting. This may merely be declaratory doctrine meant for deterrence and the actual doctrine for employment may well be different and secret. Nevertheless, the parameters commanding a consensus in the strategic community - 'unacceptable damage' - is also questionable in light of the argument of democratic political responsibility in a nuclear conflict made here. Therefore, alternatives bear discussion. Resort to the first theorist of nuclear strategy, Bernard Brodie, yet again is in order. Brodie wrote: 'The main war goal upon the beginning of a strategic nuclear exchange should be surely to terminate it

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156. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 252.

157. K. Sundarji, *Vision 2100: A Strategy for the Twenty First Century*, New Delhi, Konark Publishers, 2003, p. 146.

158. Bernard Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age*, California: Rand Corporation, 1959, p. 313.

as quickly as possible and with the least amount of damage possible - on both sides."<sup>159</sup> He had suggested this towards the later part of his work. This had perhaps influenced Sundarji.

In case the Brodie-inspired Sundarji postulation is subscribed to, an enemy nuclear first use would entail 'assured retaliation', though not necessarily at levels to inflict 'unacceptable damage'. This would incentivise restraint for the adversary. Termination of nuclear exchanges would be more feasible in case damage received is less than of 'unacceptable damage' levels. Nuclear deterrence would continue to operate in-conflict under logic described by Thomas Schelling as a 'threat that leaves something to chance'.<sup>160</sup> Since the the arsenal exists, its use cannot be discounted by the adversary. While it makes sense to terminate the conventional war also at this juncture, it could at a stretch proceed, making India's conventional advantage count.

Criticism of this position may be along two lines: one that such a doctrine dilutes deterrence and makes Pakistani nuclear resort more likely; and, second, that it encourages self-deterrence.

Firstly, massive punitive retaliation in any case lacks credibility. Deterrence, as McNamara observed, does not flow from the promise of incredible action. Therefore, Pakistani nuclear resort would be no more likely than it already is. Existential deterrence is in any case operative. Additionally, since the nuclear dimension is in the realm of informed speculation, the 'threat that leaves something to chance' is also operative. Nevertheless, even if a Pakistani nuclear resort appears more likely, the Sundarji formulation has the advantage of tempering the levels of first use. It would likely be lower order first use, perhaps even early on in the conflict. It would be less damaging, permitting a *quid pro quo* response from India. Such a nuclear exchange paves the way for a negotiated end to the nuclear exchange(s) and also termination of the conflict. Assurance of 'unacceptable damage' as the sole retaliatory option on the other hand prompts a higher order nuclear first use, since the enemy would reckon that he needs to use maximum weapons prior to suffering India's promised 'massive' nuclear retaliation.

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159. Bernard Brodie, 'Development of Nuclear Strategy', *International Security*, op cit, p. 79. Also see discussion of this observation in Michael Howard, 'Fighting Nuclear War', *International Security*, 5 (4), Spring 1981, p. 15.

160. Thomas Schelling, 'Threat that leaves something to chance' in Lawrence Freedman (ed.), *War*, Oxford, OUP, 1994, pp. 241-44.

Secondly, the expansive formulation of 'massive' punitive retaliation has come in for criticism that it is an 'ad hoc' and 'unconsidered formulation'.<sup>161</sup> In effect, it is a product of the context (Operation Parakram) in which the official doctrine was approved. The message for Pakistan was perhaps required to be more forceful. This does not mean that future decision makers need be tied down by it. That they would be self-deterred from committing genocide and opening up India to a like response is altogether understandable. The thinking that they would be self-deterred even from following through nuclear first use by 'assured retaliation' and, therefore, need to be bound by the expansive stipulation amounts to virtually holding the democratic political decision maker hostage to preconceived formulations. Further, if 'massive' is only a signal to reinforce deterrence, there is a need to make the declaratory doctrine coincide with the actual doctrine. Doing so does not dilute deterrence and is in conformity with the imperatives of clarity and communication that underpins deterrence.

Since the doctrine is meant for deterrence, it perhaps promises more than would likely be delivered in the eventuality of its employment. In effect, the doctrine for nuclear employment may be different. If that be the case, it replicates the Cold War experience of the declaratory and actual doctrines not necessarily coinciding. Even in such a case, the discussion here remains relevant - for a nuclear employment doctrine.

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161. Terms used by Rajesh Rajagopalan in his critique of the term 'massive' in the doctrine. See his *Second Strike: Arguments of Nuclear War in South Asia*, Penguin, New Delhi, 2005, and 'Assured Retaliation', "Assured Retaliation: The Logic of India's Nuclear Strategy" in Muthiah Alagappa (editor) *The Long Shadow: Nuclear Weapons and Security in 21st Century Asia*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

# Limiting Conflict

# 4

## The political level

That a nuclear war cannot be won and therefore should not be fought is widely conceded.<sup>162</sup> Since there can be no victors in a nuclear war given levels of suffering it should not be fought, even if there is an expectation of winning. Given that fact that a conventional conflict could potentially escalate, it would be necessary to nip any risk of nuclear war in the bud itself. The best course is to refrain from conventional conflict. A rational Indian conventional conflict strategy in a nuclear environment would be predicated on limited war aims, brooking no expansion. The criterion for determining the aims of the conflict assumes importance.

- *Aims should be important enough for risking nuclear escalation; but not of the order to provoke a materialisation of the threat.*
- *Pursuit of these should not involve the risk of suffering grievous losses through nuclear exchanges.*
- *These should be amenable to abandonment in case running the risk is not warranted.*

The pursuit of these aims through war would force Pakistan to choose between conceding Indian aims or risking nuclear escalation. It could consider making concessions in case Indian aims are reasonable and clearly communicated. It would risk nuclear escalation if Indian aims are perceived as expansionist. Examples of wider aims are regime change or destruction of military capability to the point of disarming Pakistan. Limiting political aims and corresponding military objectives in line with the limited war theory is inescapable in the nuclear age. The criticality for India is to ensure that its aims are limited and the fact that these are limited is unmistakably conveyed at the very outset. This does not mean that the aims are exactly conveyed, but the assurance that they are needs to be given. Heeding Schelling on 'limited war as a bargaining process' implies conceding that 'in addition to the divergence of interest over the variables in dispute, there is a powerful common interest in reaching an outcome that is not enormously destructive of values to both sides.'<sup>163</sup> Additionally, in case of a breakdown in

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162. Saying attributed to former US President, Ronald Reagan.

163. Thomas Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, New York: OUP, 1963, p.6.



deterrence, limiting the nuclear damage received acquires an equal immediacy with inflicting nuclear damage on the enemy.<sup>164</sup>

### **The conventional level**

#### *Exit Points*

'Cold Start' envisages multiple thrusts across a broad front by pivot corps offensive resources, supplemented by strike corps resources stationed closer to the border. Division sized combat groups are to be launched with a seamless continuum between mobilization and attack. Later, strike corps offensive resources from cantonments further in depth are possibly to foray deeper. This would yet again be without a discernible hiatus. Tactical pauses would in such a situation permit Pakistan to get its conventional act together and therefore will not figure in India's conventional war plan.

'Cold Start' has the disadvantage of focusing attention on the outbreak of conflict. Since it is easier to get into a conflict, than to get out of one, greater attention needs to be paid to this aspect not only by the military in joint forums, but by the strategic establishment. Exit strategies are a combination of the 'carrot' of political incentives, diplomatic persuasion and military restraint and the 'stick' of political pressure, diplomatic isolation and military violence. Pre-identification of exit points operational circumstances in time and space at which the 'carrot and stick' effort is to culminate needs to be determined. Suitable exit points for orchestration of political, diplomatic and military pressures are given below:<sup>165</sup>

- The first exit point - Initial Exit Point - would be prior to launch of 'Cold Start' offensives, in which the threat of war inherent in the crisis is utilised to extract the required concessions from the enemy. This was in evidence in early January 2002 in which the imminence of war prompted the speech of General Musharraf about changing course on support for terror.
- The second exit point - Early Exit Point - is at the launch of the pivot corps offensive resources in the first phase of attacks after 'Cold

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164. This is at variance with Herman Kahn who lists 'Limiting damage' as the third of his list of objectives for a defender; the others being 'Punish enemy' and 'Stalemate war' (Herman Kahn, *On Thermonuclear War*, p. 164).

165. Ali Ahmed, 'Exit Points and the Updation of Cold Start Doctrine', IDSA Strategic Comments, [http://www.idsa.in/idsastrategiccomments/ExitPointsandtheUpdationofColdStartDoctrine\\_AAahmed\\_220409](http://www.idsa.in/idsastrategiccomments/ExitPointsandtheUpdationofColdStartDoctrine_AAahmed_220409)

Start'. The threat of escalation is required to be manipulated to bring about the necessary concessions. This is the preferred exit point in that the offensives, being of limited intensity, would not be overly threatening.

- The next exit point - Late Exit Point - is after launch of deliberate strike corps offensives into and beyond operational depth. This would be a critical juncture as Pakistan would be likely take to nuclear signalling at this stage to stall further Indian penetrations. In case of persistent recalcitrance on the part of Pakistan, conventional war may continue and so must the efforts for conflict termination.
- The exit point in this avoidable phase of the war - Absolute Exit Point - should come prior to the threatening of a vital interest by advancing pincers. Progress of the war would now be likely to take a nuclear direction in case the objective is invested or captured.
- The last - Ultimate Exit Point - is in the immediate wake of a nuclear exchange for terminating the exchange definitely and possibly also the conflict at the lowest rung of the nuclear ladder.

National power must be so directed as to impact enemy decision makers to come to terms at these junctures. Politically, the terms and conditions should be such as to be politically acceptable to the other side, even while not sacrificing one's own national interests. Diplomatically, they should enable 'face saving'. Such orchestration would necessarily be under a time constraint. Multiple channels to convey the twinned menace and amiability in the message must continue to be operational through the war. War is not only about fighting but is an exercise of national power and includes non-military instruments. It involves an 'all of government' approach directed by the NSC.

### *Asymmetric war*

India's forces will be confronted with a levee en masse - the legally permissible uprising of a population in the wake of invasion. They will have to contend with orchestrated asymmetric operations in occupied territories. The scenario would be akin to that encountered by the Israelis when they went into Lebanon in 2006 and into Gaza in 2009. The major lesson is that Israeli tactics lacked proportion and discrimination. India has to make a distinction between the people, the Pakistani Army and its proxies. This would make for operational sense, in that the resulting restraint would ensure that asymmetric war does not gain traction through people's support. The information war would have to be modulated accordingly. An

intelligence requirement would be the drawing up of a demographic profile up to operational depth for use by civilian staff. The staff for this function would require being expanded and would require to be multi-disciplinary. The manner in which the occupation of enemy territory unfolds would determine the nature of the asymmetric counter. Lessons from IPKF's control of Jaffna must be applied. The foremost of which was that the specialised function of population control and administration should be handled by experts in the civil services. The 'whole of government' approach is equally applicable here.<sup>166</sup>

### The nuclear level

A movement away from 'massive' punitive retaliation has already been argued. The wisdom of Thomas Schelling's words in *Strategy of Conflict* is worth remembering: 'The threat of massive retaliation, if 'massive' is interpreted to mean unlimited retaliation, does indeed lose credibility with the loss of our hope that a skilfully conducted all out strike might succeed in precluding counter retaliation.'<sup>167</sup> India's current nuclear deterrence doctrine predicated on 'unacceptable damage' is not without its limitations. The Draft Nuclear Doctrine, on which it is based, had opined: 'Any adversary must know that India can and will retaliate with *sufficient* nuclear weapons to inflict destruction and punishment that the aggressor will find unacceptable if nuclear weapons are used against India and its forces.'<sup>168</sup> The problem with this formulation is - to reiterate - the questionable assumption that India can sustain 'unacceptable damage' and therefore acquires the impunity to inflict such damage. 'Flexible' punitive retaliation is instead a better option.

In a conflict situation, this would furnish the decision maker with suitable options of response. To avoid escalation that, as has been seen, India may not be able to sustain without changing its very structure, flexibility in response options should be worked into the doctrine. The matrix below explains the possibilities:<sup>169</sup>

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166. In Jaffna, a Town Commandant's HQs was formed under a Brigadier. Deepinder Singh has a complimentary word for it in his book, *The IPKF in Sri Lanka*. However, the Iraq experience of the US, under Jay Garner and Bremer after the conventional conflict phase, has suitable lessons.

167. Thomas Schelling, *Strategy of Conflict*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960, p. 253.

168. Ministry of External Affairs, 'Draft Report of National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine', 1999, <http://meadev.nic.in/govt/indnucl.htm>

169. Ali Ahmed, 'Reviewing India's Nuclear Doctrine', IDSA Policy Brief, [http://www.idsa.in/policybrief/reviewingindiasnucleardoctrine\\_aahmed\\_240409](http://www.idsa.in/policybrief/reviewingindiasnucleardoctrine_aahmed_240409)

| Type of first use  | Commensurate response                              |
|--|--|
| Nuclear tests  | No nuclear counter strike;<br>demonstration strike |
| Demonstration or 'No Target' strike  |  |
| First use on tactical battlefield target<br>in own territory in defensive mode | <i>Quid pro quo</i>                                |
| First use on tactical battlefield target<br>in offensive mode on own territory |  |
| First use on tactical battlefield target<br>in Indian territory                | <i>Quid pro quo plus</i>                           |
| First use on counter force targets   |  |
| <i>First strike</i>  | 'Massive' punitive retaliation                     |
| Decapitating strike  |  |
| Counter value strike(s)  |  |

This does not decrease deterrence since 'assured retaliation' would remain the doctrine. Pakistan cannot be assured of escaping a counter strike of greater severity. India's escalation dominance capability at both conventional and nuclear levels would be telling. In 'flexible' nuclear retaliation, the option of responding massively is in any case retained. The chief argument in favour of a graduated response in the debate leading to the change in the NATO strategy was that the decision maker should not be restricted to 'massive retaliation' as the only response option, since self-deterrence may result. Nixon's dilemma was: 'Should a President, in the event of a nuclear attack, be left with the single option of ordering the mass destruction of enemy civilians, in face of the certainty that it would be followed by the mass slaughter of Americans?'<sup>170</sup> This stands good in the Indian case. Finally, McNamara's rationale for the change over to a city avoidance strategy holds good here too. He reasoned, 'We want to give them a better alternative... the strongest possible incentive to refrain from attacking our cities.'<sup>171</sup>

Flexible punitive retaliation has some advantages. It lends itself to the limited war concept – one extending into the nuclear domain despite its restrictive definition. Mindful of escalation, it permits a lower order counter; thereby

170 Lawrence Freedman, 'Nuclear Strategists' in Peter Paret et al. (eds.), *Makers of Modern Strategy*, Oxford: OUP, 1986, p. 773,

171. American Defence Secretary, Robert McNamara's statement to the House Armed Forces Committee on 30 Jan 1963, *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, April 1963

limiting even a war that has 'gone nuclear'. It incentivises Pakistani limitation in turn, thereby enabling a negotiated war termination. It is in keeping with the law of armed conflict in that it genuflects to proportionality and discrimination. It is in consonance with India's political and strategic culture. The requirement to the contrary that India acquire and demonstrate the will and resolve to carry out genocidal attacks is to indirectly demand a change in the political orientation of the state so that a questionable nuclear doctrine is made implementable. Lower order exchanges make post conflict peace possible, while higher order attacks would make post conflict continuance as civilised entities impossible. Deterrence is not upset but is instead heightened, in keeping with the logic of the 'threat that leaves something to chance'. That something worse could happen in the uncharted territory of nuclear conflict would bring about conflict termination more readily. This doctrine would be more easily applicable for both fronts, thereby making for a single, as against a 'differentiated', doctrine for the two fronts.<sup>172</sup>

But it is possible that nuclear exchanges could take a counter military and counter force turn. Escalation, as the critics contend, would be virtually inescapable. It is here the logic of the Sundarji formulation - of ending the exchange at the lowest possible level - makes sense.<sup>173</sup> He envisaged a largely proportionate quid pro quo and quid pro quo plus responses. Exchanges - not readily amenable to control - are better ended. This may not be possible once the exchanges are underway. In-conflict deterrence, gaining a favourable position and political compulsions stemming from vengeance, would inform nuclear exchanges subsequent to first use. Measures to avoid escalation need to be instituted prior to war outbreak. While the Indian understanding that escalation control is a chimera underpins 'massive' nuclear retaliation, not attempting limitation is to make higher order exchanges inevitable.

Therefore, it needs clear articulation that *the intention is to end any exchange at the lowest possible level*. The operative word is 'possible', since the adversary is an autonomous actor. Incentivising moderation - both sharing the same objective of escaping nuclear punishment - an *ab initio* doctrinal movement needs be made. The recommended formulation is: '*Assured retaliation*' with the caveat of *intention to end the exchange at the lowest possible level*.

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172. A term used by Bharat Karnad in his *India's Nuclear Policy*, London: Praeger, 2008.

173. Ali Ahmed, 'In tribute: Recalling the Sundarji Doctrine', *USI Journal*, Jan-Mar 2008.

Clearly, articulation by itself is not enough. In peace time, the confidence building measures envisaged in the Lahore Memorandum of Understanding<sup>174</sup> - as the very first item - require to be furthered. Presently there have been four rounds of talks on nuclear CBMs, the last of which, as mentioned earlier, was in October 2007. Even these talks have been conducted pursuant to the first part of the sixth point on the MOU: 'The two sides shall periodically review the implementation of existing Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and where necessary, set up appropriate consultative mechanisms to monitor and ensure effective implementation of these CBMs.' The second part of the point has not been implemented. The more important first point has been bypassed and the impression is that there is engagement between the two states on nuclear doctrine. This means that some ground is yet to be traversed. Though more than a decade has passed, it is not too late to start. A standing strategic dialogue mechanism between the two nuclear powers as discussed in the next chapter needs to be maintained.

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174. Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Indian Foreign Secretary, Mr. K. Raghunath, and the Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Mr. Shamshad Ahmad, in Lahore on February 21, 1999 [http://www.indianembassy.org/South\\_Asia/Pakistan/mou\(lahore01211999\).html](http://www.indianembassy.org/South_Asia/Pakistan/mou(lahore01211999).html) (Accessed 20 Feb 2010). It is interesting to note that the embassy of India in Washington, D.C. has since removed the document from its website.

## Doctrinal Balancing

## 5

Currently, India's strategic doctrine is poised uncertainly between deterrence and compellence; doing nothing to satisfy India. It comprises deterrence at the subconventional level, an offensive conventional doctrine and a nuclear doctrine of 'massive' punitive retaliation. In the existing circumstances of strained relations in South Asia, this has escalatory potential. It is also leading to a Pakistani counter in terms of more adventurous provocation; further straining Indian security. Pakistan's external balancing involving China has added to India's pre-existing 'two front' problem.<sup>175</sup> Quasi-compellence is not working and instead appears to be adding to Indian insecurity.

The counter-point to this position is that, firstly, India's is not a compellent doctrine, in that it is one of offensive deterrence. Secondly, its votaries argue, India is not implementing it with adequate finesse and commitment. As a result, the compellence strategy is less than optimal. Consequently, the argument goes, much more needs to be done and with greater efficacy, including covert operations, higher defence sector reforms and acquisitions, so that the doctrine is made to work. India refrains from exercising military power with resolve and competence. Once this is achieved by improving acquisition processes and higher defence decision making structures, increasing defence spending and getting offensive orientation right, it would be able to exercise offensive deterrence, as also compellence with dexterity.

Since India's strategic doctrine has not been articulated, it is difficult to define it accurately. Declaratory statements of India being peaceable are accurate in describing the 'carrot' part of its policy. The reality of the 'stick' is difficult to capture, since much of the effort is not in the public domain. To take Indian pronouncements at face value is to see reality differently than what appears to Pakistani decision makers. They would first see it through their own lens and secondly be more conscious of the coercive dimension of India strategy. India's position of being a restrained actor is right. However, it is not wholly so. The extent to which India has been less than restrained is best known to Pakistani decision makers. But such practices of statecraft are legitimate and appropriate in view of the proxy war being waged by Pakistan. That state cannot be allowed impunity. However, the reservation here is that

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175. Rajat Pandit, 'Future war on two-and-a-half fronts?', *Times of India*, 31 Mar 2010.

this power struggle makes security and peace elusive. Therefore other alternatives must be considered alongside.

Take a benign scenario in which current doctrines are operative. What respective service doctrines enable is simultaneous pressure points to impact the 'mind' of Pakistani decision makers. The 'mind' of the military leadership is taken as the 'centre of gravity'. What are possible outcomes? Pakistan, as a rational state and its army cognisant of its self-interest post conflict, would be amenable to a negotiated end to the conflict. A negotiated end implies that the causes of the conflict are addressed. While for India they would be restricted to discussion of terrorism, for Pakistan these would include Kashmir. In effect, despite the employment of the instrument of 'last resort' military force, no progress would have been made beyond what can be termed as 'square one' in the India-Pakistan engagement. In other words, offensive deterrence has its limitations and changing gears to compellence does not bring about any better result.

Two questions arise. The first is, 'Whether resort to military force has resulted in India being more secure?' The second and more important one is, 'Does greater ability to coerce only serve to bring the nuclear aspect into the foreground?' The paradox is that the closer India gets to achieving the conflict aims, the closer it gets to nuclear dangers. The closer it gets to military 'victory', the closer it gets to political 'defeat' there being no victors in nuclear war. Is this in India's interest?

The answer to the question revolves around the utility of war and of military force in the nuclear age. The direction of future doctrinal evolution will be determined by the answers to these questions. Clearly, these cannot be answered by the military in isolation as has been the case so far. The government must take a call on the nature of its strategic doctrine. Military doctrines being downstream efforts would then adjust and reflect the change.

The present comfort level with military doctrines possibly indicates their acceptability to the government. Non-articulation of a position by the ministry may indicate that it deems the doctrinal aspect as being within the autonomous province of military function. However, in a nuclear era, there can be no autonomous military domain. An aware government can be expected to reserve to itself the power to decide if and when to initiate conflict. It also needs to set the parameters on how this will be conducted. India's record has been exceptional on this score right from the 1965 war to the 2001-02 stand-off. The Kargil conflict was instructive on the civil control



exercised, even if the military could have done with a more liberal parameter of not crossing the Line of Control. Nevertheless, given the maturing of the nuclear era and the disruptive possibilities at the subconventional level, there is scope for giving enhanced attention to both war avoidance and conflict limitation. The suggestion here is that a strategic dialogue forum would assure both.

This is in accordance with the government's position. From criticism received, it appears that the government has been 'slow' on acquisitions and higher defence reforms. While there are other organisational - reasons for this, it can be inferred that the government is not convinced that a greater ability for compellence would be useful in tackling Pakistan as a strategic problem. Going ahead with these 'reforms' may not help make India more secure. In case these are implemented, then the military option of proceeding with compellence would become more salient in future considerations. This would be in face of co-extensive Pakistani efforts to keep pace. Not only would the threat it poses increase, but so would the argument that force is the more obvious answer. This would bring the nuclear dimension more to fore. India would counter-intuitively be less secure, despite the doctrinal innovations and material acquisitions intended to make it more so.

The government would not be averse to a negotiated change in strategic doctrine, in concord with Pakistan. This can be arrived at through a strategic dialogue in a forum constituted for the purpose. The dialogue is likely to acquire a momentum of its own and will also impart a thrust to other dialogues underway, such as the composite dialogue. The 'trust deficit' has the potentiality to be transformed thereby.<sup>176</sup> Over time, shared perceptions of subcontinental security could be thought through. This would help to realise the regional potential. The end state visualised is that of a Pakistan dismantling its terror infrastructure, and fulfilling the longstanding Indian demands. India can simultaneously trim down its offensive conventional posture by reconfiguring its conventional strike forces. Both states step back from their offensive nuclear doctrines with Pakistan acceding to NFU and India to flexible punitive retaliation.

The strategic dialogue forum would have added benefits for conflict management in addition to the conflict resolution mandate envisaged. By

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176. 'India, Pak foreign secretaries meet to bridge trust deficit', *Times of India*, 24 June 2010.

being constituted as a standing body, it would be available for crisis management, and, in case of conflict outbreak, for conflict termination. In case the conflict were to 'go nuclear', then for earliest termination of nuclear exchanges at the lowest possible level. Currently, there is no forum for these tasks, even though the two states have transited into what Rajesh Basrur likens to a 'Cold War'<sup>177</sup> of their own. As with the earlier Cold War, there is a need for a consultative mechanism that ensures it remains 'cold'.

In the Cold War, the superpowers had certain common interests. These included the necessity to avoid nuclear war. This could only be achieved by avoiding war itself. This meant regulating their behaviour in a manner which precluded a crisis itself. Less critical, but no less consequential, was the need to limit arms spending. The methodology they alighted on over time included arms control and information sharing. Arms race avoidance measures were undertaken such as the Anti Ballistic Missiles treaty. Reducing threat of first strike was done by regulating capability through SALT and START. Such an engagement also helped to develop habits of cooperation through negotiations and monitoring. Towards this end, of particular interest here, was the Standing Consultative Commission. In addition, there were dedicated hotlines for information sharing, , advance warnings on missile launches, accidents and military manoeuvres. These were fallout of the Helsinki Conference.<sup>178</sup> While CBMs have been undertaken in South Asia, it is possible to also replicate the Standing Consultative Commission, configured to the conditions obtaining here.

A brief outline of the proposals to be taken further by officials and given shape by the political imagination are as follows:

- The joint mechanism needs to be created over the short term.
- It could comprise high level civilian and military officials of both states headed by their respective National Security Advisers or political appointees with a background in national security.
- It should be a standing body, not subject to the vagaries of interstate relations.

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177. Rajesh Basrur, *South Asia's cold war: nuclear weapons and conflict in comparative perspective*, New Delhi: Routledge, 2008.

178. Michael Quinlan, 'Managing Nuclear Opposition: Reflections on the Cold War Experience', *USI Journal*, Apr 2003

- It should have a formal operations room with secure communication links, modelled on the lines of Nuclear Risk Reduction Centres (NRRC).<sup>179</sup>
- The tasks assigned to the representatives would be initially 'doable' - restricted to discussing respective threat perceptions. This could then be taken forward in sync with the peace process. Over time, momentum in either can be used to energise the other. For instance, the Siachen issue, reportedly ready for resolution could benefit from discussions in this forum. The knock-on effects would be on other ready-to-resolve issues such as Sir Creek.
- Proposals of each side for melioration of the threat perception can be brought aboard over the middle term. With the peace process moving forward on Kashmir issue alongside, Pakistan would not need its 'strategic assets' any more, Pakistan could proceed with dismantling its terror infrastructure, even as India reconsiders its conventional doctrines.
- The measures for monitoring and verification need be jointly decided.
- Over the long term, with success, its tasking could with 'strategic balancing' move into the implementation phase. This phase could include the physical drawdown. India could 'right size' its mobile forces, releasing resources currently locked in, for modernisation and 'transformation'.
- Additionally, the body could be tasked to assist with crisis management and escalation control in conflict. In effect, the body

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179. An officer of Pakistan's Strategic Plans Division, Rafi uz Zaman Khan, has suggested this in his papers, 'Nuclear Risk Reduction Center' at the Stimson Center, ([www.stimson.org/southasia/pdf/rafikhan.pdf](http://www.stimson.org/southasia/pdf/rafikhan.pdf)); and Occasional Paper 49, December 2002 ([www.stimson.org/southasia/pdf/nrrcsouthasia.pdf](http://www.stimson.org/southasia/pdf/nrrcsouthasia.pdf)). Indian interest is remarkable by its absence. This divergence owes to Pakistan attempting to heighten the nuclear threat for its own purposes, particularly in the mind of the West at a time when safety of its nuclear weapons has critical attention. India for its part has been reticent since its weapons are not for warfighting but for deterrence alone. This paper has argued that the nuclear initiative not being with India, it may well be thrust unwillingly into a nuclear scenario. In such a circumstance, it should not be found unwittingly pushed.

would be an 'NRRC Plus' or an 'enhanced NRRM'.<sup>180</sup> This would supplement CBMs as hotlines and help impart momentum to linked dialogues such as the composite dialogue, 'back channel' etc.

The idea would have the backing of the international community. The US in particular can be expected to be supportive. It has been urging the two sides discreetly in this direction. Its support has remained tacit due to sensitivities in both states against being dictated to by the superpower.<sup>181</sup> It has much to gain from a détente between the two regional powers since fallout of their rivalry has complicated its operations in the AfPak region. It is investing in deepening democracy in Pakistan.<sup>182</sup> This involves a reduction in the role of the army. This can be furthered in case of a stable, non-threatening relationship with India.

China is also interested in seeing a stable Pakistan. It has a problem in managing the restive Uighurs in the Xinjiang province. The insurgent groups active there have found space in the ungoverned spaces along the Durand Line.<sup>183</sup> But, the attitude of China may bear watching since any success would amount to China losing an ally to under cut India in the future great power games. However, managing China would in any case be a challenge. One way

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180. The US NRRC, that earlier operated jointly with the USSR between 1988-2007, now has functions described as: 'The U.S. Nuclear Risk Reduction Center operates the United States' communications links used to exchange information with foreign governments in support of arms control treaties and security-building agreements. The NRRC is a unique organization staffed by the Bureau of Verification, Compliance, and Implementation (VCI/NRRC) within the Department of State (DOS) and is located in the Harry S Truman building. When it began operations on April 1, 1988, it operated a single direct government-to-government communications link (GGCL) with its U.S.S.R. counterpart, located in Moscow in the Ministry of Defense. Since then, the U.S. NRRC's role has expanded to include a number of other international communications links, both bilateral and multilateral, dealing with approximately 15 different nuclear, chemical, and conventional arms control treaties and security-building agreements.' (<http://www.state.gov/t/vci/nrrc/>) The model can be suitably modified jointly India and Pakistan to suit their purposes.
181. The US took care to restrict the role of Special Representative Richard Holbrooke to AfPak by leaving India and Kashmir out of his ambit.
182. The US aim can be discerned from its take on the US-Pakistan strategic dialogue that took place in February 2010, described on the website of the US' Islamabad embassy as: 'In six sessions, both sides exchanged views on measures to enhance Pakistan's inherent capacities to realize the vision of a democratic, progressive state, committed to socio-economic advancement and to effectively address political, economic, development and security challenges.' <http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/uspakstrategicdialogue.html>
183. East Turkestan Liberation Organisation (ETLO) and the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) that want to establish separate Eastern Turkestan state for Uighurs in Xingjiang Province are based in the FATA region (*The Military Balance 2010*, London: IISS, 2010, p. 342).

to meet the challenge is to ensure that relations with neighbours remain on an even keel. India could do without having to look over its shoulder in case it has to face up to a Chinese challenge in the future. India's shaping of its own region by removing Pakistan as a regional challenger would be an index of its coming of age. Militarily, any military drawdown in the plains, such as in reconfiguring the armoured corps and firepower resources, would not have a direct bearing on the Chinese front due to terrain difference.

The idea has first to win the day against sceptics who prefer that Pakistan be tackled by making coercion work better by the enhanced asymmetry route. They believe that reducing asymmetry, presaged by doctrinal balancing, amounts to Pakistan gaining parity with India. The idea therefore redounds to Pakistan's advantage. This critique misses the disruptive potential that crisis and conflict have on India's economic trajectory, that - to them - is to furnish the growing asymmetry. The economic repercussions of crisis and conflict on India's liberalising economy have not been thought through. Being protective of the economy, that has brought about a turn round in India's power credentials since the nineties, is a worthy political goal. The fallout of estranged relations with Pakistan also has an internal political dimension that need not be elaborated here. Therefore, transforming Pakistani attitudes by tweaking policy appropriately makes for long term sense. It would keep the economic trajectory stable, into which even Pakistan could plug in eventually. The arguments of critics should be used to sharpen the idea; not stymie it.

A strong critique that can be anticipated is in the proposal's seeming focus on the nuclear threat stemming from terrorism instigated escalation. It may be likened to the Pakistan's negotiating position of 'holding a gun to its own head'. A strategic dialogue would re-hyphenate India to Pakistan. Pakistan would hold the forum hostage to 'resolving' Kashmir in its favour. It may use it for deception and gathering intelligence on India's perceptions, intentions and capability profile. Such a critique underestimates the terror threat that exists; the escalatory dynamic in conventional doctrines predicated on a 'race to the front'; uncertainty in nuclear dynamics of conflict; and the less visible internal political fallout of the conflict with Pakistan seen in civilisational terms on inter community social relations. In so far as the Kashmir issue goes, it figures in the composite dialogue. The idea is also to energise the composite dialogue and progress on the Kashmir issue through bridging the 'trust deficit' through a strategic dialogue. Lastly, the expectation of manipulation by Pakistani negotiators does disservice to India's felicity in the 'game'. In any case, it is imperative that the idea needs to be made to work.

Shortcomings in conceptualisation and operationalisation need ironing out appropriately.

While the novelty of the idea may come up against inertia, it bears reminding that institutional lobbies and even the proverbial 'arms lobby' may find the talk of peace, a 'threatening' notion. Therefore, traction for the idea is needed. Further study in the national security establishment, led by the NSCS, and in relevant ministries, needs be done. Responses to the idea by the strategic community would help strengthen and give it detail. Thinking along these lines already exists.<sup>184</sup> This can be proceeded with further over the short term, when the possibility of conflict is seemingly remote. Once the idea is firmed up, it can be pitched to Pakistan at a favourable future juncture during an ongoing process such as at the forthcoming round of the composite dialogue. Once the institutional forum for strategic dialogue is set up, it would find acceptability by fulfilling a 'need'. The body would - with time - develop the trust, habits and working ethos necessary to withstand the test of crisis. But, more importantly, the doctrinal balancing it undertakes would make it a self-annihilating institution. The more successful it is in the proposed strategic balancing, the less it would be required for its other function of managing conflict escalation - there being little chance of conflict thereafter.

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184. Harinder Singh and Ramesh Phadke, 'Indo Pak Rapprochement: Unexplored Option of Military to Military Engagement', IDSA Comment, [http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/IndiaPakistanRapprochementUnexploredOptionofMilitarytoMilitaryEngagement\\_250610](http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/IndiaPakistanRapprochementUnexploredOptionofMilitarytoMilitaryEngagement_250610)

## Conclusion

## 6

The burden of the institutional interest of the Pakistani military has been carried for far too long by Pakistan, India and South Asia. If the aim is to cast off this millstone, then an efficacious strategy needs to be tried out. The current impasse in South Asia shows that strategies such as containment, coercion and deterrence have not worked as well as intended and have inbuilt dangers. A change of tack is warranted. Getting Pakistan to bandwagon with India is the answer.<sup>185</sup> Is it possible?

Pakistan's military requires India as 'bogey' for the political status quo internal to Pakistan. It can use the India card in its relations with China. Once the US bailout peters off, it will continue to have a military and economic benefactor. Historically, it has attempted parity with India so as to punch above its weight in its external relationships. But the anti-India stance has its limits as a future policy option. If the past is any guide it needs jettisoning. The policy has so far only served to keep Pakistan poised on the brink of a 'failed state' and 'rogue state' status. It is holding up the peace and the economic take-off through regional integration. Pakistan's population growth requires innovative solutions to cope, lest Islamism spread further. The latter has not only challenged the Pakistan army in its stronghold the General Headquarters,<sup>186</sup> but also raised questions on the internal cohesion of the force. The present dangers and diffused threats of the future make Pakistan receptive to the idea of engaging India.

The benefits are obvious, but more importantly from the military point of view its vested, commercial, interests would not be threatened. Given that reliance on external powers, has proved to be a double-edged proposition in the past, it would be more prudent for the military to rely instead on an expanded domestic economic base. Future problems, such as over water, would be subject to Indian goodwill. Its interests in Afghanistan are better served by getting India to concede ground. India could consider this if Pakistan is likewise accommodative. The larger problems such as impact of climate change are subject only to regional solutions, for which an energised regional forum is a prerequisite. Building this may require reaching out

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185. Ali Ahmed, 'Getting Pakistan to Band Wagon', <http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2010/03/27/getting-pakistan-on-the-bandwagon/> (Accessed 1 Apr 2010).

186. 'Press review: Rawalpindi attack', *BBC News South Asia*, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/8302179.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8302179.stm) (Accessed 1 Apr 2010).

reciprocally to India. Earlier involvements in great power politics have not helped Pakistan any. Its strategic location has exacted a price beyond any benefits that may have accrued. Rethinking its India policy is no longer an option among other choices; it is a necessity.

This is not impossible to visualise. The Pakistan army is not a monolith.<sup>187</sup> Even though it has an Islamist element, it also has a largely dominant secular-rational side. While many may be practicing Muslims of the conservative and orthodox kind, Islamists interested in using the power of the Pakistan army for Islamic political ends - are a minority. The Pakistan army, being nationalistic rather than Islamist, is interested in pursuing what it sees as Pakistani national interests. The army therefore would be amenable to meaningful engagement.<sup>188</sup> If the potentiality of Pakistan's interest in Kashmir and its concern with power asymmetry are assuaged, then it would not be averse to realigning the security policies it controls. This would help secular-rationalists in the army and Pakistan in its internal power equations versus Islamists.

Pakistan operating in the realist mode may accept India's offer, if suitably couched. Realist thinking implies being sensitive to power imbalances. Where power balancing is not possible or proves counter-productive, then the option is of bandwagoning. India needs to formulate a detailed gameplan of what it needs to do in terms of its security and foreign policy to bring about this outcome. The aim here has been to direct thinking along these lines and accepting the logic that this is necessary and desirable. The feasibility and operational details require factoring in the reservations of critics. Currently, Pakistani compliance with rolling back the terror infrastructure is minimal and reluctant. The composite dialogue, started as an indirect means, among others, to expand the constituency in favour of peace is impending. In case of resumption, it would have to contend with the 'trust deficit'. Therefore, engaging the Pakistan army to ensure any meaningful progress is imperative. The strategic dialogue mechanism suggested here is a means to this end.

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187. Anatol Lieven, 'All Kayani's Men', *The National Interest*, <http://www.nationalinterest.org/Article.aspx?id=23214>

188. Actions suggestive as 'feelers' appear to have been taken. *The Hindu* (16 Sep 2009) reported that the ISI chief had attended the Iftar at the Indian High Commission at Islamabad. The ISI reportedly invited India's defence attaches in Islamabad for a 'lunching out' of the Indian Air Force attaché?? (In rare move, ISI hosts Indian attaches at its officers mess', *Indian Express*, 13 Jun 2010). The attaches had also been invited last year for a briefing as per Stratfor report, 'India, Pakistan: An ISI-Army Seat at the Negotiating Table?', 25 July 2009.



Meaningful and enhanced reaching out can prove to be a gamechanger. India, being the stronger and bigger power in the region and having ambitions as a great power, requires initiating steps that eventuate in change. Creating the conditions for this in through a strategic dialogue posited here as the first step. To an extent the offensive doctrines of both states are understandable as a defensive recourse to the security dilemma. Mitigating the 'root cause' identified as the security dilemma through dialogue would result in a mutual and verifiable drawdown initially in doctrines and postures and eventually in forces. Bringing about détente and a follow-on entente requires strategising informed by the Ashokan tradition. The suggestion will contribute towards the creation of a *South Asia which as a single strategic entity can contend with the 21st century's security challenges.*