

The India and Pakistan-Nuclear Relationship

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ABSTRACT

The core argument this article makes is that The India and Pakistan-Nuclear Relationship. For the study of present topic the investigator used the analytical methods for this article by reviewing relevant publications, primarily based on the online journals available on Internet, Wikipedia, Elsevier and Journal of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA)

I.INTRODUCTION

India–Pakistan nuclear relationship, which has undergone three cycles of conflict and cooperation since their cold war commenced in the late 1980s. The alternation we find between crisis and collaboration is similar to that which occurred during the US–Soviet Cold War. However, there are some important differences. The Cold War was a much longer conflict, involving nuclear competition and antagonism over four decades, from 1949 (the year the Soviet Union obtained nuclear weapons) to about 1989, whereas in South Asia the comparable period (so far, to be fair) has been much shorter. If we date the nuclearization of the two countries to *c.* 1989, then it is about two decades old. Second, whereas the Cold War involved the active deployment on alert status of very large and technically sophisticated forces on both sides, India and Pakistan have thus far refrained from similar deployment of their relatively small and less developed forces even at the height of crisis. Given time, might they follow the same path? Third, because the large deployed forces of the United States and the Soviet Union posed serious risks in times of relative stability as well, there was a greater incentive to engage in strenuous efforts at arms control. In contrast, the Indian and Pakistani forces in their recessed postures do not produce such great anxieties. This means there is less pressure to engage in arms control and a greater focus on confidence building. This is less binding, because verification is not a vital component, yet in some ways more promising since it leans heavily on political understanding, which is the key to resolving disputes. As India and Pakistan developed their nuclear arsenals, the relationship became increasingly militarized, and the frequency and level of conflict increased.

The role of nuclear weapons during the crisis has been the subject of some debate. At the time, US officials were alarmed by intelligence reports that Pakistan was making preparations for a nuclear strike. One report stated that its F-16s were ‘pre-positioned and armed for delivery – on full alert, with pilots in the aircraft’.

During the crisis, while each tended to fear the worst, both sides displayed abundant restraint. Though their air forces were positioned to strike one another, a necessary posture given the vital advantage successful

conventional air strikes could confer, the armored divisions of both countries remained in non offensive positions.

The Kargil conflict, 1999

In May 1999, Pakistani forces in civilian garb began occupying key positions along the Kargil heights on the Indian side of the LoC in Kashmir. Initially, India believed that it was a small incursion by Islamist *mujahideen*, but it soon became clear that the force was a professional one and was large in number.

Owing to the harsh climate and geography of the region, Indian forces had withdrawn, as was their custom, from their posts during the long winter. The intruders were thus able to penetrate deep into Indian territory, in places up to twelve kilometers, along a 150-kilometre front. The Indian Air Force was called in and the Army's counter-attack reinforced with 155-mm howitzers. The terrain made the process of ousting Pakistani forces a slow one. Fighting continued well into July, when Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif called his troops back under American pressure.

The role of nuclear weapons in the Kargil conflict was indirect, yet central. By this time, both countries had conducted nuclear tests in mid-1998. However, while the tests strengthened deterrence by precluding conventional war, they did not prohibit fighting at a level below that of conventional war. There were two important differences between 1990 and Kargil. First, India and Pakistan were now declared nuclear powers, which removed all ambiguities about nuclear risk. Second, their forces engaged in combat for about two months, which raised the risk of war to a much higher degree than before. This meant caution came at a higher price as well, but we have seen that both were prepared to pay that price.

As with other cold-war confrontations, cooperation yielded some results by way of stabilization. It demonstrated the rapidly declining value of military force between nuclear powers. The empirical evidence from the India-Pakistan relationship, as well as from the other cold-war relationships discussed earlier, is clear. Nuclear weapons constrain their possessors from thinking in conventional ways when they are in situations of immediate deterrence, i.e. when war is near. Doctrines that emphasize types of forces and force balances are of little relevance in such circumstances. Hence, concepts that are built upon notions of credibility or resolve and the distribution of capabilities are inconsequential. Moreover, since nuclear rivals are careful to eschew conventional war as well, absolute and relative conventional military capabilities do not count for much, either, except to the extent that they may be useful in marginal conflict or against other non-nuclear adversaries.

We have seen that nuclear powers are careful to avoid conventional war. This means that deterrence theory must consider whether the traditional approach to conventional weapons is meaningful in the nuclear context. Indian strategic thought does not generally do this. Most analysts either separate the two and say little about conventional weapons in their deliberations on nuclear doctrine; or make the argument, again drawn from American strategy, that strong conventional forces are necessary to keep the nuclear threshold high testing

Here too India and Pakistan are generally in agreement. After the 1998 tests, India announced a moratorium on further testing and Pakistan followed suit. The Indian atomic energy establishment declared that more nuclear tests were not necessary. In the domestic debate over the India–US nuclear agreement, though Indian scientists objected strongly to the US condition that the deal would be called off if India were to carry out a nuclear test, the objection was really to a permanent limitation being put in place by an outside power. There was no reference to the need for testing in order to obtain a better deterrent.

South Asia is characterized by low level of political integration, economic development and collective self reliance in defence. Activities of outside powers in Indo Pakistan war of 1965 introduced a shift in US arms policy towards the subcontinent. America's reticent, rather than neutral, attitude was clearly manifested when it imposed supply of military aid and equipment to both India and Pakistan.

During the Cold War, both United States (US) and Russia exerted political ideology and military might to gain the support of the nations of the Indian Ocean region in order to gain supremacy in this littoral. This was due to the great importance of the Indian Ocean through which runs more than three quarters of the world's trade. As of late both China and India are rising as potential superpowers and are making all efforts to gain control of the Indian Ocean.

India, because of its Indian Ocean littoral, seeks greater maritime presence in the region. China, as a Pacific Ocean Nation is increasingly interested in gaining a foothold in the Indian Ocean in its quest for global power. It has started funding its —Chain of Pearls|| port facilities in southern Sri Lanka and Pakistan which is viewed as a possible first step in gaining control of the region.

In this context, the US, the sole superpower in the world is making diplomatic efforts to balance China. South Asia is becoming increasingly important due to the shifting of the focus on Overseas Contingency Operations from Iraq to Afghanistan. With the developing relationship with India based on common concerns about international terrorism, religious extremism, and the rise of China.

India with its growing economy and powerful military position has become a global partner for the US and is shaping the future of Asia. There is a convergence of interests between India and the US on the issues vital to the two countries in the global arena.³ The naval power of India has made it one of the primary naval forces of the Indian Ocean,⁴ and it is now working with the US to maintain the security of the sea lanes running through the Indian Ocean. One of the major issues in protecting the sea lanes in the future is the harboring of large naval vessels and the security of such valuable weapon systems, which are lucrative targets to terrorists. The American global strategy to “balance of power” in region exhausted its policy makers to make a reassessment of the strategic value of Pakistan. Unfortunately Pakistan calculations went wrong when neither the US nor China directly intervened in its strategic structure of the subcontinent. The United States for the first time recognize India as a predominant power of South Asia.

The initial American involvement in Asia was primarily the product of its global policy of the containment of communism. In this team every player had his own set of reasons for closer association with America.

Another important interest of the US in South Asia is the socio-economic status of the nations in the region. A close look of the region shows that, with the exception of a few countries, all others are afflicted with one or more of the ailments of poverty, backwardness, fundamentalism, terrorism or internal insurgency. A number of territorial and maritime disputes remain alive. Confronted by this environment, States in the region believe that their security will be best guaranteed by gaining the support of the international community and the US believes that its relationship with India could enlarge India's security perimeter to achieve a position of greater influence in the region.

The Ocean is also important in navigation and marine trade. Almost one fourth of the entire cargo in the world marine trade and two thirds of world oil are loaded and unloaded in the ports of this region. This is because of the commercial sea lanes that lie across the Indian Ocean. The sea lanes are the connecting link between Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The routes passing through it connect Europe and East Africa with South and South East Asia.

Therefore, almost all the powerful states in the world are concerned with controlling these sea lanes which are crucial to the protection of their interests. This is why major powers like the US and China are trying to expand their influence in the region, for no other powers in the world does the sea transit through this region play an important role as the US and China. Study of maritime history reveals that India was the first country to have dominated the Indian Ocean until the arrival of great powers starting with the Portuguese. The Portuguese conquered the Indian Ocean and controlled all its maritime routes to dominate the maritime and economic activities of the region. The Dutch, French and the English followed the Portuguese into the Indian Ocean. Such was the significance of the Indian Ocean; that the British controlled it until the end of the Second World War for its economic and strategic gains. During the Cold War the Soviet Union considered the Indian Ocean sea lanes as extremely important waterways to further its political military and ideological interests

However, since the end of the cold war the US has been the dominant power in the region with no other nation to challenge its dominance in the Indian Ocean. But, emerging states like China and India are determined to gain the dominance of the region for the maintenance of their economic political and military interests. And yet, as the pirate activity off the coast of Somalia, the intense terrorist activities taking place in the region and the desires of emerging states suggest, the Indian Ocean, the world's third-largest body of water, already forms center stage for the challenges of the twenty-first century. In the present context, the Indian Ocean region is important because of numerous reasons. One obvious reason is its economic potential and trading routes. Other important facts are the presence of a number of nuclear powered states and a number of states with nuclear ambitions. The region is also home to some of world's most volatile failed and failing states. Terrorism,

poaching and piracy are also grave issues of concern in the region. The involvement of major powers of the world in trade and security matters in the Indian Ocean and its littoral states makes the situation in the region increasingly complex. The focus of the world in this context is beamed on to the three powers India, China and the US.

The entrance of China to the maritime domain in the Indian Ocean is a key event that has increased the complexity of the situation. China's enormous economic boom, coupled with superpower ambitions, has perplexed the United States and India. China is not only Pakistan's major military ally, it has become one of India's leading trading partners, and plays an important political role in Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, where a Chinese economic and cultural presence is welcomed as a way of balancing the dominant India.

According to a Defense concepts series article, the relationship between China and India is complex, and the developing relationship between India and US therefore is of great concern to China.²⁵ China is the leading nation in the East Asian region and India is the leader in South Asia. However, China is trying to increase its leverage in South Asia due to the US support to India. This is where the smaller countries in the region come in to play. Though China is also concerned about good relations with India, it has maintained a much closer relationship with Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The Sino- Pak relationship is a worry to India because of the Kashmir issue. China is also maintaining close links with Sri Lanka and has become a staunch ally of Sri Lanka in the recent past. There is concern in the US and Indian circles about the growing influence of China in the region. This influence might slowly result in a shift of leadership role in the region if China emerges above India in the region. Based on the facts on the importance of the Indian Ocean and the US relationship with South Asia, it is clear that the Indian Ocean is one of the busiest in terms of maritime, political and military activities. US involvement in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India coupled with Chinese influence in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka could make the region a hub of politico-military activities in the international system. It is also clear that almost all seven countries in South Asia have deep rooted internal problems and economic and political turmoil of their own.

As sense of insecurity and helplessness during Pakistan's early years pushed that country into arms of America. Without giving much thought to its immediate geo political importance Pakistan joined SEATO & CENTO in order to balance the perceived Indian threat and to acquire much needed economic and military assistance.

Pakistan was benefited from its association with US in many ways. Indian reaction to this US-PAK military relationship was strong and angry. Nehru strongly accused US of introducing the cold war in the region. The US has adopted various techniques to ensure and adequate supply of strategic raw material at favorable prices. The advent of American powers in the Indian Ocean has been a major cause of concern in India. Since the down of Indian independence, the US has perceived India as a possible obstacle to its interests.

As the countries of the region are undergoing positive political transformation, the region might be at the crossroads of a major change. There is a dominant view in the region in favour a cooperative security framework and in this regard India has to take initiative. The interests of the United States and South Asia have converged. The US and South Asia are at a unique place in time and history for building and cementing strong ties between the South Asian nations and its peoples, and these two blocks are determined to do so. The region is now, and will long remain, at the forefront of America's foreign policy concerns. The United States is committed to help South Asia achieve the bright future that it deserves.

The American Chamber of Commerce is an important partner that is helping to strengthen ties between the United States and South Asia. In a globalised world, countries are facing. The regional security environment in South Asia reveals that intra-state non-traditional security threats have assumed serious proportions in the post-cold war period. However, mutual suspicion and mistrust continue to characterize bilateral relations among states and retard the process of regional cooperation and integration. In recent years, the countries in the region have made attempts to generate consensus on common NTS issues like terrorism, natural disasters and environmental change. As a regional organization, SAARC, has laid the foundation of a common platform which has enabled regular interaction at various levels on issues of critical importance, having their effect on regional security. It offers some promise for the emergence of cooperative security architecture in South Asia terrorism has emerged as a perennial challenge to individual liberty and state authority. The entire region is affected by the virus of ideological extremism and terrorism. Due to a lack of coordination among South Asian countries, this problem remains unmanageable. Some rudimentary steps have been taken within the SAARC to work together on this issue the formation of SAARC.

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