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**Kashmir and Strategic Stability
in South Asia**

By Dr. Shaheen Akhtar - Series Editor: Maria Sultan

Kashmir and Strategic Stability in South Asia

Dr. Shaheen Akhtar*

Abstract

Kashmir has been fundamental and central to strategic calculus of India-Pakistan ever since their independence in 1947. The conflict triggered two of the three Indo-Pak wars in 1948 and 1965 and precipitated a major warlike crisis – Operation Gibraltar in the pre-nuclear era. The conflict was nuclearised with Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests in 1998. These crises have occurred in 1984 (preemptive strike on Kahuta), 1986-87; (Brasstacks) 1990 & 1998 (Kashmir crises); 1999 (Kargil conflict); 2001-02 (military standoff) and 2008-09 (Mumbai crisis). Not all of them were directly related to Kashmir but it should be underscored that Kashmir provides a major rationale for the conventional and nuclear competition between the two countries and the fact remains that any crisis between them eventually embroils Kashmir or have implications for it. Kashmir continues to generate instability and underlie stability-instability paradox between India and Pakistan. Strategic stability cannot be ensured unless India and Pakistan enter into a strategic dialogue that takes into account comprehensive NRRMs, at political, strategic, and conventional level. The paper critically explores the relationship between Kashmir conflict and strategic stability in South Asia, especially after nuclearisation of the subcontinent in 1998. It further examines the potential of Kashmir conflict in endangering strategic stability in the region and how concrete steps towards the resolution of the dispute can help in stabilizing deterrence in the region.

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1. Introduction

Kashmir has been central to strategic calculus of India-Pakistan ever since their independence in 1947. The conflict triggered two of the three Indo-Pak wars in 1948 and 1965 and precipitated a major warlike crisis – Operation Gibraltar in the pre-nuclear era. The conflict was nuclearised with Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests in 1998. It has caused multiple warlike crises in the period of existential and overt nuclearisation of the two states. These crises have occurred in 1984 (preemptive strike on Kahuta), 1986-87; (Brasstacks) 1990 & 1998 (Kashmir crises); 1999 (Kargil conflict); 2001-02 (military standoff)¹ and 2008-09 (Mumbai crisis). Not all of them were directly related to Kashmir but it should be underscored that Kashmir provides a major rationale for the conventional and nuclear competition between the two countries and the fact remains that any crisis between them eventually embroils Kashmir or have implications for it.

The paper explores the relationship between Kashmir conflict and strategic stability in South Asia, especially after nuclearisation of the subcontinent in 1998. It examines the potential of Kashmir conflict in endangering strategic stability in the region and how concrete steps towards the resolution of the dispute can help in stabilizing deterrence in the region. What is the importance of the Kashmir dispute for the strategic stability in South Asia? How it is linked with stability-instability paradox in the region? And what role nuclear risk reduction measures (NRRMS) at the political and strategic level can play in stabilizing India-Pakistan nuclear relationship and also help in resolving the Kashmir dispute? It argues that Kashmir conflict has deep linkages with the strategic stability in the region and a concrete steps towards political settlement of the conflict would immensely contribute in stabilizing nuclear deterrence in South Asia.

2. Dynamics of Kashmir Conflict

Kashmir emerged as a flashpoint between India and Pakistan as they gained independence in 1947. Kashmir, a Muslim majority state, got divided between India and Pakistan as a result of circumstances surrounding partition of the subcontinent that resulted in 1948 war. The conflict over Kashmir has characterized and shaped Pakistan-India hostility ever since partition in 1947. The conflict falls into the category of complex disputes which involve differences regarding territory, ideology, right of self-determination, security and sovereignty. In Pakistan, it has been generally referred as the unfinished agenda of the partition plan and described as the shahrug (jugular vein). India continues to consider the accession of Kashmir to India as final and refers the territory as *atoot ang* (integral part). The dispute has become more intractable over the years and has defied mediation efforts. The United Nations (UN) mediation in 1950s, Bhutto-Swaran Singh bilateral talks 1962-63, the Soviet-mediated Tashkent Agreement 1966; the bilaterally negotiated Simla Accord 1972, the Lahore Declaration (1999) and abortive Agra summit in 2001 have remained unsuccessful. In 2004, a bilateral composite dialogue, launched in the wake of 2001-2002 military standoff has entered into fifth round with not much concrete progress on Kashmir.

a) Kashmir as a Flashpoint

Kashmir is often referred as a “flashpoint” and since 1998 a “nuclear flashpoint”. President Bill Clinton described it as the most dangerous place on the earth. What constitutes a flash point and how Kashmir fits into this category? There are various elements that define Kashmir as a “flash point”. According to Timothy D. Hoyt:

Flashpoints are areas of recurring international conflict. Their political geography makes them focal point for various types of violent conflict, and

¹ Sumit Ganguly & Devin Hagerty, *Fearful Symmetry: India-Pakistan Crisis in the Shadow of Nuclear Weapons*, (Oxford University Press, 2005) pp. 1-2.

relative political values of these areas make them prone to political-military crises. These crises not only engage neighbouring adversaries, but also raise the possibility of outside intervention with destabilizing impact on regional or international systems. Nuclear flashpoints also raise the risk of nuclear escalation, again on a regional or international scale, and therefore by definition at least one of the adversaries must possess nuclear weapons, or the possibility of intervention by outside nuclear powers must exist.²

Going by various elements of a flashpoint identified by Hoyt, Kashmir can be described as a “flash point” with nuclear connotation. These may be elaborated as:

- a) Kashmir symbolizes conflicting ideologies of India and Pakistan and thus is intrinsically linked with their respective state's vision or national myths. Thereby it has acquired an existential value and both states tend to link their existence to the possession of the disputed territory.
- b) Kashmir is also a contested territory and both India and Pakistan holding closely to the Westphalian norms of sovereignty and territorial control are not ready to compromise on the issue.
- c) Kashmir has been source of major wars and recurrent crises between the two countries. There is also perception that loss of the region would irreparably damage India or Pakistan's position in a long term competition vis-à-vis each other.
- d) The geographic proximity and divided territory of Kashmir into India and Pakistan has contributed heavily in making Kashmir a flashpoint. It has created possibilities for conventional and unconventional warfare with Pakistan and Kashmiris hoping to change the status quo through use of force and India using repression and military

force to maintain the status quo.

- e) Kashmir has drawn significant international concern right from the birth of the dispute which increased since 1980s as the two countries acquired nuclear capability. First, the conflict was discussed at the UN Security Council as a dispute that may pose threat to international peace and security. Although a series of UN resolutions failed to resolve the issue, but from 1948 to late 1950s and then occasionally, with the eruption of hostilities between the two states, the UN remain engaged with the dispute, i.e. restoring ceasefire in 1965 and 1971 and again passed a resolution 1172 in the wake of nuclearization of India and Pakistan in 1998, urging on both sides “to find mutually acceptable solutions that address the root causes of those tensions, including Kashmir”.³ The dispute is still on agenda of the UN.
- f) Kashmir conflict has also drawn concern and involvement of great powers both in the Cold War and post-Cold War era. In the Cold War period, Pakistan became a United States (US) ally and India despite being non-aligned tilted towards Soviet Union which cast its shadow over Kashmir. Washington and Moscow supported one side or the other in various international fora with Moscow holding a veto threat in favour of India, though it tried to broker the Tashkent Agreement (1966). In the post-Cold War period, the Kashmir drew attention of the US that had emerged as the only super power, especially in the defusing India- Pakistan crises over Kashmir that entailed fear of escalation to a full scale war leading to a possible nuclear exchange.

Hoyt in fact, argues that Kashmir became a nuclear flash point as early as 1965, due to the interests of the US (a nuclear superpower) and China, then an emerging regional nuclear

² Timothy D. Hoyt, “Politics, Proximity and Paranoia: The Evolution of Kashmir as a Nuclear Flashpoint”, in Sumit Ganguly, ed. *The Kashmir Question: Retrospect and prospect*, (Routledge: 2003), pp.122-123.

³ Text of UNSC Resolution on India, Pakistan N-tests, *The News*, 8 June 1998.

player). In fact in 1950s, Josef Korbel, who had worked on Kashmir under UN auspicious, warned that Kashmir could lead to a larger war and ultimately to a nuclear confrontation.⁴ India's nuclear explosion in 1974 turned each future Indo-Pakistani confrontation into a potential nuclear conflict. Pakistan expedited its own nuclear programme, and by the early 1980s was widely suspected of possessing nuclear weapons.⁵ Thus the recurrent crises between India and Pakistan in the 1980s and 1990s onward have had nuclear connotation.

b) Strategic Stability & Stability-Instability Paradox

Maintaining strategic stability is a complex phenomenon, especially in a conflict ridden region like South Asia. According to Devin T. Hagerty, strategic stability is a "relationship between two adversaries where the likelihood of major political conflict is low, the likelihood of any such conflict escalating to war is low, and, in the event that it does erupt, the fighting is as limited as possible in duration and destruction."⁶ Michael Krepon, founding President of Stimson Center in his article: The Stability-Instability Paradox, Misperception, and Escalation Control in South Asia argues that "stability-instability paradox was embedded in the enormity of the stakes involving the nuclear threshold."⁷ Robert Jervis commenting on the dilemma observes: "To the extent that the military balance is stable at the level of all-out nuclear war, it will become less stable at the lower levels of violence."⁸

The nuclearisation of India and Pakistan triggered a debate among the deterrence

theorists about whether or not nuclear weapons have had a stabilizing impact in South Asia. It must be underscored that Kashmir dispute always weighed high in the strategic calculus of the strategic community in both countries. The deterrence optimists contend that the presence of nuclear weapons has made major wars unlikely and has forced restraint upon crisis-prone adversaries from escalation. The deterrence pessimists, however, question this confidence and point to the increase in both the number and the level of crises, and instability since the advent of nuclear factor in region.⁹ Nonetheless, the relevance of the stability-instability paradox in South Asia is no longer disputed by Indian and Pakistan strategic analysts. The question is "whether both countries have had their fill of intense crises and limited wars".¹⁰

3. Kashmir & Strategic Stability

Kashmir has remained central to strategic stability and thus stability –instability paradox in South Asia and is likely to continue, if resolution of Kashmir is not factored in deterrence stability in the region. "India and Pakistan are locked in a complex set of strategic conundrum. Structurally imbalanced set of geographic conditions, doctrinal asymmetries, force postures and evolving command systems are driving India and Pakistan towards strategic instability."¹¹ In such an environment Kashmir conflict provides all the combustible material for instability. This is quite evident from the fact that during past two decades at least six times India and Pakistan mobilized conventional military forces and gone into formal conventional force deployments.¹²

⁴ Joseph Korbel, *Danger in Kashmir*, (Princeton University Press 1966).

⁵ Timothy D. Hoyt, "Politics, Proximity and Paranoia: The Evolution of Kashmir as a Nuclear Flashpoint", in Sumit Ganguly, ed. *The Kashmir Question: Retrospect and Prospect*, op.cit. p.124.

⁶ Devin T. Hagerty, "US policy and the Kashmir Dispute: Prospects for Resolution", in Sumit Ganguly, *The Kashmir Question: Retrospect and Prospect*, op.cit. p. 92.

⁷ Michael Krepon, *The Stability-Instability Paradox, Misperception, and Escalation Control in South Asia*, Henry L. Stimson Center Report, May 2003. P. 2. Available at www.stimson.org.

⁸ The Illogic of American nuclear Strategy (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 984) .p.3. Cited in Michael Krepon, *The Stability-Instability Paradox, Misperception, and Escalation Control in South Asia*, op.cit. p.3.

⁹ Feroz Hassan Khan, "Evolving stability in South Asia", in *Prospects of Peace, Stability and Prosperity in South Asia*, in Institute of Regional Studies, 2005. pp. 166-67.

¹⁰ Polly Nayak and Michael Krepon, *US Crisis Management in South Asia's Twin Peaks Crisis*, Henry L. Stimson Center, Report 57, September 2006. p. 10. Available at www.stimson.org.

¹¹ Feroz Hassan Khan, "Evolving stability in South Asia", op.cit. p. 170.

¹² *Ibid.*

Kashmir has significant relationship with strategic stability in at least four ways. One, although Kashmir did not lead to the nuclearisation of India or Pakistan and nuclear weapons have no direct value within Kashmir, they are relevant in a direct military way if two rivals threaten war or go to war.¹³

Two, although the motivation for going nuclear were asymmetrical- India driven by power and prestige and Pakistan to deter India, the nuclear arsenals have become integral to the strategies of the two countries which gives confrontation over Kashmir a nuclear dimension. Three, although Pakistan has achieved strategic parity with India, the growing conventional imbalance with India lowers the nuclear thresholds especially in view of India's "Cold Start" strategy that envisages fighting a limited nuclear war to end a "proxy war" under the nuclear umbrella.

The existence of Kashmir dispute and its linkage with low intensity or proxy war in Kashmir only makes the matters worse. Four, although in their nuclear postures, India and Pakistan have not mentioned Kashmir as a "redline", India's retaining the option of retaliation with nuclear weapons if its forces are attacked by biological or chemical weapons and Pakistan's emphasis of retaining "first use" option plus General Khalid Kidwai, Director General Strategic Plan Division (SPD) list of thresholds¹⁴ that would warrant the threat or use of nuclear weapons suggest that the rivals have kept the Kashmir situation in mind.

a. Pre-nuclear Crises: 1984-1998

In the pre-nuclear era India-Pakistan experienced not only major wars but also

several war-like crises that had mostly roots in Kashmir conflict. From 1984 to 1990, there were at least three minor or major crises that adversely affected the strategic stability of the region. In 1984, India considered to launch a preemptive strike to destroy Pakistan's nascent nuclear capability. This stemmed from the situation prevailing in the Siachen Glacier in northern region of Kashmir. In April 1984, India occupied Siachen which was not demarcated when ceasefire line in Kashmir was affected in 1949 and a notional line ran north to the glacier. Pakistani forces responded and sporadic battles began from June onward.

Against this backdrop, New Delhi seriously contemplated to strike Kahuta so as to prevent Islamabad from becoming a nuclear weapon state and thus neutralizing India's strategic advantage. India, however, "resisted the preventive temptation owing to its fear that Pakistan would retaliate for an Indian Air Force (IAF) raid on Kahuta by striking Indian nuclear targets".¹⁵

The US did play a small role in urging both countries away from the brink of war. Ganguly and Hagerty argue that a "hybrid form of deterrence, best termed 'boosted conventional deterrence'- a product of the grey area that characterizes countries' transition to nuclear weapons status"¹⁶ restrained India and Pakistan from fighting a war. So a nascent nuclear capability on both sides prevented another hot war over Kashmir.

In 1986-87, India conducted a series of massive military exercises codenamed Brasstacks close to Pakistani borders. The exercises led to a month-long crisis between the two countries, endangering strategic stability in the region. The

¹³ John Thomson, "Kashmir: The Most Dangerous Place in the World?", in Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, Bushra Asif and Cyrus Samii, eds. *Kashmir: New Voices New Approaches*, Lynne Rienner, London, 2006, p.190.

¹⁴ In an interview with the Italian team General Kidwai outlined conditions under which Pakistan would resort to nuclear weapons. These included: a) India attacks Pakistan and conquers a large part of its territory; b) India destroys a large part either of its land or air forces; c) India proceeds to economic strangling of Pakistan, and d) India pushes Pakistan into political destabilisation or creates a large-scale internal subversion. See, Paolo Cotta-Ramusino and Maurizio Martellini, "Nuclear Safety, Nuclear Stability and Nuclear Strategy in Pakistan". *Consic Report of a visit by Landau Network-Cento Volta*, 21 January 2002. Available at <http://lxmi.mi.infn.it>.

¹⁵ Sumit Ganguly and Devin T. Hagerty, *Fearful Symmetry: India-Pakistan Crisis in the Shadow of Nuclear Weapons*, (New Delhi: OUP, 2005) p.59.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p.60-61. Hybrid deterrence as not pure nuclear deterrence, because no actual nuclear weapons have been deployed by the states involved; but it is not pure conventional deterrence either because the deterrent effect derives not from a balance of conventional forces, but from the prospect that conventional assets can be used to kill far beyond their basic potential when targeted against nuclear installations.

precise political objective of Brasstacks remains controversial. According to Indian reports, "Operation Trident"- the re-conquest of the northern areas and Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK), ordered at the height of the crisis- was called off less than two hours before it was scheduled to begin."¹⁷

The crisis had a distinct nuclear dimension. The assertion made by Abdul Qadir Khan in his interview with Kuldip Nayar on 28 January that "Pakistan had enriched uranium to weapon grade and possessed the requisite technical capabilities to test a nuclear weapons with laboratory simulations" constituted "nuclear signaling". Ganguly and Hagerty observe that the nuclear factor may have implicitly deterred India from going to war. With the counter-mobilization of troops by Pakistan, India realized that "the calibrated application of military pressure short of war was highly risky even in a proto-nuclear milieu".¹⁸ In the wake of the crisis, the US also managed to persuade India and Pakistan to adopt a set of confidence and security building measures.

In 1990, uprising in Indian held Kashmir triggered another intense crisis that brought two countries to the brink of a war. While 1984 and 1986-86 crises took place when India and Pakistan were essentially pre-nuclear weapon states, the 1990 crisis is considered a "bridging crisis" between the pre-nuclear and nuclear era. In this crisis Kashmir and nuclear weapons were intrinsically intertwined. The crisis directly threatened strategic stability of the region. India accused Pakistan of waging a sub-conventional war against India by financing, arming and training Kashmiri militants/"terrorists".

Pakistan contested such allegations and asserted that it is only providing diplomatic and moral support to the Kashmiri support Kashmiris right to self-determination. On 10 April 1990, Indian

Prime Minister V. P. Singh warned in the parliament: "Our message to Pakistan is that you cannot get away with taking Kashmir without a war. They will have to pay a very heavy price and we have the capability to inflict heavy losses. He decelerated, if Pakistan deployed nuclear weapons, "India... will have no option but to match. Our scientists have the capability to match it."¹⁹

As the crisis unfolded, some decision makers in India, Pakistan and the US considered that the two adversaries were "capable of deploying and using nuclear weapons on very short notice. Others discounted that possibility, believing that while both countries were capable of assembling nuclear weapons, neither had the ability to deliver them with any precision or reliability."²⁰ The US administration sent its Deputy National security Advisor Robert Gates who played an active role in deescalating the situation. Ganguly and Hagerty conclude that "existential deterrence" was primary cause for peace in the subcontinent in 1990.

Islamabad and New Delhi were "deterred from war by their recognition of each other's nuclear capabilities, and by the possibility that any direct military hostilities between them might have escalated to a nuclear exchange."²¹ Thus, in 1990 emergence of nuclear capability acted as a deterrent to a possible confrontation over Kashmir.

b) Post-nuclear Crises 1998-2008

From 1990 to 2008, India and Pakistan experienced at least four minor to major crises - 1998, 1999, 2001-2002 and 2008, mostly stemming from Kashmir conflict that involved nuclear dimension with escalatory spiral.

1998 Crisis:

The 1998 crisis not given much space by many

¹⁷ Timothy D. Hoyt, "Politics, Proximity and Paranoia: The Evolution of Kashmir as a Nuclear Flashpoint", p. 129.

¹⁸ Sumit Ganguly and Devin T. Hagerty, *Fearful Symmetry: India- Pakistan Crisis in the Shadow of Nuclear Weapons*, op.cit. p. 77.

¹⁹ "V. P. urges nation to be ready as Pak troops move to border," *Times of India*, New Delhi, 11 April 1990.

²⁰ Sumit Ganguly and Devin T. Hagerty, *Fearful Symmetry: India- Pakistan Crisis in the Shadow of Nuclear Weapons*, op.cit. p. 82.

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 103.

strategic analysts stemmed from India's nuclear tests on 11 and 13 May. The tests not only precipitated Pakistan counter nuclear tests on 28 and 30 May, but raised specter of confrontation over Kashmir.

India's nuclear tests "accompanied by exceedingly bellicose rhetoric, significant movement of military forces in preparation for the possibility of war, and severe pre-emptive war pressures."²² The period between 11 and 28 May marked the peak of the crisis and threatened strategic stability in the region. In the week following 11 May tests, India's top political leadership and senior officials unleashed a spate of aggressive and jingoistic statements targeting Pakistan's territorial integrity, threatening "hot pursuit" across Line of Control (LoC) and vacation of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) under its control. Prime Minister Vajpayee warned that "India is now a nuclear-weapon state", and "if we are attacked we will not hesitate in using them for defence". He asserted: "we have the capacity for a big bomb now for which necessary command and control system is also in place".²³

On 18 May, Home Minister L. K. Advani threatened that India would take "a tough stance over Kashmir"... "Islamabad should realize the geostrategic situation in the region" and "roll back its anti-India policy, especially with regard to Kashmir"... "India's bold and decisive step to become a nuclear weapon state has brought about a qualitative new stage in Indo-Pakistan relations particularly in finding a solution to the Kashmir problem. It signifies... India's resolve to deal firmly and strongly with Pakistan's hostile designs and activities in Kashmir".²⁴ On 25 May, Advani threatened that India would "undertake 'hot pursuit' to chase insurgents from

Kashmir back into India."²⁵

The Union Minister for parliamentary affairs and tourism, Madan Lal Khurana, warned Pakistan of a fourth round. In a statement made in Jammu on 21 May he declared: "if Pakistan wants to fight another war with us, they should tell us the place and time as we are ready for it".²⁶ Referring to militancy in Kashmir he warned: "We will destroy their camps and those helping sustenance of militancy in the state". BJP vice-president and spokesman K. L. Sharma on 22 May said, if Pakistan continued its 'anti-India policy', it "should be prepared for India's wrath."²⁷

Pakistan's nuclear tests stopped India from bullying over Kashmir. Immediately after Pakistan's tests New Delhi toned down its bellicosity. India "tried to back off with the diplomats trying to convince the world the bomb had all to do with China, little to do with Pakistan, and no one faced any threat from India which was only concerned about its own security interests".²⁸ L. K. Advani said, India is determined to defeat the "proxy war" in Kashmir "without going to war".²⁹

In an interview to the US-based India Post Advani said that India "does not favour a 'hot pursuit' policy against the militants in Jammu and Kashmir considering the "sensitive and fluid" border situation and the relations with Pakistan...".³⁰ External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh told Lok Sabha that the 'policy of hot pursuit was not under consideration'.³¹ Indian defence minister ruled out the "hot pursuit" or the cross-border pursuit of militants.

In Pakistan the tests had both strategic and psychological value. They were seen as an

²² Ibid. p.117.

²³ "Vajpayee threatens to use nuclear bomb", *The News*, 16 May 1998.

²⁴ *The Statesman*, New Delhi, 19 May 1998.

²⁵ George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation Berkeley*: (University of California Press, 1999) p.423.

²⁶ "India is ready for a 4th war: Khurana", *The Asian Age*, Calcutta, 22 May 1998.

²⁷ "Strident BJP warns Pak of Indian wrath", *The Telegraph*, Calcutta, 23 May 1998.

²⁸ Seema Mustafa, "Swimming in Saarc infested waters", *The Asian Age*, Calcutta, 1 August 1998.

²⁹ "India determined to fight the proxy war in J&K", *The Sentinel*, Guwahati, 29 May 1998.

³⁰ "India against hot pursuit of J-K militants: Advani", *The Indian Express*, New Delhi, 24 July 1998.

³¹ "Govt. against hot pursuit policy", *The Indian Express*, New Delhi, 17 December 1998.

The active US diplomacy played an important role in restraining India not to cross the LoC and prevailing on Pakistan to withdraw forces from Kargil. The July 4 joint statement underscored that fighting in the Kargil region was “dangerous and contain[ed] the seeds of a wider conflict.” It also emphasized that “it is vital for the peace of South Asia that the LoC in Kashmir be respected by both parties” and “concrete steps...be taken for the restoration of the line of control in accordance with Simla agreement”.⁴¹ In exchange, Pakistan received assurances from then President Clinton he would turn to Kashmir issue.⁴² In Pakistan it was officially interpreted as Clinton's resolve to settle the Kashmir issue.

The fear of escalation that crisis may escalate to a nuclear level seriously threatened nascent strategic stability in the region. International community unnerved by the nuclear dimension of the crisis played an active role in deescalating the situation, notwithstanding the fact that nuclear factor prevented both sides from escalating the crisis. Hagerty and Ganguly also contend that available evidence suggests that “in all likelihood, the Pakistani possession of nuclear weapons played a critical role in inhibiting India from opening a second front to draw away Pakistani forces from their points of incursion.” India also decided to “limit all air operations to its side of the LoC for fear of provoking Pakistani misgivings about a larger, more protracted conflict designed to carry the war into [AJK] and beyond.”⁴³ The Kargil crisis also signified that a military solution of the Kashmir conflict is not possible and both parties need to resort to diplomacy to settle the issue.

'Operation Parakram' or 'Twin Peak Crisis'- 2001-2002

The 'Twin-Peak crisis', codenamed 'Operation

Parakram' (Valor) by India “grew in part out of tension between India and Pakistan over Kashmir”.⁴⁴ The crisis was precipitated by an attack on the Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001 that came in the wake of an attack on the state assembly building in Srinagar on 1 October 2001. The incident broke a 10 months de facto ceasefire on the LoC. India accused Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) for the terrorist attack⁴⁵ and responded with full military mobilization on the international border/LoC.

The crisis once again pushed the nuclear armed rival closer to a war. India equated the attack on the parliament with 9/11 attacks on the US and came up with a series of demands including ban on JeM and LeT, extradition of twenty people allegedly involved in carrying out attacks in India and end the cross-LoC “infiltration”. India also recalled its ambassador from Pakistan and suspended bus, train and air links.

Pakistan condemned the attack on the state assembly and the Indian Parliament, sought “credible evidence” and offered a “joint probe” or “impartial investigation” into the incident. Pakistan also put its armed forces on high alert. In fact during the 10-month long crisis, both sides kept about one million troops in a high state of readiness along international borders and the LoC and twice came to the brink of war—immediately after the attack on the Indian Parliament between December 2001-January 2002 and in May – June 2002, after attack on the Indian army compound in Kaluchak, near Jammu, killing 33 people, mostly family members of the army personnel. However, after six months of saber rattling by both sides and India's strategy of coercive diplomacy/forceful persuasion,⁴⁶ New Delhi began to demobilize its forces in later October 2002. The official reason

⁴¹ Robert G. Wirsing, *Kashmir in the Shadow of War: Regional Rivalries in a Nuclear Age*, (M.E. Sharpe, Armonk New York, 2003) p. 83.

⁴² C. Christine Fair, *The Counterterrorism Coalitions: Cooperation with Pakistan and India*, (RAND: Project Air Force, 2004) p. 99.

⁴³ Sumit Ganguly and Devin T. Hagerty, *Fearful Symmetry: India- Pakistan Crisis in the Shadow of Nuclear Weapons*, op.cit. p. 144.

⁴⁴ Polly Nayak and Michael Krepon, *US Crisis Management in South Asia's Twin Peak Crisis*, op.cit. p.13.

⁴⁵ P. R. Chari, Pervez Iqbal Cheema & Stephen P. Cohen, *Four Crises and a Peace Process*, (Washington D.C. Brookings Institution Press, 2007) p. 151.

⁴⁶ The strategy seeks to induce an adversary to desist from ongoing hostile action by threatening to resort to force, but never actually doing so, if the adversary fails to comply with the stated demands. It also offers the adversary possible rewards for compliance and holds in reserve the possibility of increasing the costs of non-compliance. See, Sumit Ganguly and Devin T. Hagerty, *Fearful Symmetry: India- Pakistan Crisis in the Shadow of Nuclear Weapons*, op.cit. p. 169.

given for demobilization was that it had served its purpose as international community had taken cognizance of Pakistan's involvement with terror.

During the crisis, both sides exchanged nuclear threats and engaged in nuclear brinkmanship. On 14 December, Prime Minister Vajpayee in his message to the nation declared that the attack "was not just on the building, but a warning to the entire nation",... "our fight is now reaching the last stage, and a decisive battle would have to take place".⁴⁷ He warned: "We will liquidate the terrorists and their sponsors wherever they are, whosoever they are." Later, he threatened that India, which had resisted crossing the LoC during Kargil conflict, might not show the same restraint in the future. He also declared that "all options are open".⁴⁸

On 11 January 2001, Indian Army chief Padmanabhan, told a press conference that any country that was "mad enough" to initiate a

Pakistani Railway Minister and former ISI chief Javed Ashraf Qazi warned: "If it ever comes to the annihilation of Pakistan, then we will use the (nuclear option) against the enemy".⁵⁴ Both sides also tested nuclear capable missiles- India Agni II intermediate range missile and Brahmos supersonic cruise missile while Pakistan conducted a series of missiles Ghauri-1 (Hatf V), the Ghaznavi (Hatf 111), Abdali (Hatf-II) and Shaheen (Hatf IV) in rapid succession.

Many countries including Russia, Germany, France, Japan, Iran and Saudi Arabia tried to diffuse the crisis. The US and Great Britain played more proactive role in deescalating the situation. Both India and Pakistan tried to use US offices to their own advantage. India was able to manipulate American fear of a possible nuclear war to bring about heightened American pressure on Pakistan end support to Kashmir militancy. On the other hand, Pakistan leveraged its role in aiding the US in the war against the remnants of Al-Qaeda and Taliban

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Musharraf in a speech banned five militant organizations including LeT and JeM and promised that Pakistani territory will not be used for any such terrorist attack anywhere in the world and that includes India. At the same time he asserted: "Kashmir runs in our blood, No Pakistani can afford to sever links with Kashmir."⁵⁶ Hegerty and Ganguly conclude that strategy of coercive diplomacy proved to be of limited utility against Pakistan, a nuclear armed adversary.... The mutual possession of nuclear weapons was the most significant factor in bringing the crisis to a close.⁵⁷ The Stimson Centre's study- US Crisis Management in South Asia's Twin Peak Crisis observed that war was a "distinct possibility" and that dispute over Kashmir "has become more consequential with the acquisition of the nuclear weapons by Islamabad and New Delhi".⁵⁸ It warned:

If bilateral ties do not improve, they will backslide. And if serious efforts are made to improve ties, or seek a resolution of Kashmir agony, significant efforts will also be made to disrupt progress. Only sustained, top down impulses towards normalizing ties can provide sufficient insulation against extreme shocks.⁵⁹

The study speculated that a backsliding in relations and significant acts of terrorism directed against targets in India may trigger another crisis with nuclear proportion. The 2001-02 crises also heightened debate in India on a new doctrine of limited war developed in 2000 after the Kargil crisis called "Cold Start". "Under this doctrine, Indian forces capable of undertaking offensive operations on short notice were to be established along the LoC and international border and the Indian military was to restructure to increase the number of strike formations while reducing their size."⁶⁰

The stand down led to a resumption of a peace process in 2004 in which the issue of Kashmir and terrorism continued to dominate. The fragile dialogue process was once again got a rude shock with multiple attacks in India's financial capital Mumbai on 26 November 2008.

Mumbai Crisis: 2008

The Mumbai attacks that led to third major post-nuclear crisis between the two nuclear adversaries. The incident claimed 169 lives including 22 foreigners also had seeds of escalation to a conventional war with all dangers of nuclear proportions. India accused LeT for perpetrating the attacks. In a televised address, on 27 November, Indian Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh warned that New Delhi will take up "strongly with our neighbours that the use of their territory for launching attacks on us will not be tolerated and that there would be a cost if suitable measures are not taken by them."⁶¹ Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee stated that "some elements in Pakistan are responsible".⁶² India put the dialogue process with Pakistan on the hold and demanded extradition of a list of 20 people allegedly involved in terror incidents in India, and dismantling of alleged infrastructure of terrorism in Pakistan.

Demands were accompanied by threatening statements by top Indian political and military leadership to punish Pakistan if Islamabad fails to take action against the perpetrators of Mumbai attacks. On 19 December, Pranab Mukherjee warned that India would "consider all options" if Pakistan fails to deliver on its promise of not supporting terror activities. He stated: "Terrorism remains a scourge for our region. If a country cannot keep the assurances

⁵⁶ "Text of President's address to the nation", *The News*, 13 January 2002.

⁵⁷ Sumit Ganguly and Devin T. Hagerty, *Fearful Symmetry: India- Pakistan Crisis in the Shadow of Nuclear Weapons*, op.cit. p. 182.

⁵⁸ Polly Nayak and Michael Krepon, *US Crisis Management in South Asia's Twin Peak Crisis*, op.cit. p. 6.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 12.

⁶⁰ P. R. Chari, Pervez Iqbal Cheema & Stephen P. Cohen, *Four Crises and a Peace Process*, op.cit. p. 175.

⁶¹ "Group from outside behind Mumbai blasts: PM", *The Indian Express*, New Delhi, 28 November 2008.

⁶² "Attack on India Pakistan is wholly to blame", *The Tribune*, Chandigarh, 29 November 2008.

that it has given, then it obliges us to consider the entire range of options that exist to protect our interests and people from this menace.⁶³ There were reports in the media that India was thinking of cross-border surgical strikes against the alleged terrorists' camps inside AJK and Pakistan and even a limited war. Tension escalated when on 13 December 2008, Indian warplanes crossed the border into Pakistan's airspace, over AJK and Lahore sectors. Pakistani air force already on high alert chased the intruders.

The incident raised the fear of surgical strikes by India. Although the Delhi and Islamabad tried to down play the incident, defence analysts in Pakistan believed that the violations were deliberate. On 24 December, Indian Army chief General Deepak Kapoor rushed to the Siachen Glacier and forward areas in IHK to check the operational preparedness of the troops while both Indian and Pakistani fighter jets continued surveillance flights along the border.⁶⁴ The IAF

action against those running the camps.⁶⁶

Pakistan also launched cracked down on LeT and arrested its several leaders including its senior leader Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi. Besides, Islamabad assured that it will follow UN Security Council resolution 1267 banning Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) in letter and spirit. It launched country-wide crackdown on the JuD offices and activists. However, it refused to hand over anybody to anyone in connection with Mumbai attacks and asserted that country's law will take its course. Pakistan also rejected Indian accusation of any official support to the Mumbai attackers or their alleged links with Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) or "elements in its official agencies" and maintained that attackers were non-state actors.

Pakistan once again resisted India's coercive diplomacy and asserted that it is ready to counter any aggression. On 30 November, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said in case of

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government and the armed forces to meet any eventuality should a war was imposed on Pakistan.⁷⁰ President Zardari said Pakistani nation would defend itself "till the last drop of our blood."⁷¹

Fearing grave escalation in the crisis, the US, Britain, China, Saudi Arabia, Iran and some other world players stayed engaged with Islamabad and New Delhi to avert any possible confrontation between the nuclear neighbours. The Bush administration taking the lead rushed senior US officials-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Affairs Richard Boucher, Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen to the region urging India to exercise restraint and persuading Pakistan to cooperate with India in investigations and take action against those involved in the attacks. The rising tension led to intensification of US efforts to cool down the situation. As crisis escalated, the US urged both sides to show restraint.⁷²

US intelligence officials also dismissed the possibility of yet another India-Pakistan war. They told reporters they had not noticed any major troop deployment on either side of the border.⁷³ On 31 December, 2008 President Bush spoke with the Indian and Pakistani leaders in which they agreed to avoid any moves that could escalate tensions between the two countries. Bush "urged both... to cooperate with each other in the Mumbai attack investigation as well as on counter-terrorism in general."⁷⁴ The US was concerned that Pakistani troops are not diverted from operations in the restive North West Frontier Province (NWFP) bordering Afghanistan against Taliban and Al-Qaeda militants.

Although there were situations when threat of war increased, yet broadly speaking both India and Pakistan ruled out war throughout the crisis. India unlike in 2001-2002 when it mobilized its ground forces on the borders opted for a strategy of diplomatic compellence rather than a military compellence though military threat was kept alive so as to boost diplomatic pressure. This was quite visible throughout the crisis during November and December. Although Indian and Pakistani political and military leadership ruled out war, yet threats were exchanged accompanied by some posturing and signalling.

In the beginning of the crisis Pranab Mukherjee ruled out military option and Indian defence establishment denied reports regarding the deployment of Indian Army at international border with Pakistan, or the combat aircraft squadrons were being raided for an attack at any location.⁷⁵ However, India asserted its right to protect its territorial integrity. New Delhi also hinted that it might be compelled to take military action against terror networks and training facilities in Pakistan. On 3 December, Mukherjee said, every sovereign nation has the right to protect its territorial integrity and take action as it saw fit, he told journalists. He, however, cautioned against misinterpreting his observation to mean military action.⁷⁶

On 16 December, Defence Minister, A. K Antony said: "We are not planning any military action... but at the same time unless Pakistan takes actions against those terrorists who are operating from their soil against India and also against all those who are behind the Mumbai terrorist attack, things will not be normal."⁷⁷ He also denied that India was planning to call off the more than five-year-old ceasefire along the LoC. Similarly, on 17 December, the Indian

⁷⁰ "Pakistan ready to meet any eventuality: PM", *The News*, 23 December 2008.

⁷¹ Nirupama Subramanian, "We'll defend Pakistan till the last drop of our blood: Zardari", *The Hindu*, New Delhi, 25 December 2008.

⁷² Anwar Iqbal White House counsels caution, *Dawn*, 27 December 2008.

⁷³ *Ibid*.

⁷⁴ Anwar Iqbal, "Zardari and Singh ease Bush worries: US phone diplomacy", *Dawn*, 1 January 2009.

⁷⁵ "No mobilisation of troops along LoC", *The Tribune*, Chandigarh, 1 December 2008.

⁷⁶ Sandeep Dikshit, "Pranab rules out military action", *The Hindu*, New Delhi, 3 December 2008.

⁷⁷ "No plan to attack Pak: Antony", *The Tribune*, Chandigarh, 17 December 2008.

High Commissioner in Islamabad conveyed on behalf of his government a categorical assurance to the government of Pakistan that it had no intention of taking any military action in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on Mumbai.⁷⁸

Pakistan also clearly ruled out war. ISI Chief Lieutenant-General Ahmed Shujaa Pasha while talking to German magazine *Der Spiegel*'s reporter Susanne Koelbl maintained: "there will not be a war.... "We are distancing ourselves from conflict with India, both now and in general."⁷⁹ On 6 January, Rehman Malik, said there will be no war between Pakistan and India and officials of both countries were mature people.⁸⁰ On 16 January, Prime Minister Gilani toning down war threats observed: "I do not see any threat of war as we both are nuclear states and the statements coming from the Indian leadership only reflect the tremendous pressure by their public."⁸¹

India tried to link Mumbai attacks with global war on terrorism and delink it from the larger

secure Islamabad's compliance on UN resolution to crackdown on terrorist outfits.

The international community, however, viewed Kashmir as the main source of tension that is breeding terrorism and threatening security in the region. President-elect Barack Obama made positive statements highlighting the importance of resolution of Kashmir dispute for the security and larger cooperation between India and Pakistan to defeat Al-Qaeda and Taliban resurgence in Afghanistan. In his election campaign, he had talked of a regional approach, devoting "serious diplomatic resources to get a special envoy...to figure out a possible approach...."⁸²

On 21 November, Barack Obama observed that he is considering a new diplomatic push on Kashmir, reversing eight years of American silence on the issue. He believed that there could be no peace in Afghanistan without resolving major disputes between India and Pakistan. In a recent interview to *Time* magazine, Mr. Obama acknowledged talks about Kashmir were among

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confrontation, we must pursue constructive diplomacy with both India and Pakistan.”⁸⁵

Similarly Britain highlighted the importance to resolve Kashmir so as to address root cause terrorism. In an article in *Guardian* on “War on Terror”, British Foreign Secretary David Miliband suggested that resolving the Kashmir dispute would help tackle extremism.⁸⁶ On 15 January 2009, during his visit to India in an interview, British Foreign Secretary David Miliband emphasized that the resolution of the Kashmir issue would “help deny extremists in the region one of their main calls to arms and allow the Pakistani authorities to focus more effectively on tackling the threat on their Western border.”⁸⁷

India strongly reacted to Miliband's comments terming them unsolicited advice and interference in internal affairs of India. *The Time*, in its cover story, *After the Horror*, observed: “the sources of anger are not just economic. India has made little progress in resolving its decades-old Kashmir dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir; in the meantime, the Indian troops who occupy it have turned the state into a swamp of resentment and virulent anti-Indian sentiment.”⁸⁸

Islamabad officially did not try to link up the attacks with the Kashmir as such but emphasized that the resolution of dispute would act as a catalyst for peace in the region. Pakistan appreciated US effort to appoint regional envoy that included Kashmir but felt disappointed once it was fizzled out under Indian pressure. Prime Minister Gilani asked New Delhi to resume peace process to engage constructively to resolve the longstanding disputes, including Kashmir. “We hope that the peace process would resume soon and become result-oriented in addressing all outstanding issues, including

the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.”⁸⁹ He said the Kashmir dispute was central to Pakistan-India relations and held the key not only to regional but also to global peace. He appreciated world powers concern on the centrality of Kashmir dispute saying “We fully support and indeed encourage international efforts to this end.”⁹⁰

Mumbai crisis certainly undermined strategic stability in the region and has led to a prolonged standoff that has frozen all the progress achieved in instituting several Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) relating to Kashmir or in the strategic and conventional sectors.

4. Nuclear Risk Reduction Measures (NRRMS), Kashmir & Strategic Stability

The recurrent crises in the post-nuclear era establish it very clearly that the “stability-instability paradox is still operative in South Asia and is mainly linked with unresolved Kashmir dispute. While nuclearisation of India and Pakistan has ruled out a military solution of Kashmir dispute it has increased the frequency of warlike crises that entail risks of escalation to a conventional war that may spiral into a nuclear exchange. The growing conventional imbalance in favour of India and New Delhi's adoption of “Cold Start” strategy in the wake of Kargil conflict is only going to complicate the strategic stability in the region.

The doctrine first announced by Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes in January 2000 is based on the premises that a limited conventional war is possible under nuclear conditions. Fernandes asserted that there existed a strategic space between a low intensity and high intensity conventional war where a limited conventional war was indeed a possibility.⁹¹ The main rationale of India's “Cold

⁸⁵ “Text of Obama's speech”, *The News*, 28 March 2009.

⁸⁶ David Miliband, “War on terror' was wrong”, *The Guardian*, 15 January 2009.

⁸⁷ “India snubs Miliband for remarks on J&K”, *The Tribune*, Chandigarh, 16 January 2009.

⁸⁸ Jyoti Thottam, “After the horror”, *Time*, 15 December 2008.

⁸⁹ Asim Yasin, Gilani repeats composite dialogue offer to India”, *The News*, 6 February 2009.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Inaugural address by Raksha Mantri at Gulmohar, Habitat Center, New Delhi, “The Challenges of Limited War: Parameters and Options”, National Seminar organized by IDSA, 5 January 2000. Cited in Gaurav Kampani, “Placing the Indo-Pakistani Standoff in Perspective”, *op.cit.* pp.14-15.

Start" strategy is fighting a limited conventional war to end a "proxy war" under the nuclear umbrella. This is an offensive and risky doctrine which puts strategic stability in South Asia under tremendous stress. The very fact that during Mumbai crisis India weighed preemptive surgical strikes option against alleged terrorist camps in AJK and elsewhere in Pakistan and signaling was made when Indian fighter planes intruded into Pakistan air space underscores the urgency that both countries need to undertake concrete steps at the political, strategic and conventional levels to address conditions that destabilize strategic stability in the region. At the political level steps may include consolidation of cease fire on the LoC, reduction of troops addressing humanitarian concerns in IHK and inclusion of Kashmiris in the peace process.

On the issue of terrorism both side needs to take steps to increase trust and cooperation in approaching counter-terrorism. At the strategic level, there is urgent need to avoid strategic competition and take further steps to consolidate and operationalise existing CBMs. At the convention level parties need to avoid introduction of new weapon system and adopt arms control measures.

5. Kashmir-Specific steps

a) Additional measures to consolidate ceasefire on the LoC:

Although ceasefire on LoC is still holding, not much effort has been made to consolidate it by taking substantive measures. The two sides agreed to take small though important steps like upgrading of hotline between Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of the two countries, monthly flag meetings along the LoC between the local area commanders and an agreement on speeding return of inadvertent line crossers. They also agreed on no development of new posts defence works along the LoC but it was not followed in letter and

spirits and both sides accused each other for violating the agreement. Both sides need to take additional measures to consolidate ceasefire on the LoC. These may include:

- Pull back heavy artillery and mortars beyond firing range. Relocating of artillery and mortars to a minimum distance of 15 kms would be appreciable measure.
- Withdrawal of deployed forces from the existing positions with a firm undertaking that there will be no forward movement.
- Designate certain areas as no deployment zones and agree on limiting forces in these areas that are prone to conflict.⁹²
- Employ electronic and aerial surveillance in certain selected sectors as a part of cooperative approach in border management. This should couple with avoidance of intrusion by remotely piloted vehicles, including across the LoC.

b) Reduction of troops in IHK & improvement of human rights conditions:

In addition in view of improved security situation in IHK and remarkable decline in cross-LoC infiltration as admitted by the Indian official sources, India should start reducing troops from IHK in a phased manner. This would not only help in improving human rights conditions in IHK but will give them a sense of relief and a feeling that peace process has started making positive impact of on their lives. In the last four years of peace process, not much progress has been registered on this count despite the fact that Man Mohan Singh promised 'zero tolerance to violence' in IHK.

c) Improving cross-LoC interactions:

Since 2005 there has been opening of cross-LoC travel and trade exchanges which has led to some symbolic softening of the LoC. The benefit of these steps has, however, been limited due to a number of difficulties in the way of their operationalisation i.e. procedural delays in

⁹² Lt Gen Talat Masood (ret), "Building the architecture for peace and stability", in *Prospects of Peace, Stability and Prosperity in South Asia*, op.cit. p. 32.

clearance of entry permits and absence of communication links between two parts of Kashmir. There is an urgent need to remove bottlenecks in the way of operationalisation of the measures that two countries have agreed regarding cross-LoC trade and travel and institute more CBMs to expand the movement of the people, goods and ideas across-LoC.

d) Increased steps to involve Kashmiris in the peace process:

Kashmiris are central to any resolution of Kashmir dispute but as per existing parameters of the composite dialogue, they are not yet part of the peace process. They have supported India-Pakistan peace process but there has been utter frustration amongst the Kashmiri leadership on both sides of the LoC that they have not been included in a peace process. This needs to be addressed. The inclusion of the Kashmiris in the peace process is also very important for the implementation of any solution of the conflict. There cannot be any durable solution of Kashmir, unless Kashmiris are taken into confidence and made party to the settlement. Further, both governments in India and Pakistan should strengthen intra-Kashmiri dialogue by allowing Kashmiri representatives of all different constituents and faiths of Jammu and Kashmir to weigh different options that serve their aspirations without impinging on New Delhi's or Islamabad's sensitivities. And finally, involvement of Kashmiris militants into the bilateral peace process is very important. It is a point that needs to be worked out between the leadership of the two countries.

5.1 Steps to address issues relating to terrorism:

- Both sides should show political will to ensure smooth functioning of the Joint Anti-terrorism Mechanism (JATM) that was created to address concerns relating to issue of terrorism that has potential to derail the peace process.

- Both sides need to give up zero-sum strategies and address trust deficit in dealing with the issue of terrorism in comprehensive manner. This may include issue cross-LoC "infiltration", acts of terrorism in India where Pakistan-based militant groups may be suspected of involvement and India's involvement in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Baluchistan.
- India and Pakistan should utilize South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) platform to narrow down their gaps in perceptions on the issue of counter-terrorism. Further, the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism (1988), Additional Protocol to Convention on Terrorism (2004) agreement on Mutual legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (2008) can be utilized by both sides to adopt a regional approach to counter-terrorism.

While political steps would address the political dimension of strategic stability, steps at the strategic level will provide concrete foundation to strengthening strategic stability in the region.

5.2 Steps at the Strategic Level

During the past five years of peace there have been two major CBMs in the strategic sector. There included: One, Pre-notification of Flight Testing of Ballistic Missile Agreement (2005) under which both countries will provide each other advance notification of any flight test that it intends to undertake of any surface-to-surface ballistic missile. Two, is Reducing the Risk from Accidents relating to Nuclear Weapons agreement (2007). This is a major CBM in the area that can also serve as a measure in arms control. However, there has been no progress on Pakistan's proposal of "nuclear and conventional restraint regime" or Indian proposal of "No First Use".

At the arms control level the parities require to

take steps that can help in reducing the threat of conflict both at the conventional and nuclear level. In the nuclear sector this may involve measures to: build a mutually acceptable and verifiable strategic-restraint regime, including nuclear and missile restraint to prevent deliberate or accidental use of nuclear weapons. The regime may include a bilateral moratorium on further nuclear-weapons testing, maintenance of nuclear weapons on de-alert status, non-deployment of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles, a moratorium on the acquisition and deployment of Anti Ballistic Missiles (ABM) systems and other CBMs to reduce nuclear risk.⁹³

There could be moves towards regional moratorium on nuclear testing, involving China, India and Pakistan; regional fissile material control arrangement involving China, India and Pakistan pending formal negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament (CD). This would avoid nuclear arms competition in the region. Further, a regional non-proliferation regime that involves India, Pakistan, and possibly US and China as guarantors⁹⁴ may act as a great stabilizer.

5.3 Steps at the Conventional Level

There have been at least four substantive agreements in the area of conventional CBMs regarding improving communication links between high military and civil officials. These include hotlines between the foreign secretaries; Pakistan Maritime Security Agency and the Indian Coast Guards; between the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs). The maritime hotline in particular has provided relief in speedy return of straying fishermen in each other's waters. The establishment of hotlines at high official levels provides reliable direct channels of communication at moments of crisis and may help defuse the situations. The

parties need to take further steps to avoid conflict at the conventional level. The steps may include: Conventional arms control measures to build confidence between the two countries through balanced force reductions; Restrictions on induction of heavy weapons within certain specified border zones, and CBMs to eliminate the threat of "surprise attacks".⁹⁵

⁹³ Dr Maleeha Lodhi, "India and Pakistan : Peace by Piece", *Disarmament Forum*, 2004. Available at <http://disarmament.un.org/cab/CBM/CBM%202005%20Pakistan.pdf>.

⁹⁴ Adil Sultan, *Indo-US Civilian Nuclear Agreement: Implications on South Asian Security Environment*, Henry L. Stimson Center, July 2006.

⁹⁵ Dr Maleeha Lodhi, "India and Pakistan : Peace by Piece", op.cit.

6. Conclusion

Kashmir continues to generate instability and underlie stability-instability paradox between India and Pakistan. Strategic stability cannot be ensured unless India and Pakistan enter into a strategic dialogue that takes into account comprehensive NRRMs, at political, strategic, and conventional level. A fragile peace termed as 'irreversible' by the top political leadership of the two countries is struggling hard to survive Mumbai attacks. Although international efforts were able to defuse the intensity of the crisis, the dialogue is yet to be resumed.

The crisis continues to simmer on the issue of investigation and trial of Mumbai attackers and India's demand that Pakistan should dismantle infrastructure of terrorism from its soil. The absence of dialogue is likely to provide space and opportunity to the terrorists and hawkish elements on both sides to undermine the

progress that has been made in the past five years of the dialogue process. This does not augur well for the strategic stability of the region.

India and Pakistan can get over the stability-instability paradox dilemma if they seriously address the issue of Kashmir. The issue of terrorism that is causing hiccups in the peace process has roots in unresolved issue of Kashmir which provides justification to the cause of militants and their actions. Kashmir has defined the paradigm of conflict in South Asia and it is resolution of Kashmir that can define paradigm of peace in South Asia. It would in the interest of strategic stability in South Asia that both countries take concrete steps that turn Kashmir to serve as a bridge of peace in the region. An Indian strategic expert P. R. Chari observes that Kashmir has been the chief source of conflict in the several wars fought between India and Pakistan.⁹⁶