

# US-Pakistan Strategic Partnership: A Track II Dialogue

By Feroz H. Khan and Nick M. Masellis

January 2012



# US-Pakistan Strategic Partnership

A Track II Dialogue, Sixth Iteration

Phuket, Thailand

Brig (retd.) Feroz Hassan Khan

*Lecturer, Naval Postgraduate School*

And

Mr. Nick M. Masellis

*Research Associate, Naval Postgraduate School*

**January 2012**

---

This report is the product of collaboration between the Naval Postgraduate School Center on Contemporary Conflict and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, with logistical support from the Institute of Security and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University

The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Naval Postgraduate School, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, the Department of Defense, or the United States Government.

This report is approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.



**U.S. Naval Postgraduate School (NPS),  
Center on Contemporary Conflict (CCC)  
Project on Advanced Systems and Concepts for  
Countering WMD (PASCC)**

**Project Cost: \$272,974**

PASCC Report 2012 002

The Naval Postgraduate School Center on Contemporary Conflict is the research wing of the Department of National Security Affairs (NSA) and specializes in the study of international relations, security policy, and regional studies. One of the CCC's programs is the Project Advanced Systems and Concepts for Countering WMD (PASCC). PASCC operates as a program planning and implementation office, research center, and intellectual clearinghouse for the execution of analysis and future-oriented studies and dialogues for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency.

For further information, please contact:

**The Center on Contemporary Conflict**

Naval Postgraduate School

1411 Cunningham Road

Monterey, CA 93943

[ccc@nps.edu](mailto:ccc@nps.edu)

or

[OSRDInfo@dtra.mil](mailto:OSRDInfo@dtra.mil)

## **Acknowledgements:**

The authors gratefully acknowledge the participants in the September 18-19, 2011, “U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Partnership: A Track-Two Dialogue,” in Phuket, Thailand, whose presentations and contributions are the basis of this report: Amb. Maleeha Lodhi, Lt. Gen Agha Umar Farooq, Lt. Gen (retd.) Hamid Khan, Dr. Neil Joeck, Dr. Rifaat Hussain, Dr. Andrew Winner, Ms. Nasim Zehra, Dr. Zachary Davis, Maj Gen (ret.) Qasim Qureshi, Col (ret.) David O. Smith, Brig. (ret.) Naeem Salik, Dr. Rodney Jones, Dr. T.V. Paul, Dr. Zafar Jaspal, Mr. Moeed Yusuf, and Mr. Mansoor Ahmed.

In particular, we would like to acknowledge Dr. Kerry Kartchner and Mr. David Hamon of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) for lending their considerable expertise to the discussion. As a project manager, Dr. Kartchner helped shape the project’s framework, advised us on the selection of cases and subject matter experts, and has consistently helped us refine ideas. CCC leadership, including Dr. Anne Clunan, Dr. Sandra Leavitt, and Ms. Meghan Rasmussen, all helped coordinate the planning and execution of this DTRA workshop, and the finalization of the report. Ms. Diana Beckett-Hile also deserves special acknowledgment for her detailed copy-edits.

Finally, we would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to Professor Thitinan Pongsudhirak, former Ambassador Robert Fitts, Ms. Janpai Ongsiriwittaya, Ms. Wuttinee Kamolpattarakul and the entire staff of the Institute of Security and International Studies at the Chulalongkorn University for their valuable inputs and excellent logistical support in organizing this event.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:.....	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	5
OVERVIEW OF U.S.-PAKISTAN RELATIONS.....	10
STRATEGIC DYNAMICS AND POWER BALANCING IN SOUTH ASIA.....	17
A DISCUSSION ON DETERRENCE IN THE NEW AGE.....	23
DETERRENCE STABILITY AND TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS (TNW).....	25
SECURITY DOCTRINES, TECHNOLOGIES AND ESCALATION LADDERS .....	32
KEY CONCLUSIONS .....	35

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Center on Contemporary Conflict (CCC), with support from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), held the sixth iteration of the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue (Track II) on September 18-19, 2011 in Phuket, Thailand. The dialogue was held in partnership with and through the local support of the Institute for Security and International Studies (ISIS).

Like all five past dialogues, the aim was to draw upon the core themes from the current regional and strategic climate with explicit focus on strategic stability in the region. The expected outcome will possibly inform official discussions in both countries, especially for those who are involved in policymaking and implementation. Once again, like the previous iterations, this dialogue brought together top American and Pakistani scholars, former officials, and observers to address the very important strategic issues that affect the relationship between the two countries and suggest pathways for resolving these issues.

The panels arranged in this year's agenda sparked in-depth and frank discussions on a variety of security issues. The first day was organized to discuss overall U.S.-Pakistan Relations and Strategic Balancing in South Asia. The second day focused solely on Deterrence Stability in South Asia with a specific focus on the impact of military modernizations, including: the nuclear and conventional fields, the potential introduction of tactical nuclear weapons (TNW), and new technologies in the complex strategic environment of South Asia.

In order to retain strategic value to the discussion on the above issues, three questions were posed to help guide the substance of the two-day dialogue:

- How will the evolution of U.S.-Pakistan relations and power balancing dynamics in the South Asia region affect the future operating environment for DTRA's mission to combat WMD?
- How will evolving security doctrines and escalation dynamics complicate the role of WMD in South Asia?
- Are there new innovative approaches to concepts of deterrence, stability, and crisis management that should be discussed and explored further?

Lively discussions ensued which addressed the above questions. As is the case with U.S.-Pakistan relations, circumstances at the onset of the meetings dominated the discussion. Consistent with all the previous dialogues, immediate events, public statements, and media reports all affected

the quality of discussions that were oftentimes laden with rhetoric and conjectures.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the tenor of the Phuket Dialogue was captured by Anatol Lieven in a recent opinion piece, “[there] is a thin veneer of friendship over a morass of mutual distrust and even hatred.”<sup>2</sup> Such tone reflects the fact that the U.S. and Pakistan must balance two realities: one of friendship, and one of raised skepticism and contempt.

Indeed, the spectrum of the relationship fluctuates between the immediate and the enduring gamut of issues. On one end, the fabric of the relationship is seeped through a constant scrutiny of the day-to-day talking points, tactics on the ground, or internal controversies. Conversely, there are enduring issues that have existed over the past decade and have remained largely unresolved. Repeated concerns are proffered from both sides, and reflected in the perceptions that Pakistanis have about U.S. policy.

### **U.S. Policy in South Asia: Enduring Perceptions**

- Pakistan views the U.S. partnership as utilitarian and circumstantial. The U.S. is seen as limiting its relations in such a way that it will once again abandon Pakistan, as was the case in 1990. For now, it covets its relations with Pakistan to uproot the Taliban from power, but also simultaneously encourages India to occupy space in Afghanistan. This has been viewed as a potentially hostile situation for Pakistan, leaving a regime in Kabul that is detrimental to Pakistan. The more Pakistan concedes to Kabul and Delhi under pressure from the U.S., the more it provides a foothold for hostile powers, compounding its security dilemma as a result.
- Stability in Afghanistan is unlikely to take root so long as there is no tribal consensus with regard to the regime in Kabul. As long as ISAF forces remain in Afghanistan, an unpopular and minority-led government continues to rule. Paradoxically, if the U.S. and NATO depart prematurely, it could cause a power vacuum, giving rise to an intra-Afghan war; alternatively, if U.S. stays, the conflict could endure because of the occupation. Either way, there is little hope for stability. The only way out from under this impasse is to find a negotiated settlement to the conflict.
- India and Pakistan have been locked in an enduring rivalry for over six decades, failing to bilaterally resolve their conflict. Political and security issues (cross-border disputes, Kashmir, water security, etc.) continue to exist and compound with the passage of time. The root causes of terrorism and turmoil in the region are embedded in the lack of a resolution to these issues. The U.S. has little to no interest in intervening to resolve these issues, and instead seeks concession from Pakistan in favor of India. However, the more the U.S.

---

<sup>1</sup> In 2008, Mumbai terror attack dominated the issue; in 2009 the controversy surrounding certain clauses in the Kerry-Lugar Bill that conditions civilian aid to Pakistan affected the discussions; in 2010 the revelations of Bob Woodward’s book *Obama’s Wars* overshadowed discussions on WMD issues.

<sup>2</sup> Lieven, Anatol. “With a Friend like This.” *New York Times*, Op-ed. November 1, 2011.

enables India with strategic favoritism, the more impossible it becomes for Pakistan to accept such unfavorable dominance. Consequently, the more the U.S. shies away from intervention in conflict resolution, the more distant the elimination of terrorism becomes. And the more regional insecurities perpetuate, less is the incentive for local powers to resolve issues themselves.

- New security doctrines continue to evolve in the region. Based on assumed escalation control, India is dedicated to fighting and winning a war under the nuclear threshold. Indian security managers are seemingly oblivious to the consequences of starting a war; however, so long as asymmetric threats to India continue to emanate from Pakistan, it is hard to rule out a resort to the use of conventional force. And so long as India keeps the conventional war option open, Pakistan will be unable to rule out its nuclear option. The possibility of nuclear exchange cannot be ruled out in the region, as force modernizations and technological innovation continue to challenge strategic stability in South Asia.

In general, the timing of this dialogue occurred when relations between the U.S. and Pakistan were at an all-time low. The statements and events that followed in the next two months (Admiral Mullen's statement, the so-called "memo-gate scandal" which led to the resignation of Pakistan ambassador to the U.S., and the NATO cross-border attack which killed Pakistani soldiers, etc.) explained the state of malleability and fragility. Much has been the case over the past few dialogues, where the day-to-day, contentious operational environment has dictated the status of relations; while enduring regional rivalries expand asymmetrically, the means to confront the deterrence gaps continue to reduce stability to dangerous levels.

Yet, it was the successful May 2<sup>nd</sup> operation that killed Osama bin Laden that finally punctured the balloon of uncertainty and mistrust. The impact of this event overpowered U.S.-Pakistan relations to the extent that substantial discussions on security doctrines and deterrence stability were overshadowed by the tone and tenor of this subject alone. As one U.S. observer expressed, "There is disjointedness. We have very different long-term interests; this is creating a structural problem [between the two countries]." A Pakistani participant remarked, "The negatives in the relationship are all too present." Another commented, "We have various examples of looking at shortsighted gains without long-term consequences." Subsequent public statements and media reports have perpetuated this unfortunate trend.

Beyond the contentious commentary from both sides, however, two central questions remained on the table: how can Pakistan fully trust an ally (U.S.) that interprets the relationship on a one-sided basis with disregard to Pakistan's national interest, where its sovereignty is wantonly violated; and, conversely, how can the U.S. continue to confide in an ally (Pakistan) while within its borders reside entities that blatantly support terrorist networks, and provide sanctuary for those actively fighting American forces in Afghanistan? These two questions loom over the relationship at the strategic

level, and even cast a shadow on some practical questions about how to deal with the impending U.S. withdrawal mid-next year.

Nonetheless, over the remaining two days, there were multiple issues discussed that expanded into the continued examination and concerns regarding strategic stability in the region, as well as some prescriptions for how to strengthen the long-term strategic relationship. These discussions were substantive and professional, attempting to avoid the acute, opportunistic follies that exist at the tactical level and that typically impede discussions at higher levels.

Though there is no one perspective from either the U.S. or Pakistan on these very important issues, the following report represents some of the main thoughts and trends discussed during the dialogue, attempting to capture areas of both contention and agreement.<sup>3</sup>

### **Key Takeaways**

- The U.S. view is that an exaggerated sense of insecurity is driving Pakistani security policy, which is not adaptive to the changing times. There are varying hypotheses from the U.S. regarding Pakistan's role: blatant complicity, sheer ineptness, and a deliberate policy of searching for leverage against India's post-ISAF withdrawal policy. As a result, many contend that Pakistan must review its strategic policy with respect to current conditions and overall trends; it must stop following a hedging strategy by ignoring the terrorists' sanctuaries within the Pakistani controlled areas. Terror emanating from tribal borderlands, moreover, is the primary cause of Pakistani isolation and perpetual instability in Afghanistan, they argue. Yet, from the Pakistani perspective, so long as India continues to meddle and put its "horses" in Kabul, Pakistan will not accept Kabul as a friendly regime.
- Conventional imbalances, an asymmetric environment, and force modernizations continue to exacerbate the gap between Indian and Pakistani military capabilities, and increase the imbalance of power in the region.
- Comprehension of the consequences of strategic failure in Afghanistan is not fully grasped either in the U.S. or in Pakistan. Both countries have been victims of the conflict and both seemingly blame the other.
- An action-reaction arms race in the region is continuing apace with the increase in fissile stocks, assortments of delivery systems, and other technological innovations. In the aftermath of the nuclear deal and broad-spectrum strategic partnership with the U.S., India seems emboldened to develop a strategic Triad and encouraged to compete with China. Pakistan not only feels discriminated against, but also is concerned that the growing Indian capability will exacerbate the imbalance, forcing Pakistan to view nuclear weapons as a means to offset the widening trajectories.

---

<sup>3</sup> Note: the individual papers and keynote speeches from this event will be released in separate publication(s).

- Kashmir and natural resource issues are still very prevalent, and are the linkages between the two states. In order to completely understand the deterrence framework, it is important to consider the issue holistically. Pakistan must do the following in order to ensure stability: address political issues to improve the dialogue beyond the procedural stages; recognize that more progress on Kashmir is needed as the military solution alone is not likely to succeed; and ensure that stability does not remain hostage to non-state actor networks.
- Introduction of short-range battlefield weapons systems with nuclear capability poses new questions on field security, preemptive pressures, and command and control, and has opened new challenges to conventional and nuclear doctrines in the volatile region.
- Pakistan is now convinced that deterrence is highly unstable and the cause of this is India's Cold Start military doctrine. Given the multiple contingencies Pakistan's security forces have to balance, it has continued to revise its war-fighting concept—the introduction of tactical nuclear weapons (TNW) is an extension of this policy. According to one Pakistani perspective, TNW simply bolsters conventional deterrence. This school of thought continues to believe that TNW is inevitable, so strong firebreaks can help maintain stability at the conventional level. An alternative Pakistani perspective is that the term "TNW" is a misnomer; any weapon system that has a nuclear warhead cannot be a tactical. It crosses the threshold from the conventional realm to the nuclear realm, which necessitates the highest level of institutionalized command and control and use-authorization.
- Pakistan and India continue to be in a classic security dilemma that is unlikely to change. So long as the Cold War mind-set remains and politics is marked with bounded rationality, regional problems are likely to exacerbate.
- Given the asymmetries, lack of strategic depth and other vulnerabilities, India's notion of "limited war" is a "total war" for Pakistan.

The perspectives and discourse that unfolded in this dialogue offered some of the mid-range thoughts along this spectrum of issues. The dialogue continued to proffer important steps towards reconciling the complex environment that have had a persistent impact on the U.S.- Pakistan relationship, with the intention of helping both countries understand each other's strategic landscape and interests.

## OVERVIEW OF U.S.-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

***The breach of sovereignty was a momentary breach, which was nothing like the breach of sovereignty perpetuated by Bin Laden himself.***

Over the past year, there have been a plethora of events leading to the current state of affairs: the Raymond Davis debacle; the raid into Pakistan that killed Osama Bin Laden; and the cross-border fighting with the Taliban whose spill-over effects continue to ravage Afghan, Pakistani, and ISAF forces. Since the dialogue, the rhetoric has grown heated, beginning with remarks from Admiral Michael Mullen and Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, extending throughout both sides' legislators and policy makers alike. Even the current presidential hopefuls in the U.S. have been speaking out against Pakistan and questioning their commitment to combating terrorism. This has caused a mass reaction within both defense and political communities.<sup>4</sup>

Still, both sides are concerned about current relations. The war effort, in particular, has created a prism from which relations are constantly viewed across a range of perspectives on an almost-daily basis: from transactional, to coercive, and even benevolent. Both sides are attempting to prevent an "open rupture," and want to reset relations through diplomatic endeavors; both sides are at odds over how to adequately deal with the terror *problematique*: Haqqani, Mullah Omar (Quetta Shura), Tehrik-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and many other extremists groups. As one Pakistani participant expressed: "the U.S. and Pakistan have been through this several times before; this is a new place. In the past we were at periods of engagement and estrangement; now they are happening at the same time."

### *Pakistan's Perspective*

Pakistanis see that there are layers of contradictions that have compounded the difficulty of making lasting progress, for instance: the U.S. is uninterested in the "Kashmir Spring" and human rights violations in the valley, and is not being evenhanded with regard to its relations with South Asian powers. The U.S. has seemingly no regard to Pakistani sensitivities, despite the development of multiple tiers of an institutional relationship that has fostered a long history of alliance.

---

<sup>4</sup> On October 27, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton – after a visit to Pakistan – reaffirmed during congressional hearings on U.S. Foreign Policy – that there's no doubt the Pakistanis have been heavily involved in fighting against terrorists. She also added that in the last six months since Abbottabad, we have had great success in taking out Al Qaeda. The positive course this visit took was soon overturned with NATO's attack on a Pakistani post on November 26, 2011, which has added significant bitterness. Investigation continues on the incident at the time of this writing.

As presented by a couple of Pakistani speakers, Pakistanis actually view U.S. relations through several lenses: military to military (mil-to-mil), intelligence, and diplomatic/economic assistance. Historically the mil-to-mil relationship was the backbone of the countries' relationship. Yet, resentment within the military establishment of both countries has grown over time. The U.S. suspects that Pakistan's military and intelligence establishments have ties with the Afghan Taliban (the Haqqani group, for example) and Pakistani anger persists over the mistrust and violation of its sovereignty, especially since the May 2<sup>nd</sup> raid (as well as the incident of NATO air attacks against a Pakistani border post in November). Coupled with the public statements from senior U. S. officials regarding subsequent raids in Pakistan, the incursions and follow-on tone are most unprecedented in the history between the two countries.

One senior Pakistani, a former flag officer, provided specific thoughts regarding the May 2<sup>nd</sup> raid. Though he considered the operation to be a military success, he believed breaching Pakistan's sovereignty was a strategic error. This stifled the broader aspects of mutual achievements between the two countries and has forced Islamabad to focus on safeguarding its borders rather than finding mutual strategies to deal with the scourge of terrorism. In fact, he compared the breach to the objective of India's Cold Start doctrine which, in his opinion, is designed to primarily humiliate and discredit the Pakistani military and secondarily achieve limited military targets. Additionally, he contends that Cold Start provides a foundation for a larger information operations campaign to defame Pakistan. The result, as the participant described, was "increased anti-American sentiments and disillusion within Pakistan's political-military establishment." On the diplomatic end, the Pakistanis felt that a declaration of principles of partnership must be established (it is still unclear what has come of this since Secretary Clinton's last visit to Pakistan).

The Pakistanis acknowledge the economic assistance from the U.S. to be generous, but still modest compared to the losses they have suffered and challenges to the nation's broader economy. For instance, one Pakistani participant argued that in the past ten years the estimated losses -- including economic opportunity costs - amount to the tune of \$70-80 billion, which far outweighs the benefit of U.S. fiscal aid that the U.S. sends to Pakistan -- a country ravaged by natural disasters (e.g. floods) and man-made disasters (terrorism and corruption). He argued that both exports and remittances from Pakistani workers abroad brought the country \$37 billion in revenues, which sustains Pakistani economy, not the U.S. aid.

#### *U.S. Perspective*

One U.S. participant expressed that the relationship with Pakistan started with exaggerated expectations of each other, which is why managing the relationship and repairing the trust deficit is so challenging. For example, both sides have had a selective interpretation of the mutual agreements of 1954 and 1959, which were never well defined. All along, the U.S. believed the alliance was created exclusively against the communist threat, especially for protection against invasion from the

Soviet Union. The Pakistanis, however, viewed the alliance as a mechanism to garner military support in its war with India, a belief that the United States never shared with Pakistan.

The U.S. participant recognized and praised the continued joint efforts in combating terrorism overall throughout the decade; the May operation was an outlier to these many years of collective efforts. To paraphrase one participant, “the breach of sovereignty was a momentary breach, which was nothing like the breach of sovereignty perpetuated by Bin Laden himself.” Though this is a regrettable situation, it was recognized that feelings and mutual needs must be managed in order for a recovery to take place. The U.S. agrees that there are sub-national groups operating that can undercut U.S. regional relationships (this includes the threat of terrorism within Pakistani borders). The issue, much as the Pakistanis point out, is one of solvency, and how to meet the desired end-states without fueling the flames of mistrust.

The fundamental problem from the U.S. point of view remains Pakistan’s links and alleged support for certain terrorist networks (such as the Haqqani network and Quetta Shura) that have safe-havens in Pakistan’s tribal areas. The U.S. has expressed frustration with Pakistan’s reluctance to address this issue, further stressing the often tenuous bilateral relationship. Unless this pattern changes, it will be difficult (if not impossible) for the U.S. to manage this already difficult relationship. This sentiment is growing within Congress and with the American people more broadly. Still, there is a desire to work through this low period, and foster a positive relationship despite the latest gaffes; coordination and cooperation should continue despite the recent bitterness.

In order to alleviate this discontent, the U.S. participants expressed that there are three fundamental areas on which to concentrate beyond Afghanistan: political, military, and economic. Politically, the future must focus on a continuation of democracy, and for the government to govern as opposed to waging partisan attacks; the symbolism of a full elective term would be powerful in retaining domestic support and formulating sound policies. Despite strains, the mil-to-mil relationship must be restored and will remain, along with civil society, a key component of the broader relationship. Economically, there needs to be growth internally in Pakistan. Assistance and remittances are good, but having a situation that prevents Pakistan from returning to the IMF would be better.

Lastly, despite the focus on counterterrorism efforts, U.S. participants urged that the U.S. take this development in Pakistan very seriously. They note that the record shows that this has been the case since the earthquake relief efforts in 2006 and beyond.

## Crux of Afghan Crisis<sup>5</sup>

***Pakistan has neither the capacity nor desire to see a certain end-state. There is no perfect outcome. We all have to deal with the least desirable outcome that still meets our interests.***

### *Pakistan's Perspective*

According to one Pakistani perspective, the clash of narratives has been the source of disagreements between the U.S. and Pakistan with regard to Afghanistan. For instance: the U.S. continues to view sanctuary in Pakistan as one of the central reasons for ISAF's inability to achieve success; Pakistan states that sanctuary is a consequence of the failed war in Afghanistan – not the result; Pakistan has all along believed that the U.S. made strategic and tactical errors that are responsible for current difficulties despite sincere advice from Pakistan; and the U.S. strategy to rely on warlords has increased the inability to distinguish between the Afghan Taliban and other groups causing instability between both borders.

Nevertheless, there are various schools of thought on the impending U.S. pullout. One view holds that there is no potential for negotiation and reconciliation with the Taliban as long as there are any residual forces remaining in Afghanistan for an undisclosed period of time. The U.S. must therefore show its commitment to leaving, and thus, provide precise dates. This aspect suggests to some Pakistani participants that so long as U.S. forces are in Afghanistan, there will not be a positive outcome because tribes view the presence as a foreign occupation, which they have fought throughout history.

Others contended that there has to be a certain level of stabilization in the country before the U.S. departs; withdrawal should thus be based on conditions on the ground, and neither on fixed-timelines, nor on the Taliban's terms of negotiation. One senior Pakistani posed several questions, such as: "Are the militants on the run? Is Karzai's government in control? Is the law and order under control? Are the Afghan forces in the right position?" In his opinion most of the answers to these questions are in the negative. If withdrawal arrives too prematurely, argues this group, militants will fill the vacuum. They argue that this occurred the first time the U.S. left (after the Soviet-Afghan War), and it will happen again, this time with a "super-Taliban" left to rule.

---

<sup>5</sup> Pakistani participants were not unanimous on the impact of the impending U.S. withdrawal at the time of the dialogue. That might have changed after the events, which happened after September 21 (i.e. Mullen's "veritable arm" statement; Secretary of State's visit to Islamabad to bring relations back on track; the "memo-gate" scandal which led to resignation of Amb. Husain Haqqani; and now NATO attack that killed Pakistani soldiers which is under investigation).

Moreover, there would surely be a spillover into Pakistan that needs to be considered for its own internal security. A Pakistani participant critiqued comments about Pakistan's ability to secure the tribal areas. He noted that FATA's turbulence comes from external forces, with a sanctuary of 200-300km. He continued that attacks are derived from both sides, and it is therefore difficult to claim that Pakistan has failed when there are forces on the other side that reign with impunity. He expanded on these thoughts, stating that "the same people who are being paid off, and negotiated with, are the same ones you want destroyed; you cannot demonize and talk at the same time."

There is seemingly no clear consensus amongst the Pakistanis on this particular issue; however, both schools agree that without harmony of thought and action between the U.S. and Pakistan, a viable strategy for Afghan stability is unlikely to materialize. Pakistan will, therefore, remain a critical linchpin in the region. The U.S. should not dismiss its concerns.

Among other points the Pakistanis asserted that the military strategy must be consistent and subservient to the political strategy. The Pashtun tribes will continue to fight indefinitely. As one speaker stated, "you cannot whack them (tribal Pashtuns) onto the negotiation table." The key is to properly sequence the objectives, accept that there is only an illusion of engagement (at the moment), and simultaneously understand that there are several constraints that inhibit Pakistan from initiating all out kinetic actions. As one senior Pakistani specified, "Pakistan has neither the capacity nor desire to see a certain end-state. There is no perfect outcome. We all have to deal with the least desirable outcome that still meets our interests."

There were a litany of concerns revealed by the Pakistanis with regard to the status and capability of the Afghan security forces. Participants raised myriad questions and concerns: whether or not force ratios of 210 thousand troops and the air force getting 200 aircraft was actually required and even if it is, would actually come to fruition given that the efforts are driven by contractors, not by forces. Training variant ranks is also an issue; you cannot *train* a general. The defection rate of forces (already high) is also likely to grow, as ethnic disparities still exist; most of the Afghan Army is dominated by Northern Alliance with only token representation of tribal Pashtuns. The annual cost of maintaining Afghan armed forces is estimated to be \$6 billion, which will be hard to sustain. Meanwhile, the present economic and reconstruction efforts are not sufficient to ensure a viability of security forces. As described by one Pakistani participant, "the country will not be able to stand on its two feet."

A clash of interests also exists among the key regional players: China, India, Russia, and the other Central and South Asian countries. One Pakistani recommended that there should be an international conference, "that way everyone gets the benefits and resources of Central Asia." He notes that the international conference should serve as a prerequisite for achieving conditions to pull out; right now there are no such cohesive talks between these nations.

Pakistani participants generally agreed that one approach to stability in Afghanistan is to pursue a regional compact. This move could bring relevant, regional neighbors together to find common ground on non-interference and intervention. With regional players involved, there can be endorsement for the reconciliation process. Keeping in mind regional concerns over formal talks, and fears of asymmetry and encirclement, back-channels can still be used to supplement such efforts. In alternative perspectives, some participants believe that the clashes of interests are too volatile. At the end of the day somebody is arming, training, and inciting these groups; it may well elude national control. Until these issues, of both the state and non-state nature, are addressed, there will be continuous funding and weapons coming in; internal measures alone will not fix the problems.

### *U.S. Perspective*

As one U.S. participant reminded the group, however, there was once a very corrupt and ineffective government in the Western Hemisphere: the U.S. in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Democracy is not easy. Afghanistan will not have it any easier. The U.S. objective is to create conditions that will not allow terrorists to be harbored; this is where it started, and this is where it must end.

The U.S. and Pakistan differ significantly in terms of military vs. political focus. The U.S. participants believe that continued presence of foreign forces has had a positive impact in the country because it continues to provide for increased capacity and stability of the Afghan government and security forces. The U.S. has laid three preconditions for peace talks with the Taliban: the Taliban must disavow and distance itself from Al Qaeda; cease violence—specifically, stop attacking ISAF forces; and accept the Afghan Constitution and seek reconciliation within that framework.

The Pakistanis commented that the first condition was of Taliban eschewing all contacts with Al Qaeda are doable and genuine; but the other two conditions would be problematic. Unless both sides stop violence (i.e. cease drone attacks and military operations) to expect one side alone to stop firing is not going to work. On the third condition, the Taliban position is that they were neither consulted nor were party to the earlier “Bonn process,” which resulted in the Afghan constitution. The system of governance and the constitution would have to be renegotiated.

The reconciliation issue is viewed as the third leg of the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan, where kinetic operations, continued training, and capacity-building of the Afghan security forces progress. One U.S. participant stated that you must ‘fight-and-talk’ at the same time, while another highlighted that “reconciliation with Haqqani is different than Quetta Shura, etc.” There is as much of a strategic opportunity with reconciliation as there are challenges; especially since the goals of certain

players are antithetical to U.S. interests. The issue should be pursued much more robustly, but without thwarting U.S. objectives.

One U.S.-based Pakistani concluded that the reality on the ground in Afghanistan is being lost in the dialogue altogether. He disagreed with one assessment in that this endeavor is meant to be a military victory; this is *realpolitik*. He notes that the fact of the matter is that no one wants a neutral Afghan government. The key is to find where overlaps exist. He continued that “both sides have reached the point where they repeat themselves; therefore, there is a cognitive dissonance that needs to be overcome.”

### **Conclusion from Panel**

Operationally, there was some consensus on what the U.S. should do moving forward in Afghanistan: transparency by the numbers and activities of personnel on the ground. Yet, many contradictions remain. One Pakistani presenter pointed out that the U.S. and Pakistan still must reconcile these issues before any serious relations can be mended, and strategic gains can be made on the ground. As explained, “there is no point dancing around these issues, [as the strategic dialogue did] the two countries must reconcile and address common objectives.” Most of the Pakistani rhetoric was geared toward ending drone attacks, and withdrawing Special Forces from the ground in order to limit the U.S. footprint. Yet central to all of these changes needs to be a new take on reconciliation.

There is common ground on defeating Al Qaeda and strengthening stability in nuclear South Asia, however, there are tactical disparities. For instance: actions against the Haqqani “fight-and-talk” approach that Pakistan feels is inconsistent with peace talks; mutual concessions that must be facilitated, otherwise, any type of political resolution will be unrealistic; the nature of unilateral action, the impact on Pakistan’s security establishment; safe havens in Pakistan as a stage for attack; and an unknown timeline and number of forces needed to subdue the insurgency. As one senior Pakistani participant observed, “there is a low probability of negotiation if the U.S. presents an open-ended presence of residual forces.”

## STRATEGIC DYNAMICS AND POWER BALANCING IN SOUTH ASIA

***Pakistan is truly the “Breezeway” to South and Central Asia.***

U.S.-Pakistan relations in the future will not only be determined by the Afghan factor, which regularly overwhelms the current state of affairs. There are two critical areas in which Pakistan remains a strategic partner: Pakistan’s geostrategic significance, and its external relations with key countries in the region.

### **Triangular Geopolitics**

There are positive and negative aspects to U.S.-Pakistan relations: the positives being the aforementioned geographic location and relations, professional militaries, and fulcrum to South Asia; and the negatives being the potential nuclear weapons arms race, internal strife, and increased radicalism.

Though Asian strategic dynamics are primarily driven by China and India, Pakistan’s geopolitical significance will propel it toward the new “Great Game.” The nature of strategic dynamics are as follows: Pakistan’s geographical location at the crossroads of Southern Asia places it at the confluence of three large countries – Russia, China and India; its coastline links the landlocked hinterland of Central Asia to the Indian Ocean; and its proximity to Persian Gulf oil flows makes it a key hub as an energy corridor to Asia and the rest of the world. In addition, its increasing nuclear capability, large standing professional armed forces, increasing nuclear triad capabilities, and resource potential, all combine to enhance the country’s geographical significance. Pakistan is truly the “breezeway” to South and Central Asia.

Combined with its external relations with China, the Muslim world, and India, Pakistan directly affects relations within the U.S.-Sino-Pakistan *entente cordial* that will likely remain the pillar of Pakistani policy. Pakistan’s brotherhood with key Islamic countries (Saudi Arabia and Iran, in particular) and its strategic relations with India are critical. Taken together, Pakistan’s strategic position helps determine the pace of strategic dynamics in the region, impacting the power balancing and strategic alliances throughout Asia.

Relations with India in particular continue to represent a major strategic challenge for Pakistan. The latter frequently vacillates between prospects of peace, *détente*, and sudden military crises. Both nuclear-armed states are finding ways to avoid direct confrontation. Yet, limited warfare policies, and lack of clarity of nuclear thresholds, leave considerable uncertainty as far as strategic stability is concerned.

If Asia writ large manages to deal with these issues, there are some prospects for enduring stability in the region. If there are any arms races between countries, however, third and fourth party actors will also be affected. For instance, Pakistan neighbors Iran and has a very strong ideological relationship with Saudi Arabia. If Iran goes nuclear, Pakistan becomes a very important piece in the puzzle because of the reactions of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States, as well as the responses coming from the U.S. and Israel, in particular. Given the tension with India and China's special relations with Iran, it is impossible that Pakistan can escape all of the crisscrossing dynamics in the region. Within the entire milieu, instability in Afghanistan, and rise of radicalism writ large, Pakistan appears to be the centerpiece in the entire jigsaw puzzle in Central Asia and—being nuclear-armed—a critical piece in Asian power balancing and stability.

Against this backdrop, participants sought to answer the first question presented by the sponsor: *How will the evolution of U.S.-Pakistan relations and power balancing dynamics in the South Asia region affect the future operating environment for DTRA's mission to combat WMD?*

### **Power Balancing in South Asia**

***The 'war on terror' will pass, but Pakistan's relations with China will not.***

The Pakistani perspective holds that its location will make it a central hub of a communication and energy corridor. For decades to come, the improvement in communication and maritime infrastructure will advance to a level where huge amounts of land and sea traffic will merge in the future at strategic communication nodes, such as the Pakistani ports on its coastline. These dynamics will create vast economic activity where traditional security doctrines will become increasingly secondary, or even tertiary, to the primary objective of 'trading states,' i.e. the notion of the 'new silk road.' Technological progress has made the 19<sup>th</sup> century Mahan and MacKinder strategies irrelevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, according to many Pakistani participants.<sup>6</sup>

It was in this context that one of the participants remarked that a new "Great Game" is emerging in the forthcoming century that will espouse significant soft balancing, rather than the 19<sup>th</sup> century tradition of hard balancing. He noted that the latter is an outdated concept involving militarism, imperialism, and expansionism. States must prepare themselves as the world continues to

---

<sup>6</sup> Some Pakistanis noted that the context of Mackinder in the heartland is irrelevant when looking at South Asia; it is not a broken landmass, so the possibilities are endless. Land and maritime infrastructures are improving where sea-land distinction would lessen, thus geo-strategically important countries would become communication and energy corridors in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

advance technologically, becoming more interconnected through trade and commerce. The 'trading state' is evolving.

Despite these advances, hard balancing continues to be the central focus for Pakistan, while China and India also embrace significant soft balancing measures. In the participant's opinion, Pakistan must radically change its security policies. For Pakistan specifically, the combination of an austere economy and security needs trump all other pursuits, he advised.

"Right now," many Pakistanis, responded, "this is a bridge too far." This theory is attractive but does not fully correlate with the realities in the region. In the foreseeable future, traditional security would remain a compulsion even if it were not the preferred policy course for Pakistan. As one Pakistani participant stated, "Pakistan has no option of pursuing soft balancing. Hard balancing is the central theme among all major nations, and especially India and Pakistan." There are a number of issues that conflate the balancing relationship between India and Pakistan even further: the mutually assured destruction (MAD) paradigm; conventional military imbalances; and building counterweights (against China for example) play significant roles. Above all, one participant asserted, "Non-state actors are creating blowback between the major players in the region (e.g. Mumbai)." Yet, it was Pakistan's hard power that provided soft power residuals, such as peacekeeping operations, as tools for diplomacy when the country was isolated under nuclear sanctions in the 1990s.

Other opinions view that purely militaristic thinking is not going to work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Machiavellian thinking is diminishing in contemporary times and new strategic parameters are needed: deterrence, non-use of nuclear weapons, strategic restraints, and confidence-building measures. In the end, whether in a decade or two, this will be the method for determining how stability is viewed and maintained.

### **Sino-Pakistan *Entente Cordiale***

The nature of Pakistan's relationship with China will be a significant determinant in the emerging geopolitical landscape in Central and South Asia. Pakistani participants were firm in their faith that the robustness of the Sino-Pakistan relations are based on common visions and mutual benefits, and are beyond merely circumstantial or utility-based concerns (an implied reference to the US-Pakistan relations). The Pakistanis recognize the neighborhood as permanent factor in which China remains their most trusted ally, India continues to challenge Pakistani existence, and Afghanistan remains a willing pawn to be used against Pakistan's interests. Relations with Iran would also have a mix of positive and negative elements. Pakistan would therefore need to play its cards very carefully in managing its complex international relations; especially when its relations with its traditional distant ally – the U.S. – are not improving.

In this overall context, Pakistan sees its geopolitical stance beyond the utilitarian role (e.g. ‘war on terror’), which is the perceived U.S. view. To the Pakistanis, the U.S. is blind to the Pakistani potential that the Chinese are able to see quite clearly. As one Pakistani participant commented, “the ‘war on terror’ will pass, but Pakistan’s relations with China will not.” There have been developments that underscore the significance of the Sino-Pakistan relationship; the visit by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao helped reinforce the two countries’ commitment to one another. There are also major infrastructure projects that are pending in Pakistan, including rail and road. The participant explained, “Pakistan does not publicize it, and the Chinese do not advertise... The Chinese relationship provides strategic confidence... all the engineers who are in country are not there for vacation.” Nevertheless, the Pakistanis emphasized that Pakistan does not see its relationships with China and the U.S. as interchangeable: “Pakistan separates different things in different boxes.”

The American participants were somewhat skeptical about the degree of faith the Pakistanis place in China. One of the U.S. participants expressed concerns over whether Pakistan is fooling itself about its relationship with China. He specifically noted the wars between India and Pakistan in both ’65 and ’71, and questioned how China “stepped-up to the plate.” To emphasize his point, he noted that, “China takes a hands-off approach” when Pakistan is in extreme crisis and it is only the U.S. that has stepped up to diffuse the crises.

Although the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was barely discussed, except in passing; Pakistanis see distinct potential for this organization’s emerging regional role, especially as NATO withdraws from Afghanistan. In light of the recent NATO attack within Pakistan’s borders and the pending outcome of the Bonn process, the extent of Pakistan’s reliance on China (and Russia) in the days since the event’s conclusion have likely increased.

### **The Maritime Component**

The following section addresses the second DTRA question: *How will evolving security doctrines and escalation dynamics complicate the role of WMD in South Asia?*

An American professor presented on maritime issues in the Indian Ocean and how that impacts the Asian power balance. As a major transit hub, there are various vantage points to consider: transnational issues and how cooperation has been, and should continue to be, an element to the strategic calculus in the region; understanding the Indian Ocean as a major transit point for commerce and illicit trade (people, arms, narcotics, illegal fishing, etc.); the frequency of natural disasters and terrorism are also major issues that call for greater coordination and cooperation between countries; and areas where contention exists. Central to addressing all of these issues is the regional interaction with China.

Chinese maritime development has expanded from the Gulf of Aden down to the east coast of Africa. Their soft power has also been displayed through their growing naval prowess, where a recently dispatched hospital ship just left the Caribbean, while their military posture is enhanced by a new aircraft carrier class. This is just the beginning. The question is: how are other powers, including the U.S., going to react?

Pakistan's role in naval cooperation has been remarkable in recent times. A U.S. participant highlighted the Pakistani Navy's role in coalition operations. In his opinion, the Pakistani Navy has had an interesting advantage over China and India, since it has actively played an international role – including taking the command of task forces in the past decade. Pakistan continues to show its willingness and commitment to participate in such coalition operations. The more these areas can be leveraged, the more likely strategic stability can be fostered in the region.

In fact, there are many spin-offs where maritime cooperation between India and Pakistan can transcend into other areas of maintaining a strategic equilibrium between the countries and within the region as a whole. For instance, addressing piracy, port-calls, relief efforts, and access to the global commons (sea lanes, etc.) offer some examples. CENTCOM/PACOM coordination will be essential for the latter to take root, and should keep in mind the other states in the region that can address these issues for their own interests as well.

Yet, the dynamics have not always led to cooperative initiatives. When interactions are less well defined, there is a risk of confrontation. The Indian and Pakistani vessels brushing up against each other in the Gulf of Aden offer an example. Indian and Pakistani ships were involved in a rescue mission against Somali pirates that were holding hostages. Essentially both Indian and Pakistani naval ships were on the same mission. Both blame each other for the lack of safety at sea; though there are alternative interpretations, both claim that the other instigated the provocation. Even so, a week or so later, there were meetings to discuss the incident. The presenter believed that these interactions would increase as both countries seek to work together in the maritime realm: crisis management will remain a critical component in the region.

There have also been interesting interactions between China and India, especially as submarine forces in Pakistan and India increase. Both India and Pakistan are actively developing submarine forces and are employing dual-capable missiles on those vessels. So far, there are only conventional submarines, but nuclear-powered submarines are on the horizon. Conventional submarines with “unknown” armaments offer no signal to how these interactions will matter in the future. The American participant explained, “We have and can have patterns of interaction that are not cooperative.” India has been talking about getting another half-dozen subs, while Pakistan seeks vessels from China. The participant further explained that both India and Pakistan have made announcements on improving their existing submarine forces.

### Pakistani Grand Strategy: A Theoretical Observation

***Instead of using its coercive capacity, Pakistan must expand its economic sector, which would create, "A higher sense of status."***

A central theme to the grand strategy debate came from an esteemed academic and discussant on the power balance panel, who referred to the hard power balancing discussion, reinforcing that the British era of security is no longer relevant in contemporary times. As a result, Pakistan suffers more by not benefiting from the globalization phenomenon. In his opinion, Pakistan has been following a grand strategy, and even if small tactical victories occur, they do not yield strategic advantages. The same discussant advised that Pakistan is playing the game too much, and in the process is suffering. He also expressed that instead of using its coercive capacity; Pakistan must expand its economic sector, which in his words creates, "a higher sense of status."

From his perspective, Pakistan should ask whether it is making itself more secure by pursuing real grand politics. One major problem is that tactical gains, historically, have not converted into strategic victories, and this has often lead Pakistan to become the ultimate loser. Pakistan would be better off in conditions of cold peace with less focus on the rivalry with India. The discussant commented that, "Pakistan is actually missing a great opportunity by not using the Chinese element as a development opportunity." He asserted, "Yet, simple aid will not help; it must be trade, if you (Pakistan) play too much you suffer. One has to calibrate the policy." The discussant recommended looking at Indonesia and Bangladesh as models for expanding security beyond hard balancing.

Pakistanis generally agreed with these remarks, but reacted to the implication of the advice that Pakistan is singularly responsible for the security policy. One participant asserted that hard balancing "does not exist in a bubble," and countered by asking whether India would allow space for Pakistan to do the "soft balancing" and "create conditions for cold peace," as was suggested. The Pakistani participants pointed out that India isolates Pakistan, seeks bilateral agreements with all other neighbors except for Pakistan that India backed out from the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline and that India is making geopolitical maneuvers in Afghanistan and Iran.

Despite the contention, there was agreement on Pakistan's need for soft power as a means to help stabilize its economy and security. Yet, there is an information gap that needs to be considered. The Pakistanis expressed that there seems to be no appreciation for the security dimension that Pakistan must address: India is a huge factor in creating a security-intensive environment leaving, no choice for Pakistan but to cover all sides. Hard balancing is not a policy choice, but an outcome of the existing external conditions.

## A DISCUSSION ON DETERRENCE IN THE NEW AGE

Pursuant to addressing the DTRA-focused question, this section focuses on the third and final query: *Are there new, innovative approaches to concepts of deterrence, stability, and crisis management that should be discussed and explored further?*

In a keynote speech on “Deterrence in the New Age,” Lt. General Agha Farooq Umar, President of Pakistan’s National Defense University, presented a concept of “no wars, no peace.” States that are located in a security-intensive region have so many vulnerabilities, and largely unresolved issues, that they cannot distinguish between perfect peace and a state of war. Where some regions in the world are condemned to live in a state where perfect peace is illusive, South Asia has a long history of unresolved conflicts and enduring rivalries that are security-intensive.

There is always a grey area. As he defined it, South Asia has experienced a phenomenon in which various intensities during the decades following the introduction of nuclear weapons in an uncertain security environment recalculated that security environment.

For Pakistan, especially after 9/11, the lines between conventional and unconventional war have blurred. This condition has enhanced the pace for sub-conventional and irregular warfare to bleed the enemy by adding terrorists and saboteurs to the calculus. Both countries can exploit the multiple domestic fissures the other has based on a confidence that the nuclear deterrence factor and the apex of the security spectrum would hold.

General Agha provided five proposals to address these conditions:

- Limited conventional war under the nuclear threshold is a flawed strategy. The primary purpose of Pakistani acquisition of nuclear weapons was to make nuclear war an unthinkable option. He advises India to rethink its Cold Start strategy – which might have been suitable if Pakistan did not possess a nuclear weapon capability.
- Pakistan’s resources are limited, which would constrain the modernization of conventional forces, and thus, Pakistan will be forced to lower the nuclear threshold. He advised that both India and Pakistan should freeze their budgets to their existing levels.
- The fissile material cut-off treaty appears Pakistan-specific; this must be reviewed to take Pakistani concerns into account.
- Covert warfare must be eschewed, which is at the core of creating a “no war, no peace” environment. He specifically pointed out India’s use of Afghanistan to help wage a covert war in Baluchistan is aimed at tying down Pakistani forces and threaten the integrity of Pakistan: a throwback to 1971 when India did the same with Bengali nationalism to undo a united Pakistan.

- All regional players must change their mindsets in order to bring about regional stability by making meaningful progress toward conflict resolution through a constructive dialogue.

He also laid down the guidelines of the Pakistani nuclear policy as “security driven” and “specific to the threat perception:” Pakistan’s capabilities for deterrence and defense of its sovereignty are forefront; minimum nuclear deterrence is the cornerstone to Pakistan’s security strategy; adequate conventional military force will be maintained to raise the nuclear threshold; and flexible and sufficient delivery means ensures the credibility of that deterrence. Deterrence capability is, therefore, the anchor for peace and security in the region.

Keeping pace with Indian technological advances continues to strain Pakistan’s limited resource capacity. The souring of its relationship with the U.S. exacerbates this problem. For nearly a decade, Pakistan has remained wary of U.S. “double standards” in the region. Pakistan views the U.S. as the enabler for India to enhance its arsenal by freeing up its domestic resources to build fissile material for weapons purposes. Meanwhile, India is encouraged to field a nuclear Triad and allowed access to technologies that will enhance its delivery capacities in terms of aircraft, missile defense, surveillance, and other areas of strategic cooperation. The same is denied to Pakistan. To most Pakistanis, it appears that the lure of lucrative business to its military-industrial complex and nuclear industries trumps any considerations with regard to the impact on strategic stability.

Pakistani participants warned that should ballistic missile defense be pursued, the result in Pakistan would be largely psychological. If India feels that Pakistani missiles would be intercepted (BMD), then Indian decision makers will have a sense of security and protection. In turn, this would make them willing to go to the brink of crisis with Pakistan. This is the opposite of what India feels about Pakistan. Common belief in Indian security thinking is that nuclear deterrence allows Pakistan to encourage proxies into India without fear of Indian conventional retaliation.

Most participants agreed that a technological arms race is in the making. The drivers of this arms race, however, are not entirely clear. One observation suggested that the private sector potentially plays a substantive role in the materializing arms race. Questions remain, however, as to how the private sector and bureaucratic policies in the region will influence this race as it unfolds in the future. There is a trend in Indian economic interests to go the military route, but this is not the case in Pakistan. If the private sector were involved in Pakistan, civil-military relations would not be as bad as they are right now. The principal driver in Pakistan now is the public. Pakistani observers highlighted that the Indian private sector is already heavily invested in the military.

Pakistan has been experiencing significant strains in order to address its classic security dilemma with India (e.g. investment in nuclear weapons systems). At the same time, its internal security continues to strain its institutions and population at large. An American observer also expressed

concerns that in one sense, nuclear weapons in-and-of-themselves have *created* deterrence – making war an unthinkable option. This is what happened in Western Europe.

Other comments came from another Pakistani participant, who reaffirmed that there have been many factors extraneous to South Asia that have led to current state of affairs. One of the central factors is 9/11. “If 9/11 had not occurred,” he explained, “there is a very strong possibility that the deterrence relationship would have evolved through a more natural and normal evolution.”

## DETERRENCE STABILITY AND TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS (TNW)

***By integrating modern and emerging technologies within the armed forces, India has enhanced its capability to develop flexible responses.***

The first Pakistani presentation highlighted the challenges to the informal deterrence relationship that changed into a structured deterrence framework after the 2001- 2002 military standoff. Indian military strategy shifted because of three factors: a belief that Pakistan is aggressively following a sub-conventional war against India; India’s insistence that nuclear weapons have not made conventional war irrelevant; and that India’s conventional capability was inadequate to fight a swift, limited conventional war with Pakistan (and China). Based on these assumptions, “India’s strategic innovation was a new doctrine called Cold Start.” Pakistan revised its warfighting capabilities by developing TNW, due to India’s policy of “re-asserting the relevance of conventional war as an instrument of policy.” There are, therefore, two elements in the strategic framework: political and military.

The presentation then explained that the political framework referred to the non-resolution of the Kashmir conflict, which, in the presenter’s opinion, is the root cause of the evolution of strategic doctrines. He surmises that militancy and terrorism is a system, and not the cause of the conflict.

The military framework was described as the “*strategy of manipulating threats*” – both sides indulge in brinkmanship and “*risk manipulation*.” He explained that across the spectrum of conflict, any one side could destabilize a segment of deterrence to influence a particular political outcome.

Another presenter described this interaction as asymmetric capabilities and different tiers, which creates a logic of “escalatory dialectic to offset the advantage of either side.” He explained what he called the “*stability of conventional deterrence*.” This view holds that India has created three interrelated, major strategic effects by placing integrated, mobile, and flexible military forces on Pakistan’s border and increasing its military options ranging from punitive strikes to full-scale conventional war. By integrating modern and emerging technologies within the armed forces, India has enhanced its

capability to develop flexible responses. As a result, Pakistan's forward military posture was neutralized and the strategic advantages of quick mobilizations were effectively undercut.

These three conventional strategies have pushed Pakistan to revise its warfighting concept by both restructuring and repositioning its conventional forces. By introducing TNWs into the mix, Pakistan's response is to "maintain a credible linkage between conventional war and nuclear escalation." Pakistan's strategy is designed to make an Indian decision to initiate conventional operations—even on a limited scale—difficult, complicated, and dangerous.

Explaining the advantages of TNW, he explained that it assures that conventional deterrence does not fail. He emphasized that India's initiation of conventional war would constitute a deterrence failure for Pakistan. This could quickly escalate to the nuclear level. The imminent possibility of nuclear escalation, in his opinion, will pose stringent limits on India to begin a conventional conflict in the first place. He acknowledged the danger and risk of deploying TNW, but explained, "It is precisely this danger and uncertainty that will ensure stability of deterrence in the conventional domain." He reinforced the point that the introduction of TNW only enhances the value of conventional deterrence.

Finally, the presenter proposed developing a "*deterrence stabilization regime*" between India and Pakistan, which should be aimed at enhancing the stability across the entire spectrum of conflict (e.g. from low intensity, to conventional, to nuclear). He believes that given India's strategic modernization, arms control initiatives are likely to succeed in bringing stability.

He concluded with the following recommendations that: India should be convinced that Pakistan is not complicit to terror activities of non-state actors; Pakistan must be convinced that deterrence stability is not kept hostage to activities of non-state actors (e.g. India will not attack conventionally if there is a terrorist attack); create a structural framework for intelligence-sharing against terror networks and develop cooperative mechanisms for agreed-upon responses in such events and strategies to deal with the scourge of terrorism.

Both sides should discuss the conventional force posture to reduce crisis and stability. Finally, he suggested that Pakistan's development of TNW was inevitable due to force posturing, but the deployment can still be avoided if three areas are addressed: first, eliminate or reduce the strategic autonomy of terror networks; deterrence stability should be viewed holistically under a comprehensive regime, not piecemeal; sustainable political discourse must make headway. The implication of such an assertion is that conventional deterrence on its own is unlikely to hold because of the deployment postures of both armies on the border; therefore, the integration of TNW and conventional forces is the only way to enhance conventional deterrence. In other words, this exceeds conventional deterrence, and actually becomes nuclear deterrence.

A U.S. presenter described the U.S. experience with TNW. He recalled a Pakistani discussion in the past where opinions were split about the utility of shortened ballistic missiles and TNWs. However, there was consensus among the Pakistanis – “that all nuclear weapons are strategic weapons regardless of range yield and employment.” There could be tactical use, but there are no tactical nuclear weapons in South Asia.

The presenter explained at length the U.S. experience of dealing with nuclear weapons from the 1940s to the present and explained the various problems of employing TNWs. Battlefield weapons history and the U.S. experience reveal some interesting lessons where, one American participant argues, clear examples exist for why such weapons systems do not increase deterrence, and bring the adversaries closer to the brink. The Pakistani side indicated that it would have a deterrent effect: they gave the example of the M-29 “Davey Crockett” systems deployed during the Cold War. The TNW discussion was inconclusive because there was too little time to work through the issues.

***Nasr creates a balancing dynamic that frustrates and makes futile the power-maximizing strategy of India.***

Core contentions with TNW based on the Cold War experience form one school of thought: TNWs add nothing to deterrence; invite preemption; complicate command, control, and communications (C3); Nuclear Release authority for tactical targets is difficult to obtain; TNW are difficult to secure when deployed; units require scarce manpower; launch units must be withdrawn from battle to ensure their survivability; such units are not decisive; and lastly, they do not go away. As one Pakistani participant noted, the “Russians and Americans still have thousands of weapons in the inventory. This is the road we are heading down in South Asia.” As one American commented, the best thing is for “both sides to cease development. This is the best thing for regional stability.” There are also financial elements.

The introduction of *Nasr* (*Hatf*9), in April and *Parabar* in July indicates that both Pakistan and India had possibly succeeded in militarizing their nuclear weapons designs. If so, in the foreseeable future these missiles could be launched on a variety of land-based systems, artillery shells, cruise missiles, or naval systems like torpedoes and ship-to-ship missiles.

A Pakistani presenter described Pakistan’s challenge of facing “India’s hegemony” by solidifying Pakistani “defensive fence” through a combination of conventional force, defense, and credible nuclear second strike. He described three requirements: strategic vigilance, sophisticated national military build-up, and finances to bear the burden of military modernization.

He believes that the first two cannot be accomplished unless the third is assured. His argument was that Pakistan’s “economic fragility and relentless counterterrorism efforts limit its options to invest in military build-up, in comparison to India’s growing economy” and “colossal investment in

its military arsenals.” Pakistan cannot involve itself in an arms race with India and defeat radicalism at the same time; it has little choice but to implement countermeasures in the form of nuclear weapon in order to balance such efforts.

He echoed Islamabad’s concerns over India’s anti-missile program (BMD), which has prompted Pakistan to introduce TNW as a means to enhance deterrence credibility. He echoed the previous presenter’s viewpoint that TNW contains ingredients of instability and could “jeopardize deterrence stability.” He also believes that this new generation of weapons is a catalyst for a fervent arms race between these two competitors. New Delhi’s denunciation of its nuclear restraint proposal and the absence of any arms control agreement between the two countries mark the beginning of a slow arms race in the region.

***All nuclear weapons are strategic in nature. It is only the tactical manner that can be used in the battlefield.***

Pakistan’s nuclear doctrine of minimum deterrence and use as a “last resort,” misses an important link in regards to the employment of TNW. In his opinion, nuclear use could involve “graded and proportional punitive retaliatory options” (essentially, this is the doctrine of flexible response). They cannot wait for the last resort, because of the asymmetric relationship between the two states. The low yield battlefield nuclear weapons will solidify defenses, but Pakistan’s qualitative and quantitative upgrading of nuclear weapons will be adversely affected by lack of funds and the limited capacity of its defense industry. This will require a tradeoff with other socioeconomic developments in the country.

Pakistan needs to exercise “strategic vigilance” and avoid becoming entrapped in an economically debilitating arms race, which is what the presenter described as the “hidden component of India’s Cold Start doctrine.” He believes that this is a strategy of economic exhaustion intended to induce Pakistan into a game of “catch up.” Unless Pakistan is careful in balancing its economic and military requirements in a sustainable manner, Pakistan is likely to entrap itself in this process, he warned. In this context, the introduction of the TNW *Nasr* bolsters Pakistan’s conventional defenses more cost-effectively than pursuing costly conventional acquisitions, which would either be denied or prohibitively expensive.

He believes *Nasr*’s deployment will be used to deter or punish Indian mechanized brigades. *Nasr* creates a “balancing dynamic that frustrates and makes futile the power-maximizing strategy of India.” He visualizes the use of *Nasr* shells, carrying atomic explosives, to annihilate advancing armored thrusts in the southern desert sector, or blunt advances towards the short distance of the Pakistani communication centers, such as Lahore.

The proponents of TNW are convinced that they would prevent a conventional limited war and bolster Pakistani nuclear muscles. As long as India's military might continues building to punish Pakistan, it will have no choice but to pursue such options as TNW to "sustain and endure the prevalent strategic equilibrium with its eastern neighbor." So long as India continues with its new war-fighting doctrines, the lines between conventional and nuclear weapons will remain blurred and the threat of nuclear use cannot be ruled out.

***The operational deployment of battlefield nuclear weapons will mean that deterrence strategy is also moving from deterrence by punishment to deterrence by denial.***

The final Pakistani presenter discussed the history of how TNW were introduced into military strategy immediately after World War II. He quotes General Omar Bradley who wrote in 1949 that tactical use of nuclear weapons might help achieve a stable equilibrium of forces. Focusing on the term TNW, he called it a misnomer, surmising that all nuclear weapons are strategic in nature. It is only the tactical manner that can be used in the battlefield.

Going over the nuclear weapons debate from the early 1950s, the speaker reminded the audience that the proponents of "small battlefield nuclear weapons were at the same time opposing the development of a super hydrogen bomb." Tracing the history of that South Asia nuclear experience, the speaker recalled that in the early years, Pakistan had virtually ruled out any plans to develop TNW. He reiterated Pakistan's oft-cited declaration of minimum deterrence doctrines that is based on a simple punishment model of deterrence, and does not involve nuclear war fighting. This obviates the need for battlefield nuclear weapons.

With the introduction of the *Nasr* missile, and the accompanying statements regarding its "shoot-and-scoot capabilities," the weapons platform "enhances the deterrence value at all levels of conflict." He noted that besides the technical challenges of such a short-range system, the problems of physical security and vulnerability to enemy counter-actions will pose a dilemma of "use them or lose them," as well as challenges of maintaining effective command and control. He pointed out that India's response of *Parabar* within three months was not a knee-jerk response; India must have been developing it for some time.

The fundamental question for the presenter was whether or not Pakistan has developed a miniaturized nuclear warhead, and if so, if these could be mounted on cruise missiles, such as *Babur* (land-based cruise missile), and *R'aad* (air-to-ground missile), as well as naval and other future systems.

He concluded that this indicates a shift in doctrinal thinking in India and Pakistan alike. The operational deployment of battlefield nuclear weapons will mean that deterrence strategy is also moving from deterrence by punishment to deterrence by denial. He emphasized that the latter strategy entails nuclear warfare. He defined the command and control dilemma that would be necessitated to pre-delegate away from the existing assertive control. This in and of itself has its own risks, but the major question for South Asia would be how the two countries have the battlefield management and escalation control. This was difficult for the superpowers, despite their technological superiorities.

The introduction of *Nasr* is a dangerous development, but the speaker conceded that this became possible only because of India's Cold Start strategy. So long as India continues to challenge Pakistani deterrence, such tactical innovations will continue in the future as well. Alluding to Pakistani security anxieties in reference to the U.S.-India nuclear deal and India's pursuit of BMD, he surmised "the cumulative effect of all of these developments would force Pakistan to review its earlier estimates over the size of its minimum deterrent capability." He expressed hope that short-range weapons systems will not reach a state of operational deployment; otherwise there will be no turning back.

Almost all speakers conceded that the introduction of TNW is a dangerous development; however, they differed on its impact on regional strategic stability. One camp surmised that the inherent dangers of TNW would prevent a conventional war. Conversely, another camp pointed to the risk of inadvertent use and the myriad of complications of battlefield deployment which might precipitate an unintended war. There was no doubt amongst all experts that this technological innovation is a sign of militarization in both India and Pakistan, it would mean more modern systems, such as cruise missiles, would soon be carrying nuclear tipped warheads. Lastly, if this trend continues, given its implications on strategic stability, South Asia will continue to face new challenges in the coming decade.

### **Discussion on TNW**

A U.S. participant believed that citing contemporary NATO as a parallel is problematic. The weapons have a political purpose today but their use remains extremely unlikely. He noted that a better example is North and South Korea. North Korea has a Cold Start strategy in the sense of so many forces massed along the border.

Another U.S. observer expressed reservations. During the Cold War there were different organizational pathologies, where there was the logic of risk manipulation. He noted similar concerns over the context and understanding of the environment. He added that having the capability and demonstrating that things have reached a critical state, without having nuclear weapons, has created a different scenario. The decision structures are actually simpler.

One Pakistani participant responded that the decision-makers, both military and political, are astute as far as nuclear weapons are concerned; there is no reason to believe there is irrational decision-making. Pakistan's nuclear strategy is simply based on risk manipulation. There is a mutual interest in avoiding a nuclear conflict; there must be bargaining at the lowest levels. The decision-makers know what is at stake.

## SECURITY DOCTRINES, TECHNOLOGIES AND ESCALATION LADDERS

The first Pakistani presenter explained how conventional force asymmetries and India's modernization programs compare to Pakistani challenges for matching those capabilities. His contention was to indicate that every Indian technological innovation poses a new challenge for Pakistan, and compels it to shift its force goals and especially the production of fissile material.

The main thrust of his argument pertained to the strategic triad, how it would develop, and where India's ballistic missile defense (BMD) would factor into that dynamic. With BMD hypothetically placed on key strategic nodes inside India within the next two decades, and a nuclear armament surmised to be around 400 warheads, India would become a true global power. He explained at length how India's growing power would be designed to challenge China and other distant powers, but in essence, directly affects Pakistan. In particular, he highlighted that their mainstay would be sea-based nuclear deterrents, which will be based on *Arihant* (advanced technology vessel), a KF-15 submarine, which carries submarine-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs).

With second-strike capability assured, India's strategic posture in the long run will be designed to degrade the effectiveness of the Pakistani nuclear deterrent. Pakistan will be forced to develop more accurate and survivable missile systems, develop countermeasures to reduce India's effectiveness to detect, intercept, and destroy. His assessment states that their countermeasure would include MIRV/maneuverable warheads deployed on single warhead systems *Shabeen II* and I.

The likely trajectory would be to develop MIRV and improve the range of cruise missiles. Although he cited certain sources and claims, he admitted that development of such MIRVs would be logical, although extremely challenging in light of technological and resource limitations. He insisted that the declaration of TNW is an indication that Pakistan has succeeded in acquiring a capability to develop miniaturized nuclear warheads. Based on this assumption, Pakistan would be able to mount these warheads on cruise missiles. Pakistan would be required to develop boost efficient warheads on a variety of launch platforms including aircraft, mobile land-based cruise missiles, and eventually submarines as well.

He argued that the next step would be to deploy submarine-launched cruise missiles because the plutonium research capability is expanding and eventually they will produce SLCM for the *Babar* missile. He sees TNW as a force multiplier.

This shows all the possibilities that can be potentially produced as the result of an advanced nuclear weapons state. It is unclear whether all of the capabilities mentioned in his presentation are theoretical assertions, but his paper indicated the Pakistani resolve of matching India's advancement by ramping-up an arms race. The cost of this was not covered, but he explained the several indications of Pakistani production, as well as its rationale on the fissile material cut-off treaty which is stalled at the conference of disarmament in Geneva.

The U.S. presenter explained in his presentation the history of escalation ladders by using the Herman Kahn model that had 44 rungs of ascending intensity. He applied six rungs of the escalation ladder, assuming the baseline to be “real peace,” which is just “theoretical today.” In his assessment, when political-military tension arises, escalation moves to the third rung. The top-rung is total spasm war as tension mounts; by the time a conventional war breaks out, the region will have gone through a total of seven rungs.

Basically, he implied that rapid escalation from a calm scenario to conflict. The geospatial context could be in three major areas: mountains, plains, and maritime, where the effect of employment in each area is distinct in the nature of its use and will have fundamentally different implications. There is perfect peace as long as nothing happens, but it is the nature of a crisis that rungs may suddenly jump to a high level, from 5 to 15 for instance. The baseline constantly changes once a crisis scenario is introduced.

Pakistan, as a state that cannot keep pace with the technological development, will not be able to systematically keep pace with escalation in a potential conflict with India.

### **Conclusion of Panel**

The following areas represent important strides in the region:

- With the improvement of space-based technology, the capacity to deploy more accurate systems is likely to grow in the years ahead.
- The ability to miniaturize warheads and the introduction of technical, tactical battlefield weapons is a remarkable feat, if it is true. This opens up an assortment of delivery systems.
- The potential of BMD will result in countervailing responses from Pakistan where these innovations will multiply. One author believes that Pakistan will eventually be looking toward MIRV capabilities, which is the most likely route, especially if United States helps India acquire and deploy ballistic missile defenses.
- Sea-based deterrent capabilities are almost assured at some point in the near future. At this point, the true implication of nuclear weapons deployed in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea is unclear.

Almost all agreed that Pakistan will face technological and resource challenges in the future that will adversely affect its force modernization goals. Two distinct challenges can be discerned: one, both India and Pakistan will have a second strike, assured capability and both sides will be pre-delegating the command and control system. The navies of India and Pakistan will be under the constant search for vulnerabilities, unless there is a cooperative arrangement made that allows for maritime cooperation of the kind that was discussed during the Asian power balance segment. Finally, as far as the Pakistanis are concerned, their future force deployment options, which include

both nuclear and conventional assets, will be contingent upon the challenge of balancing the Afghan frontier on the one hand, and India's Cold Start on the other. The latter must be congruent with the military maintaining its potency as an institution that can balance the internal stability of the country; especially given the instability on the horizon.

It should not be surprising that Pakistan will continue to build fissile material and new systems because the asymmetric competition continues, even though there are signs of thawing relations with India given the 'most favored nation' status and other regional cooperative developments that give as some silver lining to the tension.

## KEY CONCLUSIONS

- The status of the U.S.-Pakistan relationship, over the years of trust deficits, which had been pointed out in many reports of the past, was never addressed. The point has arrived where a rupture of the relationship seems to be just a matter of time (the events in May and November are a “crisis foretold”). The U.S. side equally warned that, given the headwind argument, there is consensus on this point.
- There was not any clear indication as to what the future of Afghanistan should be. There was a clear mismatch: both sides wanted stability, but differed on the approach to these ends. There was some agreement that there must be a process of reconciliation but not quite how to sequence it.
- The first segment overshadowed all other discussions and created a tense atmosphere that was adversely affected. The following segments were peppered by a trust deficit from the initial segment.
- The strategic significance of Pakistan in relation to its external foreign policy, geopolitical location, etc. stands on its merit. China will have increasing influence (in the future without prejudices to the relations of the U.S.; it will happen anyway). All of the corridor issues (energy, economic, etc.) will attract regional and hinterland powers (new Silk Road factor). In this context lies the greater significance of U.S.-Pakistan relations in the future. Both countries have invested for sixty years in each other’s security, and it would be a geopolitical tragedy if both do not capitalize on this history of alliance and partnership.
- There was almost unanimous agreement that tactical nuclear weapons are destabilizing for the region. The cause of this introduction is the new security doctrine of Cold Start. The other implication was that this is a modernization leap – regardless of whether the tactical hurdles, such as the miniaturization of the warhead, or more robust command and control arrangements that obviates the necessity for pre-delegation, have been achieved or not. Assuming that this is the case, the emergence of a battlefield weapons scenario implies that other missile systems (cruise, etc.) could carry nuclear payloads. Though not explicit, this implies that in the next decade or so, South Asia will be in an arms race in quantity and quality. This calls for a very serious engagement of arms control dialogue between India and Pakistan.
- Technological innovation, as well as the continued modernization of conventional and nuclear forces, could severely impact strategic stability in the absence of institutional arms control between India and Pakistan. Almost all participants appreciated the direction of emerging rapprochement between India and Pakistan. It would be in the interest of peace and security in the region that the U.S. must encourage a peace process that includes not just dampening the strategic competition but also increasing economic cooperation. The

Pakistanis, however, expect U.S. to emerge as an objective broker of peace and stability in the region and to stop being an enabler of Indian hegemony.

- U.S.-Pakistan relations ought to go beyond the Afghanistan-Pakistan theatre as well as beyond India-Pakistan détente. The latter is a healthy development that opens up better prospects for the entire region. Unfortunately, U.S.-Pakistan relations have plummeted in 2011, more than in any previous period.

