US-Pakistan Strategic Partnership
A Track-Two Dialogue for Long-Term Security Cooperation
Fifth Iteration

WORKSHOP REPORT

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Executive Summary

Pakistan continues to exist in a regional security conundrum. The numerous events that have transpired over the course of this past year have only deepened the significance of three main concerns during the 2009 dialogue: intensity of terrorist incidents within Pakistani borders; the perilous situation in Afghanistan; and the implications of expanding US-India strategic partnership.

All three areas have continued down an untenable path as far as Pakistan is concerned, which led to focused attention on the following core themes in this year's dialogue: the Asian power balance and strategic stability in the years ahead; mutual threat perceptions and regional strategic stability; military modernization and imbalances; and the deterrence construct between India and Pakistan.

Additionally, participants from both the US and Pakistan expressed concern over the long-term outcomes of NATO actions in Afghanistan, to include the potential drawdown of US forces. These factors, coupled with the catastrophic floods that have displaced more than 25 million people (a number comparable to the population of California), have only exacerbated the political and economic pressures placed upon the Pakistani government and military, while simultaneously adding fuel to the extremist narrative.

The tenor of the dialogue held in Singapore is also reflective of the “Overview of the Afghanistan and Pakistan Annual Review,” released December 2010. The document reemphasized the US objective of “disrupting, dismantling, and eventually defeating al Qaeda in the region and preventing its return to either Afghanistan or Pakistan.” Yet, the review further reveals a potential uptick in drone attacks in the coming months, as well as increased Special Forces operations on the border. These announcements come at a time when Pakistan is highly concerned with maintaining internal stability, protecting its eastern borders with India, and the growing US-India partnership in light of President Obama’s visit to India.

Another theme of the Singapore event is Pakistani anxieties regarding the US-India nuclear partnership, which were cogently articulated in the statement from Pakistan’s National Command Authority (NCA), on December 14, 2010. The NCA declared that there are “trends of selectivity, exceptionalism, and discrimination relating to export control regimes… revisionism based on strategic, political, or commercial considerations that accentuates asymmetries and perpetuates instability in South Asia;” these developments are unacceptable to Pakistan. In fact, “the NCA categorically [stated that it will] never accept discriminated treatment and rejects any efforts to undermine its strategic deterrence.” They further explained that “Pakistan will not be party to any approach that is prejudicial to its legitimate national security interests.”

In particular, participants in the Singapore dialogue showed clear unhappiness over the US-India nuclear deal that, to them, undermines nonproliferation objectives, while interpreting US nuclear security concerns as nothing more than a tool to discriminate against Pakistan. All of these issues continue to weigh on the often paradoxical and fluttered relationship between the US and Pakistan, which is as important as it is complicated. The Singapore dialogue sought to address the crux of these strategic concerns.

Key highlights and trends are as follows:

Status of Relationship: The Afghan Context

- The potential drawdown of US troops from Afghanistan has increased strategic anxiety in Pakistan, and is seen as a destabilizing prospect. U.S strategic interest has become nuanced to defeating Al Qaeda with a smaller, enemy-centric ISAF presence requiring strategic
coordination with Pakistan’s military in order to undertake corresponding operations on its side of the border – especially in the tribal borderland sanctuaries. In Pakistan’s strategic assessment, the greater worry resides over the future of alienated Pashtuns and the nature of instability in Afghanistan that will directly impact Pakistan security. At the political level, there are concerns that accepting an Indian-dominated Northern Alliance government would undercut Pakistan’s strategic interests, posing a threat on a second front. Tribal Pashtuns, marginalized from the political process, will continue to wage war and create instability spilling over into Pakistani Pashtun belt. Additionally, the Pakistanis believe troop drawdown will diminish the US role as an external balancer. Even if Al Qaeda is displaced and disrupted, other factors can create sufficient conditions for instability to the detriment of US, Pakistani and regional interests.

Bob Woodward’s recent book, Obama’s Wars, was perceived as divine truth, dominating the assertions made by the Pakistani presenters. They explained that the debates, opinions, and analyses of senior U.S personalities revealed in the book have deeply disturbed security analysts throughout Pakistan. Participants drew upon three main themes in the book – governance, narcotics, and safe havens – that were viewed as central to garnering stability in Afghanistan. The Pakistanis argued that singular focus on “safe havens” in the tribal border areas would not give the desired results unless all other issues are tackled simultaneously. In the end, Pakistanis still see U.S following a revenge-based policy that is not reflective of a holistic strategy for success in Afghanistan.

Across the border in Pakistan, the “safe haven” issue is both of capacity and will. The US participants alluded to the lack of commitment from Pakistan, while for the Pakistanis it is more of a question of priority that dominates balancing between the two borders (India and Afghanistan), with that of domestic instability (this now includes nearly 72,000 troops that are exclusively dealing with the most catastrophic floods in the history of the country). The dichotomy between how much force Pakistan can spare without weakening its defenses with India, while also addressing the tribal havens between the homogenized Pashtuns across Pak-Afghan borders, remains a constant theme of disagreement between US and Pakistan participants.

The Pakistanis unambiguously stated that they remain committed to the fight against violent extremism and terrorism. To them, defeating Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) – pursuing those operating in Pakistani territory, rather than threats in Afghanistan – remains highest priority. For Pakistan, however, it is still a question of which horns’ nest to bust with only a single proverbial swatter in hand. Meanwhile, the Americans continue to believe that Pakistan is following a hedging strategy. They assert that Pakistan wants to keep in reserve tribal forces for potential “strategic depth” in Afghanistan, presumably based on potential U.S drawdown beginning next July, against any potential Indian influence. This debate is largely un-reconciled over the past several dialogues.

Asian Power Balance and Alliances

Pakistan’s foreign and regional security policies in five key areas will affect its relationship with the US well into the future: relations with China, relations with India, relations with other Islamic countries (Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and UAE), Pakistan’s nuclear status and
strategic capability (including nuclear energy), and Pakistan’s relations and strategic interest in Afghanistan. These issues will likely remain important components of future dialogues.

• With the rise of China and India, coupled with the continuing security complexities in the region, it was important to examine the broader geopolitical picture involving potential alliances and strategic balancing in the Central-South Asia region. This involves critical security interests of major powers in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region (often referred to as the new ‘great game’). A panel discussed the broader implications of Pakistan’s geopolitical role in the region to include the maritime exigencies in the Indian Ocean region.

• South Asia exists in a sustained psyche of encirclement. Where the Pakistanis see India as encircling it by establishing bases in Central Asia, and building communication infrastructure linking Iranian ports with Afghan cities and near Pakistan borders, India sees China building a “string of pearls” that includes the port of Gwadar (built with Chinese assistance). These perceptions are broadening the regional rivalry, actions, and counteractions, thus, complicating the regional security environment.

• Pakistan’s relationship with China remains a cornerstone of its foreign policy, especially as the competition between India and China increases. For decades, both countries have broadened their relationship with China from narrow military interests to political and economic strategic interests. Pakistan in particular sees China as a major ally that can wield it veto power in UNSC to secure their interests. China, meanwhile, has increased infrastructure development as well as energy and mineral exploration. From civil-nuclear cooperation at the macro level, to humanitarian assistance at the micro level, China is taking advantage of Pakistan’s geopolitical position and historical friendship. Since the Singapore dialogue, the Chinese Premier paid a state visit to both India and Pakistan, where billions of dollars of business deals were negotiated. In Pakistan, the Chinese Primer addressed the joint parliament, which has taken the relations between the two countries to a new level.

• Arms race stability is becoming an increased focus of attention in the region. Military modernizations and technological innovations both in India and Pakistan would not only have ramifications on the strategic stability within South Asia proper, but implications for broader Asian geopolitical balancing and security. For instance, introduction of cruise missiles, sea-based deterrent, and ballistic missile defenses in the region will increase arms sales to new heights and deepen the role of major arms suppliers with critical strategic interests in South, South West and Central Asia.

• The Pakistani Navy has actively participated in coalition-based maritime activities, such as Combined Task Force (CTF) 151, part of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) conducting counter-piracy operations in the Northern Arabian Sea. This area comes under the command zone of CENTCOM. Pakistan’s role has been welcomed, but concerns prevail with regard to overlapping combatant command boundaries with PACOM that undermines their significance due to entry of India. Should India join CMF (which they are currently not interested in doing), Pakistan would likely back away.

• There is a dire need to build further cooperation between combatant commands – Central Command (CENTCOM) and Pacific Command (PACOM). In South Asia, as with many
other areas in the world, the divides are seamless; therefore cohesive actions taken between
the two commands with these countries need to be approached accordingly. One way is to
forge smaller and mission-specific partnerships that might provide an appropriate venue for
ground-up confidence building, and nurture a positive image through structured diplomatic
efforts.

**Strategic Stability: Modernizations, Doctrines and Deterrence Construct**

- Two years after the Mumbai incident, relations between India and Pakistan remain tense.
Pakistanis sense that India’s policy is to diplomatically isolate Pakistan and apply pressure
militarily through posturing and deployments, thus, reinforcing the belief in Pakistan that
India remains determined to harm them by exploiting the post-9/11 global environment and
their domestic upheavals.

- Kashmir is by far the key strategic issue to address for improving relations between India
and Pakistan and increasing stability in the broader region. Since 1965, there have been
various political-military initiatives, none of which resulted in any satisfactory resolution to
the problem. This is in the face of uprising and peaceful *Intifida* with Indian force’s heavy-
handedness, where the Kashmir issue simply refuses to go away. According to the Pakistani
participants, brutal suppression of the Kashmiris, and international apathy to resolve the
grievance is the cause for insurgency. As one participant put it, “Pakistan can neither accept
the status quo on Kashmir, nor resolve it by force; India can neither keep Kashmir by force,
nor allow change of status quo either.”

- Beyond national identity and strategic disputes, Kashmir is now a largely humanitarian and
water security problem that begs for a peaceful settlement for the future of India and
Pakistan relations. The US has seemingly lost interest in being a broker in the dispute after
India angrily objected to any role by the US Envoy in the region. Much more work needs to
be done – if the US is to reconsider being an arbiter – in order to prevent the situation from
cascading into other areas like Afghanistan.

- Pakistani anxiety with regard to India’s conventional military doctrine, Cold Start, is
increasing rapidly, Pakistan interprets Cold Start as an existential threat requiring the
redeployment of troops and armored forces (it was noted that India had conducted ten
military exercises testing Cold Start doctrine since 2004.) This has in turn created a
quadrilateral tension within the Pakistani security establishment expressed as “strategic
exigencies” requiring them to deal with four different kinds of strategic threats
simultaneously: conventional threat from India, nuclear posture with India,
counterinsurgency in western borderlands, and internal instability and natural disasters.

- Strategic thinking varied between individual participants with regard to visions on strategic
stability in the region, particularly, the efficacy of short-range ballistic missiles. The
fundamental purpose of Pakistani nuclear weapons and delivery means is to deter India from
waging a conventional attack (limited or full-scale).

- Almost all participants recognized Hatf I and Prithvi I as old systems that might have
outlived their utility. Some participants, however, believe in the limited utility for battlefield
deterrence. Others considered physical presence of such SRBMs as undermining deterrence
stability because it increases the risk for preemptive strike by the adversary, and compounds the field security and command and control problems. In this context, the roles of SRBMs, and/or tactical, small yield weapons and the introduction of ballistic missile defenses are the key issues dominating the debate.

- Both the US and Pakistani participants agreed that all nuclear weapons are strategic weapons regardless of yield, range, and employment. In that sense, there are no tactical weapons in South Asia.

- Pakistan’s strategic anxieties are increasing with India’s military modernizations that include, but are not limited to, spaced-based delivery systems, sea-based nuclear deterrents, and ballistic missile defense (BMD); these and other modernization programs were at the forefront of the discussion. From Pakistan’s perspective, BMD deployment would encourage India to undertake measures that will undermine its nuclear deterrent. Pakistan is left with no choice but to adopt countervailing measures. With weakened Pakistani defense due to counterinsurgency commitments and perceived invulnerability provided by BMD, India may well be prompted to potentially start a war (Cold Start) with Pakistan.

- The US participants pointed to the difficulties of securing field-based, short-range nuclear weapons should they be deployed within battlefield range. Nuclear management makes it incredibly difficult for any ground force to be constantly alert of the status of those weapons while forward deployed. Based on US experience, despite sophisticated command and control technology, it is clearly difficult to maintain security and control when the weapons are unveiled and readied in the field for potential employment.

**Bio Security Disease surveillance**

- Bio-security was introduced for the first time in the strategic dialogue. The American concerns are two-fold: first, it is well established that extremist groups have shown interest in such technologies; man-made bio-terror cannot be ruled out from the threat matrix; second, a pandemic could occur naturally in the aftermath of an environmental or natural disaster. The threat may compound if the state capacity for public health and safety is either incompatible or insufficient to deal with the gravity of the threat on a large-scale.

- Pakistani concerns were centered on the fact that this is a new subject for them, and there was very little public awareness with regard to broad-based disease surveillance and bio-security capabilities. At the same time, they presented what current infrastructure, organizations, and efforts are underway to deal with these threats; however, more work still needs to be done.

- The discussion touched on the Cooperative Threat Reduction Act (CTR), with some viewing it as a relic of the Cold War. The concept had evolved from the Soviet Union as the model, and not with friendly partners. Redefining the CTR can help engineer ways to assist Pakistan with increasing its capacity to deal with this issue that is both borderless and indiscriminate.

- Regardless, bio-security and disease surveillance are critical issues that have been largely absent from public debates in Pakistan. Most participants were not enthusiastic about the
theory of “terrorist-in-the-cave making bio-weapons,” but generally agreed on the potential of consequences of natural disasters and pandemics and acknowledged the lack of expertise.

- The general under-development of the country and perilous economic conditions (primarily agricultural) as well as the potential for natural disasters (e.g., earthquake in 2005 and floods in 2010), make prospects for the emergence of diseases and pandemics ripe. To enhance the knowledge base and promote research in these areas, the best place is to support academic institutes. Currently, universities in Pakistan have made strides in adapting their courses and syllabi to address these issues.

Introduction:

The Center on Contemporary Conflict, with support from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), held the fifth iteration of the US Pakistan Strategic Dialogue on October 7-8, 2010 in Singapore with support of the Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS). The dialogue sought to draw upon the core themes from previous discussions, as well as the current regional and strategic climate, which assists with informing track I discussions and those who are involved in policymaking and implementation. Much like previous talks, this dialogue brought together top American and Pakistani scholars, former officials, and observers to address the very important, strategic relationship that exists between the two countries.

The panels arranged in this year’s agenda were meant to spark an in-depth and frank discussion on a variety of security issues. The first day was organized into three panels that addressed some of the broader strategic challenges, to include: an overview of US-Pakistan relations, the Asian power balance, and assessment of the terrorist threat. The second day focused solely on WMD issues, but also delved into operational constructs on Pakistan’s eastern borders with India and western borders with Afghanistan. This panel was further broken down into two sub-panels: the first panel dedicated to strategic balancing and multiple contingencies, to include: balancing the Pakistani military role and nuclear stability, expectations, and capabilities. The second panel was organized to discuss a potential missile arms race and strategic stability, focusing on a variety of subjects including BMD, repressing strategic ballistic missiles, strategic triad and future strategic restraint, and regional stability.

Strategic Overview

Status of the Partnership

The relationship between the United States and Pakistan is weakening, but is by no means unsalvageable. Numerous analogies, metaphors and anecdotes were used throughout the dialogue to make this point. But perhaps the most frank and powerful comment came from a Pakistani participant who stated that over the 60 year relationship, “never before have the two countries needed each other more, has the relationship been marred at such a high level of distrust; there is no other relationship that exists with the United States that represents such a paradox, lament with controversy.”

Though there were plenty of references to the recent publication of Bob Woodward’s book, Obama’s War, much of the discussion existed within four major areas: the debilitating effect of increased drone attacks and cross-border incursions; the unraveling situation in Afghanistan; the contaminated political environment; and skepticism about the relationship between the United States and India. American perceptions were also grave in that Pakistan is still unable to control
significant areas of its country – many of which are directly related to ongoing operations in Afghanistan. There is no doubt that the clashing narratives need to be addressed.

Despite frustration on both sides, there was consensus that the relationship is essential to both countries’ national interests; participants pointed to the history of cooperation, stating that whenever the two countries have acted in sync with each other, there has been assured strategic success. Such positive developments included defeating the Soviet invasion in 1980s, as well as many military-to-military cooperative operations such as in Bosnia, Somalia and elsewhere. Now in the post-9/11 circumstances, there has been counterterrorism cooperation, economic, and military support, which needs to advance in order to ensure further trust and cooperation. However, if the current trend of distrust continues, and other areas of dissensions emerge, both countries will suffer with potentially broader implications for the rest of the region. Therefore, the remainder of the dialogue was intended to draw upon those areas that are most significant for the two countries in building both trust and understanding.

As discussed in the 2009 dialogue, Pakistan is still highly concerned with its two-front dilemma: counterinsurgency on the western front against the Pakistani Taliban, Al Qaeda, and other extremist elements, as well as defenses on eastern front where India continues to pose a significant conventional threat through its Cold Start doctrine. This has been magnified over the course of this past year with increased drone attacks and massive flooding across key areas of the country. Internal stability in the country is then both a result of socio-economic conditions, and non-resolution of domestic problems. Finally, it is due to the war in Afghanistan itself that Pakistan has not only come under intense pressure from the US and international community, but its own people as well.

**Drones: Lessons from Pakistan**

Within Pakistan’s litany of grievances over the Afghanistan war effort is the use of drones in the border areas. The Pakistanis cited the effect on national sovereignty and the mass casualties of innocent civilians as a cause of great anxiety for the government. There is no national consensus in Pakistan over the drone strikes, and the country’s vibrant media have created drama and public excitement over the issue. Privately, many military officials speak of the attacks’ accuracy and believe it has been highly effective weapon system for killing “bad guys;” however, as of yet, few high value, first-tier, terrorists have been killed. Most participants agreed that this is a tactically superior weapon but with limited ability to address the strategic problem. It also alienates the affected population, creating an environment ripe with potential recruits for Al Qaeda.

Furthermore, based on the lessons drawn from this dialogue, there should be recognition of the potential blowback of using such a weapons system on the domestic population within a country how it affects the credibility of the government and bolsters extremist ideology, leading to more terrorist recruitment. The Pakistani situation offers some very disturbing statistics.

When drone strikes began in 2004, there were only 1-2 purported attacks a month. Now, in the midst of a catastrophic natural disaster, there has been an average of 30-40 strikes over the course of the past few months alone. The cost-benefit between tactical gain and strategic loss should be taken under a careful examination as the US proceeds with its campaign in Pakistan and beyond. Aside from the direct consequences of increased drone attacks in Pakistan, the US should look at Pakistan as a serious case study for future actions in other countries. This is highly relevant given some recent news reports indicating that the CIA may increase its covert operations into Yemen – with or without the consent of the government.

**US-India Relations:**
U.S. participants presented their views in the dialogue over the status of the relationship with Pakistan in light of America’s growing partnership with India. There is no doubt that India will be one of the core strategic partners to the United States in the years ahead. Currently, the US holds more joint military exercises per year with India than with any other partner country; agriculture and education exchanges have been very significant, and there have been substantial increases in trade and investment. The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) called India the “net security provider” in the region; its foreign policy has dealt with issues in countries ranging from Nepal to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Nevertheless, President Obama’s trip to India in November (which happened after this dialogue, but was highly anticipated by participants) highlighted many of the concerns that the Pakistani participants argued may have depreciating effects on the security environment as the years progress. Though the US is looking to broaden its economic capacity and overall strategic relationship with India, there are many issues that it will need to address in order to sustain its relationships with other countries in the region. Perhaps most shocking for the Pakistanis was President Obama’s endorsement of permanent seat for India in the UNSC. The Pakistanis hinted their concern in the dialogue.

The Pakistani participants expressed many suspicions, especially over the push by the US for an increased Indian presence in Afghanistan. This is the antithesis of the Pakistani objective, which is to have a stable and friendly Afghanistan free of India’s influence. From the US standpoint, India’s economic support may be relevant and necessary to Afghanistan’s progress, however, it increases skepticism among Pakistanis who see India’s presence in the area only as a means to destabilize Pakistan further. It will be a challenge for U.S policy to balance the competing strategic interests of the two South Asian nuclear rivals.

Additionally, the President’s unveiling an end to many of the export controls for India was a concern during the Singapore meeting, where Pakistanis argued that a transfer of technologies would widen the asymmetrical gap, and push Pakistan to rely more upon its nuclear arsenals for balance. Moreover, there have been no overt comments from the President on the issues surrounding India’s Cold Start doctrine and the declining security situation in Kashmir. One of the suggestions from a US participant during the dialogue was that the US should actually be pushing India to abandon Cold Start; many analysists believe it is a flawed and logistically infeasible doctrine that does not deter groups like Lashkar-e-Toiba (LET). Even so, it is the mere perception of the doctrine and its potential (at least in theory) that really matter in the case of Pakistan and regional strategic thought as a whole.

For now, the major issue is the likelihood of lowering the nuclear threshold. There is a significant need for stabilizing doctrines and strategies, which have been encouraged and discussed in various dialogues. Some of these ideas have been formulated through various confidence-building measures and restraint initiatives, but the problem has always resided in follow-through; the lack thereof reduces confidence and limits the appeal of such recommendations.

Terrorism and the need to ensure that nuclear weapons and materials remain safe are at the forefront of the US relationship with Pakistan and the region writ large. President Obama in particular spoke widely on the nuclear issue during the nuclear security summit in April. The results reinforce the principles that all states are inherently responsible for the security of the nuclear weapons.

Despite some deficiencies in the export control system, there has been excellent cooperation with Pakistan and many advances in maintaining a strong nuclear security culture. However, the AQ Khan network has had lasting effects for the US and international community despite the many
steps taken to ensure that such issues will never occur again. But despite the shadows of AQ Khan, there have been other advances in multilateral arms control.

American participants acknowledged that Pakistan has been committed to non-testing though not a signatory to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). On the question on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), however, major differences remain. Pakistan continues to scuttle negotiations on FMCT at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, expressing national security concerns. Pakistan’s NCA statement of December 14, 2010, (as highlighted above) directly referenced the pressures regarding FMCT, which the Pakistani participants alluded to during the Singapore dialogue.

**Afghanistan/FATA: Assessment of Terrorist Threat**

*Addressing Militancy*

At the time of the dialogue, a NATO incursion into Pakistan killed several Pakistani security forces and was at the helm of media headlines. Pakistan responded by stopping shipments meant to assist with operations throughout Afghanistan. This was significant, as 70-80 percent of NATO supplies for Afghanistan go through Pakistan. Finally after the U.S officials acknowledged the mistake and tendered a formal apology, the crisis was diffused with the resumption of supplies; nevertheless, the episode underscores the delicate nature of relations in the Afghan conflict. This is yet another example of how the countries need to synchronize their cooperation lest both sides lose. The timing of this event influenced the dialogue to some extent but it only ripened the discussions.

Bob Woodward’s recent book, *Obama’s Wars* was seen as divine truth. Pakistanis in attendance referred to the sensational revelations in the book, drawing upon three main themes throughout the dialogue; governance, narcotics, and safe havens. The governance issue refers to Hamid Karzai’s limited influence and the dependence on warlords despite a constitution. As long as major tribes are not absorbed into the mainstream politics in Kabul as stakeholders in any political dispensation, governance issues in Afghanistan will remain a source of instability for much time to come. Narcotics also drive much of the instability and terrorism. Afghanistan is a narco-economy; so long as this continues to be the case, there is no way for governance to be improved, let alone be seen as a legitimate institution by the people. While the last problem, safe havens, does exist in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), similar hideouts and secure places also remain in a large expanse of Afghanistan. This is a problem of capacity for both countries. Despite all the high-tech and professional armed forces, NATO cannot eliminate all safe houses in Afghanistan, which means NATO rules by day and the Taliban rules by night.

The current situation cannot be fully appreciated without highlighting the initial impetus of going into Afghanistan in the first place — revenge. The Pakistani participants understood the justification for retribution and response, but noted that the situation was destined for entanglement from the beginning due to the lack of foresight. U.S strategic planning has been revolving around partnering with the Northern Alliance, which lacks legitimacy in the bulk of Afghanistan, especially in the Southern and Eastern Tribal belts. The military strategy was conducted in a manner that did not properly address the Taliban and their ability to melt in the population and across state boundaries, but also alienated the majority Pashtuns. Furthermore, it was clear that Pakistanis would never trust the Northern Alliance, which has always been under Indian influence and support even prior to the events of 9/11. Finally the U.S did not factor Pakistan’s capability to address the flow of extremist fighters into its FATA and NWFP areas.
Just as major military operations were mounted in the Tora Bora region, Pakistan and India were in a military standoff for ten months in 2002. Over the years, this has led to the current operational environment, wrought with various mistakes that continue to fester, including momentum towards a Pashtunistan, mainly non-Pashtun representation in the government, expanded reliance on air attacks (drones), absence of reconstruction, and the corruption of coalition supported warlords. All the while, the ISAF approach is still a military-centric strategy, which continues to determine the political objectives while largely ignoring significant regional issues. At the height of the discussion, one of the Pakistanis posited: “Is it Pakistan’s responsibility to redeem these failures, and become the political alibi?”

Additionally, India is disproportionately expanding its economic interests in Afghanistan, when it has tremendous problems within its own borders. The Pakistani participants found it ironic that the lives of those in Kabul are seemingly more important than the ones in India’s own backyard (e.g. Eastern Indian states affected by Naxalite insurgents). Such statements are colored by the staunch belief that India is cultivating a hostile power in Kabul to do New Delhi’s bidding as a hedge against the Pakistani state.

Meanwhile, the Americans participants continue to allege that the Pakistanis are not going after various groups (Haqqanis, Hekmatyar and Quetta Shura) as part of Pakistan’s own hedging strategy. The belief persists that Pakistan keeps tribal forces in reserve against the possibility that an Indian dominated regime could be established in Afghanistan—particularly if the US withdraws and abdicates responsibility to India. The Pakistanis in turn disagreed. They do not believe contact with such groups translates to support and explained that it is a function of intelligence to monitor such groups. Second, the Pakistanis insist it would not be wise to strike at multiple groups that could potentially retaliate in Pakistan with suicide bombs when it is committed on multiple fronts; lastly they categorically state that Pakistan does not want a return of Taliban in Afghanistan, but believe that at the end of the day, negotiations would be inevitable as some of these groups hold sway in a vast territory comprising millions of Pashtuns. The Pakistani participants were firm that unless a broad based government in Afghanistan comes into power where all stakeholders have a proportionate and balanced role in governance, the Afghanistan conundrum is unlikely to end in the near future.

US “red-lines” in the war in Afghanistan, however, were adequately clear. Participants explained that Pakistan is committed in its resolve to bringing security on its side of the border, but current policies are inadequate to address these issues. US has offered three conditions for negotiations with those Taliban who are prepared to come to the table: abandon and cut off all ties with al Qaeda, accept the Afghan constitution as the system of governance; and eschew violence (i.e. stop fighting the ISAF).

It is possible to find out-of-the-box solutions within these three conditions, and for this reason, Pakistan’s influence, location, and capacity will remain critical to US interests in Afghanistan. At the same time it is important to bear in mind that, Afghanistan, because of its narrow geography, its vulnerability to any east-west offensive action, and its susceptibility to external manipulation, poses a two-front dilemma for Pakistan. Given the history of poor relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, this fear is all the more heightened in Pakistan.

Floods and Internal Stability

Pakistan must gain control over its ungoverned areas, as well as tend to the millions devastated by the flood. One of the US participants posited that the flood catastrophe needs to be seen as not just a strategic problem, but also something more immediate and humanitarian. This is
unarguably correct, but there are various strategic considerations, given the early consequences of
the massive flood.

When the Pakistani Army responded to the floods it came under intense pressure from
pulling resources away from the fight in the frontier regions. The political, elected leadership in the
early days of the Pakistani floods were inexperienced and very slow to react, and created much
public disdain for the government as a whole within Pakistan; the army simply cannot substitute for
the civilian government.

But as result, mismanagement of resources and increased potential for exploitation from
militant groups added to a dangerous climate. Meanwhile, landmines may have been dislodged by
the flooding, and disease has potential to spread across the state. As more people flock from rural
areas to the cities, the likelihood of instability increases, with an increased mix of ethnic groups (e.g.
Pashtuns) creating conducive environment for violence and corruption. Needless to say, the long-
term effect of the flood will need to be addressed by Pakistan with the full support of the
international community in order to avert increased internal disorder.

The Asian Power Balance and Stability

The discussion of the strategic environment within Asia is an example of how mutual need may
not necessarily be synonymous with mutual trust. Though the latter is the ultimate objective, many
Pakistani participants made it clear that Pakistan does not solely exist to serve other countries’
national interests; the state itself has its own interests in terms of security and economic vitality that
it consider non-negotiable. These interests include a stable and friendly Afghanistan that is not a
proxy for such hostile powers as India; conflict resolution with India through rapprochement and
détente to overcome the potential for dominance and hegemony; and its ideological and cultural
affiliations with the Islamic world.

China

Maintaining, sustaining and broadening its relationship with China will remain central to
Pakistan’s foreign policy in the years ahead. Recent economic and technological cooperation—
including civil-nuclear cooperation at the macro level, and humanitarian assistance at the micro—
offer two pivotal developments between the countries. Geographically speaking, Pakistan is also the
farthest country neighboring China’s farthest province (Xinjiang), making it a central player in
China’s resource endeavors toward the Persian Gulf and beyond. These factors support a strong
relationship between the two countries. As one Pakistani participant indicated, the relationship
between the two countries has become a cornerstone of Pakistan’s foreign policy, with roots in
history.

Though there were some questions during the dialogue of long-term support from China
beyond its own realist, resource-centric interests, it was noted that China was the first to veto in the
Security Council a measure that would have essentially given Pakistan leverage during the
Bangladesh secession in the 1970s. For now, China continues to show increased support for
Pakistan through a variety of economic projects.

For Pakistan, the economic rise of China is in its best interests in terms of growth and balancing
India. This lessens Pakistan’s anxieties towards India, though departing from current US momentum
in the region. However, perhaps the most important issue for Pakistan is its attachment to nuclear
weapons as a deterrent and a component of national survivability. These areas are where US-
Pakistan relations have historically diverged and conversely where China has sustained Pakistani
nuclear ambitions both in strategic deterrence as well as in its nuclear energy needs.
Pakistan’s core interest in acquiring and sustaining its nuclear weapons program is based in fundamental faith that nuclear deterrence is the ultimate means of surviving against its primary threat, India. Despite a robust deterrent capacity, however, external balancing continues to be a national security interest. In other words, Pakistan will continue to rely on some sort of external balancing despite a strong military and nuclear weapon program. Therefore, strategic alliances are most likely to be the path that Pakistan follows in both the near to medium future and through the 21st century.

China and United States will remain Pakistan’s major allies. In the decades ahead, China’s influence and role in Pakistan will likely broaden and deepen; Chinese policies will be shaped by several factors such as access to energy, massive infrastructure development in Xinjiang, the nature of US-India strategic partnership, and China’s maritime exigencies in the Indian Ocean. Pakistan is maximizing its strategic location as a potential energy corridor between the Persian Gulf and resource hungry states. It is a willing chess piece in this geopolitical power game between China and India. At the same time, Pakistan can block India’s land access to broader central Asia, using its geographical leverage to mitigate India’s hegemonic policies.

In addition to economic growth, military modernizations and technological innovations in India and Pakistan would not only have ramifications on the strategic stability in South Asia but implications for broader, Asian geopolitical balancing and security. For instance, introduction of cruise missiles, sea-based deterrents and BMD in the region will bring arms sales to new heights and deepen the roles of major arms suppliers with critical strategic interests in South, South West and Central Asia. At the time of this writing, heads of US, UK, France, China and Russia have made trips to India to make lucrative defense and economic deals. Only Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited both countries, signaling to India that China views Pakistan and India as a single region—South Asia.

China is the one state seriously challenging US hegemony at the systemic level. At the regional level, the Chinese see the US strategic partnership with India as a mild concern. Pakistan on the other hand, is deeply concerned with the US-India partnership, and the US’s purely utilitarian view of Pakistan (nearly 70-80 percent of NATO supplies come through Pakistan) in terms of the war on terror. The United States’ pervasive negative view of Pakistan’s nuclear capability and its reduction of Pakistan’s strategic salience with the Af-Pak strategy makes Pakistan constantly nervous about US intentions and its value to the US as a future strategic partner. Chinese investment and support, including nuclear cooperation, is a welcome contrast. China is the only country that responded to Pakistan’s civil nuclear requests; just as the world floods India with nuclear deals, Pakistan finds the US dragging its feet on Pakistan’s energy needs with such excuses as the AQ Khan network—another example of discrimination pointed out by the Pakistanis consistently since India’s test in 1974.

Power Transition and Wars

A Pakistani academic explained the Asian power balance through the theory of power transition and wars. This theory predicts that conflict is most likely when: there is parity between the dominant power and challenger; the challenger surpasses the dominant power; and the challenger is dissatisfied. The presenter noted that as a rising power surpasses or threatens to surpass the most powerful state in the system, the relative power at the time is equally distributed; at this cusp of transition the environment is most dangerous for war. If the challenger(s) do not start a war to displace the top power, the latter may provoke a war to stall the rise of that power – preventive war. In terms of the Asian power balance, this may be the recipe for regional positioning towards such outcomes (hence, the asymmetric doctrine and military modernization continues throughout the
India offers a perfect case as the regional challenger to China; where India’s growth trend over the next 10-15 years sets the country at the forefront of Asian power balance. As richer consumer markets emerge during this period, consumption patterns will change, producing a vibrant middle class. Though this is good for Indian national interests, it will need to compensate and spend more on defense, widening the conventional military gap with Pakistan, and raising potential for a military (and perhaps naval-centric) arms race with China that will increasingly pressure stability within the global commons across the Indian Ocean. Among peripheral ramifications, this will challenge the long-held mantra of “freedom of the seas” traced back to the publication of *Mare Liberum*.

**Psyche of Encirclement: A Regional Phenomenon**

Almost the entire region of South Asia exists in a sustained psyche of encirclement. Where the Pakistanis see India as encircling it between its eastern borders and increased presence in Afghanistan, India sees Pakistan’s increased relationship with China as a means to subdue its growth. At the same time, China views American relations with India, Japan and South Korea in a similar light, while Iran sees the US encircling it from all directions. Though all of these perceptions may appear to be encroaching into the realm of paranoia in some cases, there are a plethora of international relations theory that help explain this environment; this calls attention to future balance of power concerns for the region.

A Pakistani presenter explained the power relationship between dyadic disputed rivals in *tangible* (basic resources; military; economic; science/technology; population; territorial size) and *intangible* (national cohesion; domestic stability; international prestige; and support of allies) terms. (Joseph Nye had originally proposed these factors in describing sources of power.) Comparing India and Pakistan, India is “strong” or “medium” in both tangible and intangible terms at this point of time. Pakistan is weak in the intangibles realm and strong only in the category of “military.” Asymmetries are thus widening, and as a result the power balance is transitioning in favor of India, which is increasingly making Pakistan into a dissatisfied state. The presenter predicted a greater likelihood of conflict as the region passed through the transition zone. (*See Appendix 1 for graphic explanation of theory of power transition.*)

Regional states are clearly undertaking measures—strategic communications and diplomatic initiatives – that mold perceptions of encirclement into policy. The balance of power is continually adjusted, creating instability between states. Applying the power transition theory, it is easy to discern that the hard power issues of military and economic diplomacy are not enough to quell these perceptions. The participants suggested that there must be increased public diplomacy campaigns between states in the region, which includes reaching out directly to the populations through soft power elements such as the media and the internet.

Pakistan in particular faces immense challenges. Its has strong potential in the tangibles realm, however unless it strengthens its weak links in intangible resources it will not be able to realize its potential and lose out in the competition. Pakistan therefore urgently needs to redress its intangible lacks, such as national cohesion, domestic stability, international prestige, and support of allies.

Regardless of these shortfalls, there have been some positive signs coming from the bilateral relationship between China and India. As was noted by one of the Pakistani participants, there has been drastic improvement in Sino-Indian relations over the years. In 2005, Premier Wen Jiabao led the creation of an India-China Strategic and Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity. There have also been 12 joint documents related to cooperation in areas such as border issues, economies, aviation, cultural exchanges, and holding joint naval exercises. Additionally, India-China bilateral trade is projected to double from 20 billion to around 40 billion in the next five years. And though questions surround the vitality of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation’s
US-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue, Fifth Iteration

(SAARC) future as a viable geopolitical construct, it has expanded to include Afghanistan as its 8th member, along with Japan, China, EU, South Korea, and the US as observers.

Moreover, one of the US participants noted that the rise of China has been largely taken out of context. The perception of the “String of Pearls” strategy is a prime example. Originally outlined in a short Booz Allen Hamilton report, the strategy was described a series of naval bases to protect energy and resources. Yet, such a strategy would create a wide dispersion between bases, which would be unsuitable in a time of war. Also, it is questionable whether host-port countries would agree to increased port calls by China during a time of war. These are critical points that display that the strategy may be more closely associated with hyperbole than founded in the actual strategic value for China in the region.

Even so, the theoretical models should not be discounted, and the US will need to carefully maneuver within this changing environment. The question then posed by one of the Pakistani participants was whether, given the imperatives of strategic repositioning due to energy needs and trade ties, will regional economic cooperation trump the politics of confrontation? Or will the hunger for growth and resources create natural grievances that may lead to tension and conflict? The theory would suggest increased tension. The US still provides a role that can help foster cooperation and prevent confrontation, however, there must be political off-ramps as bilateral and regional relationships expand and contract.

Maritime Cooperation

Alvin Tofler’s 3-M theory, Muscle (pre-industrial), Money (industrial), and Mind (post-industrial) was offered by one of the Pakistani participants, who incorporated two more themes for modern times: one is Media (information age), and Masses (globalization and growing populations within the information age). These are all central themes to state power today. However, a US participant – added one last “M” – Maritime.

As the US continues to implement the Carter Doctrine by securing and ensuring the flow of petroleum in the Persian Gulf, coupled with the fight against terrorism, it will be forced to have an increased role in Asia and the Indian Ocean. Yet, the status of the US Navy is in a flux. As of 2007, the stance of the US Navy has been a two-ocean Navy – Persian Gulf and Pacific. But as has been suggested, the oceans have shifted. In fact, one of the US participants pointed out that there were a total of two sentences in the QDR on US interests in the Indian Ocean. The maritime situation throughout the Indian Ocean will continue to evolve – a US shift of focus in its doctrine, as well as maritime cooperation, is an essential step towards enduring stability.

One key area is that of counter-piracy and protection of sea-lanes of communication. The Chinese have learned a lot in this sector, and the Indians were among the first to confront pirates in international waters. Despite the need for such operations, there has been hesitation to come together collectively. For instance, the Chinese have not come forward in joining Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) possibly because of its current structure, and the Indians do not want to become a part of the Combined Military Force (CMF). The Indians also have concerns with becoming too close with the US when it comes to coalition operations. There is currently no significant maritime cooperation between Pakistan and China besides the port of Gwadar – other than that; there is no navy-to-navy cooperation to date. This correlates with other linkages with regard to railways and outlets of strategic communications.

Though these developments pose a challenge to the US, both countries have no interest in becoming associated through such cooperative measures. However, there are some other options worth pursuing. The Pakistani Navy has actively participated in coalition-based maritime activities, including Combined Task Force (CTF) 151, part of the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) conducting counter-piracy operations in the Northern Arabian Sea, within the command zone of
CENTCOM. Pakistan’s role has been welcomed, but concerns prevail with regard to overlapping combatant command boundaries with PACOM that undermines their significance due to entry of India. Should India join CMF (which they are currently not interested in doing), Pakistan would likely back away.

For the US, the challenge is building cooperation between its combatant commands – Central Command (CENTCOM) and Pacific Command (PACOM). In South Asia, as with many other areas in the world, the divides are seamless; therefore cohesive actions taken between the two commands with these countries need to be approached accordingly. Bringing China and India into these areas is essential to addressing many issues and looking beyond Afghanistan and terrorism, while bridging together common interests.

Strategic Force Postures and Regional Stability

**Pakistan wants a firewall between sub-conventional warfare and conventional warfare; India does not. India wants a firewall between conventional war and nuclear war, Pakistan does not.**

- US Participant

General Strategic Overview:

This panel was broken down into several subpanels following the broader Asian power balance discussion, focusing on 1) the regional security situation involving the strategic force postures of India and Pakistan, 2) Pakistan’s internal security and western border contingencies, and 3) the impact of an arms race in missile technology in the region and overall strategic stability.

It was quite evident that global trends, ranging from WMD issues as initiated by the Obama administration (e.g., Nuclear Security Summit (April 2010) in Prague, the US Nuclear Force Posture Review, and the New START treaty with Russia), coupled with the trajectories between India and Pakistan along with the growing instability between the Afghanistan and Pakistan border regions, are pushing policies out of sync with each other. The regional stability question involving Pakistan’s security concerns and US security, in particular, is highly complex to analyze and adopt clear pathways. Therefore, three different panels tackled these issues and examined both the challenges posed to strategic stability, as well as the prospects for potential arms control, CBMs, and strategic restraint in the region.

Moreover, Indian military modernization is widening the gulf between India and Pakistan in terms of resources, as well as acquisitions, particularly with the Air Force and Navy. Among the challenges identified by both US and Pakistani participants were the continuing production of strategic weapons systems, possibilities for deploying sea, air, and ground based systems, as well as the potential for deployment of smaller nuclear warheads as battlefield weapons. The introduction of theater ballistic missile defenses, cruise missiles, and sea-based systems would especially increase Pakistan’s vulnerability to India, forcing Pakistan to rely on nuclear weapons and other countervailing strategies.

Particularly noteworthy is the Pakistani anxiety of India’s conventional military doctrine, Cold Start, interpreted by Pakistan as an existential threat requiring the redeployment of troops and armored forces. This in turn has created a quadrilateral tension within the Pakistani security establishment expressed as “strategic exigencies” requiring them to deal with four different kinds of...
strategic threats: conventional threat from India, nuclear posture with India, counterinsurgency in western borderlands, and internal instability and natural disasters.

Recognizing the complexity of these strategic exigencies, Pakistan took the initiative of seeking “strategic restraint agreements” with India to defuse threats from India and to create space for addressing other concerns. India rejects outright the notion that it is forcing Pakistan to undertake balancing acts. There is a rich backdrop to Indian and Pakistani attempts for peace and arms control dialogue, with many bilateral consultations. Among many other initiatives, India and Pakistan agreed to undertake national measures so as to reduce the risk of accidental war that could lead to the use of nuclear weapons.

In a panel discussion about the possibility of recessing some categories of ballistic missiles, one presenter suggested “baby-step” arms control measures, reviving the stalled peace, security, and confidence building dialogues between India and Pakistan. For instance, in a declaration at Lahore in 1999, both countries had agreed to engage in bilateral consultations on a wide variety of security, disarmament, nonproliferation and risk reduction measures. Due to the rough challenges previously mentioned, progress on these accounts was not made. Addressing these issues will bring direct or subsidiary benefits with the prospect for future initiatives between the two countries.

Kashmir:

While Pakistan has a growing relationship with China, it continues to have enduring security and political issues with India, especially with regard to Kashmir. The US relationship with India has a monumental bearing on Pakistan and how it sees its strategic calculus in the region. The issue of Kashmir is a major point of reference for the Pakistanis in this light. They noted that despite the fact that President Obama spoke openly about Kashmir during his candidacy in 2008, he has been silent with regard to the uptick in violence and killings of unarmed civilians due to brutal use of force imposed by Indian troops. Since that time, there was a sense of anticipation after the special envoys sent to the Middle East and his historical speech in Cairo. Yet instead, there has been limited to no reference to the issue, while many Kashmiris continue to revolt against Indian rule.

Kashmir is a perfect riddle stuck in a paradox where the status quo is not acceptable to either side. Since the 1965 war, Kashmir has been by far the key strategic issue to address in order to advance serious relations between India and Pakistan, as well as stability in the broader region. If Pakistan gives up its claim over the Indian portion of Kashmir, India would push to acquire the Pakistani portion. Neither can Pakistan annex Kashmir by force, nor has India demonstrated it can keep it by force. The Kashmiris continue to suffer in the process and the dispute remains the most destabilizing between any two nuclear-armed neighbors. Each side is using its leverage to force the other to move toward the negotiating table under terms that are not fully amenable to all sides.

Kashmir is now beyond national identity and the unfinished agenda of partition. It has assumed a renewed strategic significance due to recent issues: water security and human rights. Pakistanis pointed to the more poignant issue of building dams that could threaten Pakistan’s agricultural lifeline. Therefore, the strategic significance of Kashmir has increased beyond territorial control, where India is exploiting the upper riparian advantage. The global powers have yet to discern water security as strategic interest for Pakistan. One participant described the malaise of India-Pakistan relations as analogous to a doctor treating a patient by “suppressing the symptom, but not treating the disease.” Kashmir is the root cause of the dispute with India and until a resolution is found, insurgencies and unrest will remain virulent “symptoms” with little sign of reprieve.

Cold Start and Military Modernization
From the US perspective, the overarching interests for Pakistan when it comes to India are to maximize strategic stability, lessen escalation, and lower the potential for destabilization through an arms race. However, the Pakistanis view the Indian force posture with skepticism where there seems to be continued investment in conventional weapons – armored divisions, ballistic missiles, artillery – that are not meant to cross the Himalayas and Tibet, but the planes along the LOC between the two countries. The Cold Start Doctrine (with roughly eight integrated battle groups), along with 10 military exercises since 2004, highlights the point that India is bracing for conventional conflict, not with China, but with Pakistan (See Appendix II).

Yet this has been an evolving situation over the past two decades, which one US participant summarized as three vignettes:

1. **1991**: this was the highpoint of relative strategic positioning in the region. India had not yet liberalized a stable economic situation; Pakistan had modernized its forces with a ‘bomb in the basement,’ and was able to withstand Operation Brasstacks.
2. **2001 (pre-9/11)**: 10 years later, Pakistan forces were declining, while India’s forces were improving. The strategic situation was reasonably satisfactory. India’s conventional forces were still nascent, and the military balance was equalized across the region. The Kargil Crisis proved the thesis that nuclear weapons could prevent broader war, forcing India to think on limited war.
3. **2010**: In the third decade, the strategic situation has turned incredibly dangerous. India has embarked on a conventional modernization, while Pakistan is on the brink of economic collapse. Cold War ground doctrines prevail, while Pakistan has a strategic dilemma of shifting a third of its brigades in operations in the west, weakening its position on the eastern border. Proxy forces have failed in Kashmir, but have shifted focus from outward, to inward where the state no longer has control in certain areas of the country.

As the participants discussed, today India is a strategic winner but has not been a magnanimous victor; it remains vindictive, proactive and refuses to give even the slightest gesture to Pakistan – not allowing Pakistan to back-away from the ledge. Pakistan’s situation is deteriorating from mistakes in both countries. The situation is doomed to fail, unless the two countries back off from each other.

The idea of the 2001-02 military standoff was a crude initiative to reassert conventional war as an instrument of policy under the nuclear overhang. As long as India develops quick mobility and offensive response, and integrates air-land capabilities and RMA upgrades, the strategic equation in the region will become unstable and escalate in such circumstances.

India continues to think in conventional terms regarding theories of war, coercion, bargaining and use of limited force. These Clausewitzian notions need to be revisited in Indian strategic
thinking, as there seems to be little realization that political brinkmanship could lead to conflict through misjudgment and miscalculation, and the region may slide into an uncontrollable war.

These clear-cut asymmetries – acknowledged by both the US and Pakistani participants – limits Pakistan’s options. Moreover, the spectrum of war as currently interpreted in the region has vast potential for regional calamity. While the Indians believe that Pakistan supports sub-state actors and that they can respond with conventional force (vis-à-vis Cold Start) while still remaining under the nuclear threshold, the Pakistanis do not see a strict barrier between a conventional and a nuclear response.

As stated during the dialogue, any conventional war initiated by India will cross a “trip-wire.” Though one of the Pakistani participants stated that its conventional capabilities are meant to hedge, not vanguard nuclear escalation, Pakistan is within its bounds to respond with nuclear weapons between the trip-wire and last resort – there is no way to predict this in peacetime. And with regard to conventional responses to sub-conventional threats specifically, the Pakistani speaker said that this is a relevant concern, but India’s insistence that there is a nexus between Pakistan’s state policy and militancy is flawed. Pakistan understands the issue, but as both US and Pakistani participants noted, these “monsters,” once created, always take a long time to eliminate or neutralize.

India’s version of ‘flexible response’ is locked within a zero-sum game, which is forcing Pakistan to think of ways to develop a more credible nuclear response. This discussion ranged from ballistic missiles, to the deployment of tactical nuclear warheads in the field. Even if Pakistan were to be coerced by the Cold Start doctrine, argued one of the participants, there would be an even greater destabilizing effect in Pakistan, as confronting militancy everywhere would gradually weaken state institutions, and potentially turn the populace away from the government; this would therefore create more space for the militants to operate.

Securing field-based tactical weapons was also of high concern. One US participant noted that when you have such weapons forward deployed out in a bunker, it is incredibly difficult for the force to be constantly alert of the status of those weapons between “three strands of barbwire.” Despite the best intentions, it is difficult to maintain security and control when the weapons are unveiled and readied in the field environment.

Ballistic missile defense (BMD) and other modernizations were at the forefront of this discussion. BMD can have many applications on the battlefield, from strictly defending against missile attack and protecting key leadership and iconic cities, to assisting a “Cold Start” invasion into Pakistani territory (with the thought of calling Pakistan’s bluff on the nuclear option). But in the end, this would be a costly venture, with too many cities to defend around the country. From Pakistan’s perspective, this increases anxieties with regard to the nuclear deterrent, and can lead to increasing its nuclear weapons requirements as a hedge against a conventional Cold Start invasion. In sum, a BMD deployment by India will make escalation control in South Asia more problematic.

Even so, India and Pakistan have displayed pragmatism with regard to military means and political ends in the past three conflicts since 1998; military brinksmanship has prevailed for the better. However, current developments may lead to misjudgments as Pakistan potentially reassesses its nuclear posture in order to compensate for India’s conventionally superior Cold Start doctrine. In light of US arms sales to India and its silence on Kashmir, Pakistan sees the US as cultivating it relationship with India as China continues to grow and gain influence in the region. All the while, regional stability hangs in the balance, while no adequate safeguards are in place to stop the gears of war once they begin to crank between the sub-conventional, conventional and nuclear levels.

And so long as terrorist groups remain a wildcard in the region, definitions of power and stability will be defied and challenged. One of the US participants eloquently quoted a 19th century poem by John Godfrey Saxe, “the Blind Man of Hindustan” (and restated in a famous book by Indian army chief Sunderji) which serves as an apt metaphor for the strategic conundrum that both
countries have created for themselves in the region. The poem tells the story of six blind men approaching an elephant, where each grabs a part of the animal in order to decipher what it is that stands before them. As the poem goes:

*And so these men of Hindostan/ Disputed loud and long,*  
*Each in his own opinion/ Exceeding stiff and strong,*  
*Though each was partly in the right/ And all were in the wrong.*

*So oft in theologic wars, / The disputants, I ween,*  
*Rail on in utter ignorance/ Of what each other mean,*  
*And prate about an Elephant/ Not one of them has seen!*

The US participant notes that the end of Saxe’s poem may presage what might happen if nothing is done to change the trajectory both countries are following, with regard to their doctrines and weapons procurement initiatives.

In any case, all participants agreed that reshaping Pakistani threat perceptions would require a process on the resolution of Kashmir, dealing with conventional to sub-conventional warfare, and finding alternate means to deal with militancy. Accommodating Pakistan’s strategic interests in Afghanistan and assisting Pakistan in its quest for internal stability would require balancing Pakistan’s state institutions to bring stability so as to provide the military with the space to dismantle terrorist networks within its jurisdiction.

**Reassessing Strategic Ballistic Missiles**

*Given the regional geography and deployment patterns, short-range missiles of 150km or below are strategic weapons.*  
- Pakistani participant

One particular area of focus within the India-Pakistan dialogue has been the identification of instability caused by either the deployment or possible use of ballistic missiles. This dialogue brought about discussion on a broad range of initiatives, including recessing strategic ballistic missiles, and in particular, short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs), which could be either destabilizing or stabilizing depending on the perspective. Though no clear-cut conclusion was reached on the question of missile stability, experienced Pakistani arms control presenters made a compelling case of withdrawing, retiring, or even eliminating the shortest categories of ballistic missiles for a wide variety of operational and technical reasons.

Some of the short-range missile systems are very old, with questionable accuracy and deployment capabilities in the battlefield. Due to their range limits, they would need to be deployed very close to the border. Typical deployment of any ballistic or artillery based weapon seeks to maximize range and ensure safety; the formula is to have 1/3 on one's own side, and 2/3 toward the enemy territory. SRBMs, with ranges as little as 100-150 km, would therefore be deployed barely 50km from the border, making them battlefield weapons. As one participant commented, “Given the regional geography and deployment patterns, short-range missiles of 150km or below are strategic weapons.”
The ability of these missiles to carry either nuclear or non-nuclear warheads adds to the uncertainty. The deployment itself can cause miscommunication and destabilize the region. This creates a two-pronged problem—one related to field security, and the other to the preemptive pressures of proximity. One speaker concluded that the need to eliminate SRBMs due to their destabilizing potential is undisputed. In addition to all these rationales, efforts needed to maintain outdated systems are costly. Regrettably, the environment in South Asia is not conducive to any agreement even if it makes strategic and logical sense.

Retiring these missiles into storage sites would build confidence between the two countries, and signal the possibility of future arms control dialogues. Presumably, such a measure is politically feasible, while harnessing strategic utility and tactical viability for both states, especially as the weapons reach their shelf lives. However, none of these measures will occur unless a conducive political environment is created. The present environment is heavily influenced by philosophical differences in strategic thinking, as well as other business and economic incentives. Even so, the current confidence-building measure of advanced notification of ballistic missile flight tests is a significant achievement.

Another presenter gave his analysis of the stabilizing and destabilizing effects of ballistic missiles and proffered a step-by-step process to reduce and eventually eliminate SRBMs. The presentation was given against the backdrop of strategic restraint between India and Pakistan; a presenter argued that pairing of missile and nuclear warheads could be both stabilizing (survivable deterrent force), and destabilizing and create preemptive urges.

The presenter categorized missiles according to seven characteristics: pre-launch survivability, range of missile, and time of flight are three elements that could potentially have stabilizing effects; accuracy, autonomy after launch, response time, and ambiguity about the nature of warheads are considered to be increasingly destabilizing. Amongst the technical issues, the presenter explained the wide variations of technical parameters with different categories of missiles, and surmised that most missiles in the inventory of India and Pakistan have dual-use capabilities.

The follow-on presentation focused on explaining the obstacles and complicating factors that have stalled the peace process: with no dialogue between each other for a long-time, the momentum of the process is broken, lack of tradition makes agreements on bilateral arms control difficult, and a high level of distrust makes unilateral declarations not credible and verification nearly impossible.

There are, however, multiple complicating factors to take into account that may inhibit a tenable diplomatic atmosphere: prestige issues within the respective militaries would induce competing branches (army, navy, etc) to resist giving up their weapons; manufacturing issues and business deals would also create institutional resistance; there is potential for political blowback in both countries; classifications of weapons are irrelevant in South Asia – this would just be viewed as taking away means to defense. These obstacles, overlaid on disparities in geography and domestic political exigencies, demand that strategic and political communities be on the same page.

On the philosophical end, strategic thinking varied between the individual participants with regard to the viability of stability in the region; this remains a serious debate within the Pakistani strategic community. This was the distinctive feature of the Singapore dialogue.

Again, the fundamental purpose of Pakistani nuclear weapons and delivery means is to deter India from waging a conventional attack (limited or full-scale). The debate about the efficacy of battlefield SRBMs contained two competing thoughts: one school believed in the utility that the physical presence of short-range ballistic missiles in the battlefield would practically deter Indian armed forces from attacking across the border. The other school thinks that the very presence of SRBMs in the battlefield deployed dangerously close to each other risk deterrence stability by increasing the temptation for preemptive strikes and compounded field security and command and control problems. In this context, the roles of short-range ballistic missiles, and/or tactical, small
yield weapons, as well as the development of ballistic missile defenses, are the key factors of the
debate.

**Emerging Threats: Bio-security and Disease Surveillance**

Bio-security was introduced for the first time in this track II dialogue. The American concerns
are essentially two-fold: first, is the potential terrorist threat in the region, which could allow
extremist groups to pursue such technologies in order to attack the US and its allies, creating
instability in the region and perhaps, the world; second is the concern of a naturally-occurring
pandemic spreading in the aftermath of environmental and natural disasters, which may find state
capacity for public health and safety incompatible of dealing with a large-scale outbreak.

The Pakistani concerns were centered on the fact that this is a new subject for them, and there
was very little public awareness in regard to broad-based disease surveillance and bio-security
capabilities. At the same time, Pakistanis presented what current infrastructure and efforts are
underway to deal with these threats; however, more work still needs to be done.

There were questions whether US support to Pakistan against these bio-threats falls under the
rubric of CTR. Some participants considered CTR to be a relic of Cold War; additionally, most of
the specialists the Pakistanis encountered were Sovietologists, having little or no understanding of
regional dynamics and the implication of extending such cooperation to allies.

Given the economic situation in region, coupled with natural disasters like that of the recent
floods, the prospects for the emergence of diseases and potential pandemics are ripe. Awareness of
these issues is not present in many of the South Asian countries, including Pakistan. Health facilities
and investment are insufficient when it comes to any potential outbreak. And with over 25 million
people affected by the flood, with livestock and other animals in the fray, there is an immediate need
for the US and the international community to build cooperative measures in disease surveillance
capabilities. The statistics are staggering:

- The impact of the flood was presented with comparative data from other disasters in the world
  (e.g. the Pakistan earthquake of 2004, the tsunami in December 2004, Hurricane Katrina in
  August 2005, and the Haiti earthquake in 2010). While the death count was low, displacement
  was four times more than after Katrina, covering 10 times the area affected.

- Affected infrastructure included 5,000 miles of rail and roads, 11,000 schools, 400 health
  facilities, 475 bridges destroyed, and 6000 towns and cities decimated.

- Crops and livestock: 1.3 million hectares of crops and 600,000 livestock perished. Food and
  fodder shortages are expected to impact next year.

- In terms of overall economic impact, the assessment made by World Bank and UN is that
  approximately 6.7 million people will be rendered unemployed as a result of this calamity.
The role of the armed forces in disaster response won the hearts and minds of the people of Pakistan. Despite its commitment on the western border, defenses against India including troops deployed along the LOC with Kashmir, insurgency duties in FATA and Swat valley, Pakistan armed forces deployed 72,000 troops, 70 helicopters, and 493 boats. The armed forces established 217 camps and distributed meals to 1.3 million people. (See Appendix III).

In addition to these resource demands, a US presenter indicated four direct problems based on case studies and experience in other countries, notably Indonesia and Cambodia. He applied the similar conditions with the initiating programs in areas of distress – e.g. flooded areas of Pakistan. He presented guidelines for how best to move forward. Key problems were as follows: poor to nonexistent surveillance; poor diagnostic laboratory capability; disincentive to report (bad publicity is bad for business); and the question of viral sovereignty, where states have control over vaccines and other pharmaceutical resources. In Indonesia, the NEMRU II unit was asked to leave, and in the case of Cambodia it was allowed to stay – but was taken away during the HVN1 outbreaks.

The Pakistani presenter on “Bio-Security, How Real is the Threat,” expressed two main findings from his presentation: first was public ignorance of the bio-security challenge; the second was the linkage between combating biological weapons and infectious disease was not established. He considered bio-security to be under the nontraditional security concept and asymmetric warfare models where bio-security remains a puzzle. He defined bio-security as security against an inadvertent, or intentional, malicious use of bio-technology (manmade), as well as outbreak of newly emergent diseases (natural).

The presenter indentified the bio-threat in two categories: low-end, crude attacks, and high-end, threats based on mastery of advanced biotechnologies. Finally, the presenter confronted the dual-use dilemma of biotechnology, which can be an important engine for economic and social development, but also lethal when misused for malicious purposes. This could range from synthetic biology (microorganisms) and the ability to carry out DNA synthesis, which is spreading from elite scientists to general public thanks to the internet and other media. The presenter explained “terrorists could obtain through synthetic genomics viruses such as smallpox, influenza and foot-and-mouth disease.” Similarly he expressed in details the dual-use characterizes of what he called “new biology” or “genomic sciences.”

Two threats were identified. Pakistan is a candidate for both categories because of the proximity of terror in the tribal regions, and their widely believed interests in weapons of mass destruction. The nebulous status of the terrorist threat in the last decade means the threat of Al Qaeda seeking covert bio-terror weapons in inaccessible caves cannot be fully ruled-out, though there may be technical and other logistical difficulties attached.

This discussion did not explicitly come in our presentations, but was more implied. In general, the participants considered this to be a hypothetical threat, with no clear empirical evidence; hence a mere fantasy. However, in regards to threats of pandemics resulting from natural disasters, there was increased receptivity in Pakistan, particularly since the state suffered recent disasters (flood and earthquake). Every presentation on this topic related to the floods.

Official Pakistani presentations explained the existing legislative and administrative measures regarding the biological risks in the country. Among the administrative measures, he presented the following measures currently in place to deal with the potential threat:

- Designation of national point of contact for Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) matters (Ministry of Foreign Affairs).
• An interagency working group named “task force” has been formed to consolidate their efforts on the question on bio-security and threats.

• Increased education and awareness programs in the country through a series of seminars and workshops as well as academic research. The universities in Pakistan have made strides in adapting their courses and syllabi to these issues. The academic environments provide an excellent venue to continue building a knowledge base and promoting research in these areas. Redefining the CTR can also help engineer ways of helping Pakistan to increase its capacity to deal with an issue that is both borderless and indiscriminate.

• Enhanced oversight of biological research and related activities based on three tiers at the federal level: national bio-safety committee, technological advisory committee, and institutional bio-safety committee under the Ministry of Environment in Islamabad.

• Implementation of a “code of conduct for life scientists.” Pakistan has prepared draft guidelines for these codes of conduct under the theme: “Science for Humanity” and they continue to be a work in progress.

• The establishment of the National Core Group of Life Sciences (NCGLS). This is a working group from various universities and research institutions established by the commission in Pakistan. The biological safety association was established in 2008.

• And finally is the formulation of a disease surveillance mechanism. Amongst the legislative measures, the BWC implementation act of 2010 was approved by the cabinet and is under consideration by the Parliament. The presentation explained the role of the Natural Disaster Management Authority created after the earthquake in 2005. Disease surveillance is one of the responsibilities of the National Institute of Health, which functions under them.

• A disease early warning system (DEWS) has been established since 1996 along with several training programs.

However, many of these programs are still nascent in development and need increased resources, capabilities, and engagement with Pakistan on bio-security issues, both in terms of clarifying US objectives and intentions and eliminating legal and constitution misinterpretations in Pakistan, if any.

Conclusion

Critical Trends:

• Conventional asymmetries: India has a 4:1 advantage in air force modernization and 6-7 times the budget—$9 billion— as well as six additional submarines and plans to buy an aircraft carrier; the current Pakistani F-16 and JF-17 will not be able to match.

• Cold Start: India’s doctrine aims to fight a short limited war that would not cross Pakistani nuclear redlines. Pakistan does not guarantee that war would terminate as India perceives it.
• Deployment of short-range nuclear weapons in response to Cold Start is probable. The presence of short-range nuclear weapons in the battlefield would complicate command-and-control and field security.

• Participants, however, agreed that in South Asia context there are no tactical weapons. All nuclear weapons regardless of yield and distance are considered to be strategic.

• Theater missile defense: India’s interest in BMD has created anxiety in Pakistan; India is deploying the S300-PMU system, an early-warning radar system, and is building a variety of air defense and anti-missile systems. Pakistan will likely respond with increased missile production to saturate the system and undertake other countervailing measures.

• Pakistan may be tempted to off-set declining capability with India by relying on cruise missiles. Cruise missiles development with even smaller warheads than deployed on ballistic missiles is being produced in the region.

Recommendations
1. Both India and Pakistan must halt support of asymmetric forces of militant groups toward each other.
2. India should remove security forces from Kashmir and proceed with political settlement either on promoting degree of autonomy to the Muslim areas (US proposal) and on the basis of mutual agreement through backdoor diplomacy as in the Musharraf era (only favored by some Pakistani participants)
3. India should formally abandon the notion of Cold Start and also any notion of BMD. Both sides must open strategic restraint dialogue so as to bring about stability in the region and an acceptable translation to minimum deterrence doctrine.
4. Pakistan recommends that to sustain the strategic partnership, the US must also recognize Pakistan’s strategic interests and sensitivities. Pakistanis cannot simply serve the interests of others.
5. The efficacy of drone attacks remains debatable in the Pakistani community. The weapon system might be effective tactically, but collateral damage adds to strategic problems. Participants in Singapore urged the US to view this issue with sympathy toward Pakistan’s multiple counter-militancy problems within its territory.
6. Pakistan’s political relationship remains vulnerable to internal and external shocks, including any crisis with India (and including coercive tactics by India that could lead to a crisis). This creates strategic anxieties in Pakistan, which is not constructive in a nuclear environment.
7. The US must encourage substantive India and Pakistan dialogue on issues besides terrorism, such as: Kashmir; water rights; military doctrines (both conventional and nuclear); security interests of Pakistan and Afghanistan; and facilitate Pakistan’s quest for internal stability as it strengthens its state and civil institutions.
8. Help with incentives in Pakistan to dismantle militant organizations without debilitating Pakistan internally.
9. Supporting social and economic projects, particularly after devastating manmade disasters, is critical to Pakistan’s internal stability.
10. Pakistanis want sympathy and understanding of their predicaments rather than pressure and cynicism.

Concluding Remarks

The complexity of US-Pakistan relations is too serious to be left to the governments alone.

- Pakistani participants
Since the political relationship between India and Pakistan is vulnerable to shocks (Mumbai), there is realization amongst Pakistani strategic community that retroactive militancy must be controlled, if not eliminated. From Pakistan’s standpoint, India must see the terror problem as a consequence of regional history, instead of exploiting the environment to their political advantage. Ideally, both countries need to cooperate, and consider a joint counterterrorism relationship as an increasingly common problem. There is also an increased US commitment that has had some stabilizing effect; COIN has made good progress in certain areas in Pakistan, though US is not fully satisfied and expects operations in North Waziristan, where Taliban and Al Qaeda safe havens continue to operate. All the while, the strategic trajectories between and Pakistan continue to widen. Pakistan’s economic situation is deteriorating, which makes it more difficult for Pakistan to deal with multiple security problems within the country and the region.

The US is in a unique position to be an arbiter between the two countries in helping move forward with these recommendations and other confidence-building measures. This is crucial as the US asserts itself in affairs throughout the Indian Ocean, maintaining security within the global commons and promoting increased trade relations across the region. In this sense, Pakistan’s strategic value remains vital to US strategic interests. This was best articulated by one of the Pakistani participants with a quote from its founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who stated in 1947, “Pakistan is the pivot of the world as we are placed [on] the frontier on which the future position of the world revolves.”
Appendix I

Figure 1: This chart was presented by one of the Pakistani participants indicating the thresholds within the balance of power construct across time and increased capabilities.
Appendix II

Figure 2: Indian military exercises conducted between 2004 and 2010.
Figure 3: This map shows the areas affected by the floods, as well as the extent of the devastation.