Revisiting the Kashmir Insurgency, Kargil, and the Twin Peak Crisis: Was the Stability/Instability Paradox at Play?

Rajesh Kumar
PPN College, Kanpur[1]

Abstract

The stability/instability paradox, an offshoot of the nuclear deterrence theory, states that nuclear weapons create stability as well as instability simultaneously. Nuclear weapons create stability at the macro level when the two adversaries recognize that since both have a second-strike capability, full-blown war can only result in mutual destruction. But this very confidence that the conflict will not escalate to a nuclear level, creates instability at the micro level. States indulge in proxy wars, sub-conventional warfare and limited conflicts with the confidence that the shadow of nuclear weapons makes the risks controllable and calculable. This paper tests the applicability of the stability/instability paradox to the India-Pakistan relationship after the covert nuclearization of the sub-continent. The major finding of the paper is that the stability/instability paradox is relevant in explaining Islamabad's support to insurgency in Kashmir and also the two crises after the overt nuclearization of the sub-continent. Stability/instability paradox, as a general condition prevailing in the sub-continent, has offered India and Pakistan the opportunity to adopt specific strategies like brinkmanship and coercive diplomacy during the course of various crises. Whether the paradox will remain applicable in future, depends upon what happens in Pakistan on the domestic front. The lull of 2007 in the sub-continent was not brought about because of a maturing of the nuclear relationship between the two countries, but

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because of severe domestic disturbances in Pakistan and there are already signs of the stability / instability paradox raising its ugly head again in 2008.

Introduction

South Asia has been ominously described as the most dangerous place on earth (Thomas 2002, 109-118).[2] The seemingly intractable Kashmir conflict has kept India and Pakistan on nuclear tenterhooks for a long time. The two neighbors have fought four bitter wars in the 61 years of their independent existence (Ganguly and Hagerty 2005). While the wars of 1947-48, 1965 and 1971 were conventional, Pakistan acquired covert nuclear capability by the late 1980s and its support of militancy in Kashmir also dates back to that period. The two countries went overtly nuclear in 1998 and the Kargil war of 1999 took place in the menacing shadow of nuclear weapons. The "nuclear shadow" also loomed large during the twin peak crisis of 2001-02, which witnessed the largest troop mobilization in the history of the sub-continent (Vanaik 2002). Although it has been some time since the two countries threatened to nuke each other, it certainly does not mean that the January 2004 peace process is working. Pakistan's deep plunge into an unprecedented socio-political crisis during 2007 resulted in a temporary breather[3] in South Asia's never-ending war of words and actions

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[2] Thomas writes that United States officials have called South Asia the most dangerous place on earth. This view was voiced by President Bill Clinton prior to his visit to South Asia in March 2000, almost two years after the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests in May 1998. On 11 October 2001, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told reporters again that Kashmir "is the most dangerous place in the world."

[3] By all accounts, 2007 was probably the best year for India-Pakistan relations in the last two decades. During 2007, Pakistan passed through an unprecedented era of domestic crisis. Pakistani newspaper *The News* reported that "One of the most significant aspects of 2007 was that the number of casualties suffered was probably the highest for the Pakistan military in any peacetime year. The constant state of readiness and uncertainty that is being seen in our cantonments has lowered morale and has also put a big question mark on whether we are actually winning the war on terror … Increasingly, Pakistan has become the battleground for the war on terror but the focus of the

(Siddiqui 2007). This temporary respite offers an opportunity to analyze how nuclear weapons have influenced the crisis behavior of the two countries and, as Pakistan comes out of its current phase of uncertainty or plunges even deeper into the abyss, to determine the possible shape a deterrence equation between the two countries might take.

This paper is divided into three sections. The first section establishes the contours of the stability/instability paradox. The second section analyzes how far this paradigm has been applicable in the sub-continent since the late 1980s, ever since the two countries acquired nuclear capability. The applicability of the paradox is tested in explaining Pakistan's support to Kashmir insurgency, the Kargil war of 1999 and the Twin Peak Crisis of 2001-02. This section also introduces concepts of coercive diplomacy and brinkmanship to explain the strategies adopted by the two countries during the Twin Peak Crisis. The third and final section tries to predict the future of nuclear deterrence in South Asia and contends that the paradox will continue to operate, even as Pakistan comes out of its current phase of uncertainty.

Establishing Benchmarks: Deterrence Theory and the Stability/Instability Paradox

Because the stability/instability paradox is an offshoot of deterrence theory, it would be prudent first to establish the parameters of nuclear deterrence. Recognizing, rather early, that nuclear weapons have changed the nature of warfare forever, Brodie wrote as far back as in 1946, "Thus far the chief purpose of our military has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them. It can have almost no other purpose" (Brodie 1946). When two contending states have assured second-strike capabilities[4]—that is, having been

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retaliatory attacks has changed from being anti-America to being anti-Musharraf … Even by Pakistani standards, 2007 was one of the most happening years of the decade."

[4] In the nuclear deterrence theory, first-strike capability means that a state is in a position to wipe out an adversary's entire nuclear arsenal in a decapitating first strike. Crisis stability is at its weakest when both the adversaries have first strike capabilities,

struck first with nuclear weapons, they still have enough capability left to inflict unacceptable damage to the aggressor—they will not indulge in war because it could lead to the destruction of both. This approach also was termed as Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) and it characterized the relationship of the United States and Soviet Union during the Cold War decades. It is assumed that the two states are perfectly rational actors and that they believe that it is not worth getting destroyed in order to destroy the other. But the attainment of second-strike capabilities that led to nuclear deterrence did not resolve the inherent political conflicts of superpowers. How would these conflicts play out in the face of nuclear capabilities (Powell 2003, 86-87)?[5] Superpowers had no option but to channel their rivalry to safer pursuits. This search for safer pursuits resulted in the stability/instability paradox. Explaining the concept succinctly, Krepon writes:

> The United States and Soviet Union managed to avoid nuclear and conventional warfare during the cold war, while jockeying for advantage in myriad of ways, including proxy wars and a succession of crises that became surrogates for direct conflict. International relations and deterrence theorists aptly described this tense standoff in which much blood and treasure was expended—but without direct conflict—as the 'stability/instability paradox'… The stability/instability paradox was embedded in the enormity of the stakes involved in crossing the nuclear threshold (Krepon 2003a, 1).

The paradox postulates that, to the extent that the military balance is stable at the level of all-out war, it will become less stable at a lower level of violence and this will result in proxy wars, limited wars, and sub-conventional

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since motivation to strike first pre-emptively remains strong. Crisis stability is most robust when both the adversaries have definite second-strike capability, since adversaries know that by attacking first they will ensure unacceptable damage on themselves. Even crude second-strike capabilities work as an effective deterrent, since the adversaries will want to avoid even a remote chance of massive retaliation.

[5] Powell argues that, in order to attain their interests in the "nuclear shadow," states indulge in the strategy of brinkmanship. Thomas Schelling's concept of brinkmanship is discussed elsewhere in this paper.

conflicts (Jervis 1984, 31). The underlying assumption is "because the defender cannot meaningfully threaten massive retaliation in the event of local transgressions by the aggressor, the latter's inducement to undertake such transgressions is greatly increased" (Brodie 1965, 48). Although Glenn Snyder is credited with coining the term "stability/instability paradox," B. H. Liddell Hart also was reflecting a widely-held fear of the same phenomenon when he wrote, "to the extent that H[ydrogen]-bomb reduces the likelihood of full-scale war, it *increases* the possibility of limited war pursued by widespread local aggression. The enemy can exploit a choice of techniques, differing in pattern but all designed to make headway while causing hesitancy about employing counteraction by H[ydrogen] or A[tomic] bombs" (Hart 2003, 23).

> Formally coining the term in 1965, Glenn Snyder wrote:
> [if] neither side has a 'full first-strike capability,' and both know it, they will be less inhibited about initiating conventional war, and about the limited use of nuclear weapons, than if the strategic balance were unstable. Thus the stability in the strategic nuclear balance tends to destabilize the conventional balance… The point is often made in the strategic literature that the greater the stability of the 'strategic' balance of terror, the lower the stability of the overall balance at it's lower levels of violence (Snyder 1965, 199).

Robert Jervis clarified it further:

> The common realization that all-out war would be irrational provides a license for threats and lower levels of violence. In some circumstances a state could use the shared fear of nuclear war to exploit other….Indeed the stability-instability paradox implies that the shared expectation that the disputes will remain peaceful will remove some restraints of vituperations and competitive tactics (Jervis 2001).

Similarly, according to Glaser, this thesis holds that "lowering the probability that a conventional war will escalate to a nuclear war—along preemptive and other lines—reduces the danger of starting a conventional war, thus, this low likelihood of escalation—referred to here as 'stability'—makes

conventional war less dangerous, and possibly, as a result more likely" (Chari 2003a, 19).

Following this discussion, certain basic tenets of the stability/instability paradox can be formulated at this juncture:

A. The stability/instability paradox, an offshoot of the deterrence theory, assumes complete rationality on the part of both the adversaries.

B. Nuclear weapons create both instability and stability in an adversarial relationship between two nuclear-armed states (Krepon 2003a).

C. When two adversaries attain assured second-strike capability, deterrence starts operating and the chance of a nuclear war becomes extremely low.

D. This creates strategic stability at the macro level, because no rational adversary will initiate a nuclear war, since it will lead to his own destruction in turn, due to the massive retaliation from the party attacked.

E. Paradoxically, this stability creates instability at the lower level. Conviction that conflict with the other state cannot cross the nuclear threshold provides license for rising tensions and unlimited coercive action short of that threshold (Krepon 2003b).

F. The instability at the micro level could take the form of proxy wars, limited wars and other forms of coercive actions.

One must remember that nuclear deterrence theory and the stability/instability paradox both are located within the broad framework of the realist paradigm of international relations, which contends that this world is an anarchical system and that there is no hegemon to enforce rules and norms; states are the main actors in this system (and states tend to prefer self-interests

over common interests), clashes of self-interests result in military conflicts, and states tend to accumulate power to defend themselves (Barsur 2007).

The Stability/Instability Paradox and South Asia

Before testing the applicability of the stability/instability paradox to the India-Pakistan relationship in this section, it is only logical to accept that, in spite of many similarities, there are huge differences between the US-USSR relationship during the Cold War and the India-Pakistan nuclear conundrum. It will be argued that, in spite of these glaring differences in the two sets of relationships, the stability/instability paradox remains an important tool in explaining the crises that were occurring with amazing regularity till recently in South Asia. During the Cold War, a great physical distance separated the antagonists, whereas the missile flight time between India and Pakistan is frighteningly short. While the India-Pakistan confrontation has witnessed small and un-deployed nuclear forces, both the US and the USSR accumulated huge and diverse arsenals. Under the concept of extended nuclear deterrence, both superpowers also managed alliances beneath their protective nuclear umbrellas, which is not the case with India and Pakistan (Krepon 2007a).

Another marked difference between the two relationships is the presence and activity of terrorists in South Asia. Pakistan has employed plausible deniability to sponsor cross-border terrorism in India. These actors have the capability to create nuclear instability through acts of terrorism, including nuclear terrorism (Barsur 2003). In spite of these vast differences, there are significant similarities between the two nuclear dyads under consideration. Basrur posits that both sets of relationships are characterized by military confrontation of a particular kind: large conventional forces, the possession of nuclear weapons, and high tension and rhetoric accompanied by war avoidance and the search for advantage within the constraints imposed by nuclear weapons. This situation generates crises and the specter of war, as well as

competitive behavior in the form of repeated threats and counter-threats, and tit-for-tat testing. (Barsur 2003)

Although Rajagoplan writes that the stability / instability paradox enjoys a kind of non-partisan support among the analysts and scholars examining the South Asian nuclear issue, the fact is that a heated debate has ensued since notable scholars such as Krepon, Ganguly and Chari first applied this Cold War paradigm to South Asia. Another set of equally notable scholars, such as Rajagoplan, Kapur, and Sahni have questioned the applicability of the paradox to the Indo-Pakistani relationship. Rajagopalan contends that Pakistan's support to terrorism has no causal link with the country's acquisition of nuclear capability and that, ever since the days of Mizo and Naga insurgency, Islamabad always has exploited India's internal problems. He also argues that the paradox was framed to understand the relationship between nuclear and conventional levels of warfare, while, in South Asia, it has been routinely employed to examine the relationship between the sub-conventional (secessionist insurgencies and terrorism) and nuclear levels (Rajagopalan 2006, 3, 11).[6]

Kapur writes that, instead of stability, it is, actually, instability in the nuclear realm that encourages instability at lower levels of conflict. He also argues that, going by the logic of the Cold War in which conventionally superior USSR exploited the advantage of this phenomenon, had the stability / instability paradox been working in South Asia, conventionally superior India would have punished Pakistan, severely, for fomenting trouble (Kapur 2005a, 135, 141, 142). Sahni writes that Snyder's original ideas about the relationship of conventional and nuclear levels of warfare, in 1961, were entirely contradictory to the

[6] Although it cannot be claimed that secessionist insurgencies and terrorism were unknown prior to 1965, Snyder's failure to mention these phenomena could be attributed to the fact that there was no example, at that time, in which a nuclear-armed adversary was sponsoring cross-border terrorism to foment insurgency in the neighboring state. In any case, the basic premise of the paradox is that stability at the macro level creates instability at the lower level and there is nothing in this theory that indicates that instability cannot take the form of secessionist insurgencies and terrorism.

stability/instability paradox, which he later presented in 1965 (Sahni 2004, 135). However, Sahni later concedes that the change was "expected in the wake of Cuban missile crisis" (Sahni 2007, 189). Sahni also states that the stability/instability paradox is not even an important part of the India-Pakistan relationship. The roots of the problem lie in the mutually incompatible nuclear doctrines of the two states (Sahni 2007, 195).[7] So the debate concerning whether the stability/instability paradox is applicable to South Asia has reached an interesting juncture and the answers will have serious implications for the prospects of deterrence stability, nuclear risk reduction measures, and, even, for an ultimate resolution of the conflict between India and Pakistan.

But, prior to moving further in explaining the vexed India-Pakistan relationship, a caveat is in order. By definition, academic theories are far neater than the real world could ever possibly be. Indeed, Snyder himself warns, "The real world is necessarily much more complex than any theoretical model which purports to describe or explain it. One might say that the chief purpose of theory is to abstract out the non-essential variables so that the interaction of essential ones can be perceived in fullest clarity (Snyder 1960, 174)." Keeping this caveat in mind, we now undertake the case studies of Pakistan's support to terrorism in India since 1989, the Kargil war of 1999, and the Twin Peak Crisis of 2001-2002 to test the applicability of the stability/instability paradox in the South Asian context. Although the crisis of 1987 (precipitated by India's massive war game "Brasstacks") was serious enough and A. Q. Khan, the father of Pakistan's nuclear program, threatened in March 1987 that Islamabad could respond to

[7] According to Sahni, apart from doctrinal asymmetry, the other pieces of the India-Pakistan puzzle are the difference between *status quo* and revisionist strategies, the offense-defense balance at different levels of escalation and the "plausible deniability" inherent in asymmetric warfare. A counter argument to this position could be that the stability/instability paradox is a general condition that occurs within the context of a nuclear dyad. It is only natural to expect that the specific causes behind the conflict (or the "pieces of the puzzle") will be unique in each case.

Indian provocations with a nuclear attack, there is, still, serious doubt regarding whether the nuclear dimension entered into the strategic calculus of the decision-makers of the two countries.

One cannot ignore the fact that the crisis was almost over by the time that Khan's interview, in which he made the nuclear threat, was published. Bajpai, Chari, Cheema, Cohen, and Ganguly conclude (in the most definitive study of the 1987 crisis) that the nuclear question was not a real issue during the Brasstacks exercise, although the outcome of Brasstacks may have influenced subsequent nuclear decisions in South Asia (Bajpai, Chari, Cheema and Ganguly 2007). Hagerty, a noted South Asia expert, writes, "nuclear weapons seem not to have been a major factor in the Brasstacks crisis. According to former Foreign Secretary Abdul Sattar, Pakistan's nuclear capabilities had not yet flowered by the time of Brasstacks. They were, he said, nascent, but not yet actual. The Indian perception was also that Pakistan had not weaponized (Hagerty 1995)." Hence, while there was an undeniable nuclear dimension to Pakistan's support of insurgency, the Kargil war, and the Twin Peak Crisis, it was lacking in the 1987 crisis, which, therefore, has not been included in this study.

Do India and Pakistan Have Second-Strike Capability?

Because the operability of the stability/instability paradox is premised upon the two adversaries having assured second strike capability to deter a first strike from each other, it is important to analyze whether Small Nuclear Forces (SNF), such as possessed by India and Pakistan, have this capability. Although the United States and the Soviet Union had amassed thousands of nuclear weapons during the height of the Cold War, Waltz correctly has argued that, actually, it takes very little to have a crude second-strike capability sufficient to deter an adversary. One should remember that nuclear weapons are fairly small, light, and easy to move. For a successful first-strike, an attacker has to know that the intended victim's warheads are few in number, know their precise number

and locations, and know that they will not be moved or fired before they are struck. According to Waltz:

> To know all of these things, and to know that you know them for sure, is exceedingly difficult. How can military advisers promise the full success of a disarming first strike when the penalty for slight error may be so heavy? …. Lesser nuclear states might deploy, say, ten real weapons and ten dummies, while permitting other countries to infer that the numbers are larger. The adversary need only believe that some warheads may survive his attack and be visited on him. That belief should not be hard to create without making command and control unreliable … A low probability of carrying a highly destructive attack home is sufficient for deterrence. To locate virtually all missiles and aircraft is not good enough …. Ultimately, the inhibitions lie in the impossibility of knowing for sure that a disarming strike will totally destroy an opposing force and in the immense destruction even a few warheads can wreak (Waltz 1981).

Hagerty certainly is right in his assertion that the *sine qua non* of nuclear deterrence is the survivability, not size, of one's nuclear forces (Hagerty 1995). It has been a matter of some debate regarding the number of nuclear weapons that India and Pakistan actually have. While it is generally assumed that India's nuclear program is far more likely to have second-strike capability (because it has the strategic depth to hide nuclear weapons and New Delhi is one of the biggest spenders on arms and ammunition so it may have built more nuclear weapons), evidence suggests that, in reality, Pakistan's nuclear program may, actually, be more advanced than India's program. According to a *Washington Times* report, Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is far larger than previously suspected and may be five times as large as India's arsenal. Instead of the previous estimates of 10 to 15 nuclear weapons, the new estimate is that Pakistan may have built between 25 to 100 bombs and that it has the missiles and jet planes needed to deliver them (Barber 2000).

Even if this report overestimates Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, Mirza Aslam Beg, an ex chief of the Pakistani Army, refers to a meeting in April 1989, chaired

by the then Prime Minister Benazir Bhutoo, in which it was decided that, as the minimum credible deterrence, the "correlation of one to seven" was sufficient to maintain the balance of terror against India who, at that time, possessed the capability to build 60-70 atomic warheads (Beg 2008). It is clearly evident, then, that, in spite of being Small Nuclear Forces, an equation of nuclear deterrence *has* existed between India and Pakistan since late 1980s and this situation has "paved the way" for the operability of the stability/instability paradox.

Pakistan's Support of Insurgency and the 1990 Crisis

While India had conducted a peaceful nuclear test in 1974 and had maintained a rudimentary nuclear deterrent ever since and with New Delhi's missile program reaching full output by 1988-1989, it is beyond reasonable doubt that Pakistan had, also, acquired a meaningful low-level deterrent capability by 1989.[8] Indeed, in 1990, for the grant of an aid package by the United States Senate, the American President refused to certify that Pakistan did not have a nuclear weapon capability. Proving the applicability of the stability/instability paradox would entail that Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear weapon capability gave Islamabad the confidence and incentive to create instability at a lower rung of the escalation ladder. It is not a simple coincidence that insurgency exploded in Kashmir, in 1989, at almost the same time that Pakistan also acquired nuclear capability. There is clear evidence that Pakistan's strategic enclave[9] made a conscious decision to take the advantage offered by the nuclear shield and sponsor insurgency. Recognizing, quite early, that the stability/instability paradox had started operating in South Asia, Ganguly wrote, way back in 1995, that incipient nuclear capabilities ensured that the two sides would not indulge

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[8] Exactly when India and Pakistan acquired nuclear capability is a matter of some debate. It is generally believed that Pakistan acquired nuclear weapon capability by mid to late 1980s. In 1985, Pakistan crossed the threshold of weapons-grade uranium production and, by 1986, it is thought to have produced enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon.

[9] The term "strategic enclave" refers to the politico-military establishment that frames the security strategy of a country.

in a full-scale conventional conflict. At the same time, the assumption that the risk of internal unrest is controllable and calculable resulted in Pakistan's support of the insurgency in Kashmir (Ganguly 1995, 326).

It is important to understand the context of Pakistan's decision to support the insurgency in Kashmir and the crisis of 1990. On 17 August 1988, President Zia ul-Haq, the architect of the militarization of the nuclear program of Pakistan, was killed, along with thirty other people, when the aircraft in which he was travelling crashed in what is suspected to have been an assassination. In the aftermath of Zia's death, the military stepped aside and permitted the return of Pakistan to democracy, three months later (Sublette 2008). By 1989, the Cold War, too, finally was coming to an end. In the same year, the USSR decided to withdraw its forces from Afghanistan. Consequently, Pakistan lost its status of the "blue-eyed boy" of the United States. The status of India also diminished on the strategic radar of the Soviet Union. Also, during the 1980s, the governments of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi incessantly meddled in the domestic politics of Kashmir, disposing of a democratically-elected government, in 1984, then rigging the state elections in 1987.

Hence, by 1989, a full-blown secessionist insurgency, aided and abetted by Pakistan, erupted in the vale of Kashmir. Weak democratic governments were in power in India and Pakistan. Benazir Bhutto's accession to power in Pakistan was hailed as the "victory of democracy." But the darker side was that the real power lay with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan and COAS General Mirza Aslam Beg. In India, it was only the second time since independence that a government that was not led by the Congress Party had been formed. V. P. Singh's government was a fragile coalition that was dependent upon the rightist Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). Given this scenario, therefore, it is apparent, in the aftermath of Zia's death and subsequent return of democracy, that it was important for the Pakistani army to maintain its stranglehold in the political system and, thus, the decision to support the insurgency in Kashmir made perfect sense. The crisis of

1990 gave the Pakistani army the perfect opportunity to portray India as an existential threat. As the campaign in Afghanistan was coming to an end, the infrastructure to wage *jihad* in Kashmir was, also, available. Democratically-elected but weak governments in the two countries could not afford to be perceived to be giving into each other and, therefore, had to adopt the strategy of brinkmanship during the 1990 crisis. While, in Pakistan, it was clearly the army that was "running the show" and pressurizing Bhutto to appear "tough," in India, the BJP left Singh with no choice but to appear to be ready for a confrontation with the country's archenemy.

In 1989, when the decision to support the Kashmir insurgency was taken (as mentioned, above), Benazir Bhutto was the Prime Minister of Pakistan and General Mirza Aslam Beg was the Chief of the Army Staff. It is illustrative to underscore their perception regarding this decision that was to have far-reaching consequences for the sub-continent. Quoting Benazir Bhutto, who was allowed to become Prime Minister only when she agreed to refrain from interfering with Indian and Afghanistan foreign policy, Kapur wrote:

> Bhutto recalls that in 1989, during her first term as prime minister, Pakistan's emerging nuclear capacity's 'ability to ward off [an Indian] conventional act may have led to the conclusion that a low-scale insurgency in the disputed area of Jammu and Kashmir could focus international attention on the oldest item on the United Nations agenda, which had remained unresolved. Perhaps a low-scale uprising could convince India and the rest of the world community, including the United Nations, to address this very important dispute.' … According to Bhutto, top Pakistani officers were convinced that India 'could not resort to conventional war' in retaliation for these Pakistani provocations, because 'we had nuclear deterrence.' In the Pakistan army's view, the Indians 'know that if they resorted to conventional war and we suffered a setback, we could use the nuclear response' (Kapur 2005, 143).

The decision to sponsor the insurgency in Kashmir was taken by the Pakistani Army. General Beg later admitted, regarding the momentous year of

1989, "Our panoply, although at this stage fairly crude, of nuclear weapons was activated. This was what I meant by a nuclear umbrella. Now India would have to be convinced of our intent and in the face of our new-found strength would surely not risk an attack-even though we were stirring the pot in Kashmir" (Levy and Scott-Clark 2007, 208-209).

In the light of admissions by Bhutto and Beg, Rajagopalan's argument that Islamabad's decision to support terrorism in Kashmir was a part of an old pattern and had nothing to do with nuclear capability is not valid because, this time, there was an explicit connection between Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear capability and the strategic decision to initiate violence at the lower rung. Apart from that factor, there was so massive a difference in terms of the degree and scale of Pakistan's support to earlier insurgencies and, later, terrorism in Kashmir that the two cases are hardly comparable. Highlighting this point, Krepon writes, "Pakistan's post-nuclear, unconventional, proxy warfare against India was appreciably different than before" (Krepon 2007b).

It would be naïve to argue that the blame for the insurgency in Kashmir can squarely be put on Pakistan, alone. One has to recognize that the roots of the problem lie in the bitter history of partition, successive manipulations of these governments by New Delhi, and rank mismanagement of the state. The sub-conventional war in Kashmir was, also, a spin-off of Pakistan's success in using *Mujahideen* proxies to defeat the Soviet Red Army in Afghanistan in the 1980s (Kampani 2007). The argument, here, is that Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear capability allowed it to escalate hostilities, confident in the belief that such escalation would not lead to an all-out war and that it was safe to adopt a strategy of low-intensity warfare to foment further trouble in Kashmir. India also behaved according to the expectations of the stability/instability paradox and, in spite of having clinching evidence of Pakistan's support for terrorism, refrained from taking punitive action (such as special force operations) to destroy

terrorist training camps across the border. This pattern conforms closely to the tenets of the stability / instability paradox.

Pakistan's adoption of this strategy led to the crises of 1990. Kapur writes that, during the late 1980s, Pakistan's emerging nuclear capacity emboldened Pakistani decision-makers to provide extensive support to the emerging insurgency against Indian rule in Jammu and Kashmir. In early 1990, India responded to this development with large-scale force deployments along the Line of Control and the international border in an attempt to stem militant infiltration into Indian territory and, potentially, to intimidate Pakistan into discarding its Kashmir policy. Pakistan countered with a large deployment of its own and the result was a major Indo-Pakistani confrontation (Kapur 2005b, 174). The situation began to deteriorate after a series of fiery declarations by Benazir Bhutto, who was the Prime Minister of Pakistan at the time, and V.P. Singh, who was the Prime Minister of India. Bhutto spoke of a "thousand year war" to "liberate" Kashmir while Singh told the country to be psychologically prepared for military conflict and warned Pakistan that it would not last "even a thousand hours of war" (Varadarajan 2006).

In mid-May 1990, concerned about the possibility of a war in the subcontinent, the United States government sent Deputy National Security Advisor Robert Gates to the region. Gates warned Pakistan that it would be defeated in a war with India according to every possible war-gaming scenario and the crisis soon passed (Ganguly and Hagerty 1995, 97). Hersh, quoting American officials, has claimed that India and Pakistan had come perilously close to a nuclear exchange (Hersh 1993).[10] A former senior official of the George H. W. Bush administration official said, "I think for most of us who were involved, nuclear weapons formed the backdrop for the crisis . . . . the concern

[10] Hersh quoted Deputy Director of the CIA Richard J. Kerr as saying, "It was the most dangerous nuclear situation we have ever faced since I've been in the US government. It may be as close as we've come to a nuclear exchange. It was far more frightening than the Cuban missile crisis."

was not that a nuclear exchange was imminent; the concern was that this thing was beginning to spin out of control and that that would lead to clashes, potentially conventional warfare. Most of our analysis suggested that India would fare better than Pakistan, and that very early on, as a result, Pakistan might want to consider threatening . . . a nuclear action. Or, that India, thinking about that, would escalate conventionally very early on, to eradicate it" (Hagerty 1995).

Again, it is illustrative to note the way that General Beg perceived the 1990 crisis. He later recalled, "We did not need Gates. What the US worried was going to happen, would never have taken place. We never intended to fight India. We only intended to show our enemy that we had the capability. This would have been enough to stop them coming after us when we nipped away at them elsewhere. We had established our minimum credible deterrent (Levy and Scott-Campbell 2007, 211)." However, Gates Mission may not have been as futile as Beg contends. According to Hagerty:

> The firmest conclusion that can be drawn about the Gates intervention is that it certainly could not have hurt, and might indeed have helped, the prospects for peace in South Asia. It is probably not a coincidence that India offered to withdraw its forces from Mahajan in the weeks immediately following the Gates visit. In all likelihood, the reason that Indian policymakers delayed these decisions for a week or two is that, for domestic political reasons, they did not wish to appear overly influenced by the United States. In addition, the fact that the tension abated so quickly would seem to indicate that both sides were anxious to back away from the brink of war, and that Gates provided them with a mechanism for doing so without appearing weak (Hagerty 1995).

The 1990 crisis also serves to underscore the independence that Pakistan's military exercised in controlling the nation's nuclear capabilities, even in a period of supposed democratic rule (Sublett 2008). It is safe to argue that Pakistan's support for insurgency since the late 1980s and the crisis of 1990 both prove the advent of the stability/instability paradox in the sub-continent. As already

established, Pakistan supported the insurgency with the confidence that the ensuing conflict would not escalate to the level of an all-out war because of the existence of nuclear capability. India also conformed closely to the expectations of the stability/instability paradox and, in spite of threatening military action in 1990, refused to take the conflict to the next level. Elements of coercive diplomacy and brinkmanship (as discussed in detail elsewhere within this article) also were evident in the 1990 crisis. Pakistan continued with the strategy of asymmetric warfare and India kept bearing the massive human and economic cost throughout the 1990s. The arrival of nuclear capabilities in the sub-continent eliminated the possibility of a full-fledged war and, thus, precipitated the instability at the lower level. The play of the stability/instability paradox was most obvious during the Kargil conflict of 1999.

Kargil and the Stability/Instability Paradox

In Pakistan, the decade of democracy began with the 1988 elections after Gen Zia's death and ended with Musharraf's coup in 1999. Although it is tentatively called a "decade of democracy" that experienced Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif becoming Prime Ministers, twice, critics term it, at best, as a decade of "praetorian democracy" when the army was constantly "looking over the shoulders" of both Prime Ministers. Policies toward India and the nuclear arsenal were strictly "no go" areas for civilian Prime Ministers. As mentioned earlier, the United States had lost interest in Pakistan, after 1989, and even had invoked the Pressler Amendment to cut economic and military aid; still, the strategic importance of Islamabad did not diminish. China perceived Pakistan as an important point of access to the Islamic world and a source of balance with India (Cohen 2005, 87).

On the other hand, forced by the disintegration of the USSR and the exigencies imposed by the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the government formed by India's Congress Party had launched India's economic liberalization program in 1991. Given the massive size of India's market, there was a rush from American

and European Multi-national corporations (MNC) to invest in India. In the absence of the USSR, India had also started "looking westwards" in search of allies. Communal passions, too, were high on the domestic front and an era of coalition governments was beginning in the country. The decade of the 1990s also experienced the rise of the Hindu based Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) in India. The BJP had, always, vowed that the country would become a nuclear force once it came to power. The BJP formed a coalition called the National Democratic Alliance, consisting of 13 parties, and it came to power in 1998.

In May 1998, India and Pakistan shocked the international community by conducting nuclear tests and making the region the hottest nuclear flashpoint in the world. The BJP government's Defence Minister justified the nuclear tests by arguing that the China was the enemy number one according to threat perception, a comment that elicited an angry response from Beijing. The severe international criticism and the economic sanctions on both countries that followed the nuclear tests forced the Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif to make some sort of attempt at rapprochement. Consequently, the two leaders signed the Lahore Declaration, which stated that the two governments would: intensify their efforts to resolve all issues, including the issue of Kashmir; intensify their composite and integrated dialogue process for an early and positive outcome of the agreed bilateral agenda; take immediate steps for reducing the risk of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons; discuss concepts and doctrines with a view to elaborating measures for confidence building in the nuclear and conventional fields aimed at prevention of conflict. The enthusiasm generated by the Lahore Declaration was short-lived and South Asia witnessed the Kargil War in 1999 (Ganguly 2002, 114-133).

Before analyzing the Kargil conflict in detail, it is important to draw attention to the point that a brilliant analyst, using the logic of the stability/instability paradox, had predicted that something like Kargil was about

to take place and even warned that, this time, India would not be able to escalate the conflict, horizontally, as it had in 1965. Writing just days after India and Pakistan went overtly nuclear, Gaurav Kampani penned these ominous words:

> In recent weeks, India's bomb lobby has advanced the dubious idea that nuclear weapons eliminate conflict between states. The horrors of a potential nuclear war, we are told, are enough to induce great caution in the relations between nuclear states. The argument is that once India and Pakistan acquire stable nuclear deterrents, political stability will reign in South Asia. This is only partly true. If the first rule of the nuclear revolution is the irrelevance of nuclear superiority, then the second rule is Glenn Snyder's 'stability-instability paradox.' This means that whereas nuclear weapons confer great stability at the top, there is instability at the bottom … The situation in the Indian subcontinent is no different [from the proxy wars of superpowers in Asia, Africa and Latin America]. Nuclear deterrence has ensured that India and Pakistan will never dare confront each other in a large-scale conventional war. But this does not prevent the two countries from causing insurgency or waging low-intensity conflicts on each other's territories. Pakistan has seized upon this paradox to wage a gruelling low-intensity war with India in Kashmir. Unlike 1965, the Indian army can no longer cross the border to punish Pakistan for its misbehavior. A nuclear shield now protects Pakistan, and no amount of nuclear superiority is going to swing the balance in India's favour (Kampani 1998).

The Kargil war played out exactly as Kampani had predicted. As it was an exception to both the deterrence theory and the democratic peace theory,[11] Kargil remains one of the most over-analyzed conflicts in sub-continental history. The essential facts regarding Kargil are indisputable. It was the first crisis in an overtly nuclearized environment. According to Ganguly and Hagerty, the war ensued during the first week of May 1999, shortly after local herdsmen alerted

[11] Democratic Peace theory is treated as some kind of an ironclad law of international relations. It basically states that democracies do not fight with each other. Immanuel Kant is credited with coining the term "Democratic Peace" (Kant 1991, 93-130). In 1999, India and Pakistan both were democracies. It can be argued that Pakistan was just a "praetorian democracy." Nawaz Sharif has stated that the Pakistani army was acting without the consent of civilian authority and that it was all Musharraf's fault.

Indian Army troops about a Pakistani military incursion in the Kargil region of Kashmir. Islamabad argued that the intruders were Kashmiri freedom fighters and had nothing to do with Pakistan. New Delhi realized that Pakistan intended to cut off Leh from Srinagar by taking over the strategically important highway linking them. India decided that the Pakistani intruders would be evicted, militarily. The conflict also experienced extensive use of heavy artillery at high altitudes and India resorted to the use of the Air Force against Pakistan for the first time since the 1971 war.

As fierce fighting continued and the two countries freely hurled nuclear threats at each other, the world was horrified at the possibility of a nuclear disaster in the region. But the Indian Armed Forces (IAF) displayed considerable restraint in the conduct of military operations. Specifically, the IAF did not cross the Line of Control (LoC). Such a decision made little strategic or military sense. Crossing the LoC would have permitted the Air Force to choke Pakistani lines of communications and logistics and, thereby, hasten the end of the conflict. Nor, for that matter, did India seek to open a theatre of operations, elsewhere. The Clinton Administration pressured Pakistan to withdraw its troops. Shocked by the intensity of the Indian attacks and their inability to persuade the United States and other powers to back Pakistan, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visited Washington on 4 July, seeking a face-saving device. On 12 July, Prime Minister Sharif gave a nationwide television address in which he called for the withdrawal of the *mujahideen* from the mountain redoubts. It is believed that India lost 1,714 military personnel and Pakistan 772 personnel (Ganguly and Hagerty 2005, 143, 144, 156).

Bewildering questions emerge from the Kargil conflict. One, why did Pakistan initiate a conflict just a year after the two countries went nuclear? Two, did Pakistan not realize that it had all the potential of reaching the top rung of the escalation ladder—an all-out war? Three, why did India not cross the Line of Control and, thus, defy military and strategic logic? Four, why did India not

escalate the conflict horizontally and open another front in Punjab, which was what it did in 1965? As India was in a militarily disadvantageous position, it was expected that it would cross the Line of Control, attack from the Punjab border, capture a significant chunk of Pakistani territory, and, then, swap that territory in exchange for a Kargil evacuation. Only Snyder's paradox can explain the Pakistani aggression and India's remarkable restraint.

Answering these puzzling questions, Chari writes:

> A conscious effort was therefore made to threaten but not cross the conventional-nuclear divide….. The operation of stability-instability paradox can be surmised from the intrusion across the LoC being made by Pakistan in the expectation that India would not enlarge the spatial dimensions of the conventional conflict or cross the nuclear threshold. This explains why India did not enlarge its theater of hostilities beyond the Kargi-Drass sector. This defied military logic, which required that pressure on the defending Indian forces in the confined Kargil-Drass salient be relieved by extending the conflict to other sectors along LoC. … Thus, the availability of nuclear weapons facilitated the initiation of both sub-conventional and conventional conflict under the rubric of nuclear deterrence (Chari 2003a, 19).

One of the most thorough analyses of Kargil also concluded on similar lines, that the crisis highlighted the critical importance of nuclear weapons to the success of Pakistan's grand strategy at multiple levels. Tellis, Fair and Medby wrote that Pakistan's possession of nuclear weapons functioned as the critical *permissive* condition that made contemplating Kargil possible. Nuclear weapons also functioned as the means by which Pakistan might ward-off the worst "Indian counter-response that could be precipitated by Islamabad's attempts at strategic diversion" (Tellis, Fair and Medby 2001, 49).

Lavoy also concurs with the opinion that the calculations of the Pakistani military planners seemed to follow the logic of the stability/instability paradox, according to which calculus a belligerent state that is willing to run greater risks is able to use military force to obtain territorial or political gains, thereby placing

the pressure to escalate to the nuclear, or near-nuclear, level on the other side-which, following the logic of nuclear deterrence, it will refrain from doing (Lavoy 2002).

As mentioned earlier, Kapur argues that, instead of stability as espoused by Snyder's paradox, it is, actually, significant strategic instability—the high probability that the conflict will escalate to the nuclear level—that has experienced lower level violence erupting in South Asia. Although nuclear threats occurred quickly and intensely during the Kargil war, there are reasons to believe that it was merely a display of resolve and that strategic stability existed, in reality, at the macro level. Pakistan may have been reckless in initiating the Kargil conflict but, once things started going badly, on and off the battlefield, and the weight of the political and military advantage began sliding towards India, Islamabad also showed considerable restraint (Karnad 2007, 121) and followed the tenets of the stability/instability paradox by calling the intruders back, in spite of the fact that Pakistan had initially claimed that it had nothing to do with *mujahideens*. "During the conflict when India launched Operation Vijay and resorted to the use of air power and also brought its navy into play, Pakistan did not escalate in response, indicating that the engagement was being limited to ground troops in Kargil. The Pakistani Air Force, for instance, refrained from crossing the LoC and did not engage aircrafts of the Indian Air Force even from a distance while they were attacking Pakistani troops. Had the PAF done so, the IAF may have responded with strikes beyond the LoC, thereby escalating the conflict beyond the Kargil region and bringing it closer to the nuclear threshold" (Sidhu 2007, 220). Thus, even at the cost of considerable loss of face, Pakistan acted prudently to avoid the risk of inadvertent escalation.

Although an argument can be made that it was India's distinct superiority in terms of air power that deterred Pakistan from engaging Indian aircrafts, it must be remembered that, as far as conventional weapons are concerned, India has a marked superiority on every conceivable front and that has never deterred

Pakistan. India has twice as many active army personnel in comparison to Pakistan (Cordesman 2008) and has a three-to-one advantage in modern tanks. Interestingly, India has a two-to-one overall advantage in aircraft but it grows to almost a six-to-one advantage when one compares just the most modern and capable aircraft—a category in which Pakistan lost its earlier edge after over a decade of U.S.-led international sanctions (Lavoy 2003). The fact that, in spite of such numerical and qualitative superiority, India did not cross LoC, indicates the restrictions imposed by the stability / instability paradox. This indication counters Kapur's argument that it is not strategic stability but significant strategic instability at the upper level that creates instability at the lower level.

Consequently, it can be argued that the applicability of the stability / instability paradox is very obvious in the analysis of the Kargil war. In fact, no other theory can explain Kargil, better. Pakistan followed the prediction of the paradox by launching Kargil operations in the expectation that the stability offered by the nuclear umbrella had created space for such adventure. India absorbed massive human and economic costs but refused to cross the Line of Control or escalate the conflict, horizontally, for fear of breaching the nuclear threshold. When things started going badly, Pakistan called the intruders back and conformed to the tenets of the paradox by avoiding escalation from its side.

With the advantage of hindsight, one can clearly understand, as a RAND report noted, that Pakistan seemed to believe that the international community would intervene in a fashion that would be both timely and consonant with Pakistan's strategic interest, once it had secured its operational aims early in the conflict (Tellis, Fair and Medby 2001, 80). However, the relentless pressure from the United States to restore the *status quo*, unconditionally and unambiguously, China's reluctance to back Pakistan in any meaningful way, and the entreaties from Saudi Arabia for restraint clearly surprised Pakistan's decision makers (Mohan 2003, 89). On the other hand, international support was a pleasant surprise for India. Raja Mohan, an influential foreign policy expert, writes:

> When India discovered the Pakistani occupation of Kargil heights and began to mobilize for its military operations, it had little expectations of international support. When the first indications of American backing to India came, they had to be conveyed through unusual channels, including the author, to both signal a skeptical security establishment in New Delhi and convince the public of America's changed attitude towards Kashmir conflict (Mohan 2003, 192).

In spite of severe embarrassment in the aftermath of Kargil, Islamabad, consciously or unconsciously, continued to behave according to the expectations of the paradox by brazenly supporting cross-border terrorism and India also played along expected lines by incurring massive losses. This response resulted in the Twin Peak Crisis of 2001-2002. Elements of coercive diplomacy and brinkmanship, obvious in the strategic behavior of India and Pakistan since the late 1980s, were even more clearly observable during the Twin Peak Crisis. It will be argued, in the forthcoming section, that the stability/instability paradox created a suitable environment for the adoption of the strategies of coercive diplomacy and brinkmanship.

The Twin Peak Crisis: Introducing the Strategies of Coercive Diplomacy and Brinkmanship

While the BJP-led fragile coalition continued to remain in power in New Delhi, the ripple effects of the Kargil war were a major factor in Musharraf's coup (Sethi 2000).[12] Due to the events of 9/11, Pakistan's support had become crucial to launch attacks on the Taliban in Afghanistan. Consequently, Musharraf had become a crucial ally of the George W. Bush administration and Pakistan had started receiving military and financial aid worth billions of dollars. But Clinton's unwavering support for India during the Kargil war had, already,

[12] The editor of the Pakistani newspaper *The Friday Times* wrote that Kargil led to tensions between Mr. Sharif and the principal military architects of Kargil led by General Musharraf. In the event, Mr. Sharif's attempted sacking of General Musharraf and two key Kargil players in Pindi, in October 1999, led to a coup against him, plunging Pakistan into its third military phase.

taken Indo-American relations to a new height. The economic fortunes of India and Pakistan also had experienced a reversal during the course of the 1990s. Although international support had, initially, surprised India, it had made New Delhi realize that, for the first time, it could use its attractiveness as an emerging market with a potential for high growth rates to bear upon the relations with the major powers such as the United States and the United Kingdom. The simultaneous improvement of India's relations with all the major powers during the 1990s put an end to the Cold War context in which Pakistan had enjoyed a special relationship with the west, China, and the Islamic world.

While India offered the prospects of a successful economy, Pakistan was increasingly perceived as a failing state, torn apart by sectarian divisions, the rise of extremist Islamic forces, and the failure of the political class as a whole (Mohan 2003, 193). While Musharraf had helped America in launching an exceptionally unpopular war against the Taliban (a former staunch ally of Pakistan), in India, Vajpayee was busy managing a coalition that was being threatened, almost daily, by its own partners. Communal passions were high, again, in India. The communal carnage in the Indian state of Gujarat, starting in February 2002 (when riots against Muslims followed the burning in Godhra of a train carrying Hindu pilgrims who were returning from Ayodhya) shook the nation (Mohan 2003, 203). Given such a precarious domestic situation, a government led by a supposedly Hindu party could not afford to seem weak on the Pakistan front.

Logically, Pakistan should have learned important lessons from Kargil and realized that there is no international support for terrorists who intend to "redraw borders with blood" (Clinton 2000).[13] But, as per the expectations of the stability/instability paradox, Pakistan continued to aid and abet insurgency in

[13] In March 2000, during his rather brief visit to Pakistan, President Clinton declared that this era does not reward people who struggle, in vain, to redraw borders with blood. It came as a rude shock for the Pakistani national security establishment.

Kashmir with even more confidence, having realized from the Kargil experience that India's nuclear threshold is, indeed, very high. Despite India's tremendous misgivings and mistrust, both sides, again, tried to make peace in July 2001 in the Indian city of Agra. The Agra summit broke down amid mutual recriminations and disappointment without so much as a joint statement or a commitment to reopen discussions at a later time (Fair 2005) and, then, the Twin Peak Crisis ensued. There were two terrorist attacks, separated by an interval of five months, which constituted the "peaks" of this crisis—hence the name "Twin Peak Crisis."

On 13 December 2001, six terrorists attacked the Indian Parliament. India alleged that the attackers were members of the Lashkar-e-Taiba and were acting on behalf of Pakistan. Prior to this incident, an attack on the Jammu and Kashmir legislature on 1 October 2001 also had taken place, killing 26 people. Soon after the attack on Parliament, India ordered the mobilization of its Armed Forces, shifted its air assets along the LoC and borders with Pakistan, and moved its naval ships to the Arabian Sea, closer to Pakistan (Khan 2003, 109). India also recalled its ambassador from Islamabad and suspended the bus and train services to Pakistan. In an exercise of coercive diplomacy, India demanded that Pakistan take strong action against militant Islamic organizations and groups undertaking terrorist attacks in India and hand over 20 individuals accused of terrorist acts in India. Both countries freely tossed nuclear threats at each other as the world watched a dangerous game of nuclear brinkmanship. Washington, concerned both about the prospect of war and about the danger of its own and Pakistan's resources being diverted from anti-terrorism operations in Afghanistan and western Pakistan, launched a major crisis-management initiative with intense consultations between top American, Indian, and Pakistani leaders and a high-profile visit by the US Secretary of State, Colin Powell (Schaffer 2003, 175).

Warnings to Pakistan went unheeded and more than 30 people, most of

them women and children, were killed in another horrendous terrorist attack on the families of Indian troops in Kashmir on May 14, 2002. Following this attack, the nuclear "saber-rattling" reached unprecedented levels in the sub-continent. Finally, due to intense pressure from the United States, President Musharraf addressed the nation on 27 May 2002 and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to fight terrorism.[14] In early June 2002, Indian officials sensed a decrease in terrorist activities and, by the end of June, the crisis had passed. However, India pulled back its forces to normal positions only in October 2002.

The stability/instability paradox is, again, relevant in understanding the reason Pakistan continued its brazen support of terrorists in spite of having gone through the Kargil misadventure and the reason India did not attack Pakistan, despite amassing hundreds of thousands of troops on the border. Pakistan pursued this path because the stability/instability paradox continued to operate and Islamabad was even more convinced, after the Kargil experience, that India would not "climb the escalation ladder" to the level of an all-out or nuclear war. India also followed the tenets of the paradox, closely, and did not escalate its response, despite giving every indication of being ready to do so.

But a few unanswered questions remain. While India had displayed considerable constraint during Kargil, why, then, did New Delhi act as if a massive conventional attack or, at least, a punitive surgical strike across the Line of Control to destroy terrorist training camps located inside the Pakistani

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[14] In this address, President Musharraf said: "Pakistani soil would not be allowed to be used for terrorism against anybody. I repeat we will not allow this. I also want to tell the world and give the assurance that no infiltration is taking place across the Line of Control. But I want to make one thing quite clear. A liberation movement is going on in Occupied Kashmir and Pakistan cannot be held responsible for any action against the Indian tyranny and repression. We do not want war. But if war is thrust upon us, we would respond with full might, and give a befitting reply. I would now like to convey a message to the world community, Pakistan does not want war. Pakistan will not be the one to initiate war. We want peace in the region. Let me also assure the world community that Pakistan is doing nothing across the Line of Control and Pakistan will never allow the export of terrorism anywhere in the world from within Pakistan."

territory was about to take place? Did India not realize the impact the months-long deployment would have on the morale of its troops? Did it not realize that backing-off, simply after Musharraf's verbal assurance (which New Delhi had declared, previously, would not suffice) would entail massive loss of face, domestically as well as internationally? Although both countries claimed that the Twin Peak Crisis was a victory for them, the fundamental question remains: while (consistent with the prediction of the stability/instability paradox) India did not attack Pakistan, why did it act as if it was about to do so?

For adequately explaining this outcome, it becomes necessary to introduce other strategies that are useful when the stability/instability paradox operates. Krepon has rightly pointed out that the penalties of the stability/instability paradox have been disproportionately born by India (Krepon 2003a, 19). Pakistan has, consistently, taken advantage of the paradox and successfully bogged down India in insurgency in an attempt to bring New Delhi to the negotiating table over Kashmir. India's massive troop deployment was a desperate attempt to break the "straightjacket" of the stability/instability paradox. In order to escape from the limited options offered by the paradox, India tried the strategy of coercive diplomacy. But, under the protection of its nuclear shield, Pakistan responded with the strategy of brinkmanship that, again, foiled India's efforts. It was the stability/instability paradox that facilitated the adoption of these strategies.

> Ganguly and Hagerty define coercive diplomacy[15] as a strategy that: …. seeks to induce an adversary to desist from ongoing hostile action by threatening to resort to force (but never actually doing so) if the adversary fails to comply with the stated demands. It is more compelling than diplomacy alone, for it carries with it the explicit threat of the resort to war if compliance is not forthcoming within a specified time span. On the other hand, it also avoids the rapid resort to war, consequences of which may not be controllable and calculable. …. The likely successes of this strategy depend in

[15] Coercive diplomacy has also been defined as the threat or use of limited force to compel or motivate a change of behavior of a target state or group.

> considerable measure on two closely related variables: what exactly is demanded of adversary and how strongly disinclined the adversary is to comply with these demands (Ganguly and Hagerty 2005, 169-170).

To analyze Pakistan's response to India's strategy of coercive diplomacy, it is important to understand the basic features of brinkmanship. According to Powell, these features are:

> A. Deliberate creation of the risk that the events will spin out of control transforms the crisis between nuclear-armed states into a kind of brinkmanship.
> B. In a brinkmanship crisis, each state tries to induce the other to back down by taking steps that raise the risk that events will go out of control.
> C. Each adversary faces a series of terrible options. It can quit, or it can decide to hang on a little longer and accept a somewhat greater risk, in the hope that its adversary will find the situation too dangerous and back down first.
> D. If neither adversary backs off, the crisis goes on with each player effectively pushing up the risk until one eventually finds the risk too high and backs off or until events actually do spiral out of control.
> E. Brinkmanship crises are *contests of resolve or nerves,* not of relative military strength. What makes these crises dangerous is the ambiguity about the balance of resolve, i.e., about which state is willing to run larger risks.
> F. Escalation will occur only in the condition when the balance of resolve is uncertain. If each state perceives itself to be more resolute than its adversary, then each may escalate in the expectation that the other will blink first.
> G. As the crisis continues and neither player backs off, each learns that the other is more resolute than initially perceived. Ultimately, one adversary concludes that the risk is just too high and the chances that the other will back off are too low to merit further escalation. At that point that adversary backs down and the crisis ends (Powell 2007).

There were compelling reasons for India to adopt the strategy of coercive diplomacy. After Kargil, India's strategic enclave had been actively debating the

concept of limited war under the nuclear shadow. Kampani notes that the country decided, given that "the insurgency cannot be defeated by fighting the civilian combatants in a reactive campaign in Indian-controlled Kashmir alone, India must take the battle into Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. This can be achieved in two ways. First, India can either politically coerce Pakistan by threatening war to end support to the insurgents in Kashmir. Or alternatively, India can change the terms of the insurgency in Kashmir by initiating a limited conventional war to raise the costs of the sub-conventional war for Pakistan to a point where they become unsustainable (Kampani 2007)."

India had reached a point at which it was willing to test Pakistan's nuclear resolve over Kashmir. One cannot ignore the fact that India's Operation Parakram took place after the 9/11 events and that it was American intervention was decisive in resolving the crisis. India had sensed that the horrendous attacks of September 11 and the Bush Doctrine had created an opportunity for the adoption of a high stakes strategy of coercive diplomacy. The World Trade Center attacks had underscored Pakistan's support for the Taliban as well as of other militant Islamic groups operating in Kashmir. Buoyed by United States support during the Kargil war, India believed that 9/11 had created a classic opportunity for the convergence of strategic interests between the two countries, as both of them had become victims of Islamic terror, of which Pakistan had been a facilitator. The dramatic events of 9/11 had turned international opinion in favor of states facing terror from non-state actors (Kampani 2007). India wanted to draw international (in particular, American) attention to the Kashmir issue (reversing its decades-old stand that Kashmir was a bilateral problem) in order to put pressure on Pakistan to abandon terrorism. New Delhi believed, if it came to waging war, international opinion would be solidly behind India. The domestic public was, also, an audience for the Indian leadership's decision to initiate an unprecedented deployment. After an attack on the very "seat of democracy," India could not afford to be perceived as doing nothing.

However, Pakistan's aggressive response to India's massive troop deployment turned the crisis into a dangerous game of brinkmanship and this "game" involved a contest of resolve between the two countries. India mulled over the options of: an attack across the Cholistan desert to split Pakistan and excise Sind; placing Lahore under siege to obtain the surrender of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir; cross border raids by helicopter-borne special forces to destroy terrorist camps in Pakistani territory; punitive attacks upon Pakistan's regular forces; letting Pakistan suffer a financial crisis due to its counter-deployment. Meanwhile, Islamabad "upped the ante" by reiterating its "first-use doctrine" and alerting its nuclear forces (Chari 2003b, 21).

There were five main reasons that India's strategy of coercive diplomacy did not work. One, by asking to end all infiltration, India was asking for far too much from Pakistan. By then, Pakistan had become the victim of its own rhetoric and considered Kashmir as an important part of its identity. Lacking domestic legitimacy and already unpopular over the *volte-face* on the Taliban, Musharraf could hardly be expected to accede to the Indian demand. Two, India could hardly offer any significant incentive for Pakistani compliance. Indian public opinion was not ready for any concession on the Kashmir front, as it would have been perceived as caving into terrorist acts. Three, in Pakistan's perception, India's threat to escalate the conflict was not credible because (as per the expectations of Snyder's paradox) India had refused to expand the scope and dimension of the earlier Kargil conflict (Ganguly and Hagerty 2005, 180-181). Four, as empirically observed, escalation generally becomes less likely the longer a confrontation lasts. As the crisis continues, each state becomes increasingly confident that it is facing a resolute adversary. The 2001-2002 stand off had, already, stretched almost a year.[16] Five, by introducing the elements of

[16] According to a USIP report, coercive diplomacy works only between 25 and 31 percent of the time: in other words, it fails more often than it succeeds. The target asks itself, what will the coercer do next if we give in this time. Apart from this the three ways to coerce—denial, punishment, and risk—can go only so far or can be viewed as a bluff.

brinkmanship, Pakistan turned it into a contest of resolve and proved to be a formidable adversary.

As a matter of fact, the game of "chicken" can, also, explain the respective Indian and Pakistani strategies of coercive diplomacy and brinkmanship. In the game of chicken, two adversaries in cars race towards each other for a head-on collision. Each driver can keep driving straight toward the other car or swerve. If they both swerve, they avoid collision and neither one gains anything. If one swerves and other one does not, the first driver loses face and the other one is declared the winner. If neither car swerves, they collide and both drivers die.

What would the actors do? If one believes that the other is one will "swerve," then the only rational response is to continue. If one believes that, regardless of anything else, the other one will persist, the only rational response is to swerve. So, in the end, it is the balance of resolve that matters in the game of brinkmanship as in the game of chicken (Slantchev 2005).

How would the actors display their resolve in this game of chicken? To convince the adversary that one is not willing to change the course of the car, one could relinquish the control of the car and, then, leave the final clear chance of averting the disaster to the opponent. Or one could yank one's steering wheel and wave it to the other driver and communicate one's resolve not to swerve. Here, the concept of "rationality of irrationality" comes into play. If A could convince B that he is irrational and, therefore, cannot understand B's resolve not to swerve, then A could render himself immune to B's threats and win because B, being the rational and smart one, would have no choice but to back down. President Nixon called it the "madman theory" (Slantchev 2005). He is reported to have said, "I call it the madman theory… I want the North Vietnamese to believe I have reached a point where I might do anything to stop the war. We'll just slip the word to them that for god's sake you know Nixon is obsessed about communism. We can't restrain him when he's angry—and he has his hand on the nuclear button…" (Slantchev 2005).

The Twin Peak Crisis closely followed the pattern of the game of chicken. Ultimately, in front of a more resolute adversary, India had to be satisfied with mere words from Musharraf and had to devise an exit strategy to save face. A revisionist state, under the control of a military government, will, by definition, be far more resolute than a democratic state, especially one led by a coalition government. Apart from this consideration, the rationality of Pakistan's decision-making has, always, been questioned in India. The Indian security community refuses to entertain the idea that appearing irrational may be a part of Pakistan's calculated strategy to convince India that the unexpected—hitting the nuclear button—can be expected from Pakistan and, as the saying proclaims, deterrence works (or, for that matter, does not work) in the mind of the adversary.

Thus, India's threats were not credible for Pakistan while Pakistan's nuclear threats were reasonably credible for India. Pakistan did not believe that India would escalate. India believed that, by following its first-use doctrine, Pakistan could utilize the nuclear option. In spite of its inferiority in both nuclear and conventional balance, Pakistan proved to be the winner in the test of nerves. Kapur has contended that, as in the case of the Cold War, had the paradox been applicable, conventionally-superior India would have punished Pakistan, severely. However, it is clear that it is not necessarily the conventionally-superior adversary but a more resolute adversary who takes the advantage of the stability/instability paradox and creates instability.

The Twin Peak Crisis was not the first case that demonstrated this phenomenon. Even in the 1987 Brasstacks crisis and the 1990 deployment, India had no other option but to "look away" from a resolute Pakistan's "unblinking stare." The contention, here, is that the stability/instability paradox is a general condition obtaining between nuclear armed adversaries who have second-strike capability *vis à vis* each other. This general condition generated a critical permissive situation, suitable for the adoption of various specific strategies such

as coercive diplomacy and brinkmanship during the course of the India-Pakistan conflict.

Trajectories for the Future

Since the Twin Peak Crisis, dramatic changes have taken place in Pakistan and it is important to underscore those changes to predict the operability of the stability/instability paradox in the future. Musharraf's verbal assurances that ended the Twin Peak crisis remained literally verbal and Pakistan blatantly continued the low intensity conflict in Kashmir. There were horrendous terror attacks, throughout the length and breadth of India. As the stability/instability paradox continued to hold firm, it was proved beyond doubt that India's coercive diplomacy had been a failure. In January 2004, the two countries launched a peace process and a slew of confidence-building measures were announced. In mid 2004, BJP lost the elections and a Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government came to power.

There were no significant changes in Pakistani policy indicating that there was unanimity among the political class of India regarding how to deal with Pakistan. But, due to continuing terror attacks, the peace process remained fragile and was, finally, derailed by the 9 October 2005 serial blasts in Delhi that killed at least 70 people (Bhushan 2005). In March 2006, two bomb blasts rocked Varanasi, the holiest city of India, killing 20 people and injuring 50. But surprisingly, from mid 2006 onwards, a steep decline was noticed in the Islamic terror attacks in India. In the highly troubled state of Jammu and Kashmir, in 2007, terrorism related killings—at 768—fell below the "high intensity conflict" mark of a thousand deaths for the first time since 1990, when they stood at 1,177 (Saahni 2007). There were relatively few terror attacks in India in 2007 and most of them were attributed to the Bangladesh based organization, HUJI. There was hardly an occasion, during 2007, when the two countries threatened to launch nuclear attacks against each other. Pakistan even agreed to reverse its policy and

declared that the United Nations resolution demanding a plebiscite in Kashmir was no longer relevant.

So, did the developments of 2007 put a question mark on the continued applicability of the stability/instability paradox? Actually, no. The causality behind the reduced terror attacks in India, during 2007, lay elsewhere. After all, India had not agreed to any of the demands of Kashmiri separatists and no formal agreement regarding Kashmir between India and Pakistan was in sight. There was, still, no coherence in India's "national response" to terrorism, no evidence of a consistent strategy or policy perspective, no institutional memory or visible learning process within the various institutions of governance to show that lessons had been derived from past campaigns and from counter-terrorism experience in various theatres. Nor had India succeeded in devising protocols, strategies and tactics of appropriate response (Saahni 2007).

Since mid-2006, Pakistan had been passing through an era of instability that can only be compared, in terms of mass and scale, to Islamabad's debacle in the 1971 war. Pakistan's border regions of Balochistan, North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) were, and still are, "on fire." A separatist movement has been raging in Balochistan that has the potential to threaten the very existence of the country. Apart from that challenge, due to American pressure, the Pakistani army was involved in a massive counter-insurgency operation in its own country. Consequently, as a form of reprisal, a spate of suicide bombings rocked Pakistan. Musharraf had become increasingly unpopular and chaos marked the political scene in Pakistan. The reduced terror attacks in India, during 2007, have to be seen from this perspective (Shourie 2007). As Ajay Saahni, a noted strategic analyst pointed out, it was actually the inexorable series of crises in Pakistan that had undermined the country's capability to sustain past levels of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. Because a large proportion of troops had to be pulled back from the Line of Control and the international border for deployment in increasingly

violent theatres in Balochistan, NWFP and the FATA areas, Pakistan's ability to sustain the "proxy war" against India, at earlier levels, had been undermined (Saahni 2007).

In late 2007, an unprecedented movement demanding the return of democracy shook Pakistan and an embattled Musharraf, under severe domestic and international pressure, allowed both ex-Prime Ministers Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto to return. Musharraf had to resign from the post of army chief and Ashfaq Kayani, once his trusted General, took command. Benazir's assassination, in December 2007, plunged Pakistan into an even deeper political crisis. After the election, Yousaf Raza Gillani of the Pakistan's People's Party became the Prime Minister. Almost immediately, the fragile peace of 2007 fell apart. The Pakistani Army made it clear that the country, at best, will be a "praetorian" democracy. Pakistan sought an accommodation with the Taliban, initiating a ceasefire with Baitullah Mehsud's Tehreek-e-Taliban, a move that was highly resented by America. The Jaish-e-Mohammad chief, Masood Azhar, and Maulana Sufi Mohammad, the founder of Al-Qaeda-linked Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi, also were released. A rapprochement with the *jihadis* made it clear that the Pakistani Army—and not the elected politicians—would continue to decide the pace and contours of the peace process (Swami 2008).

Speaking to his troops along the LoC, General Kayani brazenly said that the Pakistani Army would "never turn its back" on the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir (Parthasarathy 2008). The results of a renewed Military-Mullah alliance in Pakistan were almost immediately visible in India. In May 2008, a series of blasts that ripped through the Indian city of Jaipur, killed 60 people and injured 200. The ceasefire that had held along the Line of Control, since 2004, was violated at least four times by Pakistani troops. The Indian Army claimed that these incidents were apparent attempts to push trained militants into India (Majeed 2008). A Newsweek reporter felt a sense of foreboding on the streets of Kashmir's towns and villages and warned that Pakistan might be

"taking off its gloves (Kahn 2008). An internal document of the Indian government, meant for restricted circulation, ominously warned, "Despite recent efforts at peace, there is no change in ISI's objectives, which include the 'liberation' of Kashmir; revival of militancy in Punjab; use of the Bihar-Nepal border for smuggling arms, explosives and fake currency; cooperation with ULFA; control of insurgent networks from Bangladesh and using certain madrassas in border states like West Bengal (Mohan 2008)."

By mid-2008, encounters with militants in Kashmir also increased dramatically. Immediately after a semblance of normalcy returned to Pakistan,[17] it returned to its earlier policy of provoking insurgency in Kashmir. These developments point only to one direction. On the one hand, the Pakistani Army is seeking accommodation with the Taliban and striking peace deals with separatists in border areas. On the other hand, the stability/instability paradox is "raising its ugly head," again, and a strategic decision may have been made that, instead of bearing the brunt of *jihadi* attacks inside Pakistan, it is better to let them fight their *jihad* in India.

In such a scenario, what is the future of the applicability of the stability/instability paradox in the sub-continent? The answer to this question is highly contingent on what happens in Pakistan. It has been clearly shown that, while the roots of the Kashmir problem may lie in India's botched policies, the specter of terrorism is Pakistan's creation. For the next five to ten years, certain possible trajectories can be plotted for Pakistan:

A. Pakistan is able to handle problems in Balochistan and the NWFP, successfully, and becomes a healthy, stable democracy while the Army is marginalized. This result is highly unlikely but,

[17] Many observers might disagree that the current chaotic scene in Pakistan can be termed as even a semblance of "normalcy." But my submission is that, compared to the even more chaotic scene in 2007, the present situation may be termed a "semblance of normalcy," although American policies, the fragility of the democratic government, the military's own interests and the acts of *jihadis* may shatter this semblance at any time

given the fact that the "democratic peace" theory is treated as an "ironclad" law in international relations, if this goal happens, a genuine rapprochement will emerge in the sub-continent and the stability/instability paradox will not remain applicable.

B. Pakistan is able to handle problems in Balochistan and the NWFP, successfully, but this success strengthens the Army's position, further, and the country emerges as a military dictatorship, yet another time. There are compelling reasons that the Army does not want, and cannot afford peace, with India (Ramachandran 2004). In a military regime, the stability/instability paradox will, definitely, remain applicable.

C. Pakistan is able to handle problems in Balochistan and the NWFP, successfully, and emerges and remains a "praetorian democracy," as it currently exists.[18] As the previous governments of Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto have proved that a civilian Prime Minister under military tutelage cannot forge peace with India, the stability/instability paradox will remain applicable.

D. Pakistan is not able to handle problems in Balochistan and the NWFP and becomes a shaky democracy. In such a scenario, a weak civilian government will remain engaged in handling separatist movements and the stability/instability paradox will not be applicable. Although sporadic terror attacks in India might continue, Pakistan, itself, will remain the prime target of terrorists.

E. Pakistan is not able to handle problems in Balochistan and the NWFP and becomes a military dictatorship, again. An embattled and weak military government, as during 2007, will not be able to

[18] The term "praetorian democracy" denotes a democratic government that is under the tutelage of the military and thus not truly in charge of domestic and foreign policy.

foment trouble for India and the stability/instability paradox will not be applicable.

F. Pakistan breaks up into many parts. This is the most horrible scenario for the entire region, in general, and for India in particular. "Loose nukes" will become a real possibility. For India, it will be tantamount to dealing with three or four nuclear-armed Pakistans. Under such a scenario, the applicability of the stability/instability paradox cannot be predicted, because Snyder's Paradox, like deterrence theory, presumes rationality on the part of adversaries.

It is not as if the applicability of the paradox depends entirely on what happens in Pakistan while India remains a silent spectator. If Pakistan is severely destabilized and a hard-line government assumes power in New Delhi, then India might want to exploit the advantage of the paradox and create trouble at the "lower rung" of the "escalation ladder." But this is an extreme scenario and the chances that it will take place are rather low.

So, what are India's options? India cannot influence, significantly, events in Pakistan. But for the next couple of years, Islamabad will remain embattled with insurgency and unrest in various parts of Pakistan, itself, and the troubled state of Jammu and Kashmir may remain relatively peaceful as a result, in spite of recent events pointing to the contrary. This circumstance could be a perfect opportunity for India to "win the hearts and minds" of the Kashmiri people and reintegrate them within the Indian mainstream. This result can be the best and, probably, the only guarantee against terrorism.

Conclusion

Glenn Snyder's stability/instability paradox has remained applicable in South Asia since the 1990s. The effects of the paradox became increasingly pronounced and reached a peak in the Kargil war of 1999. An analysis of various crises shows that the stability/instability paradox has been a general condition between India and Pakistan and this general condition has manifested itself in

the form of the adoption of the specific strategies of coercive diplomacy and brinkmanship. Snyder's Paradox, like deterrence, works only until it fails and this consideration calls for a genuine attempt at conflict resolution between the two countries. Whether the paradox will remain applicable in the future depends, mostly, upon what happens in Pakistan. However, a combination of the theories of realism, deterrence, and the stability/instability paradox predicts that, even if the Kashmir conundrum is resolved, Pakistan will find some other way to foment trouble for India, especially if Islamabad manages to find its way out of the current domestic imbroglio.

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