Future of War and Strategy: Indo-Pak Dynamics

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Abstract

The evolving character of war and strategy in the emerging geopolitical environment reflects a tension between the traditional Trinitarian concept of war, pursued by a state for attaining some policy objective, and a transformed, non-Trinitarian, stateless war pursued for myriad objectives. The future of Indo-Pakistan strategic dynamics is characterized by this tension. It is further aggravated by the space available in these countries for stateless wars and the introduction of nuclear weapons along with their modern derivatives into the strategic competition, that is beset by contentious issues like Kashmir and the deep-seated rivalry. The development of nuclear weapons has failed to infuse strategic stability in Indo-Pakistan relations. Joint and irregular warfare scenarios are likely to characterize the future of war and competitive strategy in the subcontinent with complex notions of victory. Conventional and nuclear forces will have to be adroitly balanced by Pakistan in continental, air, maritime and strategic domains against India's 'superiority in numbers' to rebuff its space for 'limited war'.

Keywords: War, Strategy, Nuclear Weapons, Security, Deterrence.

Introduction

The evolving international environment in which the strategists will plan and fight the future wars is becoming increasingly complex and unpredictable. Strategic actors like international organizations, non-governmental organizations, multinational corporations and terrorist networks, at times having interests different from states, are challenging the state-centred global political order. Other transnational challenges comprise direct threats from human beings including terrorists, organized crime, drug trafficking and human smuggling; add to them threats from impersonal forces including disease, international pandemics, population growth and migration, resource shortages, global environment degradation and climate change[1]. Transnational ideologies like the ones propagated by Al Qaeda, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Boko Haram, Tehreek-e-Taliban

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[1] Alan G. Stolberg, "The International System in the 21st Century," *US Army War College Guide to National Security Policy and Strategy*, 2nd Edition, (US: Army War College, 2006), 6.

Pakistan (TTP) and Maoists have helped to franchise war among the disenfranchised. Such devolution in warfare has muddled the ends, ways and means of strategy. Defiance of the state's writ in ungoverned territories, "pre-emption" to thwart international dangers and festering irredentism further complicate the strategic milieu. The information revolution has an omnipresent impact on world politics. Traditional elements of national power like geography and natural resources, military and nuclear capability, economic and industrial capacity and population and national will largely reflected the relative capacity of nation states to wage war. Since "there has been a growing suspicion that the nature of warfare itself may be changing in fundamental ways", not only in terms of advancement in military technologies at the state level but more profoundly at the sub-state level[2], there is a need to improve awareness about these changes. As these levels overlap, the spectrum of warfare and strategy becomes even more complex, with state and violent non-state actors (VNSA) vying for power in fuzzy domains. Hard, soft and smart power, wielded by state and non-state actors alike, is adroitly exercised to achieve the ends of strategy. This complexity is amply manifested in the Indo-Pak rivalry with deep rooted differences, irredentist claims, nuclear weapons and a legacy of warfare that refuses to go away. The projections of future warfare would help to identify the likely contours of the conflictual relationship between India and Pakistan.

Anatomy of War

Warfare has been described by Clausewitz as a political and social activity, within the *trinity* of policy direction by the government, people's primordial passions and chance taken by the militaries. It is worth noting that the changing character of world politics would inevitably entail a change in the character of warfare too[3]. The simultaneity of competition and cooperation amongst state and VNSAs alike gives rise to diverse strategies of coercive statecraft, which might be a mix of actions based in diplomatic, informational, economic and intelligence domains, with the traditional coercive instrument of power, the military, in a selective role. Nuclear weapons, wherever applicable, further compound the strategic dilemma. Peter Paret defines strategy as 'the development, intellectual mastery, and utilization of all of state's resources for the purpose of implementing its

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[2] Ashley J. Tellis, Janice Bially, Christopher Layne, Melissa McPherson and Jerry M. Sollinger, *Measuring National Power in the Post Industrial Age* (US: RAND, 2000), 5.

[3] Michael Sheehan, "The Changing Character of War," *The Globalization of World Politics*, 5th Edition, ed., John Baylis et al. (New York: OUP, 2011), 218.

policy in war'[4]. Strategy, like politics, is the art of the possible. It takes its meaning and form from geography, history, politics, economics, the society and the issues that so often necessitate the resort to warfare as a considered choice of policy. Andre Beaufre differs with Liddell Hart's emulation of Clausewitz's traditional military concept of strategy as the art of employing military forces to achieve the ends set by political policy. Beaufre defines strategy as 'the art of the dialectic of force or, more precisely, the art of the dialectic of two opposing wills using force to resolve their dispute'[5]. He goes on to explain that the ultimate objective of this psychological competition of rival strategies is to achieve mental impairment of the enemy, which manifests itself in a peculiar attitude; an attitude of hopelessness and futility. Although, Clausewitz had expressed similar views more than a century ago saying:

> "War is not the action of a living force upon a lifeless mass (total non-resistance would be no war at all) but always the collision of two living forces…. If you want to overcome your enemy you must match your effort against his power of resistance, ….viz, *the total means at his disposal* and *the strength of his* will"[6].

Clausewitz explained that the determination of *means* was easier but the *will* could only be ascertained in terms of the "motive animating it" and that as soon as one adjusted his power accordingly, the enemy did the same and the competition continued to an extreme of "*maximum exertion of strength*". The Western-led Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) of the last four decades or so, and resulting strategic asymmetries in global conflicts, has made future estimation of this competition even more complex.

Andre Beaufre signified the importance of keeping an eye on the future strategy by saying: "*preparation is now of more consequence than execution.* In other words it is useless to spend millions on a defence system, the future effectiveness of which is doubtful, whereas it is essential to be *well informed* and *exercise foresight*"[7].

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[4] Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 3.

[5] Andre Beaufre, *An Introduction to Strategy* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965), 22.

[6] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans., Michael Howard and Peter Paret, abridged by Beatrice Heuser (New York: OUP, 1976), 15-16.

[7] Andre Beaufre, 45-46.

Warfare and its Impact on Strategic Thinking

> "But in war more than in any other subject, we must begin by looking at the nature of the whole; for here more than elsewhere the part and the whole must always be thought of together". – Clausewitz

As we begin by taking a holistic account of war, it becomes evident that a mix of legacies and transformations will characterize warfare in future. Renowned futurists Allen and Heidi Toffler had propounded twenty years ago in their seminal account on future of warfare, *War and Anti War*; "the way we make war reflects the way we make wealth — and the way we make anti-war must reflect the way we make war". Anti-war is akin to peace making, peace keeping and reinstating the failed deterrence. At times, war could itself become an instrument to create such conditions. They argued that as the world leaves the industrial age behind and enters the information age, a revolutionary new mode of economy based on knowledge is replacing the conventional raw materials and physical labour-based economy. While one might argue in favour of continued significance of labour and materials in economic development, the extraordinary advantage that knowledge-based economies have created is hard to ignore. Hence, comparing the transformation in the way wealth is made, they asserted: "this remarkable change in the world economy is bringing with it a parallel revolution in the nature of warfare"[8]. Colin Gray, the famous scholar of war, described future of warfare and strategy by arguing that it is actually the character of war that changes with time and not its nature, which remains constant, propounding Clausewitz's view, "all wars are things of the same nature"[9]. But no two wars can be termed to have exact similarity; their distinct 'style' distinguishes their character. Most wars contain variants of conventional and unconventional styles of warfare. While technologies and tactics change, the broad options of warfare strategy remain the same. Unlike Tofflers, Gray argued that for holistic understanding, war can be explained with reference to seven contexts; "political, socio-cultural, economic, technological, military-strategic, geographical-geopolitical and historical". He further asserted that Thucydides' eternal causal factors of war, i.e. fear, honour and interest, were as relevant to 21st Century as they were some 2400 years ago, since the nature of human society had not changed just like the nature of war, emphasizing the universal and eternal possibility of war. While comparing the two world views about the future of war and strategy, it can be said that

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[8] Allen and Heidi Toffler, *War and Anti War* (Little, Brown: UK, 1993), 3-5.

[9] Colin S. Gray, "War — Continuity in Change, and Change in Continuity," *Parameters* (Summer 2010): 7.

the purpose of war, to subdue the adversary's will to advance his own interest, remains constant; so does its nature, seeking subservience from a position of strength often entailing violence. However, what is changing is the character of war; its ways and means. The fundamental force driving that change is obviously knowledge. Superior knowledge about the adversary's intent, capabilities, vulnerabilities and strengths would lead to superior strategies with comparative advantages to outmanoeuvre the enemy by advanced information processing ability backed by superior mobility, kinetics and logistics.

Character of War in 21st Century

Strategy is all about being able "to invent, design and execute historically specific strategies that may succeed." According to Clausewitz, it "does not specify what to do, but it does advise on how to think about what to do"[10]. Correlating it to contemporary times; there is a general theory of Airpower, while many airpower strategies like Parallel Operations, Strategic Paralysis, Coercive Airpower, Effects Based Operations, etc.' were evolved over time in history in different contexts. Similarly, the continental military thought, as expounded by Clausewitz and Mackinder has seen many strategic developments like operational art, joint warfare, power projection, counterterrorism, counterinsurgency (COIN), etc.

Any discussion about the changing nature or character of war cannot be complete without taking into consideration the views of Martin Van Crevald. He argued in a path breaking work on strategy, *The Transformation of War* (TTW) that the way a society conducts warfare is based upon the construct of its social structures and beliefs. He indicated the pre-eminence of unconventional strategies against conventional opponents and the failure of regular militaries in dealing with this irregular foe. He correctly pointed out that the insurgent, revolutionaries and terrorists were much quicker in adapting to the changing dynamics of warfare than conventional militaries. Based upon this, he presented his most provocative arguments asserting that the contemporary strategic thought about the 'what', 'why' and 'how' of warfare is fundamentally flawed and, moreover, it is based upon an obsolete and incorrect *Clausewitzian* worldview. He went on to assert:

> "We are entering an era, not of peaceful economic competition between economic blocks, but of warfare between ethnic and religious groups.… Already today the military power fielded by the principal developed societies in both *West* and *East* is

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[10] Ibid, 8.

hardly relevant to the task at hand…Unless the societies in question are willing to adjust both thought and action to the rapidly changing new realities, they are likely to reach the point where they will no longer be capable of employing organized violence at all. Once this situation comes about, their continued survival as cohesive political entities will also be put in doubt"[11].

Ten years later, in 2002, after eliciting significant debate, Crevald revisited his theory and claimed that it has been vindicated profoundly by the course of history ever since the publication of *TTW*, except for the phenomenon of information warfare that has emerged prominently during this period. Reinforcing his past critique of Clausewitz's trinity of governmental policy, peoples' passions and military's fighting, he asserted that Clausewitz was wrong because an analysis of the conflicts of the last decade amply highlighted that the distinctions of the *trinity* did not exist in the same form, for example in Somalia and Afghanistan. Therefore, he declared that the prediction in *TTW* about history "witnessing a major shift from Trinitarian to non-Trinitarian war seems to have fulfilled itself" and the conventional forces of states were finding it difficult to understand this new kind of war[12].

Crevald argued that "war is not so much a continuation of policy as a form of sport such as football or chess". Simplifying the war and policy dialectic, he gave the example of football, where the game was not a means to achieve some end but an end in itself; where the players cooperated beyond their self-interest (policy); where opposing teams clashed to inflict damage by means of goals achieved through teamwork, training and a design to defeat the opposing side. In case of one side being very strong than the other and forced to play for prolonged periods, in accordance with logic of mutual learning in war and football, ultimately the weaker side would become strong and the stronger side weak, over a sufficient period of time[13].

Van Crevald's theory obviously attracted more debate, both in support and against it. In a particularly incisive critique, Seydlitz, argued that Clausewitz's general theory of remarkable trinity of War was timeless and much more significant than his description of the art of Napoleonic

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[11] Martin Van Crevald, *The Transformation of War* (New York: The Free Press, 1993), ix.

[12] Martin Van Crevald, "The Transformation of War Revisited," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* (2002), 13:2-8, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09592310208559177 (accessed February 25, 2013).

[13] Martin Van Crevald (2002),13.

warfare[14]. He asserted that Clausewitz had dedicated the complete first chapter of Book One, *On War*, to explaining war itself: a policy instrument, a large scale duel, a cards game, an act of compelling the enemy into submission, a competition between two dynamic forces, an activity possessing the distinct characteristics of attack and defence, an act on a continuum of political actions, an act of divided results, a dangerous undertaking and an act whose nature varies with the seriousness of purpose given to it by the political circumstances. It is only after these explanations that the remarkable trinity appears at the end of the first chapter of Book One, under the caption, The Consequences for Theory:

> "War is more than a true chameleon that slightly adapts its characteristics to the given case. As a total phenomenon its dominant tendencies always make war a paradoxical trinity — composed of primordial violence, hatred and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone. The first of these aspects mainly concerns the people; the second the commander and his army; the third the government"[15].

A closer scrutiny of these definitions vis-à-vis contemporary conflicts like Afghanistan, Palestine, India, Pakistan, etc. would reveal the timelessness of the eternal 'Trinitarian' theory. In Afghanistan, the Afghan Government with US's military backing is conducting the counterinsurgency with utmost violence, the fledgling Afghan National Security Forces are taking due chances and the war is subordinated to a policy direction of the government of ending violence in the war-torn country. Similarly, Taliban are wreaking havoc in terms of violence, their hierarchy is taking a lot of chances and they also have a policy direction to oust foreign forces and get due share in power. Similar analogy would apply in Israel versus Hezbollah/Hamas wars. In all the full scale wars fought between India and Pakistan, Clausewitzian trinity remained a constant on both sides. Whether the conflict is conventional or low intensity, limited or unlimited, overt or covert, intra state or inter-state, the three factors of Clausewitz's trinity remain dynamically instrumental; a political purpose (positive or negative), people's concerns of varying

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[14] Seydlitz, "The Decline of Strategic Theory — the Influence of *The Transformation of War*," (seydlitz 89,2008) http://www.dnipogo.org/fcs/pdf/seydlitz_decline_of_strategic_theory.pdf (accessed February 25, 2013).

[15] Carl von Clausewitz, 13-30.

intensities and creative warriors ready to take chances for '*maximum exertion of strength*' to overcome their enemy's power of resistance.

Future of Indo-Pak Strategic Dynamics

The overt development of nuclear weapons, means of delivery and discourses on nuclear doctrines was a turning point in Indo-Pak strategic dynamics. Interestingly, both India and Pakistan would argue differently vis-à-vis the perceived impact of introduction of nuclear weapons in their strategic calculus. Pakistan would contend about elimination of any prospects of war between the nuclear-armed rivals while India would disagree and profess existence of space for conventional war of limited aims under nuclear overhang.

> "Indian political and military leaders and strategic analysts believe that there is a clear strategic space for a conventional conflict below the nuclear threshold because nuclear weapons are not weapons of war-fighting. They are convinced that for Pakistan it would be suicidal to launch a nuclear strike against India or Indian forces, as it would invite massive retaliation"[16].

Especially in the past decade or so, Indian strategic thinking has covered much ground in evolving a spring-loaded, offensive-defensive strategy, meaning to be strategically poised, at a very short notice, for the offensives to achieve maximum destruction of enemy forces and gaining territory as well, while remaining tactically on the defensive to deny the same to the adversary. It was meant to address their sub-conventional vulnerability by employment of conventional forces under 'Cold Start Doctrine' (CSD) for effecting punitive deterrence in retaliation to any abetment of insurgency or terrorism by Pakistan against India. It is supposedly a very well-articulated 'Proactive Strategy' (PAS) calibrated to remain cognizant of Pakistan's nuclear capabilities[17]. It's a complex politico-strategic undertaking that is predicated on the assumption that in case of any extraordinary terrorism in India, allegedly with Pakistan's support, Indian political leadership would be fully poised to immediately order war under PAS; exploiting defensive unpreparedness, inducing dislocation by way of multipronged non-linear offensives, while defending own vulnerabilities and calling Pakistan's nuclear bluff in the process. Any delay therein would entail repeat of Operation Parakram 2001 or even post-

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[16] Gurmeet Kanwal, *Indian Army: Vision 2020* (Harper Collins: New Delhi, 2008), 66.

[17] Ali Ahmed, "India's Limited War Doctrine: The Structural Factor," *Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*, no. 10 (December 2012): 19.

Mumbai 2008, where sensing danger Pakistan mobilizes her forces, reinforces defensive formations and is ready to exploit her offensive capabilities for trans-frontier options besides mounting of international pressure that gets sensitized due to the nuclear factor. The concept of this short duration, intense war is coined by Indian Armed Forces as 'hit and mobilize', structured to be the converse of the previous notion, i.e. 'mobilize and hit'. It offsets Indian mobilization differential vis-à-vis Pakistan by preplanned configuration of the offensive content of defensive/pivot corps, termed Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) applied within 48-72 hours of the opening of hostilities. The offensive corps simultaneously mobilize in three different Army command areas as Theatre Force Reserves (TFRs) to fuse with IBGS within 72-96 hours and carry on the offensive at opportune points, with limited objectives, in order to remain below Pakistan's 'perceived' nuclear thresholds. Grappling with this dilemma, Indian planners say that "the crucial choice here requires a decision to move away from the paradigm focused on capture of territory to a paradigm based on destructive ability, … with airpower, missiles and long range guns as the central vectors."[18] On watching closely the current unstable equilibrium in Pakistan, the report, *Nonalignment 2.0 — A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the Twenty First Century*, opines, "*We should not assume that all forms of instability* (in Pakistan) *are bad from our perspective*".

In the backdrop of such provocative policy being propounded by Indian strategists, the sensitivity of disputes assumes even greater significance.

> "After over a decade of Pakistan's proxy war and particularly after Kargil, the national mood is much different. Indian public opinion will accept nothing short of the final dismemberment of Pakistan in case that country chooses to cross the nuclear Rubicon and launch a nuclear strike, even if it is on Indian forces"[19].

It is often argued that protracted combat between Pakistani and Indian Armed Forces… in the wake of nuclear weapons, heightens alarmingly the prospects of this regional conflict resulting into a nuclear conflagration[20].

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[18] S. Khilnani, et al., *Nonalignment 2.0 A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the Twenty First Century*, (New Delhi: National Defence College, Centre for Policy Research, 2012), 40.

[19] Gurmeet Kanwal, 76.

[20] S.P. Kapur, "India and Pakistan's Unstable Peace; Why Nuclear South Asia is Not Like Cold War Europe," *International Security*, vol. 30, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 127.

Analysing the long drawn and complex competition between India and Pakistan, Stephen P. Cohen, after spending a lifetime studying Indo-Pak conflict ridden relationship, describes the 'eternal rivalry' as genealogical, mutating and pervasive. Kashmir, the 'root-cause' of rivalry is itself becoming 'as much a symptom as a cause'. It was essentially an issue of injustice to people but has become more of an irredentist dispute. The adversarial relationship between these two countries is intractable, with the rivalry 'firmly wedged in the internal politics of both countries'. The intractability is structurally complicated. In trying to find out its root-cause, Cohen explores whether it is driven by 'territory (for example Kashmir), authority over people (over Kashmiris, and also over Indian Muslims), ideology or a simple struggle for power between two powerful states?' Quite pessimistically, he concludes that, 'some elements on both sides argue that they will never have a normal relationship'. It is going to be a 'latent and protracted civil war', until either of the rivals 'gives in completely — whether on the territorial issue, the people issue, or the ideological issue — or all three'[21].

Kashmir — The Core Issue

Kashmir dispute is widely described as the core issue whose origins lie in the division of the subcontinent. Both countries claim ownership of the territory and negotiations have repeatedly failed to resolve the issue. Owing to their intense rivalry, inter-state war between India and Pakistan remains a live and vivid possibility[22]. As was seen in the backdrop of 2001-2 attack on Indian Parliament and Mumbai in 2008, Indian coercion is likely to begin as a preconceived reaction following any future mass terrorist attack that will accentuate the crisis to its military dimension. If the diverse indicators are closely observed to see how these crises precipitated, the centrality of Kashmir dispute emerges clearly. The sufferings of Kashmiris in India have recently aggravated more due to rampant joblessness and curtailed opportunities, poor health and education facilities, underdevelopment and ineffective political representation, complicated by the insurgency and heavy presence of the armed forces that abuse power most brutally[23]. In June 2010, the killing of innocent Kashmiris by Indian security forces led to mass protests and within six months more than a hundred Kashmiris died,

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[21] Stephen P. Cohen, *Shooting for a Century* (India: Harper Collins, 2013), 146.

[22] Monika Barthwal Datta, *Understanding Security Practices in South Asia* (London: Routledge, 2012), 28.

[23] A. Matoo, "Summer of Discontent," *Harvard International Review*, vol. 32, no. 4 (Winter 2011): 54-58.

most of them being teenagers[24]. The groundswell of discontent bred by such high handedness along with complexly widespread, franchised means of terrorism make the strategic environment pregnant with very dangerous possibilities. Another disenchantment trend, emerging in the Kashmir freedom struggle, is the well-educated youth's resorting to use of extreme violence to press for their cause. In the wake of the increased impetus in the militant struggle after the hanging of Muhammad Afzal Guru, a noticeable fact is the identity of some of those killed in recent actions, which include engineers, scholars and scientists[25]. As expansionism in thought and action continues to be displayed by global terrorist actors like Al Qaeda's growing influence in the Subcontinent, Yemen and Iraq or the ISIS's daring exploits in Iraq and Syria, visualization of such trends in Kashmir remains a probable scenario. It is likely to be accentuated with the availability of motivated and educated cadres from amongst the antagonized segments of the oppressed and disenchanted Kashmiri youth seeking a more spectacular role in their struggle.

Contours of Strategic Competition

India is constrained by the compulsion to practically keep Kashmir out of discussion, especially with the incumbent BJP Government's manifesto of even doing away with the special constitutional status of Kashmir. It is constrained by its struggle for greater power status and regional hegemony in which it is forced to project Pakistan as a strategic irritant. It is a constraint because any discussion on Kashmir would take the focus away from the assertion of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism as the core issue in any future dialogue likely to be pursued by India centred on the demand to punish the perpetrators of the Mumbai carnage. In the wake of Operation Zarb-e-Azb since July 2014 and the national resolve post Peshawar school massacre, there is a renewed international confidence in Pakistan's resolve against terrorism. However, this advantage might not remain very relevant in sustaining the goodwill of US for very long and any future terrorist incident of a large magnitude inside India could turn the Indo-Pak strategic competition overtly violent. The Indian policy of a punitive therapy aiming to achieve submissiveness through regulated armed intimidation is constrained by chances of nuclear conflagration, which is an inherent risk of any such adventure.

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[24] Ibid, 54-58.

[25] S. Bukhari, "J&K: Treading a Dangerous Path," *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 5 (June 2013), http://www.ipcs.org/article/india/jk-treading-a-dangerous-path-3974.html. (accessed June 9, 2013)

India's biggest advantage vis-à-vis Pakistan lies in her conventional military superiority[26] and economic growth that affords steady arms build up to reach almost asymmetric proportions against Pakistan in less than a decade's time from now. With such defence expenditure in place and projection, Indian military is configured to achieve the ends of policy in Pakistan whenever called upon to do so. But two impediments need to be tackled. First and foremost is the threat of spiralling escalation that could uncontrollably lead to a nuclear exchange. Second is Pakistan's significant conventional military capability that can limit the Indian strategy of 'limited aims' and even project a potent offensive threat into Indian territory, which might not be palatable to their public and polity. So space has to be socially constructed for gainful employment of this superior advantage. Indian rhetoric of existence of space for war below the nuclear threshold is an adroit step in the same construction.

Pakistan, on the other hand, is constrained by her economic situation and her volatile internal security. Military is burdened with the ongoing stability and counterterrorism operations in FATA, worsened by the continuing instability in neighbouring Afghanistan. An intimidating posture by India in such circumstances, like the recent escalation along the Line of Control, will put more pressure on the military to come up with a competing strategic answer that helps in augmenting the deterrence in a comprehensive and effective manner, within the given economic constraints. In order to deter war, Pakistan would naturally be forced to rely rather heavily on her nuclear capability. The 'credible minimum deterrence' will continuously be revisited to ensure that it matches the current level of overall threat perception that is emanating from India at given and projected points in time. It would also be forced to project as a balancer for the conventional inadequacies and voids. In this regard Low Yield Weapons (LYWs) have created quite a stir in Indo-Pak security debate. One section of commentators view it as a hazardous move and question its wisdom, while the other looks at it as Pakistan's response to 'India's highly provocative and aggressive Cold Start Doctrine'[27]. While accusing Pakistan of initiating this level of nuclear arms build up, it is often ignored that when Pakistan announced on 19 April 2011 the successful test firing of a short range, portable missile, Nasr, capable of carrying all kinds of warheads, India

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[26] Gurmeet Kanwal, "Indian Military Modernization: Plans and Strategic Underpinnings," *The National Bureau of Asian Research for the Senate India Caucas* (US) (September 2012): 7.

[27] Naeem Salik, "Tactical Nuclear Weapons and Deterrence Stability," *The International Relations and Security Network* (2012), www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?lng=en&id=142891 (accessed July 5, 2014).

responded in kind in July 2011, which obviously was not a spur of the moment decision but part of a deliberate policy being pursued for quite some time. While it was categorically declared that introduction of Nasr 'has enhanced Pakistan's *deterrence* at all levels of conflict', much of the discourse that ensued against this development was directed at the dangers of its involvement in war fighting. 'Use them or lose them' would be a dilemma in a volatile battlefield, besides the command and control challenges. In a way, however, this discourse is itself helping to further augment the deterrence, which should be taken as a positive indicator in the overall stability dynamics between India and Pakistan.

Stability-Instability Paradox

The stabilization effect or otherwise of nuclear weapons in the balance of power between rival states with festering issues is a debate that finds much relevance in the Indo-Pak context. Commenting about the effects of nuclear weapons on international peace, Glenn Snyder remarked:

> "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 its lower levels of violence"[28].

Much debate has gone in the interpretation of the *stability-instability paradox* in South Asia (Kapur: 2005, Rajagoplan: 2006, Feroz: 2003). Kapur argued for its inapplicability by stating that in fact instability in a nuclear domain fails to deter Pakistan from instigating conflicts in India, as a higher level of strategic stability would have prevented them from such actions; thus, in his opinion, it is actually an instability/instability paradox. It is argued by Rajagoplan that the paradox is inapplicable in Indo-Pak context because Pakistan has all along been pursuing the policy of supporting insurgencies in India, even before the nuclearization of the region. Feroz opined in favour of the argument by saying that room for open conflict between India and Pakistan has been closed after nuclearization since escalation to nuclear domain inadvertently accompanies any conflict in South Asia.

The conflict between India and Pakistan is manifested in three domains, i.e. nuclear, conventional and sub-conventional. Pakistan emphasizes upon the stability which nuclear weapons have induced into the

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[28] Michael Krepon, "The Stability-Instability Paradox," *Arms Control Wonk*, November 2, 2010.
www.krepon.armscontrolwonk.com/archive/2911/the-stability-instability-paradox, (accessed June 9, 2013).

'uneasy peace' situation prevalent between the two countries and propagates a mutual strategic restraint regime to augment the stabilizing effects of nuclearization. India, on the other hand, terms it as a Pakistani ploy to ensure stability at the nuclear level in order to neutralize Indian conventional superiority, thereby creating space for exploiting the sub-conventional domain in Kashmir to instigate the simmering insurgency. Michael Krepon analysed the extent to which 'stability-instability paradox', as expounded in the Cold War era, is applicable to the subcontinent where a nuclear conflagration is simmering due to the Kashmir dispute:

> The way out of this morass is widely appreciated, but rarely acted upon. This exit strategy points to placing a much higher priority on the well-being of Kashmiris — something both Governments profess to hold dear, but rarely act upon… The best chance of defusing nuclear danger and controlling escalation lies in political engagement. Nuclear risk reduction begins along the Kashmir divide.[29]

It should rather be argued that nuclear risk reduction actually rests in reducing the pervasive mistrust marring the Indo-Pak relations as a whole. Improvement of trade relations, toning down of rhetoric and putting content in bilateral negotiations, with premium on securing well-being of Kashmiri people, is the need of the hour. It is much needed and cannot be more urgent than now because of the fast expanding nuclear arsenals of both countries that have gone down to the so-called 'tactical' level because of the introduction of LYWs on both sides. Although some authors continue to assert that it is Pakistan that has upped the ante by introducing LYWs in the operational construct of India versus Pakistan military conflict scenario[30], ignoring the fact that if at all it is true, it has happened because of India's policy of seeking Pakistan's 'submissiveness' through jingoistic strategies like PAS. The recent decade of provocative developments in Indian military thought seemed to have set in motion the natural tendency of classical realist thought, described as the second principle of political realism, which asserts that states define their national interests in terms of power[31]. Statesmen tend to remain seized with the necessity of continuously assessing the survivability of their state in a world much devoid of morality or legality and defined by self-help. Political realism will drive states to

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[29] Michael Krepon, "The Stability–Instability Paradox, Misperception, and Escalation Control in South Asia," *The Henry Stimson Centre* (May 2003). http://www.stimson.org/southasia/pdf/kreponmay03.pdf (accessed May 16, 2013)

[30] Michael Krepon, "The Tortoise and the Hare," *International Herald Tribune*, April 5, 2013.

[31] H.J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, 4th Edition (US: Alfred A. Knopf Inc, 1948), 5.

seek competitive and adaptive strategies that aim to maximize their advantages and minimize the vulnerabilities. Indian ongoing endeavour to keep building the threat of a massive conventional assault in case of a future terrorist attack is breeding a volatile strategic competition. Both the belligerents will strive to leverage their competitiveness within their respective constraints and advantages.

Strategic Instability in Indo-Pak Relations

- Stockton identifies three main threats to strategic stability, whose application in South Asian environment needs to be seen[32]. It would be useful if these were evaluated in a comprehensive manner, as crisis fermentation in the Indo-Pak case is much different than the Cold War antagonists. Here, owing to the apprehensions of sub-conventional flare ups that result from a complex proxy/VNSA influence in the conflict, especially in the backdrop of Kashmir's volatility and hostile military postures in the disputed territory, the conventional stability worsens in tandem with nuclear stability. The transformed and devolved non-Trinitarian warfare of sub-state actors as asserted by Crevald could cascade into a traditional Trinitarian war driven by state "policy", fuelled by people's "primordial" passions and fought by Generals ready to take "chances", as expounded by Clausewitz. A brief theoretical review would be helpful in developing better understanding.

- **Crisis Instabilities:** Crisis instabilities result from the desire of antagonists to gain an advantage by improving their chances in the conflict through striking first with nuclear weapons, rather than wait to react to enemy's actions. Although this category might not be relevant to Indo-Pak strategic environment but the idea remains pertinent to any future crisis as both belligerents are wary of respective operational and tactical advantages that give dividends, if attained in time. Hence their desire to grab that advantage would invariably result in cascading crisis instabilities. As sophisticated Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities have been developed by both sides, awareness about each other's gambits would be much more clear, thus furthering the possibilities of pre-emptive conventional moves at various levels by both sides to improve their chances, in disregard of heightening instability that ensues. Whether these moves include preparation of nuclear forces

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[32] Paul Stockton, Strategic Stability between the Super-powers, *Adelphi Papers* no. 213, IISS (1986): 8.

for operational purposes is difficult to predict but it is likely that neither side would like to take a chance and be surprised later, therefore the action-reaction chain can predictably result in increasing strategic instability. Unless mistrust reduces, which is not the case presently, a host of VNSA franchises can trigger crisis instability between India and Pakistan[33], using the boiling Kashmiri conundrum, without any side being in control over the developments owing to precipitous public sentiments and highly alert militaries.

- **Arms Race Instabilities:** When rival states strive to make qualitative and quantitative force improvements in order to meet the perceived threats, an arms race becomes inevitable due to the '*security dilemma*' that remains omnipresent, especially in sensitive, geopolitically tense spots of the world like South Asia. What is the impact of Kashmir dispute on the 'Arms Race Instabilities' between India and Pakistan? According to an Indian analyst, Major General G. D. Bakshi, Jammu and Kashmir will be the theatre of the next Indo-Pak war:

  With tremendous strategic significance of the Gilgit–Gwadar transport-cum-energy corridor, the entire strategic calculus about J&K has undergone a paradigm shift. China has ominously altered its stance on J&K and has moved in a big way into the northern areas. Chinese military engineers have entered the Gilgit–Baltistan region and are feverishly engaged in widening the KKH and surveying the rail alignment to Kashgar. With this major Chinese move into Gilgit, J&K may well be the focus of the next major war in South Asia.[34]

This "major Chinese move" based upon the presence of some Chinese contractors working on KKH, is indicative of the mistrust and misperception prevailing in Indo-Pak relationship. Although defined by 'credible and minimum', the deterrence capabilities on both sides will keep up their modernization programmes[35] to redefine these precepts in accordance with emerging threat perceptions.

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[33] Syed S. Shahzad, *Inside al Qaeda and the Taliban* (London: Pluto Press, 2011), xiii.

[34] G.D. Bakshi, "Indian Predictions for the Next Major Conflict," *TACSTRAT*. www.tacstrat.com/content/index.php/2012/10/10/indian-predictions-for-the-next-major-conflict/ (accessed October 17, 2012).

[35] Feroz Hassan Khan, "Minimum Deterrence: Pakistan's Dilemma," *Small Nuclear Forces, Five Perspectives*, ed. Chalmers, M et al. Whitehall Report 3-11 (London: RUSI, 2011), 72.

Dahiya describes Indian vital national interests as protection of sovereignty and territorial integrity, protection of life and property of citizens against external aggression and terrorism, deterrence against the use or threat of use of weapons of mass destruction, preventing establishment of foreign military presence, establishing stability in immediate neighbourhood and security of sea lanes of communication[36]. The first threat/challenge that the author lists is Pakistan:

> Pakistan is the immediate source of direct threat. Keeping in mind the India-centricity of Pakistan's foreign and security policy it would be safe to presume that proxy war, will continue to be the corner stone of its India containment strategy. This threat is exacerbated by the US need to accommodate Pakistan because of its dependence on the country to prosecute the war in Afghanistan and continued support from China. Its nuclear capability and calculated low threshold for use of nuclear weapons continue to limit India's options in dealing with it.

The author puts internal security as the 'greatest challenge' that India confronts today, being virtually under siege due to the insurgencies in Northeast and J&K and left wing extremism. Besides the usual diatribe against Pakistan, the author candidly admits "poor governance, criminalization and communalization of politics, increasing social awareness and failure of the state to provide economic benefits to the deprived" as the reasons for these developments.

The need to compete between India and Pakistan for balance of power remains, as is amply clear from the evidence, which is likely to accentuate the 'arms race instabilities' in the region.

- **Escalatory Danger:** When two nuclear armed adversaries engage in war, the chances of it graduating from conventional to nuclear is a clear and present danger. It could be as part of a design, or it could be misreading of the adversary's intent, or it could be an inadvertent engagement. Whatever may be the case, spiraling escalation of conflict will be the eventual outcome, unless restraining initiatives survive in the heightened mistrust that is expected to mar the escalated environment. The dangers of such an escalation are under much debate in the Indo-Pak context, especially in the wake of perceived 'ambiguity' in Pakistan's nuclear doctrine and the rather

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[36] R. Dahiya, "Reforming the Military Institutions and National Security Strategy," *Grand Strategy for India 2020 and Beyond*, ed. K. Venkatshamy and P. George (New Delhi: IDSA, 2012), 75.

ambitious stance of massive retaliation in Indian declared policy. Ali Ahmad argued in favour of toning down the Indian response to *quid pro quo* or maximum up to *quid pro quo plus*, i.e., a 'flexible response' entailing "*deterrence by denial* for lower order first use and *deterrence by punishment* continuing for higher order attacks", backed by other nuclear risk reduction measures that "reinforce the conflict termination message."[37] The same author argued in favour of toning down the Cold Start doctrine to what he terms as 'Cold Start and Stop' strategy, which implies staying short of application of Strike Corps because it amounts to waging of full-scale war that is unthinkable in nuclear age. Thereafter employing other elements of grand strategy to achieve favourable war termination in the short and peace in the long term, thus retaining the viability of this exercise in coercion[38].

Future of War and Strategy in Indo-Pak Dynamics

Keeping the above debate in mind, it is likely that Indians would continue their rapid pace of armed forces development in joint and irregular warfare scenarios, both, to meet the full spectrum of threat, overcoming the constraints of nuclear overhang[39]. While remaining engaged economically with China and strategically with US, they are likely to continue covert abetment of internal security problems in Pakistan while seeking competitive advantage through aggressive strategies of 'Limited Aims' and 'Proactive Operations'[40] based on cold war theories like *Renaissance of Limited War and Strategy of Fait Accompli*[41]. The conventional forces will be augmented by a robust nuclear strategy, befitting a regional power, whose *prudence versus wrath* orientation (massive retaliation or flexible response) is likely to remain debatable[42]. Cyber warfare will invariably form an essential component of every scheme of operation in intensely net

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[37] Ali Ahmed, "Political Decision-Making and Nuclear Retaliation," *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 36, no. 4 (July-August 2012): 519.

[38] Ali Ahmed, "Towards a Proactive Military Strategy: 'Cold Start and Stop'," *Strategic Analysis, v*ol. 35, no. 3 (*May* 2011): 402.

[39] Gautam Banerjee Lt Gen, *The 21ˢᵗ Century Army – Strategies for Future* (New Delhi: Manas, 2012), 276-299.

[40] Gurmeet Kanwal, *Indian Army: Vision 2020* (New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2008), 62-87.

[41] Andre Beaufre, *Strategy for Tomorrow*, (US: Stanford Research Institute, 1974), 4, 34.

[42] Ali Ahmad, "Political Decision-Making and Nuclear Retaliation," 511-526.

centric future conflicts, like the one seen against Iran[43]. The 'neoclassic' component of operational art, information, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR), highlights importance of satellites and outer space, which would put a premium on space research and development. The unprecedented access afforded to global media, with their projection into the citizens' living rooms through TV screens, will increase the significance of perception management. Unbridled proliferation of dual-purpose technologies and concepts into the hands of VNSA will make the future conflict more complex. The irregular style of warfare with prominence of VNSA, illegitimacy of states in the eyes of certain segments of population, counterinsurgencies and cultural fault lines, which are predominant today, constitute the 4th Generation War, whose diverse manifestations will characterize Indo-Pak strategic calculus. Belligerents, when out-gunned, will resort to outwit the other side by seeking strategic compensation through asymmetry, like sensible combatants looking for a winning edge to offset their deficiencies. Adaptive, competitive and innovative strategies will be needed by regular militaries to match the strategic advantage being sought by the chameleon-like enemy. Crafting the notion of victory in 4th Generation War will be complex. It will be hinged upon public perception. The state and non-state forces will strongly contest winning of the hearts and minds through superior narratives and counter narratives. Reconstruction, rehabilitation and security without provocation, of insurgency-hit areas, will be the new concept of state actors to defeat insurgents[44]. Like in Pakistan's case, reconstruction of Miranshah town destroyed in Operation Zarb-e-Azb, resettlement of the temporarily displaced persons and successful reinvigoration of peaceful life and business would constitute a credible notion of victory, rather than the defeat and ouster of TTP only. In the maritime domain, capability of sea forces to project their power 'forward from the sea' by virtue of four modern attributes, namely, aircraft carriers, precision missiles, long range guns and marine forces will continue to dominate future naval warfare. Airpower will continue to enjoy its predominance in providing precision firepower, stealth and lethality to shape the battlefield in a conventional war; however, in the irregular war, their role will mainly be restricted to intelligence, target acquisition, surveillance, reconnaissance, logistics and selective precision engagement. Armed drones will obviously find a prominent place in the Airpower doctrines of both India and Pakistan, taking a lead from the USA

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[43] David E. Sanger, *Confront and Conceal* (New York: Crown e-book, 2012), 52-54.

[44] Dominic J. Caraccilo, *Beyond Guns and Steel, A War Termination Strategy*, (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011), 150-160.

Central Intelligence Agency's successful use of this remotely controlled means of intimidation with a light footprint that has "changed the face of warfare"[45].

Conclusion

Owing to the legacy of belligerence, a lingering core issue like Kashmir, territorial sensitivities, internal vulnerabilities and restricted defence budget, Pakistan's security strategy has multifarious challenges. Irregular warfare abetted by inimical external forces[46] is putting strain on conventional forces. An adaptive and competitive counterterrorism advantage will remain a strategic imperative in the near future. Threat of conventional and nuclear forces will have to be adroitly balanced in continental, air, maritime and strategic domains against 'superiority in numbers' to rebuff the much craved space for 'limited war' to India. Battlefield transparency, high intensity, net-centricity, information operations, dominating firepower and high tech air warfare will accentuate operational difficulties of future war. Redress of these vulnerabilities in a regular war will only be possible through increased joint and net-centric response. In view of financial constraints, the 'comprehensive national security strategy' challenge for Pakistan lies in utilizing full spectrum strategic deterrence to avoid an arms race with India, while equitably maintaining core military capabilities, to meet the conventional and sub-conventional threat matrix, providing leverage for meaningful diplomacy, economic stability and societal security.∎

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[45] Mark Mazzetti, *The Way of the Knife*, (India: Penguin, 2013), 100.

[46] Baqir Sajjad Syed, "Concerns to be Raised about Indian Hand in Terrorism," *Dawn*, January 29, 2015, 1.