

“Nuclear South Asia: A Guide to India, Pakistan, and the Bomb”

Video Transcripts

Chapter 5: Nuclear Crises and Crisis Management

5.1: “Crises and Crisis Management in South Asia”

Sameer Lalwani: 00:10

From what we learned in the Cold War, a crisis usually involved a number of components. The first is some sort of deviation from the norm, some sort of abnormality, abnormal intensity of interactions. The second was usually a threat to national interests in some way, at least perceived by one of the parties. The third was something to do with a compressed timeframe for decision-making. Now, it may not necessarily have actually been compressed into a finite number of days, but there was always a perception that time was not on the side of a decision-maker, and a decision needed to be rendered quickly. The fourth was a level of uncertainty, unpredictability, information asymmetries that just left a lot of uncertainty in place. And the fifth, that was the most important component, is that there was always this prospect that things could escalate to a militarized engagement or to war. So ultimately, those, sort of, five components I think are what make up a crisis, and that same interpretation could be applied to South Asia over the last 20-30 years. In the late eighties and early nineties, we saw a few times when military mobilization, or military exercises, triggered a sense of a crisis, at least in one party. So in 1987 with the Brasstacks crisis, in 1990 the Compound crisis, these seem to coincide with major military exercises by either India or Pakistan that induced the other side to believe that there was a potential for an imminent threat. And then as we get later on into post-2001 or even earlier, the trigger for a crisis seems to evolve more towards some sort of violent non-state actor incident. So, an attack by a terrorist group on, sort of, a major center like in Mumbai or like the Parliament building. So it seemed to move away from sort of these large-scale, mass-militarized mobilizations to these individual incidents that would then trigger the prospect of mobilization in a crisis.

Michael Krepon: 02:13

One hypothesis for crises on the Subcontinent is that they occur after attempts to improve relations, and they occur because some people want to short-circuit diplomacy, to set it aside. As evidence for this, we could argue that the attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001 came after India and Pakistan had agreed to a memorandum of understanding to significantly improve relations. We could argue that the Mumbai attack in 2008 came after, or during, back-channel talks between the Musharraf

government and Manmohan Singh's government, to actually try to address the Kashmir problem. More recently, the Modi government tried on three occasions to improve relations with Pakistan: inviting the prime minister of Pakistan to the inauguration, followed by an attack on the Indian consulate in Afghanistan. Second, an agreement by the foreign secretaries to resume the composite dialogue, followed by small-scale attacks against Indian targets. Third, Prime Minister Modi's visit to Lahore, a surprise visit bearing gifts for birthdays and weddings, followed by attacks against Indian military outposts and another consulate in Afghanistan. So this chronology seems to suggest cause and effect.

Sameer Lalwani:

04:38

Crisis management is just a general concept that would include any sorts of institutions, mechanisms, or templates to address a crisis, and these could be between two parties that are party to the crisis, so it can be, sort of, bilateral mechanisms or institutions. One classic example of this from the Cold War was the red phone, where the U.S. president could call the Kremlin and try to clarify exactly what was going on. And the primary purpose of this would be to both communicate during the crisis and convey information, if necessary, during crisis. Then you also have third-party mechanisms and institutions for dealing with this, and that would just be the routes that a third party takes to try to solve a bilateral crisis. In the case of the Subcontinent, the United States has played, pretty much, a critical role in every crisis going back to the 1980s. Some would even say that a strategy utilized by at least one, if not both countries, India and Pakistan, was to pull the United States into that engagement in a crisis. So historically, the United States played a role in this. There are some scholars who would say that they've developed a template, a playbook, for how to deal with a potential crisis. It means reassuring both parties, offering some sort of commitments to both sides, providing intelligence, if necessary, to both sides, promising potentially to work with them to find the perpetrators or address the provocateurs of the crisis. So in this case, the United States has a lot of experience in this. It's not necessarily clear, though, that all these lessons will translate perfectly over into future crises, especially if they are fairly surprising. The only real third party that's been involved in managing crises over the past 30 years has been the United States, in a consistent manner, and the United States faces somewhat of a pivotal deterrence, pivotal assurance problem: that is that it has to pivot between these two parties, which it has relationships with, neither of which is an adversary, but neither of which is sort of like a total ally, either. So what they are trying to do is both reassure both sides, as well as deter both sides from believing they have the

opportunity or incentive to go to war. So it's a very tricky calibration that the United States has to thread. It has been largely successful over the last 30 years. Pretty much every crisis has been – I would say most crises have been averted, and the instances when things escalated to war, they still remain fairly limited for a number of reasons, and ultimately the United States played a very important role in ending the Kargil War and getting forces to retreat from the Line of Control. So it has been a fairly effective template. There's multiple tools that are employed by a third party generally to address a crisis. You have basically three basic tools in your diplomatic toolkit. You can have coercive measures, you can have incentives that you put on the table, and then you can just have persuasion or dissuasion, just by making the argument to other leaders or military officers about, sort of, the strategic nature of the choices or the wisdom of the choices that are being made. In terms of incentives that the United States has offered in the past, it's offered intelligence cooperation, particularly to India in instances when it was about finding and tracking down non-state actors in the case of Mumbai. It offered intelligence cooperation and offered legal support, should it be necessary for potential prosecution. It even offered to help pressure any parties that were hosting these militant groups. So in this case with Pakistan, the United States offered some assurances that it would be able to help pressure Pakistan to deliver on some of these non-state actors. So those are the incentives it puts on the table. It also probably puts some coercive measures on the table. For instance, in 1999, during the Kargil War, there were some, you know, coercive measures applied towards Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to get him to pull his forces back from the Kargil region. Then there's regularly levels of dissuasion that the United States – or persuasion and dissuasion that the United States – is utilizing. It's constantly communicating with leaderships on both sides to explain to them the risks of their choices, to clarify the risks of their choices, to explain the consequences, both for the relationships with the United States, but also with the world should they proceed down this path of escalations.

5.2: “Escalation Dangers in South Asia”

- Naeem Salik: 00:11 There are so many uncertainties in war, as Clausewitz has written extensively, even about the conventional conflict, that the fog of war is such that you cannot anticipate the actions of your adversary, and even your own soldiers can upset all your plans. So all the pre-war peacetime plans go out of the window once the first bullet is fired. And coming to the nuclear conflict, it's very difficult to predict whether escalation can be controlled because there is no precedent, there's no historical experience; no power on the Earth has gone through this experience. The only use of nuclear weapons was in 1945, and that was a unilateral situation where only the U.S. had the monopoly over the nuclear weapons, so those two bombs were dropped without any retaliatory capability with the other side. But in a situation where the two sides are armed with nuclear weapons, it is very difficult to predict whether an escalation can be controlled because despite the fact that there are redundancies, the hardening of communication, that is the soft underbelly of nuclear command and control. If there's a nuclear use, as per the consequences of the nuclear explosion, the communications are going to be badly affected, and then you'll never know whether you'll be able to effectively command your forces or not. So it is very hard to imagine that the nuclear escalatory cycle can be prevented or stopped at any stage.
- Michael Krepon: 01:43 Think about this. Two countries who understand themselves, each other, so little, who find themselves in a limited war – a limited war that leads to one, just one, mushroom cloud – these two countries that are in such a fix will suddenly understand each other perfectly well. I think this is a flimsy hypothesis. Thankfully, it has never been tested, but the constraints that India and Pakistan have experienced so far, self-constraints as well as constraints that are encouraged by the international community. All of these constraints were possible because no one crossed the nuclear threshold, and these constraints were driven by the desire of Indian and Pakistani leaders not to cross the nuclear threshold. So what happens if this threshold is crossed, whether by conscious choice or perhaps, more likely, by an accident, by a breakdown in command and control, or perhaps it's an airstrike using conventional munitions that, lo and behold, creates a mushroom cloud or at a minimum, the release of fissile material? What happens then? The truth of the matter is that you cannot find real answers in the literature. I've been in the field a long time. I have never read any persuasive argument about escalation control on a nuclear battlefield. The

most tried and true way to avoid questions of escalation control is not to get into a fight.

Scott Sagan: 04:38 Thus far, we have not had escalation to nuclear use. That's the good news, but can we rely on that forever? I don't believe so. Relying on nuclear weapons for your security is like walking across thin ice. The fact that you have done it once does not mean you should practice that forever. Nuclear weapons are inherently, exceedingly dangerous, and I hope that Indians and Pakistanis, like many Americans, begin to recognize that the roots of our security are better secured by having stronger conventional capabilities and reducing the role of nuclear weapons as far as is humanly possible.

Toby Dalton: 05:23 India and Pakistan have different beliefs about nuclear weapons and how they deter, such that the chances of a misperception or poor decision-making in a crisis led by misperceptions is a real possibility. I think that is backed in turn by a sense in Washington held by most thinkers on nuclear weapons that hues more towards pessimism about deterrence and the high likelihood that deterrence fails for a wide variety of reasons having to do with breakdowns in systems, human error, technical errors, the difficulty of maintaining command and control and the chain of command during crises, etc. – a lot of which were born out by the U.S. experience in the Cold War. I think in South Asia, on the other hand, you tend to find more strategic thinkers and policymakers who hue more towards deterrence optimism, and that is that essentially the power of nuclear weapons to deter is far greater than the pessimists tend to assume, and that there doesn't need be a very high alert level or ready force posture in order to affect deterrence. And therefore the kinds of accidents or misadventures that deterrence pessimists tend to worry about tend to be discounted by deterrence optimists.

Christopher Clary: 06:46 The main driver of instability on the Subcontinent is Pakistan's inability or unwillingness to cease the operations of terrorist groups that operate from Pakistani soil and target India. When these groups succeed, which they do on a recurrent basis, in planning and executing an attack on Indian soil, this generates tremendous pressures for Indian civilian politicians to do something about it. So far, nuclear deterrence has held, and Indians have been unwilling to run the risk of a punitive attack against Pakistan that might escalate to the nuclear level. But it is unclear, in the future, whether Indian civilians will forever persist in being restrained to these provocations.

Mansoor Ahmed: 07:32

Such a situation can very easily be manipulated by a hawkish political elite in India. And they can, once their capability has been integrated on ground, which is of course now being owned by the Indians as the Cold Start doctrine, which was previously denied, I think they will try to attempt to carry out some kind of limited, punitive, conventional action against Pakistan. Now, such a situation will inevitably lead to escalation because no limited conventional conflict can possibly remain limited, as the Indians might want it to be, because the fluidity of the battlefield and the response from the other side will be beyond the control of the decision-makers sitting in Delhi. Having said that, I think it's important to note that a conventional conflict is likely to stay conventional, even if the limited conflict escalates to full-scale war, but it is only going to escalate beyond a certain point if Pakistani conventional forces are degraded beyond a certain level, and that is the military threshold. If Pakistan loses a certain critical area or population center or a large chunk of its territory, that is the spatial or territorial threshold.

5.3: “Leadership Beliefs, Signaling, and Threat Credibility”

Julia MacDonald: 00:06

The standard definition of a nuclear crisis in the international relations literature is any crisis that occurs between two nuclear-armed states. Now, this is a broad definition. It means that any standoff between nuclear-armed states is a nuclear crisis, whether or not nuclear weapons were explicitly threatened or used during that period of time, the idea being that nuclear weapons are so destructive that even their mere existence and the slight possibility of their use should shape state behavior. Leadership beliefs are important to take account of in crises because they can shape how leaders perceive the world around them and also the crisis context within which they operate. Now, there's been a significant disagreement within international relations about how important leadership beliefs are vis-a-vis other structural variables in international politics, but there's now a significant literature that shows that leaders' experiences, beliefs, and assumptions matter to crisis outcomes. My own research focuses on how leadership beliefs about an adversary's resolve can shape assessments of threat credibility during crises, for example. And I argue that leaders enter crises with beliefs about how their adversaries, or how much their adversaries, are willing to use force during crises, and that these beliefs can shape the interpretation of incoming information and signals leading to very different assessments of threat credibility. So states can use a variety of signaling mechanisms to make the threats more credible. They can issue public statements about their willingness to use force. They can use military mobilizations. In the nuclear realm, they can raise alert levels, for example, or move their nuclear forces to indicate their willingness to escalate the crisis. And in other cases, we've seen states relax their organization of command and control in order to increase the risk that there would be escalation in the nuclear realm.

Julia MacDonald 02:04

Adversaries assessing the credibility of threats differently is one of the key explanations for the onset and continuing escalation of war. When one state believes that it has issued a clear, credible threat like the United States did in 2003, for example, and yet the adversary doesn't believe that that state is willing to use the military might or has a political resolve to carry through on that threat, there has been a fundamental miscommunication that nearly always results in the failure of coercive diplomacy. So a crisis manager or a third party can influence the credibility of threats in a number of ways. One of the key roles they can play is in facilitating information exchange and reducing uncertainty that can lead to war. And so

as I've mentioned before, two key elements of threat credibility refer to the ability to convince your opponent that you have the military power to carry out a threat, but also the resolve to do so, and third parties can help facilitate information on both of these elements. And the first element, that is military power, a third party can help clarify the balance of power between two states and make it clear that if a threat is carried out, that one side will lose. This was the role of the United States in 1990 between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, when it made clear to Pakistan that it was the militarily inferior party in the conflict, and that the United States would not come to its aid. The third party can also provide information about relative resolve and relative stakes in the conflict by providing information, for example, about domestic political constraints in their country, and so in both ways, third parties can help make the crisis more transparent, reduce uncertainty, and reduce the risk of war.

5.4: “Inadvertent Escalation”

Barry Posen:

00:08

Inadvertent nuclear escalation, in terms of the narrowest definition, arises from a situation where non-nuclear military operations, such as conventional airstrikes, negatively affect the survivability of the other side's nuclear force in a way that's entirely unintended by the attacker. Nuclear weapons that are highly accurate or that are quite stealthy – these are forces that permit you to attack the other guy's forces and to do it in a way that allows you to achieve surprise. It's particularly bad if those same forces are not built in survivable, basic modes themselves. In the theory of inadvertent nuclear escalation, the nature of the two sides' strategic nuclear forces matters as much as the inadvertent conventional operations. If each side had its nuclear forces based in submarines, at sea, that were very hard to find, that essentially defy the easy first strike, then the two sides could fight a conventional war probably without affecting the other's nuclear forces. If, on the other hand, each side has a whole lot of offensively postured nuclear forces with counterforce capabilities that are accurate and each side has somehow failed to make its nuclear forces survivable, then in some sense, the conventional attacks can start the music. The conventional attacks can begin to degrade the survivability of each side's force against the backdrop of an expectation that the other side is thinking of striking first. So, the inadvertent escalation problem is rendered much more difficult if both sides are postured for strategic nuclear war-fighting, rather than for pure retaliatory kinds of attacks that are designed to deter. The first thing I think you want to do is try and posture your nuclear forces to survive the adversary's best effort to strike first or to surprise them, which means hardening them, making them very mobile, having command and control that can survive a nuclear attack. Quiet submarines can be a way of basing your nuclear forces, but anything you could do to make the nuclear forces more survivable helps contribute to stability and limits the potential for escalation.

Barry Posen

2:19

At the same time, states should think a little bit about their conventional operations, as well. It's very tempting, for example, for air force commanders to try and strike early and often to destroy the other side's airfields, destroy its command and control, destroy its SAMs, and in a non-nuclear world, maybe this would be an intelligent way to fight. But in a nuclear world, those same effective conventional, preemptive strikes can turn out to have an effect on the other side's nuclear forces and produce worries on the other side that might lead them to think about using nuclear weapons. So it can be a very dicey

situation, and the states do have some influence over how dicey situation could be, both in the kinds of horses they buy, and in the way they posture them and the way they use them. We have no idea whether nuclear powers can fight conventional wars with each other and avoid the use of nuclear weapons. It's possible if they fight rather carefully, which means they have to limit some of the potentials of their offensive conventional forces, they probably have to be very careful about the targets they choose. They have to be mindful of how the other side can misperceive their operations. You're asking for a standard of conventional military strategy and practice that I think has been seldom achieved in recent memory.

5.5: “The Nuclearization of Crises on the Subcontinent”

- Vipin Narang: 00:10 A catalytic nuclear posture, as I define it in my book, *Nuclear Strategy in the Modern Era*, is when a state has a limited or even unassembled arsenal, but uses that arsenal to try to coerce a third party, rather than deterring an adversary directly in order to intervene on his behalf in a crisis or in a conflict. It uses the threat of breakout or assembly of weapons in order to get that third party, which is often the United States, to intervene to stop the state from crossing those nuclear red lines. Since the United States has always been somewhat allergic to nuclear proliferation, this enables states to effectively coerce the United States to help them in times of need. In the 1980s, Pakistan found itself in a unique situation after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. It wasn't a formal ally of the United States, but the United States was critically dependent on Pakistan to supply the mujahideen in Afghanistan to defeat the Soviets. This gave Pakistan leverage against the United States because the United States could not afford to see Pakistan in a conflict with India, for example. Under American shelter, Pakistan actually accelerated its nuclear program. Because the United States had congressional legislation which would force Congress to impose sanctions on Pakistan if it crossed certain nuclear red lines, Pakistan could threaten to cross those red lines, which would trigger an aid cutoff to Pakistan and threatened the American effort in Afghanistan, and this leverage allowed Pakistan to manipulate the United States throughout the 1980s, particularly in times of need and in crises, by threatening to break out as nuclear weapons program, forcing the United States to intervene on Pakistan's behalf in conflicts with India.
- Michael Krepon: 01:56 Brasstacks happened right at the cusp of the advent of nuclear weapons on the Subcontinent. The bombs were in the basement. Pakistan was actually ahead of India, but India had a very adventurous, risk-taking army chief who organized a massive military exercise near the Pakistani border. Pakistan took note of this, of course, and countermobilized. It was a big crisis, and it required the intervention of the Indian prime minister to regain control of this situation and to have the army chief, whose name was Sundarji, in effect, to stand down. One of the consequences of Brasstacks was to accelerate the nuclear programs of India and Pakistan. If there were going to be large scale military mobilizations in war-fighting corridors, then nuclear weapons needed to be in reserve.

- Ashley Tellis: 03:12 Operation Brasstacks, I think, was a turning point in the history of nuclearization in the Indian subcontinent. From an Indian perspective, I think it was the last time India attempted to use coercive diplomacy in the form of a major military exercise to signal to the Pakistanis that it was running out of patience with respect to Pakistani-supported terrorism. From the Pakistani point of view, the fear that India might use military coercion in the future, I think, only propelled it to push more actively forward with developing its nuclear weapons. That evolution was already underway, and I think Brasstacks brought it to its logical conclusion, which was developing a nuclear deterrent that was capable of preventing India from using war as an instrument to change Pakistan's policies.
- Scott Sagan: 04:17 This exercise occurred when General Sundarji, the chief of staff of the Indian army, convinced the political authorities that he could exercise a large-scale conventional operation to demonstrate to Pakistan that India had the capability to cross the border in a devastating conventional attack. He wouldn't do so, he said, but "we're just going to exercise so that we have that capability and improve our operational abilities." The exercise was approved, and when Pakistan responded to the exercise by conducting a large-scale exercise themselves, Sundarji asked for authority to actually attack and to use the Indian air force to attack the Pakistani nuclear program to stop Pakistan from going all the way to get nuclear weapons. He was denied that capability. That is, Rajiv Gandhi said, "No, we're not going to launch a preventive attack against Pakistan." I think the fact that that crisis occurred is a demonstration that the Indian military, at times, has tried to take actions into their own hands, at least under General Sundarji, wanted to engage in a preventive attack on Pakistan, using an exercise getting out of control as an excuse.
- Vipin Narang: 05:54 In 1987, at the height of the Brasstacks crisis, Indian journalist Kuldip Nayar interviewed AQ Khan, the head of the Pakistan enrichment program. In the interview in January 1987, AQ Khan said that Pakistan can build a bomb whenever it wanted. The article was to be published in the *London Observer* and probably notified British and American authorities about AQ Khan's threat. And the article was eventually published only in March 1987, but there's also some evidence that the interview was passed on by Kuldip Nayar to Indian authorities. Indian authorities weren't necessarily deterred by AQ Khan's threat, and this had been a specter that have been growing, as far as the Indians were concerned, for a while. But it did alarm the United States and potentially British authorities. John Gunther Dean was dispatched to South Asia to initiate, to diffuse the

crisis, and through a series of meetings and cricket diplomacy, as it was known, the Brasstacks crisis was diffused. Although the evidence for an intentional catalytic posture in the Brasstacks crisis isn't dispositive, there is some evidence that the Pakistanis wanted the Americans, in particular, to note that the exercises and the crisis could escalate and get out of control to the point where Pakistan might assemble nuclear weapons, thereby triggering American sanctions and threatening American supply of the mujahideen in Afghanistan. Rajiv Gandhi had kept India's nuclear weapons program in the icebox up until that point, but the AQ Khan interview, combined with later evidence in 1988 that Pakistan had at least come very close to weaponization, eventually triggered Rajiv Gandhi's order to weaponize India's nuclear weapons program in the spring of 1989. So if there's any significance, it was convincing the Indians that the Pakistanis were intent on weaponizing their nuclear capabilities.

- Moeed Yusuf: 07:44 You know, Operation Brasstacks is an interesting one because there's been so much written about it, and in my view, as much as I have looked at it, I think the importance of the crisis in terms of the nuclear development in South Asia has been exaggerated somewhat. It is true that that was sort of the first crisis where Pakistan and India perhaps began to think about a nuclear dimension. But, in reality, I don't think either India or Pakistan really started thinking nuclear in terms of crises, even until after the 1990 Compound crisis which took place after Brasstacks.
- Rizwana Abbasi: 08:19 This particular Brasstacks event played an important role, particularly in transforming Pakistani strategic thinking, and of course, decision-making. It actually helped and pushed Pakistan and set Pakistan's direction towards weaponized deterrents. And more significantly, I would also say that this particular event helped Pakistan in pronouncing publicly the role of nuclear weapons and, of course, deterrent capability.
- Michael Krepon: 08:56 The 1990 crisis has been characterized as a compound crisis by researchers like Stephen Cohen because many contributing factors were at play, not the least of which was unrest in Kashmir and in the Indian Punjab, supported by Pakistan's intelligence services. And there were concerns that preemptive strikes could be taking place against nascent nuclear capabilities. There were concerns that the armed forces of the two countries were mobilizing.
- Vipin Narang: 09:36 There are two pieces of evidence to suggest that Pakistan employed a catalytic nuclear strategy and intentionally did so. The first comes from General Aslam Beg, chief of army staff at

the time, in Feroz Hassan Khan's book *Eating Grass*. In an interview, Beg says that Pakistan intentionally signaled to the United States that they were thinking about crossing certain nuclear thresholds in order to mobilize the United States to diffuse the crisis. The second piece of evidence comes from the United States itself. There is evidence that the United States' intelligence agencies picked up either some sort of signals intelligence or imagery intelligence that Pakistan was either actually considering moving or assembling nuclear weapons, or was faking it, so that the United States would take notice. Then-ambassador to Pakistan, Robert Oakley, quipped at one point, "The crates on the trucks to Sargodha might as well have said 'Pakistan nukes' on it." That's how dispositive the evidence was, as far as the U.S. was concerned, and the U.S. was alarmed enough that it immediately dispatched then-Deputy National Security Advisor Robert Gates to the region to diffuse a crisis. The Compound crisis is probably the clearest example we have of Pakistan intentionally employing a catalytic strategy at a point where the Afghan war was winding down, but where the United States still could not afford Pakistan to get into conflict with India.

Michael Krepon: 10:51 The United States employed a very novel technique to help diffuse the Compound crisis with, of course, the permission of the Indian and Pakistani governments. U.S. military attachés based in Pakistan and India would go to look for signs of military mobilization and report back to the United States, which would report back to the two governments. This technique during the 1990 crisis, of having the United States chase down rumors and provide reliable information about the status of forces, turned out to be very useful and was employed in subsequent crises.

Vipin Narang: 11:46 By the end of the Compound crisis, it was certainly clear that Pakistan had become a nuclear weapons state. It was shortly thereafter, actually, that President Bush could no longer certify that Pakistan no longer possessed a nuclear device, which was the congressional mandate in the Pressler and Solarz amendments. And either that meant that Pakistan had actually assembled nuclear weapons, or was, so-called "last screw away from doing so." By then, India had already initiated its weaponization program, and so by the Compound crisis, South Asia was well on its way to mutual nuclearization.

5.6: “The 1999 Kargil Conflict and the Role of Nuclear Weapons”

- Teresita Schaffer: 00:21 In the late spring of 1999, Pakistan sent both military and, in some cases, paramilitary troops across the line dividing Indian- and Pakistani-controlled territory in the old princely state of Kashmir, which as many of you probably know, has been the subject of a dispute between India and Pakistan since the two countries were born as modern independent states. They were discovered by Indian patrols in early May, and this resulted in what some people refer to as a "half war" between Pakistan and India. They were actually shooting at each other. India ultimately wound up pushing them back. Why was this important? Well, first of all, a shooting war between two nuclear powers with a major unresolved dispute who live right next door to each other, so they don't have geography giving them time to think about what they're doing. Secondly, it was pretty clear that the Pakistanis had made massive miscalculations before sending their troops across. The hope seems to have been that this would be a sneaky spectacular that would give them, quite suddenly, a tactical advantage in the territory that Pakistan considered to be its by right, and that India controlled. The best compendium of comments on this episode, which is an edited book put together by Peter Lavoy, suggests that the Pakistanis did not expect India to react, or at least not to react militarily, and that turns out to have been a massive miscalculation. India did react militarily. India reacted with restraint, but the restraint meant that they did not themselves send troops across the Line of Control.
- Manpreet Sethi: 02:30 Initially, I think the tentative response of the military was that these were extraordinarily well-armed and trained terrorists that had come and occupied certain hills in the area, but as the information poured in, and it was corroborated that these were actually Pakistani soldiers, infantrymen, regular soldiers who had occupied those positions in the garb of mujahideen, the Indian response became more and more strict about what they had to do to push them out of the region.
- Shaukat Qadir: 03:04 Well, the political-military objectives of Pakistan were, at that time, the insurgency in Indian-controlled Kashmir, the indigenous insurgency, was kind of ebbing. It was slowing down a little, so it was essentially to bring that back to life, and in the process of doing so, create a situation where India would be brought to the negotiating table and perhaps lead to finding a permanent solution for Kashmir. This was, in fact, the idiocy that cost us everything. We did not take into account the international situation, the environment prevailing at that time.

The environment then was that the Indian prime minister had come over to Lahore, and we'd had a peace talk, and everybody was kind of hopeful that things would work out, perhaps then also lead to some solution of Kashmir. So it was not supportive of the kind of military intervention that was undertaken by the Kargil operation.

Jack Gill:

04:07

The militaries on both sides know every square millimeter of the Line of Control up there, and the thought that you could, that one side or the other could make a move in on the scale and scope of that which was executed by the Pakistani side, and not come to anyone's notice, or that this would be allowed to stand, was the other reason I say it was a surprise. The second point I would make is on Indian restraint, that it was both from the air force side, but also to a lesser degree from the ground side. It was also clear that within that restraint, that the Indians would not let this incursion stand and would have to repel it, or exert themselves to the uttermost to do so. And if you look at things from a military standpoint, in particular, if we move out of the international security context into a very military analysis, in my view, the Pakistanis who moved across the line, were in the position of any static defense, which is to say that an attacking force, given enough willpower and resources, will take apart any static defense, given enough time, unless that static defense can be constantly refreshed, refurbished, reinforced, etc., and the Pakistanis could not or chose not to do so. So eventually, the Indians took them apart through a lot of real grit and a lot of blood. The third thing, I think, that's notable about the Kargil incursion is that it was very unfortunate, in my view, because it did spoil the very optimistic atmosphere that came out of Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to Lahore in February of 1999, and in particular his pilgrimage, if you will, or his appearance, at the Minar-e-Pakistan in Lahore; the joint statement that he and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif released. All these actions had a very favorable impact on regional relations and for those of us on the outside, so to have this all undone within a very short period of time after the Lahore Declaration was very, to my view, very unfortunate for regional relations.

Mansoor Ahmed:

06:35

The idea of Kargil was not to engage in limited a war with India. The idea was to have the Kargil area back from Indian control, because this was on the Pakistani side of the Line of Control before the 1971 war. And the Line of Control is a de facto, quasi-boundary which was renamed as the Line of Control after the Simla Agreement. Earlier, it was just a ceasefire line. So it was not – the sanctity of the border, as such, was not at par with the international border. Having said that, Kargil was never intended to be the kind of war that it came out to be. It was just

a normal – originally planned to be a normal, routine operation of capturing vacant posts, which is a routine activity on the Line of Control. But in this particular case, the units and the regulars that were involved became more enthusiastic and disregarded the logistics supply chain and probably overextended the areas where they went, because those, all of those areas at the high peaks were not occupied at that time. So it became difficult for them to maintain and retain their new positions because the Pakistani air force was not involved, and the Indians had brought in their air force and had concentrated huge amounts of their heavy artillery, along with the troops. So to them, it was a kind of an infiltration when, in fact, originally it was designed to be a localized operation on the Pakistani side.

S. Paul Kapur:

08:22

The Kargil War occurred less than one year after India and Pakistan openly acquired nuclear weapons. The two countries had been what are sometimes called “opaque proliferators” before that. They had some level of nuclear capacity, but they hadn't openly tested nuclear weapons or assembled them. After May 1998, that changed, but less than a year later, India and Pakistan were engaged in their first war in 28 years. What role did nuclear weapons play in that? It seems pretty clear that nuclear weapons emboldened the Pakistanis to push harder at the status quo than they had been doing previously. There's quite a bit of evidence that the Kargil operation was something that had been in the minds of Pakistani planners for some time, and people who were involved in that are actually quite open about saying that nuclear weapons figured into the mix when they thought about whether this was a smart thing to do. They understood that nuclear weapons would give them a shield against Indian retaliation and would enable them to provoke India in ways that they otherwise couldn't have. The initial thinking about this operation went back a number of years, but it didn't happen until the two sides had actually acquired nuclear weapons.

Stephen Cohen:

09:36

I think that they effectively inhibited India from going across the Line of Control and beating up on the Pakistanis or attacking elsewhere in the region. All the memoirs that have come out since then, all the interviews I've done with people who were making decisions at that time or shortly before or afterwards, indicate the Indians were concerned, and the Pakistanis, of course, realized pretty quickly they had gone too far in provoking the Indians. Pakistanis assume that they could go across the Line of Control and get the Indians to negotiate about Kashmir. They didn't count on the Americans being hostile to them and blaming them for essentially disturbing the status quo. Their expertise was wrong on two counts: they

underestimated the Indian response, and they underestimated the American response.

- Naeem Salik: 10:17 In the Kargil conflict, the effect of nuclear deterrence was that the conflict remained confined to a very narrow portion of the LoC itself, didn't even expand horizontally all along the LoC, and what to talk of international borders. So I think it was only because of nuclear deterrence that the conflict was deliberately kept confined by both sides.
- Rizwana Abbasi: 10:43 Nuclear weapon deterrence did give confidence to Pakistani planners and initiators to initiate this particular conflict. Probably, many in Pakistan and also outside of this particular region think that this was a great misadventure, and it was actually designed without taking the political community into account and into consent and confidence, and most significantly, it actually was a plan that was not prepared based on cost-benefit analysis. It was an initiative that was taken without calculating the Indian response and consequences of this response in the wake of escalation of the crisis.
- Gurmeet Kanwal: 11:29 It is the belief in India that nuclear weapons did not play much of a role during the Kargil crisis. Yes, it was reported that Pakistan had moved some of its ballistic missiles closer to the border, or marshalled them and moved them to the deployment areas, but the moves do not appear to have had any significant impact on Indian operational plans, as they were confined to the mountains in the Kargil district in any case. And no – the army, and the planes, and the air force, and the planes had played no role at all in the Kargil conflict.
- Michael Krepon: 12:07 There were some threatening messages that were conveyed, but those messages were not backed up by actions on the ground. The United States was looking carefully and it had difficulty really assessing the state of play with respect to nuclear forces. The U.S. intelligence community was new at this game. Pakistan wanted to get America's help to moderate this conflict and to ease both sides off of the crisis, and Pakistan moved nuclear assets. Some of the intelligence community took these moves to be preparations for nuclear weapons use, but I'm of the view that Pakistan was really signaling the United States more than India, because India did not have independent means to see these moves. The United States did, and I think the message was to the United States: "Help us out here. Be a crisis manager."

“5.7: Crisis Management During the 1999 Kargil Conflict”

- Devin Haggerty: 00:07 The United States plays a role in these crises that nobody else can play, namely that of an honest broker, a country that can have its senior-most diplomats and other officials in India and Pakistan very quickly as a crisis begins, to try to act as kind of a peacemaker or a crisis manager. It can provide transparency. The United States has used its intelligence resources in the past to assure the Indians and the Pakistanis that there are not threatening military movements along their borders. The U.S. has been kind of a communication bridge between the two sides. There are lots of facilitating roles the U.S. plays.
- Lisa Curtis: 00:58 There was one point where it was detected that Pakistan had possibly moved some of its nuclear material or nuclear capabilities and that it was actually contemplating, you know, looking at the nuclear option, and this is when the U.S. became alarmed about the situation. And looking back, was Pakistan ever really considering the nuclear option? Probably not, but the fact that it was even potentially something that was being considered, I think, was enough to raise alarm in the U.S. and prompt the U.S. to focus all of its diplomatic attention on the region. And of course, the U.S. did work with China. China also played a helpful role in convincing Pakistan to back down. And so that was also, I think, a success of U.S. diplomacy.
- Marvin Weinbaum: 01:57 It really was the combination of Nawaz Sharif's visit to Beijing and then to Washington which impressed the leadership, at least the civilian leadership, in Pakistan, that it could not continue to pursue its activities on the glacier.
- Teresita Schaffer: 02:23 There's a fair amount of literature on military tactics which suggests that countries that make a major surprise tactical move benefit by it in the short-term, but not necessarily in the long-term, and you can argue that that's what happened here. The short-term was quite short. The long-term arrived at the time that Nawaz Sharif started looking for a way to either get benefit out of his move, or get out of it himself. The first thing that happened was that he decided to go visit China. Pakistan and China have a very close relationship. As he was leaving, the announcement was that he was going on a six-day visit to China, which sounds like an odd thing to do when your troops are engaged in a hot battle. What was even more surprising, however, was that he came back after a day and a half. Why? Well, it seems that this was another miscalculation. Pakistan and China do have a close relationship, which he was, I think, trying to parlay into a ceasefire in place, meaning that Pakistani

forces would remain on the Indian side of the line. And the Chinese press releases were all full of references to the Line of Control. In other words, the line that Sharif's troops had crossed.

Michael Krepon:

04:07

As a principal crisis manager during the Kargil War, the United States government conveyed the primary message to Pakistan and the Pakistan military to cease, desist, and go back to the status quo ante. There'll be no rewards for reckless behavior. You've got to go back. The primary message of the United States during Kargil to India was to act in a responsible way. Yes, this aggression will not stand, but be careful not to expand the scope of this conflict, either geographically or vertically, with respect to upping the ante, conceivably toward nuclear use. When the Pakistani prime minister came to Washington over the July 4th holiday, President Bill Clinton challenged Prime Minister Sharif "Look, we see these things. These are dangerous things. And do you know what you've gotten yourself into?" Which was an impossible position for the prime minister, because Nawaz Sharif was not plugged in. He presumed that what he was being told was accurate, but he had no power to affect it. So really, the U.S. government was focused on the Pakistani military. They were the decision-makers. They were the deciders during this crisis, and it soon became apparent to the Pakistani military that this was a great misadventure. Very few military offices were involved in its planning, and everybody could see, even the planners, that it was not working out as intended. The Kashmir issue was not getting more attention in the way that Pakistan wanted. What was getting everybody's attention was that this was a reckless move.

5.8: “Lessons Learned from the 1999 Kargil Conflict”

- Dave Smith: 00:05 The nuclear dimension in Kargil did play a role, in the sense that both sides took away different lessons from Kargil, and perhaps both of them are equally incorrect. On the Pakistan side, I think there was a feeling that because the Indian military response to Kargil was so cautious and measured, the Indians were very careful not to penetrate beyond the Line of Control. They did not violate Pakistan's airspace along the Line of Control. In fact, they took great care to avoid doing that, even when they were using their air force to attack Pakistani positions near the Line of Control. I think Pakistan drew the lesson that its nuclear capability might shield it from provocative Indian military actions. In a sense, it's sort of insulated it to a degree from a full-scale Indian attack. On the Indian side, because of their relative success in eliminating the Pakistani penetration of what they call their territory along the Line of Control, they drew the conclusion that there was space, despite being in a nuclear environment, for limited conventional military operations. And it isn't clear now, seventeen years later, what the long-term implications of both of those conclusions might be.
- Ashley Tellis: 01:49 I think India, Pakistan, and the United States drew different lessons from the crises in the late 1990s. Pakistan learned that open war against India was likely to bring upon itself the wrath of the international community. India learned that a restrained response to Pakistani aggression earns plaudits, provided the operational tasks that the Indian military is supposed to service, can be achieved at the same time. And the U.S. learned that it would have to maintain eternal vigilance with respect to keeping an eye on the risks of escalation of conflicts in South Asia.
- Michael Krepon: 02:41 What did the Pakistani military learn from Kargil? I think they learned that this kind of a blatant move to change the status quo in Kashmir was a bad idea, that it hurt Pakistan. It hurt Pakistan's international standing. It brought the international community onto India's side. It reinforced the status quo in Kashmir. It didn't change it. So those lessons, I think, were inescapable. It didn't mean that there wouldn't be future crises, but it meant that this kind of a disguised, but obvious still, military move just wouldn't work for Pakistan. What lessons did India learn from Kargil? I don't think the lessons were conclusive, except that “We need to have better intelligence. We've got to keep our guard up. We've got to maintain manned outposts, even in wintertime in the upper reaches of Kashmir.” That was clear. But what about the war itself? The war was

unsatisfying, even though it was a victory from India's perspective. The status quo returned in Kashmir and that meant that the status quo also included Rawalpindi's support for groups that had anti-Indian agendas. The victory of the status quo is an odd kind of victory for India. It's in some ways an unsatisfying victory, even as you celebrate the achievements of your armed forces. What lessons did the United States learn from the Kargil War? The primary lesson was that the Subcontinent was going to be a very dangerous place after both sides had acquired nuclear capabilities through hot testing. In this sense, the United States didn't learn anything new. U.S. officials knew that the region was going to be more dangerous by adding nuclear weapons, and lo and behold, it was so dangerous that there could be a limited conventional war under the nuclear umbrella.

Rizwana Abbasi: 05:24 In the wake of this particular crisis, of course, the concept of stability-instability was generated and emerged, and of course, both states, and particularly India, realized that there is actually a high probability of limited war under the nuclear overhang.

Sadia Tasleem: 05:44 The faith that Kargil, sort of, had reinforced in the idea of effectiveness of nuclear deterrence, there is literally no conversation on whether it was actually nuclear deterrence that was at play or not, at least in the mainstream discourse in Pakistan. That's just taken for granted, that the mere presence of nuclear weapons had deterred India from undertaking a military action across the international border. So, in some ways, it sort of reinforced the belief in the idea of utility of nuclear weapons. On the other hand, I think there was some realization within the military, particularly within the people closer to President Musharraf, that a lot of work had to be done on the questions relating to nuclear deterrence, and the notion of operationalizing deterrence and thinking about requirements of maintaining an operational deterrent also came after Kargil. There was literally no conversation on the operational aspect of nuclear deterrence before Kargil.

Moeed Yusuf: 07:06 On the naval side, you know, the Indians did, in some ways, threaten a naval blockade. Pakistan, later on, suggested that a naval blockade is one of its nuclear red lines, but at the end of the day, I'm not entirely sure that the Pakistani military minds still grasp the importance of the naval platforms when it came to Kargil or the fallout from it. I think the conversation in Pakistan was very much, on the one hand, Musharraf and company trying to defend the act, and others saying that it was a huge diplomatic and tactical blunder in that sense. So I think the conversation remained on how you could revamp limited

war in South Asia under the nuclear umbrella, but the naval aspects, still, I don't think in Pakistan's imagination, became any more important.

- Manoj Joshi: 07:51 The Kargil Review Committee was constituted after the Kargil crisis, and subsequently that yielded a group of ministers, which recommended some far-reaching reforms in India. They created new institutions like the Defense Intelligence Agency. They recommended the creation of a position of a chief of defense staff to coordinate, to lead, the three services as well as the Strategic Forces Command. So yes, in the case of the Kargil crisis, we did see that there was institutional learning, in terms of trying to reform the military and the intelligence services, because there was a perception that the intelligence services had also not done too well.
- Abhijit Iyer-Mitra: 08:41 The main lesson of the Kargil War was the limits of deterrence for India because if you actually look at what happened in the parliamentary debates and all the rhetoric that came out after the nuclear tests, there were a lot of people warning Pakistan to watch out. What Kargil did was to put an end to a lot of that rhetoric and wishful thinking. The downside, of course, was that India realized that deterrence doesn't help you against terrorism. It doesn't help you against sub-conventional warfare. It's certainly shows you that there is – and this is a very dangerous phenomenon – that there is room for a significantly high-intensity, localized conflict under the nuclear umbrella. So what it did was that it actually spurred a lot of Indian thinking about limited wars under a nuclear umbrella. And unfortunately, what's happened with this line of thinking is that these so-called “limited war scenarios” are now beginning to resemble full-scale war scenarios.
- Manpreet Sethi: 09:53 India did show that you could use force, even in the presence of nuclear weapons, but the learning for India that happened was that you could use force with certain constraints on it. So it was not that you don't have the capability to be able to use your complete force, but the fact is that the presence of nuclear weapons do make you move towards more calibrated use of force, rather than the full force capability. I think the Cuban Missile Crisis was well-remembered at this moment in time. The Ussuri River conflict was also well-remembered, and the sense that the use of force would have to be constrained was a learning that happened on the Indian side. So the Kargil crisis and the role of the nuclear weapons, I would say, was instructive for both sides pretty early on in their nuclear weapon states' journey, to be able to realize what were going to be the contours in which the relationships would develop in the future.

Chapter 5, Lesson 9

David Smith:

00:09

Well, the Twin Peaks crisis began, I guess, with the 13 December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament by terrorists who were part of Lashkar-e-Taiba, but this was also occurring at a time when the Pakistan army had, for the first time in its history, deployed troops into the Federally Administered Tribal Areas as part of the U.S. military operations that were ongoing in Afghanistan. Specifically, on the 13th of December, the United States was involved in what later became known as the Tora Bora Operation, in which there was a large expectation that they had Osama bin Laden surrounded on an isolated range of mountains just on the other side of the Durand Line. So the United States put enormous pressure on Pakistan to deploy its army along the Durand Line in order to try to seal the border, and if that was not possible, to pick up any fleeing remnants of the Afghan Taliban who were the object of the Tora Bora operation. So while I was in Islamabad, I was totally focused on the west, and no one in Islamabad was expecting the crisis that occurred after December the 13th. India mobilized its entire army, and for the first time, began to deploy forces from its eastern army command in eastern Bengal to the west. This is something that it had not done in the wars of 1965 or the 1971 War. So this certainly caught the attention of the Pakistan military, who repeatedly warned us late in December that while they didn't want to do that, if the Indian mobilization continued at the level that they were seeing it unfold, then they would have to remove all of their forces from the west and to deploy them to the east. But, because the Indian military mobilization took so long, about three weeks before the units were into their wartime positions, the Pakistan army had enough time to reorient itself from the west to the east and were in position and seemed to feel very confident that they would be able to deal with the Indians on the conventional basis, even though there were reports on both sides of missile units being moved and rumors of nuclear escalatory measures being taken, none of which we could ever find out to have occurred. So after about the middle of January, this was the first peak of the Twin Peaks crisis. Things seemed to settle down. It looked a lot like the early years of World War II, when after the German army went into Poland, it camped out on the French border for month after month after month. Things escalated in May, once again, when there was another LeT attack on an Indian encampment at a place called Kaluchak, if I'm not incorrect, which included a housing area where Indian military dependents were staying. This, again, ratcheted up the tension, and it was at this time that the greatest fears of an escalation to the nuclear level

began to occur. In fact, many government officials on our side were convinced that the Indian army would attack across the international border and that if it did, Pakistan, if it could not offset that conventionally, was well-prepared to use its nuclear arsenal.

- Michael Krepon: 04:29 Because the Twin Peaks crisis went on for so long, almost a year in length, decision-makers had the opportunity to employ nuclear weapons for messaging purposes more than in the Kargil crisis. So for example, during the Twin Peaks crisis, there were missile flight tests, quite a lot of them on Pakistan's side, but some on the Indian side as well. Every flight test of a ballistic missile during a crisis is, in effect, a warning: "Watch it. This capability is being readied." During the Twin Peaks crisis, when you had mass mobilizations of conventional capability, you also had significant movements of nuclear assets, not just missile flight testing, but because war was quite conceivable in both peaks, neither side could afford to be caught napping. So we had a lot of missile movement, and of course, in this crisis, we also had the usual public statements on occasion, threatening nuclear use, reminding the other side that this capability existed.
- Manoj Joshi: 05:55 In essence, they deterred any further action on the part of India. Of course, there are other issues involved in the Parakram thing. On January 12th, President Musharraf had announced that Pakistan's territory would not be used by terrorists anymore, and he had banned a couple of terrorist organizations. So if you take the total sum of things, I would say there were multiple causes to the manner in which India and Pakistan reacted, but certainly I think there was – the nuclear weapons did effectively deter Indian action against Pakistan. Also, at that time, Pakistan very clearly indicated that it would escalate any Indian action by carrying out a series of missile tests, if I recollect, which indicated the direction in which things could head if the Indians responded across the border.
- Salma Malik: 07:05 We felt that there might actually be a war, but at the same time, there was also this kind of confidence, which is a very unfortunate thing to do, that you have the nuclear assets, so they might actually prove to be the deterrent that they've been held up to be. There was also this aspect that unfortunately, now that escalation is really happening, where it going to end and how much restraint can they really exercise? Because this was a very unprecedented, very high level of military movement, which at least we hadn't seen in our life.

5.10: “Crisis Management during the 2001-02 Twin Peaks Crisis”

- Michael Krepon: 00:05 Washington really developed a crisis management playbook during Twin Peaks, and the playbook consisted of very high level interventions. The United States president got on the phone, the United States secretary of state got in an airplane, the leaders of the European Union, Great Britain, United Nations would visit the region. These visits would be choreographed; “kindly do not start a war when somebody important is on your soil or en route to your capital.” All of this became developed during Twin Peaks. Another very important aspect was the employment of U.S. intelligence capabilities to assess the moves that both sides were taking. During a crisis, there are rumors. Sometimes, these rumors are purposely floated to gather intelligence about what the other side is doing. And the United States was the de facto designated rumor-swatter that if the intelligence did not provide evidence of worst fears or worst cases, we would convey that information to both capitals. One of the most effective instruments of crisis management by the United States came in effect by accident. The U.S. ambassador to India, fearing the worst, declared during the second peak of the crisis that non-essential personnel at the embassy should leave the country, that this was an extremely dangerous situation, and the movement of so many U.S. nationals out of a war zone, a radioactive war zone, was such an impossible task that people should not come to India and should actually leave India. The U.S. ambassador at the time, Robert Blackwell, did this without thinking of it as a crisis management tool. He thought it was necessary to protect American lives, but it turned out to be a very effective crisis management tool because among those who were supposed to stay home were U.S. businessmen, U.S. investors, and the Indian economy was being punished by this extended crisis. Indian economic growth was being punished by this extended crisis, and with the U.S. ambassador saying, “Stay home everybody or leave the country,” this would be exacerbated. And so the Indian leadership really, I think, clearly came to the conclusion, “We need to wind this up. These mobilizations are not helping us if we're not going to go to war, so let's wind it down.”
- Marvin Weinbaum: 03:45 What really was important here in our diplomacy was the fact that we thought that neither side really wanted to go there. If it had been otherwise, I don't think we would have had the success that we had. The deputy secretary, Rich Armitage, was absolutely critical, along with others in the diplomatic community, who sort of, with their travel – especially in June of 2002 – their travel to Islamabad and New Delhi, were able to

keep the conflict from erupting. Armitage got there and immediately sensed this, neither side really wanting to, and so then the question was, what mechanism can we have here that would enable both sides to walk away, at least reasonably satisfied with the results of his diplomacy? And what he did was he said, effectively to both sides: "I know you don't trust one another, but therefore you're going to have to trust me. You're going to have to trust the United States, that we will hold both sides' feet to the fire here and assure that neither side is going to take advantage here of a draw-down."

Lisa Curtis: 05:34

When it comes to the Twin Peaks issue, I think the U.S. played a critical role. First, in just continuing to send senior U.S. visitors to the region to tamp down the tensions because the crisis really was kind of spread out over a six-month period. Of course, the attack on the Indian Parliament in December of 2001 precipitated the crisis. That was really a critical moment, and the U.S. was able to encourage Musharraf, former President Musharraf, to announce that his country was banning the terrorist organizations that were behind the attack, giving the impression that Pakistan would crack down on these terrorist groups: Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Muhammad, who were allegedly behind the attack on the Indian Parliament. But then again, you had another critical point in the crisis in May of 2002 when an Indian army base was attacked in Jammu in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and this again required the U.S. to get involved, to talk both sides down from escalating the crisis even further. And I think the U.S. played a critical role both with India and with Pakistan. Particularly, former Deputy Secretary of State Armitage was able to convince Musharraf to commit to cracking down on terrorist groups on Pakistan's side of the border, and then giving India the, sort of, face-saving way to back away from further escalating the military crisis.

Ashley Tellis: 07:19

I had the ride of my life because it was something that was completely unexpected. When I went to India, I think in July of 2001, and the crisis came a few months later and lasted for a very long period of time, lasted essentially from December 2001 to October 2002. It was an extremely hectic period. The embassy was a very active embassy, even apart from the crisis, but the crisis just made it extraordinarily challenging because we had to do two things simultaneously: maintain a very close relationship with the government of India in order to shape its choices, and we had to do very, very shall we say determined and focused advocacy with our own government back home.

Michael Krepon: 08:26

I was in Jammu, and I was in Srinagar, in the summer of 2002. I was there because I thought the crisis was over. Things were

quiet, troops were still mobilized, but things were quiet. And I am leaving Jammu on Jet Airways back to New Delhi and then off to the United States, and I opened the paper and I read about the attacks on the Indian housing complex in Jammu. And as I'm reading the paper, I'm saying to myself, "Oh my God, this is it. How could the government of India not react to this?" And fortunately, Richard Armitage, who was the deputy secretary of state for the United States and the point person for crisis management, he felt strongly that the same conditions were in place after these attacks as was the case after the attacks on the Indian Parliament building. In his view, nothing had fundamentally changed, and there was nothing for India to gain by going to war. So, as I was flying back to the United States, Richard Armitage was preparing to fly to the region and to hammer out a way for India and Pakistan to avoid a war.

5.11: “Lessons Learned from the 2001-02 Twin Peaks Crisis”

- Michael Krepon: 00:05 So the takeaways from Twin Peaks, for some, was, “We need conventional war-fighting options. We need them in a short period of time before the United States crisis management playbook opens up ,and all of these foreign leaders get in airplanes and tell us to calm down.” And so what has been called “Cold Start” was one lesson learned by some from Twin Peaks, but for others in India, the fundamental dilemmas of going to war with Pakistan remained in place. What are the targets? What are the benefits? Do we really benefit from getting into a war with Pakistan? We have other business to conduct. It's the business of economic growth. What did the Pakistani military learn from Twin Peaks? It could have been considered a victory. India threatened war and backed down. That's a victory, narrowly defined, for Pakistan. Other groups in Pakistan could come away from Twin Peaks with very different lessons. The crisis began, after all, with attacks on Indian soil, dramatic attacks on Indian soil against the center of government in India. How did that benefit Pakistan, even if the war was averted? Pakistan’s standing was diminished greatly as a result of Twin Peaks, even though it was a standoff. So there are mixed lessons in Pakistan. For some, a standoff equals victory. For others, it's not about the standoff. It's about the triggering event of the crisis.
- Manoj Joshi: 02:18 The Twin Peaks crisis. The lesson learned was that the old-fashioned way of trying to deal with Pakistan was no longer viable. There was a mass mobilization, but that mobilization didn't really lead to anything. So the armies were on the border for eight, nine months. You could say they were ready for war, but that kind of war, seemed in the sense, it seemed – I think after that, there was a kind of an understanding that those days are gone, where you could have that kind of conflict with Pakistan. So the institutional aspect of it tied up with the Kargil Review Commission, because that was the group of ministers’ report which was being implemented in those years, 2001, 2002, 2003 when that is happening. The third thing was the announcement of the Indian nuclear doctrine and the nuclear command authority, so there was a feeling that we needed to more clearly signal that we not only have nuclear capability, but we have the institutional mechanisms which can employ nuclear weapons. So that was announced on the 4th of January, 2003, I think. So yes, definitely, there were institutional learning lines from that crisis.

- Abhijit Iyer-Mitra: 03:47 It forced the army to shift towards other kinds of thinking, and what comes out of this is Cold Start. But even with Cold Start, the problem was that it didn't actually fight a different way. It was the same armor, it was the same logistics chains fighting the same kind of battle, but in smaller formations held closer to the border, much more threatening, and therefore much more prone to a tactical nuclear strike. That really was the net result of Operation Parakram.
- Swaran Singh: 04:32 Operation Parakram after the terrorist attack on Indian Parliament in December 2001, and of course the Kargil War of 1999, were two major episodes between India and Pakistan after both countries had declared themselves to be nuclear weapons states. So in many ways, they had both positive and negative lessons. I think the most important lesson was that they showed that they could still continue to be in control in terms of escalation, and it did not go out of control in both of these episodes. But the negative part is that it also showed how non-state actors, who ideally have no relationship to nuclear weapons or nuclear deterrence, could also trigger such possibility where nations come under a certain clout as to whether they are safe countries to live. A lot of countries had issued, for example, advisories during these two episodes that their nationals should leave this country. So how non-state actors can create a situation where states, even if they're not willing to create such a threatening situation between them, are so vulnerable to non-state actors. So that's a negative lesson.
- Moeed Yusuf: 05:42 I think the number one lesson was that war is simply not an option, without suicidal tendencies attached to that. I don't believe the accounts that say that India was basically just posturing for the sake of posturing, the mobilization was really to put pressure on Pakistan. I think India really did feel that there was a need to punish Pakistan so that Pakistan's alleged pro-militancy strategy and policy would be reversed. I think once it mobilized, it realized that with nuclear weapons in the mix with Pakistan's conventional forces, it simply couldn't make that happen. So I think the number one lesson for India was a full-scale mobilization under the doctrine that it had at the time, the Sundarji Doctrine, full mobilization of forces to punish Pakistan all out, was not going to work. On the Pakistani side, I think the conclusion was that this is a very dangerous game. And so if these terrorists are going to continue doing what they did in in December of 2001 and then May of 2002, this could very well spill into something that's going to be catastrophic for both sides. And so you see Musharraf then making a conscious effort, trying to pull back some of this policy, announcing that

he will, and then infiltration levels across the Line of Control going down significantly.

Sadia Tasleem: 06:55 Operation Parakram is also cited very frequently in the literature as one of those episodes which had reinforced Pakistani thinking on the utility of maintaining a nuclear deterrent, because it was again thought that probably one of the reasons why Pakistan and India didn't end up fighting a war was the presence of nuclear weapons.

Mansoor Ahmed: 07:20 The lessons learned from the 2002 crisis were reinforced in the 2008 crisis when again, the Indians were planning to carry out surgical airstrikes against Pakistan in response to the Mumbai attacks by non-state actor groups, who were again alleged to have been supported by elements from within Pakistan. And the outcome of both the 2002 and the 2008 crisis was that the Indians realized that they needed to mobilize more quickly and came up with an even more destabilizing doctrine, known as the Proactive Operations or the Cold Start Doctrine, which calls for rapid, blitzkrieg-style operations involving all elements of the air force, the artillery, mechanized infantry, and tanks on very short notice against Pakistan, which is, according to the Indian perspective, it is designed to be surgical. It's designed to be punitive, but that, again, has forced Pakistan to move towards the development of short-range battlefield nuclear weapons, low-yield battlefield nuclear weapons, that have now caused a lot of debate and controversy around the world and have, from a Pakistani viewpoint, complicated India's plans for conducting a limited war below Pakistan.

5.12: “The 2008 Mumbai Crisis”

- Anish Goel: 00:05 The main concerns were a number of things. Number one, first and foremost, preventing war from breaking out between India and Pakistan. As I mentioned in the previous question, this was the top concern, that India would have some sort of kinetic reaction against Pakistan, and then once war breaks out between two nuclear-armed countries, it's a very, very dangerous situation that could spiral out of control before anyone has a chance to really understand what's going on. The second, I'd say, main concern was figuring out what the actual ground truth was about what was happening, who was responsible, where did the terrorists come from, and things of that nature. We were getting intelligence reports, you know, almost as soon as the attack started, but it's always difficult to tease out how much you can rely on those, how accurate they are, how they comport with other reports that you're getting, media reports and all this information that's coming in, so just trying to sort out exactly what was happening so that we knew what was going on. And then, you know, I'd say the final concern was making sure that the Indians knew that we were on their side, and that we were ready to help in whatever way was necessary. And I mean that in two ways. One is that we were ready to send law enforcement assistance to help end the attacks because as you probably know, the attacks went on for something like three or four days. And so, as soon as the attack started, we were ready to help out in that way, and also to help out in the aftermath to ensure that the systems were being put in place to prevent an attack like this from happening again.
- Anish Goel 2:08 The messages that were going to Islamabad were, “We want you to understand how serious this is, that this is a terrorist group that's known to operate and train within your borders has carried out an attack on a neighboring country, a pretty horrific attack, and not only killed hundreds of Indians but also killed Americans who were caught up in it.” And so, you know, part of the message was, “This is something that you need to take seriously and isn't something that can be swept under the rug.” And then the other, one of the other, messages was that we expect full cooperation, and that we expect Islamabad's assistance in tracking down the perpetrators and in bringing the perpetrators to justice. We also were conveying the message that, “Listen. We don't know what the Indians are going to do.” We told them that we're counseling restraint, and we're counseling patience, but the Indian public is really outraged, and the prime minister of India at the time was under a lot of pressure to respond to Pakistan. And at the end of the day, we

didn't know exactly what his final decision would be, and so Pakistan needed to take steps to ensure, to give the Indian prime minister space so that he could resist the calls to take kinetic action against Pakistan.

Manoj Joshi: 03:40

The Indian government asked the three services as to whether we could respond militarily towards Pakistan because by that time, there was very clear evidence of Pakistani complicity in that incident. The three forces, of course, had to look at wider issues, in the sense, one thing was to launch a punitive expedition in the sense, like an air force strike on camps or whatever it is on the Pakistani side, but on the other hand, they had to consider the fact that if this war escalated, meaning if the Indian action, there was a counter-reaction and then there was an escalation. And at that point, the Indian army very clearly signaled to the civilian authorities that they simply were not ready for an all-out war. They didn't - there was shortage of critical ammunition, shortage of critical equipment, and so if any kind of reaction – a short, quick reaction – escalated to a wider war, then the Indian army was simply not prepared.

Ashley Tellis: 04:53

In any crisis. I think the role of the leaders really become pivotal, and no matter what you hear said about bureaucracies and the role that bureaucracies play, they really become marginal to the choices and the appreciation of leaders themselves. And so when you had the terrorist attacks in Bombay, for example, in 2008, the pivotal players at that point were Manmohan Singh in India (the prime minister), Prime Minister Zardari in Pakistan, and President Bush, and in practical terms, Secretary Condi Rice, who really took the leadership in doing two things simultaneously. One was to express very strong solidarity with India, that we understood what was going through and that we were determined to bring all our capacities to bear in order to help India manage the crisis. And two, she leaned very strongly on Prime Minister Zardari and the Pakistanis to make certain that they curtailed the activities of LeT to the degree possible, or at least curtail them enough that India was willing to give diplomacy some time to work. And I think the fact that we ended up without a crisis is really a tribute to two individuals in my view: Dr. Rice at the U.S. end because of the effort she put into pursuing these two objectives I just laid out, and Manmohan Singh, who, when there were many around him who expected or hoped that he would engage in some form of retaliation, thought long, deep, and hard, and decided that retaliation would not serve India's strategic interests and therefore held his hand. Sometimes not doing something is a great act of political courage.

Michael Krepon: 06:59 Who learned what after the 2008 Mumbai attacks? I think in Pakistan, there was learning that major attacks carried out over many days on national television, attacks that can be traced back very easily to Pakistan – that's a bad idea. It puts Pakistan in an extremely bad light. And so far, after the 2008 attacks, all of the anti-India incidents have been on a small scale. What has India learned after this series of attacks: the Parliament attack in 2001, Mumbai 2008? My answer is not very much. There are still terrible gaps in Indian security practices. Things don't get fixed in India in a systematic way. Bureaucracies get in the way. It's slow-motion activity. So I don't think India has learned much, or at least if it has learned things, it hasn't brought learning into practice. Consequently, India remains open to more terrorist attacks. The United States has practice now in crisis management. The United States was the primary crisis manager after the Parliament attack and after the Mumbai attacks in 2008. So the United States has a playbook; when a crisis happens, U.S. crisis managers, which are really at the very top of the administration – they open the playbook, got to get on the phone, got to counsel caution, got to have big people in the air going to the region counseling caution. Got to work with China to tell Pakistanis the right messages: “Don't expect us to bail you out. You got yourself into this.” Got to counsel New Delhi with restraint: “Don't let this get out of hand. You could lose big time if you let things get out of hand.” This is the playbook. It helps to have pretty experienced people working the playbook. It can't be low-level staff people. It's got to be big people who deal with crises, and if the crisis managers are unfamiliar with the region, if they don't have good ties with key people in the region, then there could be problems.

Moed Yusuf: 10:08 We need to change the conventional definition of a nuclear crisis. As you know, conventionally, a nuclear crisis, as we talked about it in the Cold War, would be one where nuclear weapons played an active role. You know, there was some kind of movement of nuclear forces, some thinking about use, etc. In South Asia, I think the definition that applies is any crisis actually is a nuclear crisis because it has a nuclear angle to it, and the nuclear angle is nuclear weapons are present. And their doctrines, and the force postures, and the way they are going to behave in crises with nuclear weapons is so opaque that it's impossible to tell whether nuclear forces are actually involved or not. And thus to me, the benchmark should be lowered, and any crisis where you have the serious potential of escalation, whether conventional, and from conventional to nuclear, or directly nuclear, should be called a nuclear crisis, and then we should study the nuclear aspects of that crisis in that stead. Now, in Mumbai, there is no evidence that nuclear weapons

were moved or thought of in that sense, but at the end of the day, the chances of escalation leading to some movement of the nuclear forces always exists in the India-Pakistan context. One, because it's opaque – both programs – on how they're going to posture in a crisis. Second, because neither has actually ever tested this. They've never gone to a crisis where they've had to deploy, and so it's going to be uncharted territory for both of them, which means that the risks are going to be higher, or at least unknown, when it comes to watching these crises.