

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

## **Video Transcripts**

### **Chapter 7: The Future of “Nuclear South Asia”**

#### **7.1: “Ballistic Missile Defenses (BMDs), Multiple Independently Targetable Re-Entry Vehicles (MIRVs), and Counterforce Targeting”**

- James Acton: 00:04 It's probably helpful, first, to say what a ballistic missile is. A ballistic missile is basically a rocket; it's powered for the first few minutes of its flight, and then the reentry vehicle containing the warhead just falls freely under gravity in an arch back down towards the earth. What missile defenses aim to do is to intercept that reentry vehicle before it explodes. So missile defense interceptors are basically other rockets which you fire at the incoming rocket. Then there's various variations on that theme. The most sophisticated defenses: the intercept aims to collide directly with the incoming war. Slightly less sophisticated defenses: the interceptor aims to explode when it's in the vicinity of the warhead, but taking down the warhead with it. But the basic idea here is trying to intersect incoming reentry vehicles before they're able to explode. The first thing that you're going to do if you're a state developing ballistic missiles is just try to get one warhead, one reentry vehicle on that missile. Then once you've got that technology working, you might start thinking to yourself, "Well, if I could fit multiple warheads on one missile, then I would be able to save money; I could have more warheads with fewer missiles." So there's various, different concepts for how you fit multiple warheads on top of one missile. One concept is called “MRV,” M-R-V, not M-I-R-V, but M-R-V. That's a system in which you have more than one warhead on the missile, but those warheads go down in a pre-programmed pattern, so you can't maneuver them relative to one another. The U.S. used that, basically, for destroying cities. You could have three different warheads coming down in kind of a triangular pattern. More sophisticated technology allows each of those warheads to be targeted at their own specific target, and that's called “MIRV,” multiple independent reentry vehicles.
- Michael Krepon: 02:17 Countervalue nuclear capabilities, or countervalue targeting, means the ability to target cities, valuable soft targets that could deter an attack upon you. Counterforce targeting is something different. It means being able to target military targets, being able to target war supporting industry, being able to target command and control. This is a broader set of targets. Sometimes, they're close to cities or within cities. Sometimes

they're not. So, the requirements are greater, and you are now in the realm of warfighting concepts, warfighting concepts of deterrence, and if deterrence fails, the prosecution of a war by nuclear means.

James Acton: 03:24

The basic argument for missile defense is it's just like any other form of military defense. Soldiers try to stop incoming bullets from hitting them; they try to stop incoming mortars from hitting them. So the argument for ballistic missile defense is defending against ballistic missiles is not any different. I think there's really two key arguments against ballistic missile defense. The first one is the question of its cost effectiveness. Ballistic missile defense is extremely expensive, and a lot of the testing to date has not been done under realistic conditions, and even under those less than realistic conditions, there have been a lot of test failures. So one issue is: is this money that's being spent actually buying effective protection? The second issue is kind of – the second argument against ballistic missile defense – it's more of a theoretical argument, but it's that if I'm trying to defend against someone else's ballistic missiles, building my interceptors is very expensive, and it may be cheaper for them to build ballistic missiles. So we can get into an arms race in which I'm building interceptors, but they're building missiles faster and more cheaply than I can build interceptors. The phrase for this from the Cold War was, "ballistic missile defense is not cost effective at the margins." They can build missiles cheaper and faster than I can build interceptors.

Naeem Salik: 04:59

If you have a limited missile defense with a limited capability, then there will be a tendency, you see, to try and carry out a first strike and destroy as many enemy systems on ground before they're launched against you because you know that whatever is destroyed on ground, that much less will be coming towards you, and your missile defense system may be able to take care of that. And that's where the problem comes because then it encourages the first strike and preemptive tendencies, as well as allows you to take greater risks during a crisis, a greater degree of brinkmanship because you feel at least psychologically secure that you have something to defend you against incoming missiles.

Michael Krepon: 05:50

MIRVs increase the number of warheads a side can target against another side, and these warheads can become very accurate. And so, it forces the other side, if it believes it will be disadvantaged, to follow suit. So we have a vertical contest here, and it's not just that, because you also want to make your targets harder to find. So you have to spend money on making

these targets mobile. This is what happened during the Cold War, and nuclear forces rose from a couple thousand warheads to around 10,000 warheads. When countries start moving toward counterforce capabilities, the ability to target preemptively the other side's nuclear capability, then you have to be in a position to use early or to lose, and using early means going before the other side has taken defensive measures by moving around its capability. Mobility provides protection against preemption, but when you move into the field, when you get more ready to use nuclear weapons, if you must, then that's where dangers grow. Dangers of accident; dangers of command and control difficulties; dangers with respect to the other side seeing movement, thinking it might be readiness to strike first, and believing that it has no choice but to preempt.

## **7.2: “MIRVs, BMDs, and Counterforce Targeting on the Subcontinent”**

- Michael Krepon: 00:04 India, China, and Pakistan are headed toward a whole new and higher level of strategic competition, and one of the big reasons is this: *The Lure and Pitfalls of MIRVs*. This is an advertisement for a free Stimson publication. Putting more than one warhead on a missile. In addition, new advanced cruise missiles. In addition, sea-based deterrence and the move toward counterforce targeting, going after military targets. All of this is circulating now. China has reportedly already flight tested MIRVs, Pakistan has advertised that it has the ability to do this on its longer-range missiles, and India has proven it's capable of doing this because of its space program. So here we go. It's happening, unless leaders in these countries take steps to defuse this competition. India and Pakistan now have more warheads than targets, with respect to cities. So you start looking at military targets, you start looking at warfighting campaigns, you start looking at counterforce targeting, and that gets countries very, very uneasy. If the other side is building up warheads with sufficient accuracy to go after our nuclear deterrent, that suggests a warfighting impulse, and we can't let that happen. So we must compete, and this is what happens, and it's happening now, just at the early stages, in South Asia.
- Toby Dalton: 02:18 Given Pakistan's interests in offensive capabilities, in particular longer-range missile systems, it would not be surprising to see Pakistan go down the road of a multiple reentry vehicles in the future. And as we saw from the U.S.-Soviet experience, the commitment to multiple reentry vehicles, and then the challenge that comes with protecting those delivery vehicles, and the preference that that gives to first strike capabilities, combined with shifting towards a more counterforce posture, and the growth in capabilities and the size of the arsenal, will create new kinds of instabilities that haven't been experienced in South Asia before: instabilities that we see in the U.S.-Soviet experience and that took decades to unwind at very significant cost.
- Rajesh Rajagopalan: 03:16 I don't think emerging technologies for MIRVs or BMDs will affect India's deterrence posture, primarily because India's posture is essentially to deter other nuclear weapons, and it is a minimal deterrent doctrine. The logic behind it is that as long as India has some level of second strike capability, that should be more than adequate to deter any threat. In other words, it is not designed to match other countries or other threats, weapon-for-weapon or missile-for-missile or bomber-for-bomber. So as long as we have a minimal deterrent capability,

that should suffice. Now, how does this affect MIRVs and BMDs? If we assume China or Pakistan later developed MIRVs, it simply increases the number of warheads that they would have at their disposal. But that doesn't really affect India's deterrence because no amount of MIRVing or no excessive missile force on the Pakistani or Chinese side will affect India's second strike capability. As far as BMD is concerned, there is a possibility, of course, that if an effective BMD system is created, then India's second strike capability could be affected. If an effective shield by either Pakistan or China, if they build an effective missile shield, then if India has only a small number of weapons, and if some of these are targeted in a counterforce strike, it is possible, of course, that India's second strike capability will be affected. But as of now, I do not see BMDs, the technology for BMDs, reaching to a level where they will be able to provide a sufficient shield against ICBM-range missiles. As of now, even the most effective BMDs, at best, can counter intermediate range missiles. They really cannot handle long-range ballistic missiles, so the ICBM range.

Feroz Khan: 05:21 It's the combination of ballistic missile defense and India's MIRVing capability that would, in my assessment, tilt the offense-defense balance more in the favor of India. That will be something that would be a long-term worry for Pakistan, but even the ballistic missile defenses program will be a very short area defense program. Say, for example, New Delhi or Mumbai, if India wants to defend them; the rest of India is exposed to Pakistan. Even then, it is probably going to give a false sense of security to India because they may be able to defend, say, up to a maximum of 10 targets, when it comes on BMD. But what if Pakistan decides to target 15 or 20 at the same time, just double the number of missiles coming there? It'd be impossible to defend them. So I don't think that there should be a bigger worry for Pakistan if it comes to the ballistic missile defenses, because it will only give India some point defenses of certain areas, but not entire India. That's what my assessment of BMD would be.

Manpreet Sethi: 06:25 MIRV technology is something which is still emerging in the Southern Asian region. The Chinese are wanting to develop and deploy MIRV missiles in order to defeat the American missile defense. Because the Chinese are going ahead in this direction, there is a fair amount of talk within India that we need to go in for MIRV of technology as well, but it is still something which is in the future. Therefore, I think it could make for a good arms control measure between India and China if we could arrive at a treaty where both countries decide not to go in for MIRV missiles. Both India and China have no first use treaties, and

MIRVed missiles are essentially first strike weapons because you'd rather have them used first than have them destroyed on your own territory. Considering that both these countries have no first use doctrines, it would make sense for them to give up on the MIRV capability. It will also set the tone for reducing the salience of nuclear weapons for the rest of the world, but it remains to be seen whether they will – both countries will – show the political sense to go ahead in this direction.

### **7.3: “The No-First-Use (NFU) Debate”**

Vipin Narang:

00:04

India professes a “no first use” doctrine and has since 1998 in its draft nuclear doctrine, and then in the official release of its 2003 doctrine. The 2003 doctrine has not been officially revised since then. So India claims to abide by a strict no first use policy. There is some evidence that the Indian no first use doctrine is already undermined by two key tenets. First, within the doctrine itself, there's an exception to the no first use policy, where India threatens nuclear retaliation in the event that chemical or biological weapons are used against India or its forces, which would constitute the first use of nuclear weapons. Over time, there have been dilutions of India's no first use doctrine, which suggest that it's abiding by it may not be as strict as the doctrine claims. Various authoritative voices, including in November 2016, the sitting Defense Minister Manohar Parrikar stated, in his personal opinion – if that's possible for a defense minister – India should neither declare, one way or another, whether it has a no first use doctrine, indicating that there are growing voices in the Indian government which do not believe that India should be bound by an official and strict no first use policy. In his book *Choices*, former National Security Advisor Shivshankar Menon outlines a scenario that justifies India's preemptive use of nuclear weapons if it believed that an adversary, namely Pakistan, were imminently about to use nuclear weapons and had declared its intent to do so. So over time, there has been some dilution of no first use, and whether it is as strict as the doctrine professes is unclear. In a normative sense, whether India should have a no first use doctrine is a debate that continues in India. My personal view is that the nuclear dyad is stabilized by India having a no first use policy. Given India's conventional strength against Pakistan, there is no scenario in which it really needs to use nuclear weapons first to stave off a Pakistani conventional defeat, and it is in a position where its nuclear forces should be able to deter Pakistani nuclear use. So India really only needs to use its nuclear weapons, both against Pakistan and China, to deter nuclear use against it, which enables it to select and adopt a no first use policy. So, moving away from an no first use policy has noted disadvantages, including putting India and Pakistan in what is known as “first strike instability,” where Pakistan might fear for the survivability of its forces if India were believed to be going first. And so India having a no first use policy is a firebreak in a potential conflict between the two, so that Pakistan doesn't fear it's in a “use it or lose it” situation.

- Mansoor Ahmed: 02:53 The application of new kinds of doctrines and concepts being practiced by the Indians during exercises, in which they are calling for taking out deployed Pakistani short-range or medium-range strategic systems through conventional counterforce strikes, and most recently, there is even talk of revising India's no first use doctrine. India's Defense Minister made a statement, and there have there been writings by Shivshankar Menon and others which are suggesting that India needs to develop a comprehensive capability to achieve some kind of escalation dominance very quickly during a conventional conflict. Decapitating, conventional counterforce strike, might not be as effective as they might like it to be, but it will generate a whole chain of unintended consequences because such a move by the Indian side will inevitably convince the leadership in Islamabad that they are going for a total destruction of the Pakistani strategic forces.
- Manpreet Sethi: 04:07 The no first use doctrine of India arises from its understanding of the role of nuclear weapons. Given the nature of the weapon, the excessive damage potential that it has, which cannot be constrained in space and time, India doesn't see any role for the weapon where it would have to use the nuclear weapon first and still come out looking better after having used that weapon, given that there are secure second strike capabilities on both of its adversaries. So therefore, as I understand it, the no first use makes for a more credible deterrence strategy, where you're suggesting deterrence by punishment to the other side, rather than using the weapon first and believing that you will be able to come out better after having used the weapon.
- Ruhee Neog: 04:50 With first use, several complications arise. First is that the decision to escalate lies with the state that has decided to employ a first use policy, and this, of course, has its attendant psychological and material costs. Psychologically speaking, the political leadership of that particular state then has to decide, at which point, it should use its nuclear weapons, and this is effectively lowering the nuclear threshold. Materially speaking, there is obviously a higher level of military preparedness, things like nuclear weapons being on hair trigger alert, which could have dangerous implications for the command and control structures of that particular country. The second reason, I think, is that having a first use policy is to also deter the adversary, in the sense that you are conveying to the adversary that if you use your nuclear weapons in a first strike, you are going to be in a better position in the aftermath. But if the adversary has an assured second strike capability and India's nuclear doctrine promises to respond massively in the event of a first use of nuclear weapons, then neither country that has employed

nuclear weapons is going to be in a “better position,” so to speak, post-nuclear use.

Michael Krepon: 06:17

It's possible, but still very hard, for declaratory nuclear doctrine to alleviate concerns about counterforce capabilities, because the capabilities are coming. That's where the technology is going. So one way that a country can declare its disinclination to use counterforce capabilities is by not deploying limited ballistic missile defenses, which are hugely expensive and terribly ineffective. Another way countries can avoid this counterforce compulsion leading to increased nuclear dangers is to avoid actions that can trigger a nuclear-tinged crisis. So these are the two keys, in my view. Forget about ballistic missile defenses. Don't be like the United States, which has spent \$300 billion on them, and they still don't work. And avoid playing with fire. Avoid prompting crises that can lead to nuclear use.

## **7.4: “India and Pakistan's Maritime Interests and Threat Perceptions”**

Nilanthi Samaranayake: 00:04

India and Pakistan, they have many interests in the Indian Ocean. I would say both countries, though, share an interest in the security and the stability of sea lanes in the Indian Ocean region, given how significantly dependent both countries are on the maritime domain for their trade. India's, I would say, in terms of geographic interests, are much greater than those of Pakistan. India, for example, has identified its primary areas of interest as the entire Indian Ocean region, so that stretches from the southwest corner of the Indian Ocean all the way to the Strait of Malacca. It's interested in projecting power across the region in an area where it sees itself to be a natural leader. Pakistan, on the other hand, its geographic interests are more limited than India's. It's concerned about safety and security of sea lanes in the Arabian Sea.

C. Raja Mohan: 01:13

In the past, India defined its maritime threats largely from the fear of the American naval power in this part of the world. When the British withdrew from east of Suez, India said, "Look, this idea of a power vacuum is unacceptable. There should be some kind of a collective security solution in the form of the Indian Ocean zone of peace." But I think that idealist approach, it has given up today, as it sees the Chinese presence and power projection into the Indian Ocean grow. Today, I think India sees a bigger threat. The threat is no longer as perceived from the United States, but from China, and I think dealing with the Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean has already moved India towards more cooperation with the United States. The second aspect is while India can get closer to the United States, but the primary emphasis, I would think, is in expanding India's own role in this part of the world, because geography favors an Indian maritime role in the Indian Ocean. And I think India has neglected the maritime domain in the past because of the land-based threats from Pakistan and China, but in the future, the integrating of the maritime domain into the overall national strategic calculus is going to grow.

Nilanthi Samaranayake: 02:30

Pakistan's threat perceptions, at least according to Pakistan naval leaders, are to protect against attacks on shipping. We've seen the Pakistan navy do a lot in this region, in terms of trying to counter piracy and counter terrorism. The Pakistan navy participates in combined maritime forces and has commanded the counter-piracy task force more than any other country has in that coalition of navies. Also, at present, it has commanded it eight times. It's also commanded the counter-terrorism task force nine times, so it's very interested in protecting against

attacks on shipping, just given how dependent Pakistan is on the maritime economy.

Moeed Yusuf: 03:17

Pakistan's maritime threat perceptions in the Indian Ocean really center around India and India's growing naval capability, but also the fact that the Indian Ocean is becoming a major hub of geopolitical tussle, with the Chinese now coming into Gwadar and Indian concerns around that. The Indian Ocean is really the only space left, in terms of blue waters, where there is still opportunity for countries to capture space and increase their competition, if you will. Strait of Hormuz is right next door, so it's a crucial supply route, still remains for energy, and so India and Pakistan will remain in this competition, but quite frankly, I don't see the Pakistani naval capability increasing significantly anytime soon. So if you want to think through Pakistan's lens, it's really going to be a land-centered thinking still, and perhaps using China as a bit of a hedge in the Indian Ocean against India. Kargil was a watershed in more ways than one. It was definitely the first real nuclear crisis where both countries thought nuclear, even if they didn't have the kind of operational capabilities that would've made this crisis a real nuclear one, in that sense. 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. As India's naval projection power increases, Pakistan has had to think more of that, but the inter-service rivalry, the Pakistan army's domination of the military, I don't think it makes it easy for the navy or, for that matter, the air force to gain the space that they desire.

Nilanti Samaranyake: 05:19

For China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean region, I think you have to look at it on two levels. First, the military level, but then also the commercial level, and the blurring of these two levels is what alarms observers. So China's economic interests have really brought it into the Indian Ocean region due to the need to protect those economic interests. So we saw China in the 2008-2009 period become an independent deployer to the western Indian Ocean region in the counter-piracy effort, where many navies have contributed and still continue to contribute almost a decade later. As a result of that experience, China became a regular feature of the operating life of the Indian Ocean. There's also a commercial level where you're seeing China since the mid-2000s to the present, so for roughly the past decade, have more economic interests in the Indian Ocean region, such as through maritime infrastructure, port projects,

for example. And since it is in the Indian Ocean, they are inevitably India's neighbors and countries with which India has had longstanding relationships. While they aren't military projects, these commercial projects caused some anxiety in New Delhi because of the potential strategic significance.

## **7.5: “Nuclear Weapons and the Indian Ocean”**

- Vipin Narang: 00:09 India's submarine-launched ballistic missile program is designed to impart India a truly secure second strike capability, and the ranges on these SLBMs is really crucial. India first developed the K-15 missile with a 750 kilometer-range capability for the Arihant and subsequent SSBNs. But the problem with a 750 kilometer-range SLBM is that you have to come so close within, for example, China's strategic centers on the east coast, that you're operating in hostile waters, and so this became a problem from a survivability standpoint. So India has subsequently focused on developing what is known as the K-4 missile, which is based on the Agni-IV. It's a solid fuel missile with a 3,500 kilometer-range, and with that kind of range, the idea is that India's SSBNs could operate in the Indian Ocean, in friendlier waters, and still have the range to be able to target China's east coast and strategic centers. So in the development cycle, India will likely focus on the K-4 missile and potentially longer-range SLBMs based on the Agni family but for submarines, and develop a number of SSBNs so that it can potentially have at least one on continuous deterrent patrol in friendly waters and deterrent patrol boxes in the Indian Ocean. But the real aim is to provide India with a really secure, and a truly secure, second strike capability against China because it worries, like all states, that its land-based missiles could be targeted by the Chinese or other states in a potential conflict. And having a quiet SSBN is really the most survivable second strike capability that a state can have.
- Diana Wueger: 02:00 Pakistan has not and may be a little further from the idea of a nuclear powered submarine, so their conception right now is that they're going to potentially put nuclear weapons on diesel-powered submarines. And they've tested the Babur-3, a submarine-launched cruise missile. That's kind of where they are. They're not as far along, and it's not as clear how they are going to think about this particular problem set. But realistically what you want, because what you want is for this ship to stay hidden, you need it to be able to stay submerged, and naval nuclear reactors give you that ability. A diesel ship has to surface regularly to exchange air. There's a new form of technology called air-independent propulsion that will allow you to stay submerged for a little longer, a couple of weeks, but you still have to surface. And for submarine, when it surfaces, that's the most dangerous time, both physically because you don't necessarily know what's up there until you get up there, and in terms of anti-submarine warfare, that's when it's easier to find

these submarines. So the likelihood is that Pakistan is going to see a reason to move toward naval nuclear reactors.

Nilanthy Samaranyake: 03:27

Crisis stability is something that the United States is acutely interested in when it comes to the traditional India-Pakistan conflict, and especially for the ability, or the potential, for this conflict to manifest in the maritime domain in the Indian Ocean. The stakes are so high, just given the potential for the conflict to escalate to the nuclear level, so I think the United States' crisis response, its diplomacy, would be very delicate and very nuanced. I think if it actually gets to that stage where you are seeing some kind of conflict at sea, it's gone too far.

Diana Wueger: 04:14

What you're likely to see, actually, over the next couple of years is an increase in conventional submarine acquisitions, in conventional anti-submarine warfare asset acquisition, such as the P-8Is, P-3s, things like that, where they're going to want to be able to find these shifts, they want to at least be able to find them and track them. Whether or not they will in fact attack them is a question mark because that could be destabilizing. It's just not really clear what would happen if, you know, Pakistan has a submarine that's carrying nuclear weapons and India finds it, is India: (a) going to think that it is a conventional submarine and is therefore maybe a legitimate target, or (b) is Pakistan going to feel threatened by having something on its tail? Then you get into the "use-or-lose" problem. If Pakistan waits too long. and India attacks it and sinks that submarine, Pakistan loses that asset.

C. Raja Mohan: 05:13

If the anti-submarine warfare picks up, the submarine invulnerability begins to alter because of technological revolution. There's much talk about now using roaming squadrons drones, underwater drones, underwater submarines, which operating in packs can take away some of the invulnerability of the submarines, which is a classic feature. The revolution in the emergence of autonomy, in the emergence of the areas of artificial intelligence; these are going to make a big difference to the whole nuclear discourse, but I think there's much catching up. The nuclear discourse has to get out of its own little well that it is caught in, like a frog in a well. It thinks very narrowly, and my sense is the technological revolution is going to force the frogs out of the well.

Diana Wueger: 06:05

The question of whether a blockade is something India could do. or would do, or how that would play out, I think is a really interesting one, and I think it's something that's being given some consideration, certainly within the Indian navy, how they might do that. Pakistan has one major port: it's Karachi, and 90

percent of its trade flows through Karachi. Blockades take a while to take some effect and to really change behavior, but you can create within Pakistan a lot of problems related to energy supplies, food, those kinds of basic needs, and you can create the social problems and social unrest fairly quickly. Realistically, you don't actually have to stop and interdict or sink every single ship attempting to get to Karachi. What you really have to do is drive up the cost of insurance. If shipping companies can't insure their ships going to Karachi because there is the concern that India will attack them or sink them or, you know, something bad will happen, then they're just not going to go to Karachi. It's a commercial problem more than a military problem. So India doesn't have to, you know, put up a ring around the port. It needs to really put the fear of God in, you know, Lloyd's of London, and insurance companies being what they are and being fairly risk averse, you're likely to see a spike in insurance costs before you're likely to see India just sinking ships willy-nilly.

Moeed Yusuf:

07:42

The problem, of course, is that Pakistan's nuclear red lines are ambiguous. So for India to determine how far it could go, whether on land, air, or sea, in terms of pricking Pakistan without crossing its red lines, is a question that is very difficult to answer, and that's one of the key pillars of Pakistan's deterrent strategy, if you will. You know, India will inevitably threaten naval blockade if a crisis has real potential of escalating. That is Pakistan's real weakness. The flank that Pakistan cannot cover, quite frankly, is the naval one, no matter what. And that is why, though, the Pakistani red line on the naval front is probably going to be pretty low. And so a naval blockade that starts hurting Pakistan economically, pretty soon in a crisis; the weaker Pakistan's economy, the quicker it will reach that threshold, the tougher it becomes for India to execute it. So again, there's no clear answer to this, but I think it's an obvious tool in India's hand, and India recognizes that Pakistan is no match in that space, so it'll definitely use it as a threat. Whether it can actually employ it for a long enough time without risking a serious consequence, in terms of a reaction from Pakistan, I think is an open question.

## **7.6: “China’s Role in ‘Nuclear South Asia’”**

- Andrew Small: 00:04 The China-Pakistan relationship has always been a security-centric relationship. It basically came together in the early- to mid-sixties as a result of the wars that played out, both between India and China in 1962 and between India and Pakistan in 1965, and the sense that the two sides could derive mutual strategic advantage from security cooperation.
- Thomas F. Lynch III: 00:29 I think if one looks carefully at the China-Pakistan relationship, there is one clear and paramount driver in that relationship, and that is mutual suspicion and antipathy between India and China and India and Pakistan. Indeed, over time, China has sided with Pakistan in a robust array of engagements and interactions that have all contributed mightily to adding complexity in the security calculation that New Delhi must make with respect to Pakistan, adding ballast and even adding capacity to Pakistan's military arsenal and to its nuclear knowledge and know-how, and also to Pakistan's ability diplomatically to withstand pressures in places like the UN Security Council and other international fora from devices, activities, and indeed motions raised by India and its allies to try to either find Pakistan in noncompliance with treaties, in noncompliance with militant activities and terrorist organizations, or Pakistani non-compliance in the requirements for nuclear nonproliferation. Pakistan, we know, turned to China quite often and quite frequently. Not so often to get direct access to nuclear weapons technology, although I think the record, the prudent understanding of the record, suggests that there was some of that that did occur, in many ways kind of through a second- or a third-hand frame of reference, but mostly indirectly, turned to China to overcome sanctions that were hurting the civilian nuclear program in Pakistan. And here, the record is pretty clear that China did provide a lot of help and assistance with the nuclear reaction cycle, with the fuel development cycle, whether it be on the uranium side or the plutonium side, and much of this was done in supplement of knowledge and capability that Pakistan was growing organically, indeed growing through its own scientists and its own internationally trained, nuclear capable scientific community. But quite often, the record shows that China was there to provide that extra bit of information, that extra bit of monetary support, that extra bit of access to knowledge and know-how, to help find ways to overcome challenges with developing not only nuclear fuel cycles, but also developing the types of capacities that lead to a successful development and then a test of a Pakistani nuclear weapon first in 1998.

Andrew Small: 03:11

China's role in Pakistan's nuclear program has been quite critical, particularly during the early years of the nuclear program's development. When Pakistani scientists were struggling on a few critical issues, the Chinese were willing to swing in with support, both technical support, but also in terms of things like the provision of highly enriched uranium and various junctures, various materials that Pakistan needed to advance its program. And that's run through both from the early particularly critical periods in the early eighties, but through the nineties and beyond. Chinese scientists have, in some ways, been quite integrated in the Pakistani nuclear program, and even to this day, I think there are various technical areas in which the Chinese have been, much more discreetly than in the past, very closely involved, including even issues such as miniaturization of nukes. The other area that has been very important has been in terms of the Pakistani missile program. In fact, Pakistan's nuclear program did have fairly substantial indigenous capabilities to draw on, even if some of them were taken from elsewhere. On the ballistic missile program, Pakistan really didn't have a functioning program in the eighties, and so in the early stages, China sold missiles directly, and laterally it helped Pakistan to develop its own indigenous missile program.

Rajeswari Rajagopalan: 04:48

The India-China-Pakistan dynamics always have come into play, even though India has not really looked at the Chinese capabilities for a long time, when it looked at the short – the missile capabilities. But from the last decade, decade and a half, I think China has figured prominently in that regard, the delivery vehicles, the delivery mechanisms that China has developed, as also the kind of coalition or the cooperation that between China and Pakistan has gone into increasingly determine India's posture in this regard. So the nuclear capabilities, the nuclear delivery mechanisms that India is developing at this point of time, also the missile defense options, again, is in response to some of the Chinese capabilities in this regard as well. So the China-Pakistan cooperation is increasingly beginning to cast a shadow on what India wants to do, its policies, and postures in this regard.

Yun Sun: 05:44

When the Chinese look at South Asia, there are a couple of concerns. The first concern, of course, is the internal stability of Pakistan. If Pakistan does not stabilize, I mean, if Pakistan continues to have internal turmoil, that's not only going to affect China's ability to work with Pakistan on issues like Uyghur homeland security issues, but it's also going to affect the Chinese strategic assets in South Asia. And with a weakening Pakistan, the Chinese will be wondering, "How are we going to check and balance the rising influence of India, especially given

India's diversifying external support or external defense relationship with almost all the powers in the world: look at the United States, look at Russia, look at Japan?" So that's China's top concern, how to stabilize Pakistan, how to make Pakistan a strong and competitive member vis-a-vis India in South Asia. Then the second concern is about whether the Chinese expanding influence, or China's expansion of the sphere of influence through issues like the Belt and Road, to the softer approach such as Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in South Asia and China's navy escort mission in the Indian Ocean, through the Indian Ocean, and also in China's building of the deep sea ports in Sri Lanka, in Gwadar, and in Myanmar, are going to in some way put China and India in a confrontational position.

Andrew Small:

07:19

The CPEC, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, is a multi-billion dollar project of Chinese investments across a range of different areas in Pakistan. The figures cited range from about \$28 billion, which was the figure that was agreed when Xi Jinping visited Pakistan, to the sort of higher levels of numbers that are being quoted, particularly on the Pakistani side, the mid-50 billions. I think in any case, it is tens of billions of dollars that is being invested on the Chinese side, whatever the disputes about the specifics. The bulk of the early investments are in energy, and about 70 percent of the first wave of the investments are going to be in the energy sector, and then there's going to be various other infrastructure investments, special industrial zones, and some interconnectivity projects, fiber-optics, and a few other things, and Gwadar port itself. It's often described – the fact that it's described as a corridor is in some ways a distraction, although people often focus on the fact that there are these roots connecting Xinjiang to Gwadar port. In practice, it probably be seen more as just a large-scale investment package. Try to help Pakistan's energy sector, try to address some of the infrastructure deficits that are there, and then if these are successful, I think the intention is to be able to move ahead with broader forms of industrial cooperation.

Mushahid Hussain Syed: 08:41

China has given a vote of confidence in the future of Pakistan, its progress, its prosperity, through injection of \$46 billion worth of aid and investment in areas like energy, infrastructure, the Gwadar port, and special industrial zones. The challenges are basically security and the capacity of the Pakistani system to absorb the assistance with the kind of speed at which the development has to take place. So I think that Pakistan has a historic opportunity to join the ranks of fast-developing countries with the assistance of the world's second largest economy, that is China's, and we hope and expect that Pakistan will rise to the occasion and help fashion together a development framework that filters down to the less developed parts of Pakistan and the less developed regions.

## **7.7: “China’s Future Role in Crisis Management”**

- Yun Sun: 00:05 Well, first of all, it has to come to the essential question of what China wants to see when India and Pakistan are engaged in a strategic crisis. China does not want to see border instability along that part of the region, or that part of the Chinese border. But on the other hand, China is also firmly standing with Pakistan, meaning that China does not want to see Pakistan being put at a disadvantage when there is a security confrontation between India and Pakistan. So based on past experiences and past cases, we know that China has played the role of a crisis manager through several different approaches. So first of all, we know that China conducted “shuttle diplomacy” between Islamabad and New Delhi when such a crisis emerged. For example, in 2008, the Vice Chinese Foreign Minister engaged in shuttle diplomacy, conveying or communicating with both India and Pakistan about what needs to happen, what is China's expectation, and how to tone down or deescalate the tension along the border or the disputed area. Another way I think that people outside the region look from China is that whether China can put more pressure on Pakistan to, for example, hold off some of the radical Islamic organizations that we know are operating in Kashmir, whether China will be able to tell the Pakistani military to act more rationally. The answer to that question depends on who you talk to in China. Most likely when you ask Chinese government officials that, “Can you play the role of a crisis manager vis-a-vis Pakistan, meaning can you put enough pressure on Pakistan to make sure that Pakistan would behave rationally in a crisis scenario?”, the most likely answer you will get from the Chinese is that, “We can, but why should we?” It also depends on what the scenario is between India and Pakistan. China can be objective in the crisis scenario between India and Pakistan, but I don't think the world should expect to China to be completely neutral.
- Teresita Schaffer: 02:26 China has normally shied away from any involvement in India-Pakistan negotiations. They take the position that they're great power, and they don't deal with these petty things. Besides which, they have a special relationship with Pakistan, and they don't want to put that on the table. I think that for the kind of peacebuilding negotiation that we sometimes talk about, but have rarely had an opportunity to try out with India and Pakistan, that's going to keep China away. However, I do see the possibility of a Chinese role in some kind of future crisis management. They would not couch it as a mediating role, but there is precedent for China using its relationship with Pakistan

to move the situation off dead center. When Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, cut his trip to China short because the Chinese were talking about nothing except the Line of Control, that was a signal. He figured out that he wasn't getting anywhere.

Andrew Small: 03:50

So China has played a role in crisis management between India and Pakistan at several junctures already. I think post-nuclearization of South Asia, China has tended to take steps in these crises to try to find ways to help the two sides deescalate. And it's tended to do so in relatively close cooperation with the United States as well. Kargil was a particularly notable juncture in that respect in 1999, where China took a pretty firm line with the Pakistanis, encouraging them to pull back. In some of the other crises: Twin Peaks crisis, Mumbai. I think more of the questions have been directed at the Indian side in terms of their response. China's swung in and done its bit, sending diplomats to the two capitals, again, coordinating with other international efforts, and I think you'd see a pretty similar sort of thing in the future. India has no interest in China playing a mediating role, of course, it's not something of that nature, but given the special relationship that China has with Pakistan, they can weigh in to encourage the Pakistanis to take certain steps that they might otherwise be unwilling to take. Pakistan has learned over the decades that China will be pretty pragmatic when it comes to its own interests in any crisis in South Asia. The crises that Pakistan has precipitated and where China has seen Pakistan as culpable, have, despite the friendship between the two sides, not been situations in which China has been willing to swing in on Pakistan's behalf. And that goes all the way back to even 1965, where I think China was willing to intervene, but only on its own terms. And I think Pakistan has come to understand that there are real limits to the sorts of steps that China is willing to take. It is willing to, through these sorts of crises, continue to provide military support in the form of weapons sales, it's willing to provide diplomatic protection, and even that within certain boundaries, but in terms of full-scale Chinese intervention, I think there is an understanding in Pakistan that China will be very careful about guarding its own interests in these situations, and that if Pakistan were to attempt to catalyze China's involvement in one of these involvements, it could have a detrimental effect the broader relationship.

Thomas F. Lynch III: 06:33

I think China is badly misunderstood by too many in the West as being able to somehow step up and perform a crisis management role. I don't think China has, first and foremost, the credibility to act in such a manner. China, over the course of the last 40 years, has been viewed in India, by all stripes in the

Indian political and economic and diplomatic corps, as having sided unfailingly and in many ways, badly, with Pakistan, either at diplomatic votes and activities in the UN Security Council, in the UN in general, or in other modes and fora around the world. And that the credibility that Beijing would need to have in order to offer, or deliver, or to promise something to India to get it to stand back in a crisis moment is far too low to make any reasonable observer believe that China could act there. The second issue is one of access. And here again, China's consistent long-run pattern of being able and willing to access senior leaders, particularly those in the military intelligence in Pakistan, is way, way asymmetric compared to its access and ability to get leverage, much less an audience, with the key decisionmakers, mainly civilians, in the Indian side. So I think on both those levels, access and credibility, China is a one-legged stool. Alright? It's got both of those with Pakistan, and indeed it's cultivated that kind of access and credibility with Pakistan over time in the development of the relationship that it has there, but it does not have that kind of access or that kind of credibility with India. So as a matter of course, Chinese influence and capacity to serve as an independent broker, certainly as an autonomous, independent broker, is a deeply, deeply questionable premise and one that Western policymakers should pursue only with a very cautious kind of understanding. And certainly if China is to matter at all in crisis stability, it would have to be seen as standing shoulder-to-shoulder with some other outside agency or party, and this is something that we know just in the last fifteen or twenty years is something China has been kind of reluctant to do, that is to take a partnership role in trying to stand down or deal with major crises around the globe.

Manoj Joshi:

08:57

Because China has so far been in the South Asian region as an ally of Pakistan, in that sense it cannot play a role of a neutral party. But what China has done is that in the past crises also, barring '65, meaning in '71 and subsequently in the Kashmir crisis, it has been very circumspect in its support for Pakistan. It hasn't directly supported Pakistan in either of the crises, or even more recently with the Kargil crisis took place. The Pakistani delegation went to China, but returned emptyhanded. I think China can play a role, provided there is a clear perception that it is not kind of an ally of Pakistan. Minus that, it can only play a different kind of role. The United States is still seen as a party which is, kind of, fairly even-handed with both India and Pakistan. We don't have that perception of China. With China, that role will come purely in a kind of a transactional way where India can say, "Okay, we have an offer for you. Why don't you

step aside?” So the nature of the Chinese, Indian, and Pakistani interaction will be different from that of the United States.

Yun Sun: 10:21

The biggest distinction between the Chinese playbook and the American playbook is that on the first page of the Chinese playbook, it is going to read, “Call the Americans, and ask Americans to enhance their shuttle diplomacy and their crisis management between India and Pakistan,” and I don't think the Americans will have that first page, meaning that America will look to China for that kind of pressure or that kind of diplomacy when a crisis scenario emerges. So that reveals something about China's perception of itself in South Asia or in a crisis scenario in South Asia. China will see that China is a player, because China has a vested interest in the peace and stability of the region, but China doesn't see itself as the main responsible party when such a crisis emerges. The Chinese will see that the Americans will have a much bigger role to play, and Americans also have a much bigger stake in a conflict scenario between India and Pakistan. Whether there is any possibility for coordination and cooperation between China and the United States, in terms of a crisis scenario between India and Pakistan, meaning that China has a very close relationship with Pakistan and presumably a higher level of influence over Pakistan's decision-making, and that the Americans arguably have that effect over the Indians. So the desired formula is that, in the event of a crisis, China and the U.S. can work together to deescalate the tension.

Moeed Yusuf: 12:00

The nuclear moment is so special. The nuclear crisis moment is so special and so unique that third parties tend to work in concert with each other, tend to fall in line behind this de-escalation agenda, de-escalation before everything else, and you've seen this in South Asian crises where the Chinese, the Russians, the Brits, and everybody else has lined up behind the U.S. to try and convince India and Pakistan to de-escalate before thinking about larger foreign policy interests. And my own sense senses that that will remain intact, unless you go to a fundamentally different global structure.