

Limited War Under the Nuclear Umbrella and its Implications for South Asia

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Since the creation of India and Pakistan, both countries have been involved in several conflicts that continue to pose the risk of inadvertent war. These conflicts include the Kashmir dispute, territorial disputes such as Siachen, a nuclear arms race, and water disputes. Unlike in the past, any future war between the two countries, no matter how limited it might be, will have the potential to escalate into a full-scale nuclear war in light of the changed strategic environment. Although the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan in May 1998 have radically changed the strategic landscape in South Asia, nuclear weapons have yet to assure strategic stability in South Asia despite tall claims by various quarters. The question of stability in South Asia cannot be isolated from global conventional and nuclear weapons policies. The US, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, and to some extent Russian equation constitute a nuclear chain affecting not only the stability of South Asia but also that of other regions. Therefore, in the absence of a positive US role and the lack of a constructive approach, based on ground realities by both India and Pakistan, the likelihood of maintaining strategic stability in this region seems very bleak.

Soon after the 1998 nuclear tests by India and Pakistan, both countries formalized their respective nuclear doctrines based on divergent approaches. Pakistan's nuclear policy guidelines are security driven and are specific to the perception of threats that emanate from India. Its nuclear capability is solely for the purpose of deterrence of aggression and defence of sovereignty. In contrast, India has adopted as national policy a nuclear doctrine that has offensive designs and retains the scope for conventional war fighting. Knowing well that unlike the United States and the former Soviet Union, India and Pakistan have direct and very high stakes due to geographical contiguity, the Indian leadership has contemplated fighting and winning a limited conventional war against Pakistan. Such a limited war strategy is part of its doctrine for achieving desired political objectives by exploiting the strategic space beneath the nuclear threshold. Many scholars believe that this strategy is potentially dangerous as it has the inbuilt threat of escalation. Therefore, India's strategy of limited conventional war will continue to cause instability and uncertainty in South Asia.

In any future crises between India and Pakistan, factors like incorrect reading of the adversary's intentions, inaccurate assessment of political objectives, poor intelligence on combat strength, and unexpected conventional attacks by either side would be major sources of conflict escalation. Given the present level of the two armies, India's limited war strategy is unlikely to achieve the desired objectives in a given period in the future at any level, from "surgical or punitive strike" to a full-scale "cold start" operation. Due to geographical constraints, Pakistan would not have the flexibility to lose space in its strategically important areas. Therefore, its army would definitely fight with its full potential to stall the

* The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the policy viewpoints of the Government of Pakistan, the Pakistan Army, or the Strategic Plans Division, the organization where the author is currently working.

Indian offensive at all levels. The Indian leadership's exaggerated sense of its armed forces' capabilities is dangerous and very risky. It draws precedence from the US war against Afghanistan and Iraq and the view that if the US can launch surgical strikes against Afghanistan or Iraq, then India can strike *jihadi* camps across the Line of Control (LoC).

India, however, does not have capabilities like the United States; nor is Pakistan like Afghanistan. The Pakistani army is capable of defending its territorial boundaries; therefore, a limited war initiated by India might result in a stalemate or lead to a full-scale conventional war that would invite even more trouble.

Notwithstanding the above, military expenditures in South Asia since 1995 and especially after the 1999 Kargil conflict have rapidly increased with India's growth rate three times that of Pakistan. This disparity could enable the Indian army to employ new military tactics in future conflicts with Pakistan. Until appropriate steps are taken, Pakistan's existing critical deficiencies and growing conventional asymmetry vis a vis India could force Pakistan to lower its nuclear threshold.¹ Lowering the nuclear threshold by Pakistan would automatically create destabilizing effects in the region.

In the context of strategic stability, the factor of strategic culture also plays an important role. Ken Booth defines strategic culture as "...a distinctive and lasting set of beliefs, values and habits regarding the threat and use of force which have their roots in such fundamental influences as geo-political setting, history, and culture. These beliefs, values, and habits constitute a culture which persists over time, and exert some influence on the formation and execution of strategy."² Both India and Pakistan as nuclear weapons states will have to redefine their strategic culture and be more rational in dealing with regional issues. Development of nuclear weapons has logically taken away from both India and Pakistan the option of war to promote their foreign policy agendas and achieve political objectives. There are outstanding disputes between the two countries that need to be resolved, as crisis management will not suffice. Therefore, sincere, constructive dialogue is the only safe and risk-free option that is available to both countries to resolve their long-standing issues and bring peace and prosperity to the region.

This paper aims to analyze critically the problems and risks involved in the concept of limited conventional war under the nuclear umbrella in the Indo-Pakistan equation and its implications for stability in South Asia. Areas of interest include: 1) How do India and Pakistan perceive the concept of limited conventional war? 2) How do scholars and independent think tanks in India, Pakistan, and the West foresee a limited conventional war in South Asia? 3) Do declared and perceived nuclear policies of the two sides matter? Do they make limited war more or less likely? 4) How should nuclear weapons held by Pakistan influence its armed forces' war-fighting capabilities? 5) What would be the possible scenarios and strategy for India's conducting a limited conventional war vis a vis Pakistan? What would be its implications on regional security and stability? 6) How may one best address this issue to ensure regional stability? These are the issues for debate. The views expressed here by the author are solely his own and do not reflect those of any institution.

DEFINING LIMITED WAR CONCEPT

¹ Michael Krepon, Rodney W. Jones and Ziad Haider (eds.), *Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South Asia* (Washington, DC: The Henry L. Stimson Center, September 2004), 10.

² Ken Booth and Russell Trood (eds.), *Strategic Cultures in Asia Pacific Region* (London: McMillan, 1999), 4.

The concept of limited war goes back to the 19th century when military theorists underscored the determinative relationship between political ends and military means. Both 19th century theorist Clausewitz and his 20th century successor Liddell Hart were committed advocates of the use of limited war or limited force as opposed to total war. In the 19th century, when concepts of blitzkrieg and wars of annihilation dominated military thoughts and policies, Clausewitz opposed such concepts.³ He stated, “Political objectives, as the original motives of the war, should be the standard for determining both the aim of the military force and also the aim of effort to be made.”⁴ With the advancement in automatic warfare in the middle of World War II, Liddell Hart realised that because of the destructive nature of the weapons, wars should be limited; however, he did not advocate limited war as a strategy. Later after the development of nuclear weapons, Liddell Hart came up with the concept of limited war. He said, “Where both sides possess atomic power, total war makes nonsense” and any unlimited war “waged with atomic power would make worse than nonsense; it would be mutually suicidal.”⁵ He goes on to say “any total war, or even the preparation for it, is likely to carry more evils in its train, without bearing any good promise in the event of victory.”⁶

Robert E. Osgood defined limited war as follows:

A limited war is one in which the belligerents restrict the purpose for which they fight to concrete, well-defined objectives that do not demand the utmost military effort of which the belligerents are capable and that can be accommodated in a negotiated settlement...The battle is confined to a local geographical area and directed against selected targets - primarily those of direct military importance...It permits their economic, social and political patterns of existence to continue without serious disruption.⁷

In another study, Osgood defines limited war as a war that was “to be fought for ends far short of the complete subordination of one state’s will to another’s, using means that involve far less than the total military resources of the belligerents and leave the civilian life and the armed forces of the belligerents largely intact.”⁸ Limited war is also defined as a “military encounter” in which the two warring sides “see each other on opposing sides and in which the effort of each falls short of the attempt to use all of its power to destroy the other.”⁹ According to Henry Kissinger, limited war might be a “war confined to a defined geographical area, or war that does not utilize the entire available weapons system (such as refraining from the use of thermonuclear weapons). It may be a war which utilizes entire weapons system but it limits its employment to specific targets.”¹⁰

The available definitions of limited war invariably exist in western literature and especially in the United States. The primary aim of the definitions, which emerged after World War II, seem to have focused on military actions that might not threaten the immediate destruction of the US and its allies on

³ Robert E. Osgood, *Limited War Revisited* (Westview Press: Boulder, Colorado, USA, 1979), 2.

⁴ Howard, Michael and Paret, (eds.), Carl von Clausewitz: *On War* (Princeton University Press: New Jersey, 1976), 81.

⁵ Basil Henry, Liddell Hart, *The Revolution in Warfare* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1947), 36.

⁶ Brian Bond, *Liddell Hart: A Study of His Military Thought* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1977), 164.

⁷ Robert E. Osgood, *Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 1, 2.

⁸ Osgood, *Limited War Revisited*, 3.

⁹ Morton H. Halperin, *Limited War in the Nuclear Age* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1963), 2.

¹⁰ Henry Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1957), 139.

one end and the former Soviet Union and Communist China on the other.¹¹ The acquisition of nuclear weapons by the former Soviet Union rendered pointless the US threat of “massive retaliation” and established deterrence. Analysts such as Robert Osgood then introduced the limited war concept to keep the Cold War “cold.”

In the Indo-Pakistan context, limited war theory is acquiring highly placed proponents, gaining its own doctrinal respectability, and even being advertised with historical precedents. As a doctrinal response to deter and threaten Pakistan, Indian security planners have regurgitated the American limited war concept dating back to the nineteen fifties.¹² The strategy was publicly debated and Indian think tanks have accordingly dovetailed the existing definitions of limited war with their own strategy with slight modifications. From the Pakistani perspective, the limited war concept has not been fully debated at an appropriate level. Pakistani analysts have not worked in this area probably because Pakistan’s nuclear policy guidelines do not foresee any prospect of fighting a limited conventional war in a nuclear environment against India.

While presenting his views on the concept of limited war, General A.M. Vohra, former Vice Chief of Indian Army, explained that the occupation of countries is no longer acceptable. The Clausewitzian dictum that “war is a continuation of policy by other means” would not work in the new political and military environments. Total wars are obsolete and unconditional surrender is no longer realistic. The parameters for a limited war include setting limited political objectives for which the application of force has to be tailored accordingly; achieving these objectives as early as possible without bringing the enemy down to his knee; and not missing the opportunity to bargain and bring an end to hostilities.¹³

Dr. Chari believes that the nuclear factor has rendered “total war unthinkable.” He claims that limited war has become a necessity and must be central to the military input provided to decision-makers as an option to ensure conflict limitation. If India does not address this aspect in its strategic and operational planes, it would be negligent of its mandate.¹⁴

According to Jasjit Singh, a well-known Indian scholar, nuclear weapons have limited the aim, scope, and extent of war among states that possess such capabilities because of the tremendously destructive potential of such weapons. While giving his perspective of limited war in the Indo-Pakistan context, he explains that the options for India would be to either apply military power spaced out in time and concentrated in space, or stretched out in space and concentrated in time. In other words, Indian defense doctrine and strategy must seek to apply calibrated force for punitive effect, which does not have a destabilizing effect on the adversary.¹⁵

N.K. Pant, an Indian analyst, explains the difference between limited war and total war. He believes that a limited war can be limited in geography and have restricted objectives. Such a concept is contrary to the idea of total war in which the contenders expect total victory at any cost. Total war

¹¹ Seymour J. Deitchman, *Limited War and American Defence Policy* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1964), 13.

¹² Firdaus Ahmed, “Limited nuclear war, limitless anxiety,” *India Together*, March 2003, (www.indiatogether.org/2003/mar/fah-limited.htm).

¹³ A.M. Vohra, “Limited War,” *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, Article no. 1446 (July 31, 2004).

¹⁴ Firdaus Ahmed, “The Impetus behind Limited War,” *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, Article no. 800 (July 24, 2004).

¹⁵ Jasjit Singh, “Dynamics of Limited War,” *Strategic Analysis*, (October 2000), 1206. See also Jasjit Singh, “Doctrine and strategy under the N-umbrella,” *The Indian Express*, June 5, 2004.

necessitates the mass mobilisation of national resources and the orientation of all the organs of state for a national war effort.¹⁶ The author believes that a limited conventional war can be defined in terms of political objectives, timeframe, geographical confines, and resource employment. In the Indo-Pakistan context, a limited conventional war can be defined as a “war designed to achieve specified political objectives by applying compatible resources in a critical area and by acting smartly in a manner so as to leave bare minimum incentive for the opponent to react with nuclear weapons without taking definite risk to suffer more than gains.”¹⁷

Limited Conventional War: Indian Perspective

India has long been frustrated by its inability to control the indigenous freedom movement in Kashmir. Following the Kargil conflict, then Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes declared that the Kargil conflict has shown that the nuclearization of India and Pakistan has not made conventional war obsolete; rather it simply imposed another dimension on the way warfare could be conducted.¹⁸ Mr. Fernandes made the outlandish claim that nuclear wars “can deter only the use of nuclear weapons, but not all and any war” and under the nuclear shadow, “conventional war remained feasible though with definite limitations if escalation across the nuclear threshold was to be avoided.”¹⁹ Elsewhere, he also stressed that “Pakistan cannot think of using nuclear weapons. India could take a strike, survive and hit back; as a result, Pakistan would be finished. Therefore, India can take a chance to initiate conventional war with Pakistan.”²⁰ According to M.V. Ramana, “it was a reflection of thinking that had been popularized by the US nuclear strategists (or to put it more bluntly, psychopaths).”²¹ During the 2002 standoff, India’s then Home Minister, L.K. Advani, asserted that India would win the proxy war.

In a panel discussion at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a Washington DC-based think tank, Dr. Chari argued that nuclear weapons would continue to deter large-scale conventional war in South Asia, but they would not deter low intensity conflict. He was critical of the new thinking of India’s military and political leaders who believe that limited conventional wars can be fought and won without escalation to broader conventional or nuclear war.²² He stated, “The danger is that these strategies depend upon accurate perceptions and complete rationality from both sides...neither of which can be relied upon. Leaders in both countries are often motivated by political rather than security concerns.”²³ He further argued that in absence of credible answers to these questions, limited war in a nuclearized environment was unwise and that urging its feasibility was irrational and irresponsible. He

¹⁶ Wg Cdr NK Pant, “Prospects of a Limited War in South Asia,” *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies New Delhi*, Article no. 320 (February 2, 2000), (www.ipcs.org).

¹⁷ Note: Author’s own perception of limited war in nuclear environment.

¹⁸ M.V Ramana, “The Climate in South Asia,” *Lines*, (August 2002). See also Miriam Rajkumar, “Limited” War?” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, (May 22, 2002).

¹⁹ *The Hindu*, January 25, 2000. See also a Report, “India and Pakistan are Moving Towards the Deployment of Nuclear Weapons,” published in *Frontline*, Volume 19: Issue 05, (March 2-15, 2002).

²⁰ *Ibid.* See also Jasjit Singh, *Asia’s New Dawn: The Challenge to Peace and Security*, (New Delhi: Knowledge World, 2000), xvii, xviii. See also *Hindustan Time*, December 30, 2001.

²¹ M.V. Ramana, “Op-Ed: Indo-Pak Military Crises: Some Fallouts,” *Daily Times – Site Edition*, (Islamabad), July 25, 2002.

²² P.R.Chari, “South Asia: On the Brink,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, March 16, 2000. (A panel discussion on “South Asia: On the Brink” was conducted in Carnegie Endowment for International Peace on March 16, 2000).

²³ *Ibid.*

stated that he hoped that this hypothesis would not be tested, since India had much to lose and little to gain.²⁴

The Strategic Foresight Group from the International Centre for Peace Initiative believes that conflicts over specific issues such as Jammu and Kashmir or water in the future will be limited to border areas only. This issue will never gain the kind of prominence that will risk Pakistan's own survival. According to this group, the possibilities of war between India and Pakistan are likely on two fronts: first, "if Pakistan and India extend the conflict beyond specific issue like Jammu and Kashmir...and secondly, if terrorism or violent conflicts spread to other parts of India...India will be tempted to attack Punjab...that will lead to full-scale war."²⁵

According to Dr. Chari, the 1999 Kargil conflict and the 2001-2002 Indo-Pakistan border confrontations provide exception to the empirical rule that nuclear weapons engender caution between adversarial states. He noted that in history, apart from 1969 Ussuri River clashes between the Soviet Union and China, the Kargil war remains the only case where two declared nuclear weapons states have engaged in armed conflict. The Indo-Pakistan border confrontation (Kargil conflict) was avoided merely because of good luck and due to the involvement of the United States. Contrary to the thesis that has gained currency in India that limited wars can be fought under the rubric of nuclear deterrence, Dr. Chari is of the view that limited war in the present state of Indo-Pakistan nuclear relations cannot be pursued as a national strategy. Limited war theory remains untested and the question remains unanswered. Limited war has the potential to escalate across the nuclear threshold and therefore is essentially unworkable.²⁶

Contrary to Dr. Chari's views, there are strong statements from within India after the Kargil conflict in support of surgical operations across the LoC. A former Chief of Indian Air Staff rubbished Pakistan's threat of nuclear response by saying that "a nuclear capability pitted against another can act as a deterrent only for nuclear warfare, not against conventional warfare."²⁷ Dr. Rajesh Basrur holds that Indian frustration over Pakistan's continued support for Kashmiri separatists combined with anger at Pakistan's Kargil escapade has led India to consider limited war options.²⁸ After the Kargil conflict, India's then Chief of Army Staff, General V.P. Malik, became the leading propagator of implementing the concept of limited war in the Indo-Pakistan equation. During January 2000, he advised his government that limited war was the order of the future and national security should be a part of foreign policy. He said, "Military operations, diplomacy and domestic environment would have to orchestrate with fine judgment for a decisive outcome."²⁹ At another occasion while speaking at a seminar titled "The Challenges of Limited War," the General said, "In future, there was greater likelihood of limited wars and

²⁴ P.R. Chari, "Limited War against the Nuclear Backdrop," *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, Article no. 768 (June 2002).

²⁵ Strategic Foresight Group, "The Future of Pakistan," *International Centre for Peace Initiative*, 2002.

²⁶ P.R. Chari, *Nuclear Stability in Southern Asia* (Manohar Publishers & Distributors: New Delhi, 2003), 134, 142, 144, 145, 146.

²⁷ "Air Strike a Must to Fix Pak: Tipnis" *The Hindu Express*, June 22, 2002.

²⁸ Rajesh Basrur, "Strategic Stability in South Asia," CCC, Monterey, USA, June 29 to July 1, 2004 (A panel discussion on "Strategic Stability in South Asia" was conducted at CCC, Monterey, USA, from June 29 to July 1, 2004.), (www.ceip.org/files/evevts/Conf2000panelssouthasiabrink.asp?p=8).

²⁹ Ayaz Ahmed Khan, "Preparing for Limited War" *Defence Journal*, (March 2000).

they could take place without warning.”³⁰ He asserted that nuclear weapons have neither eliminated nor reduced the risk of the outbreak of hostilities.³¹

While responding to a question during an interview with Sonika Gupta and Arpit Rajain, General Malik explained that there is space for initiating conventional war with Pakistan, but the politico-military objective must be very clear. He believes that Pakistan would not trigger a nuclear war and face the consequences of Indian nuclear retaliation over the counter-terrorism issue.³² At another occasion, General Malik emphasized that when a nation is targeted by what it perceives to be state sponsored proxy war, “when pushed to the wall it is tempted to use its conventional forces to bring the proxy into open rather than fighting with limitations of no war no peace situation.”³³ He further argues that, “space exists between proxy war/low intensity conflict and a nuclear umbrella within which a limited conventional war is a distinct possibility.”³⁴ While elaborating the concept he explains, “Escalation ladders would be carefully climbed in a carefully controlled ascent by both protagonists;” however, M.V Ramana opposed General Malik and said, “Given the confusion and chaos of war, such ideas are wishful thinking at best.”³⁵

Jasjit Singh believes that it is the strategic space below a nuclear exchange where conventional military power has to be applied. At the upper end of the conflict, only nuclear weapons can deter nuclear weapons. From his point of view, nuclear weapons impose significant limitations on the conduct of war that did not exist until 1987. He suggests that defence strategy should be able to apply punitive (conventional military) force without inviting an excessive response like a credible nuclear threat or use. Thus, based on this principle, the options for India would be to either apply military power spaced out in time and concentrated in space, or stretched out in space and concentrated in time. In other words, the Indian defence doctrine and strategy must seek to apply calibrated force for punitive effect, which does not have a destabilising effect on the adversary. The key is that the onus of escalation should be placed on the adversary, but at every step, he should find that we would block his choice and/or impose a high level of punishment as compared to what he could inflict through escalation.³⁶

An Indian ex-Director General of Military Operation, General V.R. Raghavan explains that given the asymmetry of armed forces and equipment between India and Pakistan, there is a real danger that any kind of war between the two countries can result in the use of nuclear weapons. He claims that the perceptions of political and military leadership in India that a war can be fought and won without crossing the nuclear threshold are not only unclear but also underestimate the risk of nuclear escalation inherent in an Indo-Pakistan military conflict. Raghavan argues, “There are four factors which can turn any conventional conflict between the two countries, however limited in nature that may be, into acquiring a nuclear dimension. One, politico-military objectives that India considers limited might be considered

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ V R Raghavan, “South Asia’ Manipulation Deterrence Can Lead to Adverse Spin-off,” *Daily Times-Site Edition* (Islamabad), July 4, 2002.

³² Sanika Gupta and Arpit Rajain, *Stability in Southern Asia* (Manohar Publishers & Distributors: New Delhi, 2003), 156.

³³ V.P. Malik, “Strategic Stability in South Asia.” CCC, Monterey, USA, June 29 to July 1, 2004. (A panel discussion on “Strategic Stability in South Asia” was conducted at CCC, Monterey, USA, from June 29 to July 1, 2004), (www.ceip.org/files/evevts/Conf2000panelssouthasiabrink.asp?p=8).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ M.V Ramana, “The Climate in South Asia,” *Lines*, (August 2002).

³⁶ Jasjit Singh, “Doctrine and Strategy Under the N-umbrella,” *The Indian Express*, June 5, 2004.

unlimited and unaccepted by Pakistan. Secondly, Pakistan's greater inclination towards the possible use of nuclear weapons. Thirdly, inadequate command and control structure, deficient early warning arrangements and perceptions on either side about a doubtful capacity to launch a retaliatory 'second strike' send mixed signals, which enhance the risk of nuclear exchange. Finally, India's operational doctrine that envisages capturing vital Pakistani territory in a future military campaign in a bid to avoid nuclear first strike may prove counter productive, as it could inadvertently encourage a more rapid- and possibly less considered-nuclear response from Pakistan."³⁷

A. Sridharan comes up with yet another idea. He believes that in the nuclear environment, limited war may be the only option left for India, though this option can escalate into a total war. However, that is where the role of the world community comes to play. Interestingly, he poses a question to himself: if a limited war escalates into a total war, can India or Pakistan achieve decisive victories or will it be a stalemate once again? He himself replies that the answer is "stalemate."³⁸

Suba Chandran, a Research Officer with the New Delhi-based Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, has raised a number of questions for Indian policy makers to reply to in his article, "An Inquiry into Limited War-II; Unlimited Questions."³⁹ He explains that were India to launch a war with limited political and military objectives, what would happen if it fails to achieve the objectives through its military and diplomatic offensive in a limited period? Secondly, most calculations on limited war are based on the premise that there are only two actors involved, but what happens if a vital third actor involves itself in a major terrorist attack on an institution or an individual of vital political importance? Lastly, what if Pakistan decides to escalate the conflict to a higher level after it realises that keeping the war limited is not in its favour?⁴⁰

Limited Conventional War: Pakistani Perspective

The concept of deterrence is a key factor in the perceptions of the two countries. In Kashmir, Pakistan gives moral support to the ongoing freedom struggle, which India regards as a low intensity war that Pakistan is conducting under a nuclear umbrella. According to Feroz Hassan Khan, India believes that asymmetrical assured destruction will provide an opportunity for limited conventional war by assuming that it possesses escalation control over Pakistan. Pakistan, therefore, has not foreclosed the use of nuclear weapons as a last resort.⁴¹ Dr. Rifaat Hussain of the Pakistan National Defence College believes that nuclear weapons and conventional forces were crucial in deterring India from prosecuting a limited war as a response to the Kargil operation or the December 2001 terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in New Delhi. Today nuclear weapons are central to Pakistani strategic thoughts, especially

³⁷ Atul Aneja, "Limited War Between India, Pakistan Can Lead to Nuclear Conflict," *The Hindu*, March 26, 2002. See also V R Raghavan, "Limited War and Nuclear Escalation in South Asia," *The Non-Proliferation Review*, (Fall-Winter 2001). (The paper was written by the author while he was a visiting fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University).

³⁸ A. Sridharan, "Victory or Stalemate?" *Sulekha*, June 7, 2002.

³⁹ Suba Chandran, "An Inquiry into Limited War-II; Unlimited Questions", *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, New Delhi, October 4, 2002.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Feroz Hassan Khan, *South Asia in 2020: Future Strategic Balance and Alliances* (Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) US War College, November 2002), 171.

with regard to deterring India from initiating large-scale military operations against Pakistan.⁴² While commenting on a report on the likelihood of a restricted war between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue, Pakistan's ex-Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, said, "There is no concept of limited war between two rival countries. If a country starts a war on a limited scale, there is no guarantee that it would remain limited. Any thing can happen."⁴³

Air Marshal (Retd.) Ayaz Ahmed Khan holds that Indian military planners are seriously considering limited war options along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir, after having raised a new corps (14 Corps) and reinforced its forces (15 and 16 Corps) south of the Zojila pass.⁴⁴ Dr Shireen M. Mazari explains that the external threat for Pakistan primarily emanates from India and has two dimensions: all out conventional/nuclear war, and low conflict and/or limited war. She concluded that Kargil conflict signaled the advent of limited war into the Indo-Pakistan conflict equation.⁴⁵

While responding to questions during an interview related to the advent of nuclear weapons in South Asia, Dr. Pervez Hoodbhoy was very critical of both India and Pakistan. He explained that since the nuclear tests of 1998, we have seen two full-blown Indo-Pak confrontations. Because of recent crises, India has decided to prepare for conducting a "limited war" against Pakistan. He explained that possession of nuclear weapons gave a false sense of security to Pakistan and encouraged it into adventurism in Kashmir. From his point of view, historians will record this war as the first that was actually caused by nuclear weapons. However, he emphasized that the options to settle Kashmir through adventurism are sharply limited and the risk of mutual annihilation is very real. He further explained that Pakistan's nuclear weapons worked since 1987; however, he questioned whether it would continue to work in all circumstances. What would happen if an Islamic *jihadi* commits some huge atrocity, which turns India into a mad bull dashing blindly into a nuclear-armed Pakistan?⁴⁶

In his article, "Securing nuclear peace," that appeared in the *Daily News* on October 5, 1999, Mr. Agha Shahi, former Foreign Minister of Pakistan, highlighted the importance of nuclear deterrence and explained that there is no empirical evidence in history, with the exception of small conventional skirmishes, where the nuclear factor has not worked. Nuclear deterrence remained intact throughout the Cold War despite US supremacy over the USSR. Both superpowers did not take the risk because the possibility of even one missile getting through would have caused unbearable damage. Nuclear deterrence between India and Pakistan has also worked since mid-1980s. Agha Shahi quoted Kenneth Waltz, who argues that, "nuclear weapons make the cost of war seem frighteningly high and thus discourage states from starting any war that might lead to the use of nuclear weapons."⁴⁷ The inference drawn from this argument is that initiation of any type of war has the potential to drag the opponents into a bloody war.

Air Commodore Khalid Banuri, Additional Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Affairs Directorate, SPD, believes that the nuclear policies of both India and Pakistan do affect the idea as well as

⁴² Rifaat Hussain, "Strategic Stability in South Asia", CCC, Monterey, USA, June 29 to July 1, 2004.

⁴³ *The News* (Islamabad), May 1, 2000.

⁴⁴ Khan, "Preparing for Limited War."

⁴⁵ Shireen M Mazari, "Concept & Nature of Conventional & Nuclear Deterrence," *Defense Journal*, (November 2000).

⁴⁶ Interview with Dr. Pervez Hoodbhoy, "Deterrence Will Not Always Work," *India's National Magazine*, Volume 19: Issue 12, (June 18-21, 2002), (www.flonnet.com/fl1912/19121250.htm).

⁴⁷ Agha Shahi, Zulfiqar Ali Khan and Abdul Sattar, "Securing nuclear peace," *The News* (Islamabad), October 5, 1999. See also A.M. Vohra, "Limited War," *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, New Delhi, Article no. 1446, (July 31, 2004).

the execution of conventional limited war. He argues, “Not even the aggressor can assure that a limited conventional war, skirmish, and conflict will not escalate into a full conventional war with a possibility of further escalating into a nuclear exchange situation.”⁴⁸

A Pakistani official based in Washington DC has a different view of limited conventional war in the Indo-Pakistan equation. He believes that there is no strategic space, as propagated by V.P. Malik, which India could exploit through limited conventional war. The escalation ladders as suggested by V.P. Malik could only be carefully climbed in a carefully controlled ascent by both protagonists provided required space is available. Because of geographical constraints, only tactical space is available and even if India manages to capture that space, it would not serve its envisaged limited political objectives. He concluded that any conventional war initiated by India might be limited from an Indian point of view, but the same may not be considered limited by Pakistan. Therefore, the initiation of such an operation by India in the near future would straight away lead to a full-scale conventional war.⁴⁹

In an article that appeared in the *Daily News* on September 7, 2000, General (Retd.) Javid Nasir, former Director-General Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), argued that the Indian government under certain pressure is likely to strike across the LoC and make gains with their numerically superior force. In return, Pakistan would probably exercise the repost option. The eruption of nuclear war, according to General, “will probably remain very high.” He also emphasised that “India may be a billion plus nation with six times Pakistan’s GDP, but in the prevalent nuclear environment, such superiority is meaningless.”⁵⁰

Maria Sultan, Deputy Director, South Asian Strategic Stability Unit, University of Bradford, argues that Pakistan does not believe in the concept of limited war. The conventional imbalance will lead to a situation where if India launches a smaller operation on the Pakistani side, it would be read as significant threat, having great impact from Pakistan’s point of view. The conflict may lead to a nuclear situation eventually going through the conventional run.⁵¹

Another eminent scholar concluded that Pakistan’s first use of nuclear weapons most likely would be on an invading adversary’s columns within its territory in defensive mode to deny the adversary the incentive for escalation. A limited war doctrine is thus not deemed enough as nuclearization implies more than limited war.⁵² Limitation is a value in itself. With the requisite command and control structure in place, India gives itself a flexible response capability, and it requires what in nuclear theory is understood as “escalation dominance.” Leveraging escalation dominance in this manner, India can ensure limitation in war, even a nuclear one. However, he believes that this theory will not be practicable in the Indo-Pakistan equation.⁵³ While speaking at an international seminar marking the first anniversary of India and Pakistan’s nuclear tests, Rifaat Hussain explained that “nuclear deterrence is robust when leaders on both sides fear war and are aware of each other’s fear.”⁵⁴ He further explained that as Indian and Pakistani leaders contemplate integrating nuclear weapons into their strategy, doctrine and security

⁴⁸ Khalid Banuri was contacted by the author for his views on October 19, 2004.

⁴⁹ A formal discussion with Brig. Shafqaat Ahmed in Washington, D.C. October 29, 2004.

⁵⁰ Javid Nasir, “Possibility of Nuclear War,” *The News* (Islamabad), September 7, 2000.

⁵¹ Maria Sultan was contacted by the author for her views on October 18, 2004.

⁵² Firdaus Ahmed, “Limited Nuclear War, Limitless Anxiety,” *India Together*, March 2003, (www.indiatogether.org/2003/mar/fah-limited.htm).

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Rifaat Hussain, “Stability in the Nuclear Context,” *The News* (Islamabad), September 5, 1999.

structures, they would do well to remember John Mueller's observation that, "nuclear weapons have changed little except for ways of talking, gesturing and spending money."⁵⁵

Some of the Indian analysts, especially those involved in policy-making, have not raised questions as to how limited war once initiated would be kept limited. They have not proposed any plausible explanations as to how the strategic space below a nuclear exchange will be exploited and objectives attained without hurting the other side's strategic interests. Limited war in the nuclear environment should not be based on mathematical calculation. One can calculate tangible factors affecting the war, but it is extremely difficult to give a clear assessment of intangible factors. The state of mind on either side may change at any time depending upon the availability of intelligence, uncertainties, domestic pressures, and the nature of the crises. The "redlines" which Indian and Pakistani leaders might have contemplated for their nuclear threshold do not exist on the ground. Therefore, no one can guess correctly as to how the decision makers on both sides may react to each other's moves. Given Pakistan's geographical constraints and asymmetry in its conventional weapons vis a vis India, one may not expect Pakistan to adhere to the set process of escalation involving 44 rungs that range from limited crises to full-scale thermonuclear war, as suggested by Herman Kahn. It would be very pertinent here to quote Clausewitz. He notes, "So we see how, from the very outset, the absolute, the 'mathematical' as it is called, no longer has any firm place in military calculations, from the outset there is an interplay of possibilities, probabilities, good and bad luck, which...makes war of all branches of human activity the most like a gambling game."⁵⁶

In theory, two escalation control policies are possible. The first is to have "escalation matching" capabilities: forces that can fight a war at whatever levels the enemy choose to fight. The other policy is "escalation dominance" that refers to having superiority at every possible level of combat. It is hoped that escalation dominance would keep wars limited if they occur and would minimize their likelihood.⁵⁷ Neither policy can ensure that escalation will be successfully controlled, which is essential to averting a nuclear catastrophe. The situation in South Asia is even worse; the glass is half-full on one side and half-empty on the other. It makes the situation more precarious. Because of a number of limitations, Pakistan may apply the theory as explained by Henry A. Kissinger who concluded that, "A war of attrition, even if it were technically feasible, cannot be in the interest of the weaker. Against a numerically superior opponent, the sensible strategy would be attacking...."⁵⁸ Increasing the conventional gap is bound to result in a lowering of Pakistan's nuclear threshold thus reducing the time for diplomacy to play its role.

There is a general feeling among scholars that the Kargil conflict did not escalate because India exercised restraint. This theory may be correct to some extent; however, the author believes that ground realities point to a different conclusion. The real credit for not escalating the conflict should go to Pakistan, which did not give a matching response to the Indian counter offensive by keeping its air force and other regular forces away from the battlefield. During this conflict, India provoked Pakistan by alerting and mobilizing its forces along the international border (IB) and by shooting down an unarmed

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Roger Parkinson, *Clausewitz: A Biography* (New York: Stein and Day, 1971), 312-313.

⁵⁷ The Harvard Nuclear Study Group, *Living with Nuclear Weapons* (New York: Bantam Books, 1983), 147-148.

⁵⁸ Henry A. Kissinger, "American Strategic Doctrine and Diplomacy," in Michael Howard (ed.), *The Theory and Practice of War* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1965), 282.

naval reconnaissance aircraft flying well within the boundaries of Pakistan killing a number of senior officers onboard. The author believes that it was probably not responsible behavior or the threat of nuclear weapons that restrained India from undertaking a full-scale conventional war against Pakistan during the Kargil conflict and 2001/2002 standoff. Rather, vulnerabilities in its conventional forces restricted India's options from going beyond a certain level.

Rodney W. Jones's arguments regarding the Kargil conflict also support the author's contentions. He explains that although India was praised abroad for its restraint policy during the Kargil conflict, the fact of the matter was that it had alerted and mobilized its forces along the border with Pakistan, implicitly threatening to expand the conflict and even to blockade Karachi, reflecting the escalatory danger-underlying brinkmanship.⁵⁹ India is now preparing to remove all those vulnerabilities that existed during the Kargil conflict so that in any future war with Pakistan, it will not run short of options and will be able to undertake limited conventional war as one of the options without hesitation and losing time. It is generally believed that like the Cuban Missile Crisis, fortune also played a role in the Kargil conflict. Wisdom demands that India and Pakistan should learn from the past crises and minimize their reliance on luck while dealing with delicate issues related to nuclear weapons.

According to the author's assessment, the initiation of a limited conventional war by India against Pakistan was probably possible during 1999. India could have still taken the risk of conducting a conventional war in 2002 on the assumption and judgment that Pakistan's nuclear command and control system were not sufficiently robust for accurate launching of nuclear weapons. In the future, however, India will have no doubt about the accuracy and effectiveness of Pakistan's nuclear weapons and its delivery system. Notwithstanding the above, India might still undertake a conventional war against Pakistan to achieve limited political objectives on the assumption that Pakistan would be self-deterred from initiating a nuclear war against India. However, at the same time India would also be convinced that it may have to fight a nuclear war at the end of the day because India's limited political objectives may not be considered limited from the Pakistani perspective. The fact of the matter is that a nuclear war is too catastrophic to risk. Therefore, it is presumed that there can be no conventional war between India and Pakistan either, as a conventional war has inherent potential for escalation beyond the nuclear threshold.

Limited Conventional War: Western View

Dr. Stephen Philip Cohen, a renowned South Asian affairs' scholar, argues that there will be no breakthrough in Indo-Pakistan relations, but no war either. The region will see frequent crises, but nuclear deterrence will remain robust, and there will be little likelihood of a pre-emptive attack by either side. Nonetheless, there will be continued uncertainty and ambiguity over different escalation scenarios. He believes that it will remain unclear to outside analysts as to where Pakistan's red lines are drawn, the crossing of which would trigger a nuclear response should India retaliate against terrorist bases in Pakistan. Notwithstanding the above, he does not rule out the possibility of a general settlement on Kashmir even if it is an agreement to disagree.⁶⁰ On another occasion, when he was asked a question regarding the risk of nuclear weapons in South Asia, he replied, "there may be an overconfidence that

⁵⁹ Rodney W. Jones, "Pakistan's Nuclear Posture," *DAWN* (Karachi), September 14, 1999.

⁶⁰ Rajesh M. Basrur and Stephen Philip Cohen, *South Asia in 2020: Future Strategic Balance and Alliances* (Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) US War College, November 2002), 128, 129,130,134.

nuclear threats can be manipulated for political purposes, or that nuclear weapons stabilize the relationship. The risk of escalation because of wrong signals, misperceptions and bad intelligence is unquantifiable, but not low.”⁶¹

During the concluding session of debate on “Indo-Pakistan Peace Process: Taking it Forward” held at New Delhi, Dr. Cohen argued that the development of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan has made war less likely but at the same time also has made peace less likely. Neither state can afford a real war or coerce the other side into changing its long-standing position.⁶² On the limited war concept in South Asia, Robert Hathaway, Director of the South Asia Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center, opined that India could be tempted to launch a limited conventional war against Pakistan in two scenarios. The first is if a Kargil-like situation arises again. The second is if the ongoing dialogues between India and Pakistan fails and the situation in Kashmir once again goes downhill due to the large-scale infiltration of *jihadi* groups. He argued that he was uncomfortable with the idea of limited war because history is full of such examples where small issues erupted into full-scale wars. The limited war concept did not work in past. He emphasized that no one wanted to see a general war in 1940, but it happened, and therefore it is very important to control crises to avoid war between India and Pakistan.⁶³

Michael Krepon, Founding President of the Stimson Center, in his recently published book, *Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South Asia*, quotes a number of renowned deterrence theorists including Bernard Brodie, Barry Posen, Thomas Schelling, Morton Halperin and Robert Osgood whose arguments on limited war theory are generally along similar lines. They believe that escalation rests on the mutual understanding, willingness to play by the same general rules, and agreement to fight for limited stakes between nuclear rivals. As Osgood subsequently acknowledged, these conditions did not apply during the Cold War. It is very difficult to put this theory in practice as the fog of war increases the likelihood of inadvertent escalation. In the same context, Krepon questions whether strategists and military planners in South Asia have had more success in developing a plausible theory of and military plans for escalation control.⁶⁴ The inference drawn from this question is that it is too early to assume that India and Pakistan have achieved a level of expertise where they can fight limited wars for achieving political objectives short of nuclear escalation.

During a panel discussion on “South Asia: On the Brink” held at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in 2000, Ashley Tellis argued that South Asian crises are the outcome of Indian and Pakistani beliefs about nuclear weapons and the conflict in Kashmir. The intersection of these beliefs can have dangerous consequences. According to him, India believes that Pakistan, particularly under the leadership of General Pervez Musharraf, is a dangerous, risk-taking state, and its nuclear capability provides an umbrella under which low intensity operations in Kashmir can be conducted. He believes that the Pakistani leadership considers the resolution of the Kashmir dispute as the non-negotiable centrepiece of relations with India, and accordingly it has followed a Kashmir-centred foreign policy. As a result,

⁶¹ Stephen Philip Cohen, “Countries and Regions: Pakistan,” *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, New Delhi, 8 March 2001.

⁶² Stephen P. Cohen, “Indo-Pakistan Peace Process: Taking it Forward”, *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, October 2004.

⁶³ A formal discussion held with Mr. Robert Hattaway on November 16, 2004.

⁶⁴ Michael Krepon, Rodney W. Jones and Ziad Haider (eds.), *Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South Asia*, 148,149.

India is considering two options in response to Pakistani aggression: a limited war strategy that would meet the Pakistani offensive with force, and a matching response with a small force to operate across the border.⁶⁵

Michael Krepon identifies deterrence theorists as belonging to two different schools of thought. The first school welcomes a nuclearized subcontinent and believes that nuclear deterrence will promote peace and create stability. Subscribers to this school of thought include J.N Dixit, former Indian Army Chief K. Sundarji, former Pakistani Army Generals K.M. Arif and M. Aslam Beg, Dr. A.Q. Khan, and Devin T. Hagerty. He termed this group as “deterrence optimists.” The second school of thought contends that the situation in South Asia is far from stable and could lead to inadvertent escalation. Nuclear weapons may make decision-makers on both sides more cautious, but the sources of conflict will remain immune to the nuclear threat. Krepon terms adherents of this theory “deterrence pessimists” who include Robert Jervis, Neil Joeck, V.R. Raghavan, P.R.Chari, Talat Hussain, N.B. Naqvi and Ashley Tellis. Krepon himself is part of this group.⁶⁶

Peter D. Feaver is critical of India’s options for exploiting strategic space for limited, punitive military actions against Pakistan. He argues that “for India to adopt this theory as an operational premise is exceedingly dangerous. Indian attempts to launch punitive, preventive or pre-emptive conventional strikes whether localized along the LoC or specially targeting Pakistan’s nuclear forces and facilities would trigger a Pakistani retaliation.”⁶⁷ Dr. Cohen, while talking in panel discussion on “South Asia: On the Brink” explained that Pakistan’s withdrawal from Kargil had little to do with nuclear calculations and much more to do with domestic politics.⁶⁸ The author asked Ellen Laipson, President of the Henry L. Stimson Center, during a formal discussion whether there was space available for undertaking a limited war in South Asia. She responded positively pointing to the Kargil conflict as an example. She argued that since the possibility of escalation was always there, that is why mostly the scholars do not commit and encourage such initiatives.⁶⁹

On another occasion, Ashley J. Tellis opined that in the presence of nuclear weapons, the concept of achieving unlimited aims through conventional war in South Asia has become obsolete, at least in the first instance. Still, the challenge for managing limited aims and conventional wars exists. Theoretically, conventional wars can be fought for limited aims between nuclear-armed states. Practically, however, the temptation of escalation still remains, especially for the losing side, which could use all the weapons available at its disposal if it were uncertain about the adversary’s political and military intentions or if the threshold of limited war was not commonly accepted by both sides. The nature of political control and mutual perceptions of offensive and defensive strategies available to both sides are also crucial here, when viewed against the backdrop of fractious domestic politics. In support of his argument, Tellis

⁶⁵ Pannel Topic, “South Asia: On the Brink,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, March 16, 2000, (www.ceip.org).

⁶⁶ Michael Krepon, Rodney W. Jones and Ziad Haider (eds.), *Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South Asia*, 6,7.

⁶⁷ Peter D. Feaver, “Command and Control in Emerging Nuclear Nations,” *International Security*, Volume 17: No.3 (Winter 1992/93), 161, 81.

⁶⁸ Panel Topic, “South Asia: On the Brink”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, March 16, 2000, (www.ceip.org).

⁶⁹ A formal discussion with Ellen Laipson on October 18, 2004.

highlighted Clausewitz's insight that all wars intrinsically tend towards totality. In the final analysis, Mr. Tellis believes that nuclear deterrence stability will remain relevant in escalation control and war termination.⁷⁰

Reeta Chowdhari and Julian Schofield quoted three scholars, Kenneth Boulding, Steve Fetter, and Sumit Ganguly, who believe that nuclear stable deterrence undermines the restraints to engage in non-nuclear forms of warfare because if deterrence were stable, it would cease to deter. In other words, if the probability of nuclear weapons going off were zero, they would not deter anybody from initiating non-nuclear form of conflict. According to Sumit Ganguly, "stability at the level of nuclear weapons prevents the outbreak of full-scale war while permitting both sides to engage in low level conflict."⁷¹ According to Jervis, "the hypotheses of Kenneth Boulding and Steve Fetter rest on the assumption of perfect information, which is unrealistic. Pakistan simply does not have the level of certainty necessary to make fear of escalation irrelevant." He goes on to say that "whenever violence is set in motion, no one can be sure where it will end up because events can readily escape control...limited responses carry with them some probability that the final, although unintended, result will be all out war."⁷²

Dr. Peter R. Lavoy and Stephen A. Smith concluded that New Delhi and Islamabad are caught in a spiral of tension and mistrust that could cause the next regional crisis to flair into an armed conflict. They suggested that steps should be taken to ensure that India and Pakistan do not become embroiled in even a limited war. To put this argument in perspective, it means that even the limited war between the two countries has the potential to cross the nuclear threshold at some point of time.⁷³ In a separate study, Smith pointed out that a conventional war between India and Pakistan could inadvertently escalate into nuclear warfare. He believes that asymmetries in military doctrine and capability undermine stability and could lead to the use of nuclear weapons if the two nations engage in a large-scale conventional conflict.⁷⁴

During a formal discussion with the author on limited war, Teresita C. Schaffer, Director of the South Asia Program at the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), opined that in the nuclear environment, the limited conventional war concept propagated by India is not logical. She said it is not possible to quantify the concept of limited war in terms of geography, weapons or political objectives in the Indo-Pakistan equation. A limited war from the Indian point of view may not be limited from Pakistani perspective. She also argued that nuclear weapons on both sides have frozen the relationship between the two countries. She suggested that both India and Pakistan must avoid a Cuban Missile crisis-like situation because as per her assessment, "it was merely luck and not policies that saved both the US and former Soviet Union from nuclear holocaust."⁷⁵

Ms. Rose Gottemoeller, an analyst at the Carnegie Endowment, says that India committed a strategic error by conducting nuclear tests in 1998. As far as Pakistan is concerned, it would have been foolish on its part if it had not responded to the Indian nuclear explosions because it is understandable that

⁷⁰ Ashley J. Tellis, *Nuclear Stability in Southern Asia* (Manohar Publishers & Distributors: New Delhi, 2003), 22, 23.

⁷¹ Reeta Chowdhari and Julian Schofield, "Hybrid Governments and Pakistan: Nuclear Weapons and Conflict over Kashmir," *Aakrosh: Asian Journal on Terrorism and Internal Conflicts*, Volume 4: Number 11 (April 2001), 18.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 19.

⁷³ Peter R. Lovay and Stephen A. Smith, "The Risk of Inadvertent Nuclear Use Between India and Pakistan," *Strategic Insight*, Center for Contemporary Conflict, Monterey, California, February 3, 2003.

⁷⁴ Stephen A Smit, "Assessing the risk of Inadvertent Nuclear War between Indian and Pakistan", *Strategic Insight*, Center for Contemporary Conflict, Monterey, California, December 2002.

⁷⁵ A formal discussion with Teresita C. Schaffer, held on November 4, 2004.

Pakistan had no other option to ensure its security against India. However, from her point of view, nuclear weapons in South Asia have not created stability; rather it has created more opportunities for crises. With regard to the Indian nuclear strategy, she opined that India's factoring conventional war fighting, as part of its nuclear doctrine is not realistic. She contended that Pakistan will not be deterred by India's second-strike capability, and if its strategic interests are threatened, its leadership will be tempted to use its nuclear weapons irrespective of the consequences. Gottemoeller suggested that in the changed strategic environment, military actions to resolve disputes and achieve political objectives are lot more risky. Therefore, outstanding disputes should be resolved through non-military means.⁷⁶

During the 2002 standoff between India and Pakistan, the verdict of intelligence analyses from Washington and other European capitals that any Indian attack over the line separating Indian and Pakistani forces in Kashmir could rapidly escalate into a nuclear exchange is noteworthy. A senior foreign office source stated, as quoted by Jason Burke and Peter Beaumont, "we do not think you could talk of a limited conventional war here. India's two-to-one military superiority in ground and air forces would rapidly lead to Pakistan being very tempted to use nuclear weapons."⁷⁷ A Chinese analyst, Major General Wu Joanguo, former Associate Professor and Dean of the Anti-Chemical Warfare Academy, believes that "when countries possessing nuclear weapons and high tech conventional weapons are involved in war in which the conflict is intensifying, the possible use of nuclear weapons can not be ruled out. Nuclear weapons, therefore, are still a trump card in the hands of nuclear nations."⁷⁸

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NUCLEAR DOCTRINE AND LIMITED CONVENTIONAL WAR

The nuclear doctrines of both India and Pakistan are based on the concept of maintaining "credible minimum deterrence." Analysts have already raised questions about the divergent Indian and Pakistani deterrence doctrines. Pakistan has not come up with a declared nuclear doctrine; however, the central theme of its nuclear policy guidelines is to act in a responsible manner and to exercise restraint in conduct of its deterrence policy without causing any threat to non-nuclear weapons states. Pakistan's capability is very clearly for deterrence of aggression and defence of its sovereignty. Pakistan will also retain an adequate conventional military force in order to maintain and if possible to raise its nuclear threshold. Pakistan's Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz while addressing the Fifth National Security Workshop held at the National Defence College stated, "Pakistan as a responsible and acknowledged nuclear power believes in retaining minimum deterrence as a cornerstone of its national security policy.... [Pakistan] has no aggressive designs against any other country," but added "it would not let any country push it around." He further said, "deterrence capability is the anchor of peace and assurance of Pakistan's stability and security."⁷⁹

⁷⁶ A formal discussion with Ms. Rose Gottemoeller on November 10, 2004. She is a specialist on defense and nuclear issues in Russia and other former Soviet Union states. She works as senior associate in Carnegie Endowment.

⁷⁷ Jason Burke and Peter Beaumont, "Nuclear Neighbors on Brink of Armageddon," *Observer* (London), June 2, 2002.

⁷⁸ Michael Pillsbury, (ed.), "Chinese Views of Future Warfare," *Institute for National Strategic Studies*. The paper was first published under the heading "Nuclear Shadows on High-Tech Warfare" in *China Military Science*, No. 4 (Winter 1995).

⁷⁹ *Dawn* (Karachi), November 30, 2004. See also *Daily Time* (Islamabad), November 28, 2004.

General Khalid Kidwai, Director-General Strategic Plans Division (SPD), while briefing a group of scholars from Italy, explained that because of constraints evolving out of its threat perception, Pakistan's nuclear policy is not based on "no-first-use." Pakistani nuclear weapons are India specific and will be used, according to General Kidwai, only "if the very existence of Pakistan as a state is at stake."⁸⁰ Rodney W. Jones explains that because of existing asymmetries in defence depth and conventional military capability, Pakistan is potentially vulnerable to a massive armed threat from India across the desert against its narrow lines of communication. The Pakistani leadership would rely on effective deterrence of its nuclear weapons against a major Indian incursion threatening Pakistan's self-defence capability and jeopardizing national survival. In that case, the Pakistani leadership would face enormous pressure to resort to nuclear retaliation.⁸¹ By implication, it means that Pakistan's nuclear weapons will be used in self-defence only in case its national survival is at stake.

Maleeha Lodhi, former Pakistani Ambassador to the United States, believes that Pakistan's evolving doctrine of a minimum deterrence posture appears to lay emphasis on stable and credible deterrence based on the lowest level of nuclear capability.⁸² On the contrary, India's declared nuclear strategy is based on a posture of "no-first-use" of nuclear weapons and will be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian territory or on Indian forces *anywhere*. It goes on to say that even in the event of a major attack against India or Indian forces anywhere by biological or chemical weapons, India will retain the option of retaliation with nuclear weapons.⁸³ In fact, according to Iftikhar Gillani, India's original draft nuclear doctrine of 1999 was amended to include the phrase *nuclear, chemical, or biological attack on Indian forces anywhere* on January 4, 2003 when massive Indian deployments were positioned along the borders with Pakistan. Iftikhar Gillani further argues that India made changes in its doctrine as it had planned to take some Pakistani territory into its possession through a "surgical operation."⁸⁴ Maleeha Lodhi believes that India's doctrine seems to imply weaponization and deployment, possession of second-strike capability, and deterrence-based on tactical nuclear war fighting. She argues that thirty *Prithvi* missiles stored at the forward position at Jullender are presumed by Pakistan to be virtually deployed.⁸⁵

Rodney W. Jones's arguments on the Indian doctrine support Maleeha Lodhi's point of view. He explains that India's declared nuclear doctrine does not contain any element of strategic restraint. Its declaratory no first-use policy, with the ostensible objectives of minimum credible deterrence, is based on an expensive nuclear war-fighting force structure including a triad of survivable, mobile ground-, air-, and sea-based nuclear strike systems. He believes that "the [doctrine's] language alluded provocatively to using conventional pre-emptive capabilities offensively against any party that might threaten to use

⁸⁰ (<http://www.mi.infn.it/-landnet.>) or (cotta@mi.infn.it) See also Mahmud Ali Durrani, "Occasional Paper 37," *Cooperative Monitoring Center*, No. 95502, (July 2004), 23-24. See also Firdaus Ahmed, "Limited Nuclear War, Limitless Anxiety."

⁸¹ Rodney W. Jones, "Pakistan's nuclear posture-II: Arms control diplomacy," *DAWN* (Karachi), September 15, 1999.

⁸² Maleeha Lodhi, "Dealing with South Asia's Nuclear and Security Issues," *Defense Journal*, (January 1999), (www.defencejournal.com/jan99/nuc-sec-issues.htm).

⁸³ Press Release, New Delhi, January 4, 2003. See also Firdaus Ahmed, "Limited Nuclear War, Limitless Anxiety."

⁸⁴ Iftikhar Gilani, "India Amended N-doctrine in Operation Parakaram," *Daily Times- Site Edition* (Islamabad), October 18, 2004.

⁸⁵ Maleeha Lodhi, "Dealing with South Asia's Nuclear and Security Issues."

nuclear weapons against India.”⁸⁶ Further steps to deploy nuclear equipped weapons would mean further crumbling of the international efforts to dissuade India from crossing nuclear divide, whereas the Pakistani leadership would be compelled to define an operational nuclear deterrence strategy based on the rationale for deeply supporting nuclear forces.⁸⁷

Ashley Tellis in one of his studies suggests that India does not currently possess or seeks to build a ready nuclear arsenal, but rather its objective is to create a “force in being.” India’s shyness in formulating a more assertive nuclear policy can also be due to the lack of technical sophistication of its nuclear weapons program. This status implies that India’s nuclear capabilities will be strategically active but operationally dormant. However, according to Ashley Tellis, it is unlikely that the Indian program would forever remain as a force in being. As India grows economically and overcomes technical difficulties, there will be lot of institutional pressure on the Indian leadership to evolve from a force in being status to a fully deployed status.⁸⁸

From Pakistan’s perspective, the Indian nuclear doctrine contains inbuilt offensive and aggressive designs, which would continue to cause instability in the region. The Indian concept of no first use seems flawed and merely rhetorical. The most dangerous aspect of India’s nuclear doctrine is that it keeps open options for conventional forces to undertake war and exploit the space provided by the nuclear factor while keeping the level of conflict below the nuclear threshold. This in turn takes away the incentive for retaliation from the opponent by threatening it with dire consequences of a nuclear holocaust. The Indian leadership perceives that Pakistan will be self-deterred because of its second-strike capability. This strategy is like gambling where both parties remain under the threat of losing the game that must not be played by responsible nuclear weapons states. The strategy of no first use does not stop India from taking initiatives to launch its nuclear weapons in a pre-emptive strike. What if India decides to launch a limited war based on the concept of cold start and captures territory of strategic importance to Pakistan? What if India mistakenly perceives a threat of a nuclear weapons’ attack by Pakistan on its forces? Will India not launch pre-emptive strike against Pakistan’s strategic assets to ensure that its conventional forces, which have captured the area, remain intact? Who will stop India at that point of time? Can India credibly declare a no first use policy? There are no rational answers to these queries. Generally, declared doctrines become the first victims once war begins. Therefore, there is no reason to believe that India will not launch pre-emptive nuclear strike against Pakistani nuclear weapons or sites in different scenarios.

From Pakistan’s perspective, some short-range missiles are already closely deployed to the IB as highlighted earlier. According to a report published in *The Pioneer* on January 31, 2002, the Indian government had authorized the armed forces to use short-range Prithvi missile in the battlefield. Although the authorization was presumably limited to the missile’s use with conventional warheads, this status could easily change. Missile flight times between Indian and Pakistani cities are as little as three to eight minutes and therefore adversaries have practically no sure way of telling if an incoming missile carries a

⁸⁶ Rodney W. Jones, “Pakistan’s Nuclear Posture,” *DAWN* (Karachi), September 14, 1999.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ T.S. Gopi Rethinaraj, “Threats and Perceptions of Nuclear War in South Asia,” (www.acdis.uiuc.edu/Research/S&Ps/2002).

nuclear or conventional warhead.⁸⁹ Lastly, India's decision and resolve to acquire and develop Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) technology as part of its nuclear doctrine would definitely encourage its leadership to adopt a more aggressive posture against Pakistan. Development of this capability by India will have direct implications on the security and stability of this region and beyond. Therefore, India's nuclear doctrine poses a serious challenge to regional peace, stability, and security that needs to be dealt with carefully.

A declared policy of first use of nuclear weapons has its own problems. Such a policy would have inbuilt escalatory potential. India and Pakistan are not living in the Cold War environment where the two sides were apparently satisfied to maintain a *status quo* in Europe. Unluckily, they are living in an environment of tension and mistrust because of disputes of varying degrees that provide a fertile breeding ground for escalatory crises. Both sides' failure to manage crises at a lower level of escalation, fuelled by factors such as mistrust, inaccurate intelligence, miscalculation and lack of communication, may tempt the Pakistani leadership to lower the nuclear threshold because its declared first use policy may encourage it to do so. By implication, it means that there is no scope for fighting a conventional war under the declared Pakistani nuclear policy guidelines. Notwithstanding the above, Pakistan's nuclear policy guidelines are unambiguous and emphasize stable and credible deterrence. Its nuclear capability is surely for the defence of the country, which does not contain any aggressive designs at all. Therefore, there is no reason to believe that Pakistan's first use of nuclear policy would have any destabilizing effect in this region.

However, according to Maleeha Lodhi, there is a complicating factor in Pakistan's nuclear policy. "For Pakistan, lacking sufficient frontline, high-tech aircraft, medium and short-range missiles are expected to play a conventional war-fighting role. Keeping in view the multi-dimensional role that missiles are likely to play in Pakistan's defence doctrine in the absence of top of the line aircraft, it is likely to feel compelled to operationally deploy its missiles in a conventional role if the threat posed by India's conventional superiority becomes more acute."⁹⁰ Deployment of such missiles though in a conventional role will send wrong signals to the adversary and will intensify the existing level of crises between the two countries. According to Bruce Riedel, during the Kargil crisis, the day before former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif arrived in the United States for a meeting with former US President Bill Clinton at Blair House, "more information developed about the escalatory military situation in the area - disturbing evidence that Pakistan was preparing its nuclear arsenals for possible deployment."⁹¹ There was no evidence of such preparation; however, the lesson drawn from the Kargil crisis was that any defensive move by Pakistan to safeguard its conventional missiles or its nuclear weapons against the adversary's pre-emptive strike during a crisis would be considered a provocative act. It indicates the inherent problem of the declared policy of first use of nuclear weapons.

Dr Rajesh Mishra, an Indian analyst, believes that Pakistan's nuclear posture against India not only projects an unstable deterrent in the region but also poses a challenge to the efficacy of New Delhi's no first use policy. He considers Pakistan's nuclear weapons functionally deployed because they are

⁸⁹ "India and Pakistan are moving towards the deployment of nuclear weapons," *Frontline*, Volume 19: Issue 05, (March 2-15, 2002). See also T.S.Gopi Rethinaraj, "Threats and Perceptions of Nuclear War in South Asia."

⁹⁰ Maleeha Lodhi, "Dealing with South Asia's Nuclear and Security Issues."

⁹¹ Bruce Riedel, "American Diplomacy and the 1999 Kargil Summit at Blair House," *Policy Paper Series* (Center for Advance Study of India, University of Pennsylvania), 8.

under military control. He suggests that India may reconsider its policy of no first use.⁹² The western leadership has also criticized Pakistan's declared policy guidelines. Britain Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, told BBC in an interview on June 6 2002, "We have to obtain an understanding on both sides that they would not in any circumstances use nuclear weapons first." He said, "India has already declared its policy of no first use but it has as yet not happened in Pakistan." He clarified that "all of us can comprehend why Pakistan does not rule out what is called 'First Use'... but we can not tolerate it because a nuclear exchange is no way to resolve this conflict."⁹³ According to some western analysts, Pakistan's possession of nuclear weapons provides it with a shield for conducting a low intensity war in Kashmir for achieving political objectives. This strategy involves a higher risk of instability than Pakistan's declared strategy of first use of its nuclear weapons.

The author has a different view on the subject of low intensity war in Kashmir. Pakistan's forward policy on Kashmir is as old as the issue itself. The Kashmir issue did not surface after the development of nuclear weapons by Pakistan; rather, Pakistan's policy to develop nuclear weapons emerged as an outcome of the threats that emanate from India. Pakistan is not in favor of any type of war at all. Rather it has suggested to India a number of times, at formal and informal occasions, to enter into a bilateral "no war pact," a proposal that India has disregarded. Therefore, the policy of nuclear first use is likely to be retained as part of the Pakistani declared nuclear doctrine to deter its adversary from initiating conventional war against it. Pakistani nuclear policy guidelines play a positive role in stabilizing strategic peace, security and stability in this region provided they are analyzed and viewed from the right perspective.

How Effective Are Pakistan's Conventional Forces?

Pakistan's defence policy is based on offensive defence. Its strategic goals are modest and limited to ensuring its national survival against a large adversary. The central assumption around which Pakistan has built up its nuclear capability is that a credible nuclear deterrent would compensate for inferiority in conventional force structure and offset the nuclear advantage of India. It would be wrong to assume that nuclear deterrence is a substitute for conventional war fighting capability. No country can afford to make an abrupt transition from tension on the border to nuclear strike, particularly when its adversary is also in possession of nuclear weapons.⁹⁴ Therefore, we expect that Pakistan's armed forces would perform even better to ensure that such a situation does not rise to the level where Pakistan may be forced to exercise a difficult option, which it otherwise does not want.

For effective, credible nuclear deterrence, besides other essential requirements, a mobile, well-trained and effective conventional force is equally important. In adverse conditions, such a force should be able to provide the desired time and space for making nuclear weapons effective if it is so essential. It is believed that an effective, smart, and professional conventional force is very important for Pakistan's survival because of two main reasons. Firstly, it would prevent the adversary from achieving limited political objectives without lowering the nuclear threshold. Secondly, in adverse conditions, such a force

⁹² Dr. Rajesh Kumar Mishra, "Indian Doctrine and National Security," *Dialogue*, Volume 4: No. 4 (April-June 2003).

⁹³ (rediff.com/news/2002/jun/06war.htm).

⁹⁴ Rasul Baksh Rais, "Pakistan's Nuclear Doctrine," *The News* (Islamabad), June 3, 2000.

should be able to provide the desired time and space for making nuclear weapons effective because in all probability, Pakistan's nuclear weapons will remain unmated and kept in the alert state to avoid accidental use, inadvertent use or unnecessary escalation. Agha Shahi, former Foreign Minister of Pakistan, has also suggested that Pakistan needs to maintain adequate conventional forces so that local challenges can be dealt with locally without involving the nuclear factor.⁹⁵

Given the current level of forces on both sides, the author believes that the Pakistani army is fully equipped to fulfill its assigned tasks. It has sufficient strength and capability to deny its adversary the strategic targets of immediate concern unless India involves a quantum of force that falls beyond the definition of limited war. British military experts reinforce the same argument when they say, "while India's armed forces would enjoy a numerical superiority if war broke out, the Pakistan army is of high quality." They have also noted that "in a long lasting conflict, India would have the advantage of a strong economy...but if a conflict was of short duration, these assets would not necessarily enter into the equation."⁹⁶ According to the same sources, Pakistanis are considered to be better troops, and could beat off an Indian initial attack, but India could then use its superiority in conventional forces to overwhelm Pakistan.

William Hopkinson of the London-based Royal Institute of International Affairs says, "if the worst happened and war starts, the pressure from all sides to stop it soon would be obviously enormous, so India's theoretical long term advantage might not come into play."⁹⁷ According to Anthony Davis, "some analysts believe that Pakistan army is better trained and better led than their foes. But unless international pressure could impose a swift ceasefire, the sheer weight of Indian numbers and equipment would soon begin to tell against the Pakistanis, who geographically have no strategic depth to speak of."⁹⁸ Dr. Marvin G. Weinbaum of the Middle East Institute opines that the Pakistani army is well trained and in a limited war scenario, India cannot achieve a quick victory against a well-placed Pakistani army in defensive mode.⁹⁹

Major General (Retd.) Mahmud Ali Durrani, a Pakistani analyst, was asked during an interview that does Pakistan's possession of nuclear weapons influence the war fighting capability of its armed forces? He responded that Pakistan's conventional war fighting capabilities might not necessarily be linked with the nuclear factor. Nuclear weapons were an equalizer for Pakistan vis a vis India. He argued that there is a conventional weapons imbalance, which is further increasing with a fast pace, and Pakistan has been conveying its concerns to the responsible quarters. However, he believes that given the existing level of the armed forces of the two countries, Pakistan will be able to contain India in a limited war scenario without getting close to the nuclear threshold. It has the resolve and will to fight and displays tremendous professional skill that may lead to a stalemate if a limited war is conducted against Pakistan in the future.¹⁰⁰ If a stalemate is achieved while conducting conventional war, General (Retd) Javid Nasir says there would be "consequence for which India would not risk to stake compromise of its regional

⁹⁵ Agha Shahi, Zulfiqar Ali Khan and Abdul Sattar, "Securing nuclear peace," *The News (Islamabad)*, October 5, 1999.

⁹⁶ Spacedaily, May 22, 2002, (www.spacedaily.com/news/nuclear-india-pakistan-02qp.html).

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Anthony Davis, "When Words Hurt- No limits on a "Limited War," *Asiaweek*, Vol. 26: No. 12. (March 31)

⁹⁹ An interview with Dr Marvin G. Weinbaum was held by the author on November 22, 2004.

¹⁰⁰ The author conducted the interview with Major General (Retd) Mahmud Ali Duranni during his visit to the Stimson Center, Washington, DC on October 13, 2004.

superpower status.”¹⁰¹ The inference drawn from this argument is that India would employ more forces to complete its defined goals. In that situation, Pakistan would run short of options.

Pakistan has lately started to work on and develop its own military hardware out of compulsion. In September 2004, Pakistan hosted the International Defence Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS) where it displayed its military industrial potential. Representatives of over fifty countries witnessed this impressive exhibition. Pakistan’s military industrial complex is capable of meeting the expectations of its armed forces, especially the army. According to General (Retd.) Qayyum, former Chairman of Pakistan Ordnance Factories, “Pakistan Army is fully prepared and troops fully equipped.” He made it very clear that “We have enough stock of required weapons and dumps as per necessity of our forces.”¹⁰² Nuclear capability has injected more confidence in the armed forces. Conventional or nuclear forces will not fight future wars (if at all) in isolation. Operational dynamics of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons have factored into the policy of minimum deterrence. The military leadership at all tiers of command is confident and competent to refute any aggression. Pakistan’s armed forces are in the process of fine-tuning the integration of their conventional and nuclear deterrence. The process may take another one to two years.

The author believes that with the development of nuclear weapons by Pakistan, the responsibility of its armed forces and especially of the army has increased. The army is expected to ensure to the maximum extent that Pakistan’s nuclear threshold is maintained at the desired level by performing to the best of its ability during a conventional war with India. The Pakistan army would never want to bear the onus of nuclear escalation. Therefore, it has been trained hard to achieve the desired objectives. The Pakistan army realizes that tangible grey areas exist because of conventional weapons’ gap between the two countries, but it has the will and resolve to overcome these weaknesses through innovative use of existing resources, tough professional training, and motivation. However, these factors may not work beyond certain limits if the conventional weapons’ gap continues to grow between the two countries because of the generous support provided to India by friendly countries like Russia, France, Britain, Israel, and the United States. Currently, there are fresh indicators that US manufacturers are considering selling F-16s and F-18s to India. Should such an arrangement be finalized, it could dangerously accentuate the conventional gap between the two countries and could compel Pakistan to lower its nuclear threshold in the case of even a limited conventional war with India.¹⁰³

INDIA’S LIKELY OPTIONS, PAKISTAN’S RESPONSE, AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH ASIA

India is a big country that enjoys clear superiority in conventional forces and a marginal edge in nuclear weapons over Pakistan. The combination of these two factors has placed Pakistan into a defensive mode against India; however, the development of nuclear weapons by both India and Pakistan has marginalized war as an option for resolving outstanding issues between the two countries. Still, India perceives that the combination of these two factors has kept options open for achieving its political objectives through conventional war against Pakistan, without escalating it to nuclear threshold. Indian

¹⁰¹ Javid Nasir, “Possibility of nuclear war”, *The News*, September 7, 2000.

¹⁰² *Dawn* (Islamabad), May 21, 2002.

¹⁰³ *The Nation* (Islamabad), October 15, 2004. See also *DAWN* (Karachi), November 29, 2004.

leadership has not spelled out its envisaged limited political objectives. According to Jasjit Singh, a credible Indian doctrine should successfully counter Pakistan's strategic doctrine of conducting a sub-conventional war (through terrorism) under the nuclear umbrella since 1987.¹⁰⁴ A former Indian Army Vice Chief, Gen. A.M. Vohra, has suggested that if Pakistan does not stop cross-border terrorism, a course of military action short of limited war is open to India. India may resort to launching "punitive strikes," which are some times referred to as "surgical strikes" across the LoC. Such isolated military actions instill caution in the adversary apart from demonstrating resolve that infiltration and terrorist activities cannot continue without some retribution. Such isolated military actions can take the form of joint operations against a selected target in an area where air superiority can be established for a limited conventional operation.¹⁰⁵

The author believes that the Indian leadership is frustrated by and running out of patience with the Kashmir problem. It is serious about achieving defined political and military objectives through a limited war against Pakistan. In case the ongoing bilateral talks between the two countries on the Kashmir issue fail, the matter will become more serious. The author posed similar questions to the Stimson Center's Michael Krepon as to what would be the likely outcome in case the ongoing dialogue on Kashmir between India and Pakistan fails. He opined that firing across the LoC would probably resume, followed by an increase in *jihadi* activities. This will open a fresh chapter of violence.¹⁰⁶ In such a scenario, India may want to resolve the issue through force. Notwithstanding the means and strategy that India may adopt for conducting limited war, the minimum aim would be to create an environment where Pakistan is made to give up its moral support for the people of Kashmir, accept the existing LoC as permanent border, and force Pakistan to live according to the terms and conditions dictated by its adversary. In order to achieve the underlined objectives, there are a series of options open to India ranging from punitive or surgical strikes across the LoC to a full-scale conventional war across the LoC and/or IB. The pros and cons and the implications of these options will be highlighted in subsequent paragraphs.

As a first option, India may like to conduct limited but frequent surgical strikes across the LoC and/or IB and hit envisaged *jihadi* camps, battalions, and/or brigade headquarters of the Pakistan army by combinations of aerial strikes, artillery shelling, and commando actions. The operation may continue for quite some time. Such operations could be termed as limited wars in terms of time, resources, and territorial boundaries. This practice will cause casualties and demoralize the troops deployed along the LoC and/or IB. From the Indian point of view, it will act as a counter-balancing factor and may discourage Pakistan from supporting the Kashmiri freedom struggle. Jasjit Singh argues that a classical example of the application of punitive force would be the two-year battle of attrition across the Suez Canal between Israel and Egypt with massive air and artillery duels between 1971-73, which did not push Israel to consider its nuclear weapons use, until the time Israel's survival was threatened.¹⁰⁷

This is a doable option. India has capabilities to exercise such options for unlimited time. To begin with, it is not likely to escalate to a full-scale war. Under certain compulsions, the Pakistan army may not even give a matching response by using its air force in retaliation. Nevertheless, this option is

¹⁰⁴ Jasjit Singh, "Doctrine and strategy under the N-umbrella."

¹⁰⁵ A.M. Vohra, "Limited War", *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, Article no. 1446, (July 31, 2004).

¹⁰⁶ Formal discussion with Michael Krepon at Stimson Center on October 20, 2004.

¹⁰⁷ Jasjit Singh, "Doctrine and strategy under the N-umbrella."

unlikely to yield the desired results for India. In fact, since 1989 until recently (when both sides declared ceasefire), both sides remained engaged in such activities along the LoC. According to Michael Krepon, for most of the past fifteen years, brinkmanship in South Asia has taken the form of dangerous military practices along the Kashmir divide, including the overrunning of border posts and the “routine” use of small arms, mortars, as well as artillery firing.¹⁰⁸ India extensively exercised this option, without the use of airpower, after the Kargil conflict. The concept of limited war was tested on January 22, 2000 at 0330 hours when a company of the Indian army attacked a Pakistani post across the LoC in Itikharabad sector killing several soldiers.¹⁰⁹

India’s round-the-clock, unprovoked artillery shelling of civilians living close to the LoC, including schools, mosques and business centers, continued unabated for years. The bloodiest foray was on February 24, 2000, when Indian troops sneaked over the LoC under artillery shelling and butchered fourteen civilians in Kotli sector.¹¹⁰ The Indian strategy could not break the will and resolve of these people to sustain pressure. The Indian army’s proactive strategy proved counter-productive. It provided enough space to freedom fighters to operate freely under environment when the two armies were engaged in low intensity conflict along the LoC. It is highly unlikely that if India decides to exercise this option again, it will go in its favour. According to Hussain Haqqani, “a war between India and Pakistan will only result in the realization of the extremist *jihadi* groups’ vision of extensive violence, leading to a fulfilment of their version of apocalypse.”¹¹¹ Notwithstanding the above, such actions always create trigger-happy environment. Barry Posen argues that inadvertent escalation may also result from the great difficulty of getting and interpreting the most relevant information about a war in progress and using it to understand, control, and orchestrate the war.¹¹²

Given the history and strategic culture, as defined by Ken Booth, no one can guess at which stage such provocative actions by India will get out of hand. According to Eric Margolis, “A wrong move, new attack or even a mistake could plunge twenty percent of humankind into disaster.”¹¹³ According to Michael Krepon, renewed brinkmanship could come in the form of more extensive support for *jihadi* groups by Pakistan’s national security establishment, and more aggressive tactics to punish *jihadis* and their sponsors by India. In this sense, Kashmir can again become a “nuclear flashpoint.” Depending upon the severity of future crises, the increased readiness of nuclear capabilities to reduce their vulnerabilities may be expected, which in turn could lead to their being more susceptible to accidents, sabotage, and breakdowns in command and control.¹¹⁴ Therefore, proactive policies and actions by the Indian army against deployed Pakistani troops along the LoC and/or IB will not be risk-free. It would invite, at the least, tension that would continue to cause instability in South Asia as a whole.

¹⁰⁸ Michael Krepon, Rodney W. Jones and Ziad Haider (eds.), *Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South Asia*, 12.

¹⁰⁹ Ayaz Ahmed Khan, “Preparing for Limited War.”

¹¹⁰ Anthony Davis, “When Words Hurt-No Limits on a ‘Limited War,’” *Asiaweek*, March 31, 2000.

¹¹¹ Hussain Haqqani, “Deterrence, Did Someone Say?” *Express India*, June 10, 2002.

¹¹² Michael Krepon, Rodney W. Jones and Ziad Haider (eds.), *Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South Asia*, 149, 150.

¹¹³ Eric Margolis, “The World Holds Its Breath,” *Toronto Sun*, May 26, 2002. (www.commondreams.org/views02/0526-01.htm).

¹¹⁴ Michael Krepon, Rodney W. Jones and Ziad Haider (eds.), *Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South Asia*.

The next option open to the India is to keep the war limited to the LoC and conduct “hot pursuit” operations against projected targets and in the process capture tactically or strategically important areas by utilizing ground and air forces. This option would be more intense and involve more aggression. The strategy could be sharp and swift based on a small operation that would be kept limited in time, space, and geographical boundaries. Precision long-range air strikes on selected targets across the LoC are another choice for the adversary that could be spaced out in time. An Indian defence analyst, Air Marshal (Retd.) Kapil Kak, says that “something unexpected, innovative, and inconceivable which pays fast dividends is more likely. Speed is of the essence. Indian planner’s reckoning they have only seventy two hours before a Pakistani leader, his defence collapsing, reaches for the nuclear button.”¹¹⁵ According to Rahul Bedi, the planned campaign for the operation would be similar to the American attack in Afghanistan: air strikes would follow ground assault by Special Forces across the LoC. India’s plan of attack would be to seize and hold tracts of Pakistani Kashmir, providing the government with a much-needed military triumph and the military with improved defensive positions against Islamic militants.¹¹⁶

Hot pursuit operations were the most common topic after the Kargil conflict, envisaged and propagated by the former Indian Army Chief V.P. Malik. The Indian leadership at the national and international level publicized this concept. Indian policymakers, including some independent think tanks, have linked the Indian strategy with the US strategy in North Vietnam, Afghanistan and recently in Iraq. Henry Kissinger expressed his views that a US attack on Iraq would provide justification for India to attack Pakistan.¹¹⁷ A senior Washington Post analyst Jim Hoagland says, “the new US ‘hot pre-emption’ strategy applies equally to the Indo-Pakistani and Israel-Palestine conflicts.”¹¹⁸ Former Indian External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha when quoting the Iraqi precedent asserted more than once that there is a justification for India to take pre-emptive actions against Pakistan as a sponsor of cross border terrorism. Former Indian Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani also talked more than once about the right of reprisal and the right of hot pursuit.¹¹⁹

Conceptually, as per the author’s understanding, in the broader perspective, hot pursuit operations are conducted in two scenarios. First, an operation planned and conducted by a country within its territorial boundaries against separatists, terrorists, and dacoits for ensuring the writ of the state. Second, such operation is conducted by a country against another country’s army or a segment of the army, which has been defeated and is withdrawing in a disorderly manner. The basic aim of such an operation is the destruction of the defeated army so that it is unable to reorganize itself. It is difficult to visualize as to how the Indian army intends to conduct such operations while getting into the domain of another country without involving the risk of escalation. Operations against *jihadi* groups would neither be conducted on the Indian side of the LoC, nor would it be a declared joint operation by India and Pakistan where the Indian army would be permitted to cross the LoC and/or IB in order to reach envisaged *jihadi* camps. Imagine the consequences of the Indian army undertaking a hot pursuit operation involving ground

¹¹⁵ Jason Burke and Peter Beaumont, “Nuclear Neighbors on Brink of Armageddon.”

¹¹⁶ Rahul Bedi, “India Plans War Within Two Weeks,” *Telegraph*, June 6, 2002.

¹¹⁷ Shaukat Qadir, “Kargil: Misperceptions and Erroneous Conclusions,” *Daily Time-Site Edition* (Islamabad), October 19, 2004.

¹¹⁸ Jim Hoagland, “New US ‘Hot Pre-emption’ Strategy Applies Equally to Indo-Pakistani, Israel-Palestine Conflicts”, *DEBKAFiles*, June 20, 2002.

¹¹⁹ J.N.Dixit, “Does a Pre-emptive Indian Strike on Pakistan Make Sense?” *NEWS*, May 5, 2003.

forces, crossing over the LoC and/or IB against well-entrenched Pakistani army. Will it be a clean overrun? Definitely not. They will have to fight it out before they could reach their defined *jihadi* camps, irrespective of the level of escalation.

As explained elsewhere, Pakistan army is fully prepared and capable of defending its territorial boundaries. Any physical attack by India across the LoC and/or IB, however limited it may be, will be viewed by Pakistan as an act of war and will certainly be met by a Pakistani counter-attack or counter-offensive at the place of its own choosing. Depending upon the political objectives and the resistance that India is likely to face, the application of limits on time and resources by India would be questionable. Therefore, the probability of the Indian army conducting swift and small-size operations anywhere across the LoC and/or IB does not make sense, and it has no chance of success without escalating into a full-scale conventional war. As Thomas C. Schelling rightly said, “brinkmanship involves getting onto the slope where one may fall in spite of his own best efforts to save himself, dragging his adversary with him.”¹²⁰

Many independent scholars and think tanks within India as well as from other countries criticized India’s strategy of hot pursuit operations. One Indian foreign ministry official pointed out that Pakistan’s cooperation in a conflict and compliance with India’s wishes to fight a limited war is ridiculous.¹²¹ According to Miriam Rajkumar, affiliated with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Indian leaders must refrain from drawing too close a parallel with the US war on terrorism. India’s military capabilities do not match those of the United States, to say the least, and Pakistan is not Afghanistan.¹²² In the same context, India’s former Naval Chief, Admiral Raja Menon, one of India’s leading thinkers, said, “Mobilizing 600,000 men and 3,000 tanks is a bad answer...Our strategy and our weapon systems do not give us the capability to ‘prevent’ the cross border operation...In other words, the cross border operation will not be surgical because we have no surgical capability, and the consequences would escalate into uncontrollable war.”¹²³ Admiral J.G. Nadkarni, a retired Indian officer, argues that the “Indian leadership naively believe that we can launch quick surgical strikes against Pakistan, like the US in Afghanistan and Israel in Palestine. They forget that no self-respecting country will allow such action against itself. Pakistan is neither Afghanistan nor is it Grenada or Panama.”¹²⁴

The US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, pronounced that no parallels could be drawn between the situation in Iraq and the Indo-Pakistan face-off in Kashmir.¹²⁵ J.N. Dixit argues that the US attack on Iraq cannot be a model for India, as it does not have the resources and technology to initiate such actions against Pakistan. If suggested pre-emptive military action by India is prolonged, and threatened the government of Pakistan, the conflict can escalate into a nuclear confrontation. He further argues, “A limited pre-emptive response to Pakistan-sponsored terrorism cannot and should not be described as an

¹²⁰ Michael Krepon, Rodney W. Jones and Ziad Haider (eds.), *Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South Asia*, 12.

¹²¹ Miriam Rajkumar, “‘Limited’ war?” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, May 22, 2002.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ J.G. Nadkarni, “Our Superiority Will Prevail,” *NEWS*, January 9, 2002, (rediff.com).

¹²⁵ J.N.Dixit, “Does a Pre-emptive Indian Strike on Pakistan Make Sense?”

adventure. This is a long delayed and necessary response which India should have undertaken more than once after the Kargil conflict.”¹²⁶

Another renowned Indian scholar Praful Bidwai believes that any ground troops operation is likely to escalate and that today there can be no limited war or swift, surgical strikes between India and Pakistan. He argues that given the relative strategic parity, any military confrontation will last for several weeks that might open many fronts, on some of which India is vulnerable. He further explains that any Indian attack will certainly trigger Pakistani retaliatory strikes, as Musharraf cannot afford to be seen as being cowed down by India. Therefore, there is a likelihood that the war will escalate into a nuclear conflagration, which cannot be won. He stresses that India must acknowledge that its military options against Pakistan are limited and fraught with danger. Instead of discouraging terrorism, Bidwai says, “they will, at minimum, encourage extremists... Tragically, India’s rulers are contemplating such a course. Their motivation is profoundly irrational and vengeful. It is to teach Islamabad a US-style or Israeli-style ‘lesson.’ However, Pakistan is not Gaza. And India’s ability militarily to bend Musharraf to its dictates is limited.”¹²⁷

The next option available to India aims at making territorial gains by making swift and hard inroads into Pakistan’s territory. Penetration could be up to fifty miles.¹²⁸ Exercising this option would be even more aggressive than the previous one. According to Indian thinking, the strike would be limited to shallow objectives and calibrated to ensure nuclear weapons do not come into play in any war scenario.¹²⁹ The option is likely to be exercised through a recently unveiled new war fighting doctrine called “cold start,” conceived some two decades earlier by a former Indian Army Chief, General Krishna Rao. The element of surprise in this pre-emptive military strategy would be critical. The strategy calls for a rapid deployment of integrated battle groups comprising of army, air force, and, if need be, navy to conduct high intensity operations. Y.I. Patel explains that the purpose of the new proposed doctrine, therefore, is to increase the range of options available to India for fighting and winning a war against Pakistan. A rapid deployment and quick securing of limited objectives can be used to achieve limited political objectives before international intervention kicks in or before the conflict spirals out of hand into a nuclear exchange.¹³⁰

The Indian doctrine formulators perhaps hope that this new operational level doctrine will have the strategic outcome of deterring Pakistan from pursuing its proxy war agenda.¹³¹ Subhash Kapila argues that “The ‘cold start’ strategy would be aimed militarily at Pakistan and is offensive operations specific in which Indian air force would have a very critical role in the successful implementation of this new war doctrine. The ‘cold start’ eight or so ‘battle groups’ can not undertake ‘blitzkrieg’ type military operations without overwhelming air superiority and integrated air support.”¹³² He goes on to say that the entire success of the cold start war doctrine would overwhelmingly rest on the application of long-range,

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Praful Bidwai, “The Dogs of War,” *Frontline*, Volume 19: Issue 01 (January 5-18, 2002).

¹²⁸ Jason Burke and Peter Beaumont, “Nuclear Neighbors on Brink of Armageddon.”

¹²⁹ *Daily Times – Site Edition* (Islamabad), October 19, 2004.

¹³⁰ Y.I. Patel, “Dig Vijay to Divya Astra-a Paradigm Shift in the Indian Army’s Doctrine,” *Bharat Rakshak Monitor*, Volume 6: No. 6 (May-July 2004).

¹³¹ Firdus Ahmed, “No To ‘Cold War,’” *IPCS-Military & Defence*, Article No. 1485 (August 31, 2000).

¹³² Subhash Kapila, “India’s New ‘Cold start’ War Doctrine Strategically Revised,” *Strategic Affairs with South Asia Analysis Group*, Paper No. 991, (May 4, 2004).

devastating firepower that would per force include *conventional short-range ballistic and cruise missiles*.¹³³

The cold start doctrine is not a new concept as such a strategy has been contemplated by NATO since the nineteen seventies, but its application in the Indo-Pakistan equation is a recent development. Adequate details of this strategy have not been spelled out by India for obvious reasons. Full-scale analysis of this strategy is out of scope. Whatever means and operational strategy the adversary might apply, the objective would be to win a limited war against Pakistan, short of crossing the nuclear threshold. From the author's point of view, India might not try to capture a piece of land across the IB or a few heights across the LoC only for the sake of capturing it. The capture of the same will definitely give India the strength to bargain on its terms and conditions. Due to geographical constraints, an objective might be shallow from the adversary's point of view, but the same might have strategic implications for Pakistan. The eight "integrated battle groups," whatever the quantum of force they may have, would be used in an area where it is feasible to conduct mobile and swift operations.

The new Indian doctrine, unveiled officially on April 28, 2004, will definitely upset the tacit mutual deterrence regime that presently exists in this region. No official response to India's cold start doctrine has come from Pakistan. The author believes that Pakistan will not ignore India's decision to achieve limited war objectives by exercising the option of the cold start strategy. Instead, Pakistani leadership will prepare for an appropriate response. Pakistan will consider any action taken by India against it based on this strategy as an act of aggression and open war. Because of the element of surprise at the strategic level, it will also reduce the time for diplomacy to play its role; therefore, this concept will straightaway invite full-scale conventional war between the two armies. Based on the concept of the offensive defence policy, the reaction from Pakistan army can be expected to be equally stern and damaging. As explained elsewhere, given the present level of the two armed forces, India does not have the capability to outclass Pakistan army in a timeframe that falls in the category of limited war. India's integrated battle groups will not be employed in a vacuum. They might be able to achieve strategic surprise, though it will be very difficult; however, they cannot achieve tactical surprise in any case. Because of short lines of communication, Pakistan army is likely to be effective at a point of its own choosing before India inflicts damage.

Initiation of a limited war by India based on the concept of a cold start strategy is possible, but the outcome of such a war is not likely to be the one visualised by Indian leadership. Failure on either side will provide the motivation and incentive to escalate the war to a previously unscaled rung, which will not be desirable at all. Therefore, war between the two nuclear weapon states might be of any level and is a non-starter to achieve political objectives. According to Firdaus Ahmed, India's new strategy is an attempt to bring war back as an option into the political calculus. He further argues, "If it takes as little as a bunch of fanatics with automatic weapons to spark subcontinent crises with nuclear overtones, to make war, howsoever restrained, appear as a viable option to address similar crises in the future is itself a danger."¹³⁴ Therefore, the cold start strategy, irrespective of its future status, will continue to create a sense of insecurity and instability in this region, which is no answer to India's political and strategic objectives, an answer that can only emerge from the peace initiative underway.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Firdaus Ahmed, "The Calculus of 'Cold start,'" *India Together*, May 2004.

To conclude, there are a number of other options that India might consider exercising against Pakistan, including a cold start operation combining aerial and conventional missile strikes against Pakistan's nuclear weapons and nuclear sites. The ultimate aim of a war is to achieve peace and stability, which is unlikely in the Indo-Pakistan context. Therefore, in the final analysis, the author believes that to begin with, all options to initiate limited war against Pakistan by India may seem independent and workable but ultimately lead to the same destination, full-scale conventional war and eventually nuclear war. Both India and Pakistan would like to avoid this outcome as responsible nuclear weapons states.

Food for Thought

If response to the inability to control a situation were to escalate, then logically the response to escalation would be further escalation. Therefore, for a political problem, there can only be a political solution and for a problem of social justice, there can only be a response of providing social justice. Solely punitive measures and employing military means will not solve a political issue.¹³⁵ The advice rendered by A. Sridharan in 2002 to India and Pakistan still holds true: "War is [the] last resort in solving problems between two nations and if [the] end result of a war between India and Pakistan was stalemate, then why to go to war at all?"¹³⁶

The tension between the two countries during 2002 was contained and defused. There is a little room for error now. If the world is to stop living in fear of a nuclear clash, the root cause of violence between India and Pakistan must be addressed.¹³⁷ India should find and give assurances to Pakistan that it can live side by side with it without any fear. Therefore, in order to break this psychological barrier, resolution of the Kashmir issue becomes very important for Pakistan's completion as an independent country.¹³⁸

The ultimate purpose of a war is to make peace and bring stability. However, the author sincerely believes that in the changed strategic environment in South Asia, the only alternate option available to India and Pakistan for resolving contentious issues and achieving their political objectives is through dialogue and negotiations. As suggested by Dr Cohen, "in the end, there is no alternative but to move forward with the present 'peace process'... Both sides will have to move...the task of those of us on the outside of the process is to make it easier for them to do so."¹³⁹ Hence, leaders on both sides need to devote all their energies and time to resolve their issues peacefully. A resolution of these issues will facilitate tackling critical problems like health, education, and economy development, and eventually secure a better future for the coming generations.

Both sides need a way out of the current *impasse*. Both sides need to save face and both sides need to learn to live as friendly neighbors. Indian and Pakistani decision makers can no longer afford to drag issues for unlimited periods. Delaying or postponing war is not the answer to the problem. Crisis management is not sufficient at all under the changed strategic environment. Both sides need to take bold decisions based on ground realities to avoid war and resolve crises peacefully including the core issue of

¹³⁵ Shaukat Qadir, "Kargil: Misperceptions and Erroneous Conclusions," *Daily Times* (Islamabad), August 17, 2002.

¹³⁶ A. Sridharan, "Victory or Stalemate?" *Sulekha*, June 7, 2002, (www.sulekha.com/expression/column.asp?cid=207719).

¹³⁷ Hussani Haqqani, "Deterrence, did someone say?" *Express India*, June 10, 2002.

¹³⁸ An interview with Hussani Haqqani was held by the author on December 3, 2004.

¹³⁹ Stephen P. Cohen, "Indo-Pakistan Peace Process: taking it Forward", Brookings Institution, January 28, 2004.

Kashmir. As General Pervez Musharraf has said, “Kashmir problem can be resolved in one day provided the two sides give up their maximalist course.” He suggested, “Both sides eliminate all options that were not acceptable to the other side and then begin discussions on those options which are on table.”¹⁴⁰ The author believes that this is a valid proposal that takes into account the ground realities and interests of all parties involved in this conflict; therefore, it must get due attention from all concerned quarters if we are really sincere in achieving peace and stability in this region.

No-risk policies should be favored. Hope is not a policy. Wishing for a good outcome to the inevitable Indo-Pakistan nuclear arms race is not enough. Leaders must lead not to be driven by events, and the scholarly community has the obligation to be ahead of the policy curve, not trailing behind it.¹⁴¹ At this particular point of time, the think tanks and scholars of both India and Pakistan have unique responsibilities. They must come forward and play a strong role in updating the public about ground realities to make them part of the decision-making. It will help the leadership on both sides in tackling interest groups and taking bold decisions. Opportunities to bring peace in this volatile region without involving the risk of war must not be lost.

The United States as the sole super power has a special responsibility towards achieving peace and strategic stability in South Asia. Asymmetry in conventional weapons between India and Pakistan already exists and is growing at a fast pace. The Indian leadership is working very hard on war footing to acquire all categories of high-tech weapons systems in the next five to ten years, and US technology is the best-suited option for it to fulfil its future designs. The fear is global, but the problem and any solution are local. Before deciding to provide such technology to India, the US should weigh its national interests and global interests. The author believes that serving the regional interests within the overall global context might automatically secure US national interests in the medium to long term. Therefore, it is important that the United States discourage India from mass-scale arms acquisition by denying India access to its high-tech weapons technology.

Nuclear weapons in India and Pakistan have become a reality. The command and control systems on either side are relatively immature and are in the process of improvement. Besides taking initiatives on other fronts to reduce tensions and bring peace and stability in this region, as mentioned earlier, there is also an urgent need to ensure that nuclear weapons with India and Pakistan are “failsafe” and well protected. The nuclear power states and especially the United States can shoulder a special responsibility in this regard. The Non-Proliferation Treaty provisions should not discourage the United States from providing guidelines based on its experience for better management of nuclear weapons by both India and Pakistan. It is very important to enhance the stability and security of this region. The US along with other advanced nuclear weapons states must come forward and assist both India and Pakistan in securing and protecting their nuclear weapons by sharing their experiences and standard operating procedures involved in the management and protection of nuclear weapons and nuclear sites.¹⁴²

It is important for both India and Pakistan to rely on “recessed” deterrence or minimum deployment of nuclear weapons by ensuring maintenance of balance to avoid inadvertent or accidental

¹⁴⁰ *Daily Times* (Islamabad), October 14, 2004.

¹⁴¹ Stephen Philip Cohen, “Nuclear weapons and Nuclear War in South Asia: An Unknowable Future,” Brookings Institution, May 2002.

¹⁴² Tanvir Ahmed Khan, “A Command and Control System” *DAWN*, February 15, 2000. See also T.V.Parasuram, “Give N-safety Locks to India, Pak,” *The Observer of Business and Politics*, New Delhi, September 3, 1998.

use of their nuclear weapons. Analysts like M.V. Ramana and R. Rajaraman have already made similar suggestions to India's decision-makers.¹⁴³ India's ambitious plans to acquire state-of-the art technology for nuclear and conventional weapons and to upgrade these systems will not help stabilize South Asia; rather it will increase Pakistan's reliance on nuclear weapons, which can influence the nuclear threshold. In the final analysis, such developments will only invite further tension and rift in this region whereas the need of the hour is progressive, result-oriented dialogue process.

Lastly, as long as Pakistan and India seek to build nuclear weapons, irrespective of their intentions to use them or not, the threat of an accidental launch will always be there. Therefore, both sides must continue to work on confidence-building measures (CBMs) related to nuclear and conventional weapons in order to reduce the risk of an accidental war. The two sides have already set the pace. The world community is now looking forward and would like to see a positive outcome from the ongoing dialogue.

CONCLUSION

Pakistan's future will remain in the shadows of crises with India, haunted by the spectre of nuclear war. As documented by Michael Krepon, despite the best efforts of theorists and analysts in the west and in South Asia, escalation is not easy to control. Optimistic plans for limited warfare assume that adversaries have grievances deep enough to fight over but that they will choose to fight by an agreed set of rules. We now know from studying war plans from the Cold War that this optimistic assumption was not valid; nor does this assumption take into account the factor of unconventional warfare in the subcontinent.¹⁴⁴ Pakistan's leadership is serious and seeks to remove uncertainties and insecurity that prevail in this region by resolving all outstanding disputes with India peacefully.

India, however, probably does not realize the consequences of ongoing tensions in South Asia. Whether India attempts to exercise limited war options to settle its issues with Pakistan, an action that may escalate to the level of mutual destruction, or it maintains the *status quo* on ongoing disputes, South Asia will remain unstable. Security concerns limit Pakistan's policy options, but given a choice it would definitely focus internally on economic revival and national integration aimed at realizing the vision of Pakistan as a liberal, tolerant, progressive, dynamic, and strong but enlightened moderate Islamic state where theocracy will have no place. The same formula for focusing on human development is equally applicable to India as well. Stability, which is a hallmark for attaining these objectives, can be achieved provided that both countries instantly take plausible steps based on ground realities. These steps will prevent war and provide durable peace to the people of South Asia.

¹⁴³ Ramana & Rajaraman, "Reducing Nuclear Risk," *The Hindu*, June 4, 2004.

¹⁴⁴ Michael Krepon, Rodney W. Jones and Ziad Haider (eds.), *Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South Asia*, 164-166.