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Terminating the Interminable

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INTRODUCTION

How might the Indo-Pakistani rivalry terminate? The question is far from trivial for a number of compelling reasons. Of the post-war rivalries it remains one of the most intractable.¹ It has led to four wars (1947–8, 1965, 1971, and 1999) and multiple crises since the two states emerged from the collapse of the British Indian Empire in 1947.

Additionally, what role has the United States played in either exacerbating the rivalry or contributing to peace and stability in the region? More to the point, why should the United States devote any effort to the termination of this rivalry? Some have argued that the US role, especially in the early Cold War years, was quite pernicious. Their arguments mostly focused on the forging of the US-Pakistan strategic nexus as early as 1954, subsequent American support for military regimes in Pakistan, and the Nixon administration's tilt toward Pakistan during the 1971 East Pakistan crisis.² Others have suggested that the US role in the subcontinent has been decidedly more mixed.³

This analysis has three key foci. First, it will spell out why efforts to terminate the Indo-Pakistani rivalry are in the interest of the United States. Second, the chapter will focus on three competing models of rivalry termination and show their relevance (or the lack thereof) to the triangular relationship amongst the United States, India, and Pakistan. The chapter unfolds in the following fashion. It will briefly summarize the origins of the rivalry, discuss the significance of the Indo-Pakistani rivalry to the United States, focus on US efforts at various junctures to broker an end to the rivalry, and deal with what leverage the US has over both states. Third, and finally, it will discuss the implications for the US in managing this rivalry. The US, it will argue, has long sought to bring about an alignment of its interests with those of Pakistan. It has attempted to pursue these goals through the use of military and economic assistance, periodic

pressures on India and occasional threats to curb Pakistani adventurism. American goals have ranged from anti-Communism during the Cold War years, to the ousting of the Soviets from Afghanistan during their occupation, to preventing Pakistan from pursuing nuclear weapons, and finally, since 9/11, to removing Afghanistan as a sanctuary for Al-Qaeda.

THE ORIGINS OF THE RIVALRY

The origins of the rivalry can be traced to a territorial dispute involving the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The dispute, in turn, underpins the competing ideological visions of the two states: Pakistan, based upon a conception of primordial nationalism, and India, a state created on the basis of civic, secular nationalism.⁴ Multilateral, bilateral, and even unilateral attempts to resolve this conflict have accomplished little. It is possible that the overt, mutual acquisition of nuclear weapons in 1998 has effectively ruled out the prospects of full-scale war in the region.⁵ However, bilateral tensions have yet to significantly diminish and the dispute over the state of Jammu and Kashmir, the original source of discord, remains unresolved. Even though the ethno-religious insurgency that erupted in the Indian-controlled portion of the state in 1989 has ebbed, thanks to an amalgam of both concessions and coercion, tensions within much of the Muslim populace of the state continue to simmer, as they nurse a range of grievances against the Indian state. Were they to flare up once again, there is little question that Pakistan would attempt to fan the flames and thereby contribute to renewed bilateral tensions.

US INTERESTS IN THE RIVALRY

What, if any, interest does the US have in an amelioration and possible termination of the rivalry? The rivalry is of considerable significance to the US for a number of compelling reasons. Even as it draws down from Afghanistan, it cannot remain oblivious to the Indo-Pakistani rivalry, as it constitutes the principal strategic fault line in the region.

First, since the Cold War's end, the US has come to see India as a potential strategic partner. Even though Indian elites remain ambivalent about the scope and the dimensions of the Indo-US partnership, they share a common concern about the dramatic rise of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Such misgivings have been exacerbated because of the growing assertiveness of the PRC both in the South China Sea and along the disputed Himalayan border with India. Consequently, despite India's *idee fixe* about maintaining its "strategic autonomy," it will pursue a level of quiet strategic cooperation with the United States. Such cooperation, however, could be undermined if the US finds itself forced to choose between India and Pakistan in the event of yet another bilateral conflict. Consequently, a dampening of the Indo-Pakistani rivalry is clearly in the US interest.

Second, and in a related vein, the United States quite correctly remains concerned about the presence of a range of terrorist organizations within Pakistan and their willingness and ability to carry out strikes in Indian-controlled Kashmir. These groups, whether within the control of the Pakistani security establishment or not, can wreak havoc between the two warring nations.

Third, because both India and Pakistan are nuclear-armed rivals, continued tensions in the subcontinent remain a source of concern to the United States. The region has seen its share of crises since the overt Indo-Pakistani acquisition of nuclear weapons. None of these have spiraled into full-scale war. However, the fear of such escalation and the subsequent usage of nuclear weapons have long been on the minds of American policymakers. Not surprisingly, ensuring that the nuclear taboo is not broken in South Asia remains an enduring policy interest of the United States and a reduction in Indo-Pakistani tensions is critical to that end.

US LEVERAGE OVER INDIA AND PAKISTAN

What leverage does the United States have over India and Pakistan? American leverage over India is probably at its peak today. During the Cold War, when the two states were mostly at odds, even in times of dire distress India demonstrated that it could afford to fend off US

pressures to change its policies. In considerable part this was possible because it could almost always turn to the Soviet Union to balance American power. Today, however, the principal successor state to the Soviet Union, Russia, is neither able nor willing to play such a role. Consequently, India's room for maneuver is more limited. More to the point, India is far more enmeshed with the United States along a number of important dimensions, such as military to military contacts, weapons sales, trade, investment, and diplomatic cooperation in multilateral fora. That said, given the country's political culture, Indian policymakers still remain fiercely committed to the pursuit of an autonomous foreign policy. However, the current level of Indian involvement with the US makes it more difficult for Indian policymakers to remain oblivious to American concerns. There is some evidence to suggest that US prodding in the wake of a major Indo-Pakistani crisis in 2001–2002 contributed to the commencement of the “composite dialogue” with Pakistan.⁶

What about US leverage over Pakistan? Since the US involvement in Afghanistan in the wake of 2001 terrorist attacks on the US, it has poured well over \$20 billion in economic and military assistance into the country. However, given the US dependence on the land access to Afghanistan for the prosecution of the war against the Taliban and the remnants of the Al Qaeda, American policymakers were always hesitant to exert any real pressure on Pakistan to alter any aspect of its foreign or security policies. With the US drawdown from Afghanistan, is this relationship likely to change? Obviously, the US dependence on Pakistan to maintain the logistical chain to Afghanistan will soon draw to a close. Consequently, American policymakers should no longer feel as beholden to the demands of the Pakistani military establishment.

The question of American leverage, however, depends on whether or not US policymakers remain wedded to untenable assumptions of another era. If, for example, they continue to harbor the belief that any pressure on Pakistan is likely to drive it further into the arms of the PRC and thereby lead to a loss of any residual US leverage, they will become victims of a self-fulfilling prophecy. On the other hand, if they recognize that both the elected leadership as well as the military establishment remain dependent on the United States for economic and

military assistance and that the PRC (or Saudi Arabia) do not constitute easy substitutes, they can exert more pressure on Pakistan to abandon some of its past policies that have either piqued or exacerbated relations with India. Given that the United States does have a substantial interest in limiting the possibility and scope of conflict between these two nuclear-armed rivals in South Asia, it may be useful to turn to an examination of some literature on rivalry termination that deals with the role of external actors in fostering an improved climate of relations in an enduring rivalry.

COMPETING MODELS

Three recent works on rivalry termination provide some useful clues and suggestions about how external actors may facilitate the process of a reduction in tensions and the promotion of amity. In this section we turn to the key elements of these analyses.

Kristina Mani, in a recent work, underscores the significance of democratization in promoting rivalry termination. Even though her analysis draws on Latin American cases, there is no reason to believe that it cannot be usefully applied to the study of rivalries in other regional contexts with suitable and appropriate modifications.⁷

At bottom, her theory holds that as a new democratizing regime assumes office it will seek to adopt policies of compromise and conciliation in the domestic arena and avoid political polarization. In turn it will also try to avoid arbitrariness in the use of political power that had characterized the previous regime. These habits of compromise, negotiation and reasonableness, she argues, are also likely to spill over into the international arena. Such strategies, she argues, especially if they meet with some reciprocity from rivals, then enables the democratizers to shift critical resources away from national security, to weaken other domestic actors who are opposed to reform and to also to secure access to international markets, capital, and technology.

Mani is also attentive to the presence of potential “veto players” within the political order who could undermine or hobble the efforts of democratizers. These “veto players” in turn, are defined as *partisan* and *institutional*. *Partisan veto players* are individuals or groups who stem from

alignments within the political system while *institutional veto players* are those who enjoy such status on the basis of constitutional arrangements.

The task of democratizing agents then is to find ways to either neutralize or win over the potential veto players as they seek to consolidate democracy at home and reduce tensions abroad. To do so, Mani argues that the likely veto players have to be engaged for extended periods of time and thereby have their preferences altered. Obviously, if external tensions can be reduced, the ability of veto players, most notably military establishments, to forestall or hobble reforms can be diminished. This model has considerable logical as well as intuitive appeal. However, it will be shown that it is nevertheless of rather limited utility in the Indo-Pakistani case, especially because her model grants no explicit role to external actors. The absence of a role for external actors greatly reduces the relevance of her model for this particular project.

Charles Kupchan, whose work deals with a different set of cases from other regions, offers a second model of rivalry termination. The key elements of his model can be summarized as follows. Kupchan's argument is located in the larger body of literature dealing with "the democratic peace."⁸ His analysis is composed of four distinct segments or stages toward rivalry termination. In the first phase, one which involves *unilateral accommodation*, one party makes a unilateral gesture with the hope of eliciting a reciprocal reaction. Such accommodation will be facilitated if both parties see a common threat. The second phase moves toward *mutual accommodation* when the hopes of tension reduction give way to *mutual confidence*. The third phase leads to *societal integration* when confidence expands, contributing to a milieu of mutual *trust*. The fourth and final phase culminates in the generation of new political narratives, with the two polities coming to share a common *identity*.⁹

It is really the first two phases of Kupchan's model that are of significance to this analysis, as they deal specifically with the process of rivalry termination. The subsequent phases are invaluable in explaining how a rivalry may eventually culminate in the creation of a security community. While the model is elegantly laid out, however, the relevant components of the model which account for its success elsewhere have not been present in South Asia and are

unlikely to obtain anytime in the foreseeable future. More to the point, his model, like that of Mani, has no particular role assigned to external actors.

Our third and final model is derived from the work of William Thompson. His model has the following components. They involve *expectations*, *shocks*, *policy entrepreneurs*, *reciprocity*, and *reinforcement*. Each of these components requires some discussion and explication.

Expectations are based upon what rivals have done in the past and what they are presently engaged in. *Shocks* are defined as transitional situations that can provoke a significant change in adversarial relations by changing key *expectations*. (Shocks, in turn, can be either endogenous or exogenous and third parties can play a vital role in generating exogenous shocks). Next, *policy entrepreneurs* are decision-makers who prove to be critical in seeking de-escalation. Their role, in turn, can be bolstered through a process of *third-party interventions*. Additionally, for this process to culminate in the de-escalation of the rivalry, there must be *reciprocity* and *reinforcement*. In the absence thereof, a de-escalatory process will not ensue.¹⁰ Finally, if all six variables are present, the likelihood of the model's expectations being realized is that much greater. That said, *policy entrepreneurs* and *third parties*, though desirable, are not critical to the working of the model.

That said, the presence of the role of *third parties* renders his model most useful for our purposes. Specifically, using his model, we will highlight the role of the United States at key junctures and turning points in this relationship when the possibility of a breakthrough toward amity loomed large. As this analysis will demonstrate, the United States has not always played a particularly positive role on all occasions.

CLOSE CALLS AND MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

The following section will examine three important moments when the rivalry may have de-escalated but did not and what role, if any, the United States played in the process. The first will focus on the period after the 1971 Indo-Pakistani conflict, the second on the era after the death of General Zia-ul-Haq and the restoration of democracy in Pakistan, and the third during

the last years of General Pervez Musharraf following a major crisis in Indo-Pakistani relations between 2001 and 2002. Of the three episodes, it is believed in some quarters that the most recent attempt came closest toward generating a rapprochement.

Several moments in the Indo-Pakistani relationship should have provided suitable opportunities for a reduction in tensions as Pakistan made a transition from military rule to democracy. The first such episode came about in the wake of the country's disastrous defeat in the Indo-Pakistani conflict of 1971.¹¹ The origins of this particular crisis and its culmination in the third Indo-Pakistani war have been explored elsewhere. Suffice it to state that it stemmed from the unwillingness of the West Pakistani civilian elite as well as the military establishment to share power with their East Pakistani counterparts in the aftermath of Pakistan's first free and fair election in December 1970. As the negotiations collapsed, the Pakistani military embarked upon a brutal crackdown in East Pakistan, leading to the flight of nearly ten million refugees into India. After exhausting diplomatic options, Indian policymakers, unwilling to absorb such a large influx of refugees into its already turgid population, chose to provoke Pakistan into a war.¹²

The US role during this crisis was, without question, malign.¹³ The military dictatorship of General Yahya Khan in Pakistan had facilitated Henry Kissinger's visit to Beijing in July 1971.¹⁴ Consequently, the Nixon administration was unwilling to exert any pressure on Pakistan despite evidence of the military's brutal and egregious conduct against hapless East Pakistani civilians in March 1971. Instead, it adopted an overtly hostile stance toward India on the mistaken belief that the country was acting at the behest of the Soviet Union.¹⁵ American support for Pakistan during this crisis not only alienated Indian elites but helped drive India into a strategic alignment with the Soviet Union.

Furthermore, despite US support for Pakistan, India prevailed militarily in the conflict. Pakistan's defeat was decisive in that it led to the break-up of the country. Furthermore, it also contributed to the discrediting of the Pakistani military because of their unprofessional conduct in suppressing the civil unrest in East Pakistan and their subsequent incompetence in the conduct of the war with India.¹⁶

In the aftermath of the war, however, President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, through very deft negotiations with his Indian counterpart, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, in 1972, managed to reach a very favorable postwar settlement. Specifically, he arranged for the release of 90,000 Pakistani prisoners of war, reiterated a commitment to abjure from the use of force in resolving the Kashmir dispute, and accepted a change of nomenclature, which altered the Cease Fire Line (CFL) in Kashmir to the Line of Actual Control (LOAC).¹⁷ The disastrous performance of the Pakistani armed forces in the 1971 war coupled with Bhutto's adroit diplomacy in the wake of military defeat gave him an opportunity to reduce the salience of the military in Pakistan's politics and to move toward a rapprochement with India while consolidating democracy at home.

Unfortunately, neither he nor his party did much to utilize this opportunity to alter the internal political arrangements within the country and promote a culture of negotiation, compromise, and reasonableness when dealing with political opponents. Consequently, no democratic consolidation took place either in normative or institutional terms. Instead, he chose to promote populist ventures, nationalized several industries, alienated the civil service, and failed to win the trust of the military. Furthermore, he undermined the independence of the Pakistan Civil Service, arbitrarily retired several hundred civil servants, and abolished service guarantees. He also created the Federal Security Force (FSF), an organization designed for his personal protection and one that he used to victimize his political opponents. In an effort to emplace his party in the province of Baluchistan, he summarily dismissed the National Awami Party in the province. In the wake of this dismissal, an armed rebellion erupted in the state. Bhutto banned the party, arrested its principal leaders and charged them with conspiracy and high treason. He also used the military to suppress the uprising and granted them considerable leeway in the use of force. When his popularity started to sag, far from resorting to a strategy of political conciliation, he chose instead to wrap himself in the mantle of Islam and thereby even alienated segments of his own supporters. His final error, of course, was the attempt to rig the national elections in 1977. This decision led to widespread discontent across the country and his eventual overthrow in a military coup.¹⁸

Not surprisingly, given the domestic turmoil that his policies had engendered and his preoccupation with the suppression of the uprising in Baluchistan, his regime could make no meaningful gestures toward India. To compound matters, in an effort to compensate for Pakistan's conventional inferiority he also embarked upon a clandestine nuclear weapons program.¹⁹ To the extent that there was any re-orientation in Pakistan's foreign policy, it involved a significant turn toward the Middle East.²⁰

A long period of peace did ensue between the two adversaries in the wake of the 1971 war. However, this period of peace cannot be attributed to the beginnings of a rapprochement. It was little more than a reflection of the conventional military asymmetry between the two states. Pakistan, the revisionist power, was simply in no position to militarily provoke India given the latter's considerable military superiority.

Indeed, the next crisis did not take place until 1987. An ethno-religious insurgency had broken out in the Indian border state of Punjab. In the mid-1980s, this crisis peaked and Pakistan sought to exploit India's difficulties in suppressing the rebellion through the provision of sanctuaries, training, and weaponry for the insurgents.²¹ This crisis stemmed from India's decision to resort to a strategy of coercive diplomacy to dissuade Pakistan from continued meddling.

It is important to note that certain permissive conditions within India were conducive to the adoption of this strategy of forceful persuasion. A largely untested prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, who was also a political neophyte, was in office; the Minister of State for Defense, Arun Singh, enjoyed a close rapport with the Chief of Staff (COAS) of the Indian Army, General Krishnaswami Sundarji; and the COAS was known for his flamboyance as well as a propensity for risk-taking. Taken together, these factors created an ideal conjuncture for the events that transpired.

The United States, along with the Soviet Union, played a mostly helpful role in defusing this crisis.²² During or shortly after this crisis, it is widely believed that Pakistan crossed a threshold in its quest to acquire a nuclear weapons option.²³ Though its security establishment

had long utilized an asymmetric war strategy against India, the growth in its nuclear weapons capability certainly emboldened them to adopt a more aggressive stance toward India.²⁴ Though US and Soviet intercession played critical roles in containing this crisis, neither power did much to follow up with the two warring parties to further the cause of conflict resolution.

A second opportunity for de-escalating the rivalry with India arose in the wake of the abrupt death of General Zia-ul-Haq in a plane crash in the summer of 1988. After a decade of military rule, popular disaffection with the military in Pakistan was at its apogee. Consequently, his successors made no attempt to try and sustain military rule. Furthermore, the United States, which had granted General Zia-ul-Haq considerable leeway and had indeed, by default, bolstered military rule, encouraged the Pakistani military not to interfere in the political process. Almost immediately, Benazir Bhutto, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's daughter who had returned to Pakistan from exile, entered the political fray. When national elections were held in November 1988, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), which she now headed, swept the polls.

In the meanwhile, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had been assassinated in India in 1984. Her son and successor, Rajiv Gandhi, had won a significant mandate when elections had been held later that year. With both leaders enjoying substantial domestic popularity, it proved possible for Rajiv Gandhi to make an overture toward Pakistan to try and reduce tensions. These hopes for improved relations were also enhanced because of the relative age of both national leaders, neither of whom had searing memories of the horrors that had accompanied the partition of the subcontinent in 1947. Indeed, the initial efforts to improve relations proved quite promising.

While visiting Pakistan for the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit in December 1988, Gandhi signed three important agreements with his Pakistani counterpart. The first and easily the most significant of these was a pact whereby both sides agreed that they would not attack each other's nuclear facilities.²⁵ The other agreements outlined plans to work toward ending the confrontation on the Siachen Glacier and the delimitation of a boundary along Sir Creek near the Indian state of Gujarat and the Pakistani

province of Sindh. In this context, it is important to note that even though the Indian military had distinct views about the demilitarization of the Siachen Glacier, they were in no position to exercise a unit veto on the subject.²⁶

Throughout the year thereafter, a series of high-level meetings ensued which were designed to improve bilateral relations. Many of these meetings dealt with contentious issues including the Siachen Glacier question. Furthermore, in July 1988, Rajiv Gandhi became the first Indian prime minister to visit Pakistan in 30 years. Benazir Bhutto had expected Rajiv Gandhi to make some concession on the Kashmir question to enable her to deal with pressures from radical Islamists and the military at home. Rajiv Gandhi, however, was unwilling to make any such gesture.²⁷ Accordingly, despite the goodwill that had been generated as a consequence of the prior agreements, the visit did not prove to be especially fruitful barring the formal agreement not to attack each other's nuclear installations. Nevertheless, other high-level meetings between key officials that had been in the cards continued throughout most of the year.²⁸

The sudden eruption of an ethno-religious insurgency in the Indian-controlled portion of the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir brought these negotiations to a halt. The origins of this insurgency were indigenous and could be traced to the exigencies of Indian politics.²⁹ However, almost immediately after its outbreak, the Pakistani military, despite the presence of a civilian and democratically elected government, jumped into the fray.³⁰ Recognizing that she could ill-afford to continue the discussions with India given her domestic milieu as well as the antagonism of the military, Bhutto promptly did an about face and ratcheted up her hostile rhetoric. Any prospect of some accommodation with India that had arisen was now irretrievably lost for well over a decade, especially as Rajiv Gandhi had lost the national election in 1989 with a coalition government coming to power.³¹

The coalition government was at a loss when confronted with the Kashmir insurgency. To compound matters, the Indian security forces, which had no dearth of experience in coping with domestic insurgencies, initially adopted a mailed fist strategy in their efforts to crush the insurgents. This approach almost immediately backfired and actually widened the scope and intensity of the uprising.³² Of course, Pakistan's quick involvement in supporting elements of the rebels led to a dramatic escalation of violence.³³

Faced with the abrupt eruption of this insurgency, the US could do little to address its underlying causes. However, as the crisis threatened to spiral out of control in 1990 and rumors of an Indian strike across the Line of Control became rife, the United States did engage in some crisis diplomacy. To that end, it dispatched Robert Gates, the US deputy national security adviser, to both India and Pakistan in May 1990. In Islamabad, Gates made clear that the United States had simulated every plausible Indo-Pakistani war game scenario and in every case Pakistan lost. Accordingly, he urged Islamabad to end its support for the insurgency in Kashmir, while he told his Indian interlocutors in New Delhi that they should exercise military restraint and also not seek to suppress the insurgency with mailed fist tactics.³⁴ Subsequent American efforts to reduce Indo-Pakistani tensions during the first Clinton administration, however, were seen to be blatantly partisan and set back the cause of peacemaking in the region.³⁵

The third and final case that will be discussed started under a military regime in Pakistan and in the aftermath of a major Indo-Pakistani crisis. The origins of this attempt at rapprochement remain somewhat murky. However, it is widely believed that an external actor, the United States, played a critical role in prodding the two sides to embark upon a peace process.³⁶ US pressures, no doubt, were taken seriously in both Islamabad and New Delhi because much international pressure had been brought to bear on the two countries in the wake of the 1998 nuclear tests.³⁷

The backdrop to the initiation of this process was hardly propitious. The Pakistani state had been implicated in a terrorist attack launched on the Indian parliament on December 13, 2001.³⁸ In the aftermath of this attack India had embarked on a massive military mobilization

designed to forcefully persuade Pakistan to not only desist from allowing any more terrorist attacks but to also end its involvement with the use of terror.³⁹ This crisis stretched out for most of the spring and summer of 2002 and concluded in the early fall of the year. In its wake, it is believed that the George W. Bush administration, which was keenly interested in eliciting Pakistan's cooperation in the "war on terror" and in eviscerating Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, urged the two parties to move toward a reduction of tensions. A more cordial Indo-Pakistani relationship, the administration believed, might enable Pakistan to direct its military resources to its border with Afghanistan.

In any event, Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee offered a resumption of talks with Pakistan in mid-April 2003. Significantly, this offer was made in Srinagar, the capital of the Indian-controlled portion of the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir.⁴⁰ Later that year, General Musharraf reciprocated with two important gestures. In November, he banned three terrorist organizations, the Hezb-ul Tehrir, the Jamiat-ul Furqan, and the Jamait-ul Ansar, and agreed to a cease-fire along the Line of Control in Kashmir.⁴¹ Also in November, the Pakistani prime minister, Zafarullah Khan Jamali, proposed an unconditional cease-fire.⁴² Subsequently, in December 2004, a few weeks prior to the 12th SAARC Summit in Islamabad, Musharraf demonstrated some apparent flexibility on the Kashmir question. Most importantly, he suggested that the contentious issues of the UN plebiscite, a long-standing Pakistani demand, harking back to the late 1940s, could be set aside.⁴³ However, faced with intense domestic criticism, the Pakistani Foreign Office sought to reduce the significance of his statement while insisting that they remained open to meaningful discussions with India to resolve the Kashmir question.⁴⁴

As in the past, on the sidelines of the SAARC Summit, Vajpayee and Musharraf reached an understanding that met the basic expectations of both sides for a viable dialogue. Significantly, India conceded that Kashmir did indeed constitute an international dispute and Pakistan agreed to prevent terror emanating from its soil. In the wake of these developments, a full-scale "composite dialogue" ensued. The dialogue encompassed a range of issues, from

nuclear confidence-building measures to the possible demilitarization of the Siachen Glacier. It is believed that considerable progress toward the resolution of a number of nettlesome issues was being made. Most importantly, it is also argued that a preliminary roadmap was also drawn up for the eventual settlement of the Kashmir dispute.⁴⁵ This possible pathway to rapprochement had five significant features. First, the two sides had agreed that there would be no significant changes in the LoC but that some minor adjustments were possible. Second, they agreed that the two governments would devolve considerable autonomy to their respective parts of Kashmir. The specifics, of course, would have to be dealt with in due course. Third, they also agreed on various steps to bring about a process of reciprocal demilitarization. Fourth, India did not agree to a proposed “joint management” of the affairs of the whole state but did express willingness to consider such an approach for the management of watersheds, forests and glaciers. Fifth and finally, they agreed to open the border to the free movement of people and goods.⁴⁶

Others, however, claim that despite the fashioning of a possible roadmap it was far from clear that Musharraf was in a position to make a credible commitment. This analysis cannot adjudicate between those two competing positions. What is known, however, is that two different regimes in India, with markedly divergent political orientations, sustained the peace process.

Even after Vajpayee remitted office following the electoral defeat of his National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition government, his successor, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, continued the nascent peace process, and with much vigor. Musharraf’s ability to sustain the peace process, however, was undermined because of the exigencies of Pakistan’s domestic politics. Specifically, the removal of the Chief Justice of the Pakistan Supreme Court, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhury, in November 2007 triggered a significant backlash and undermined Musharraf’s position.

Faced with the possibility of impeachment, President Musharraf resigned from office in 2008. Soon thereafter, elections were held and a civilian regime under the aegis of the Asif Ali Zardari, the husband of the assassinated Benazir Bhutto, assumed office. It is possible that this

regime may have continued the process that had been initiated under Musharraf's watch. However, a major terrorist attack on Bombay (Mumbai) in late November 2008, which was traced back to Pakistan, effectively brought the dialogue to a close.⁴⁷ No prime minister in India could possibly sustain the talks in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attacks which made clear that the Indian state was acutely vulnerable to a determined terrorist onslaught stemming from Pakistan.

The US role in prodding the two parties in the wake of the 2001–02 crisis was, in many ways, an important catalyst in promoting the “composite dialogue.” Consequently, in this particular case the role of the US as a *third party* was a critical factor in boosting the prospects of conflict resolution and eventual reconciliation.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis of these three cases it is possible to conclude that the Thompson model offers the best explanation for the prospects of rivalry de-escalation or its failure. The variables of the model provide a number of useful apertures to examine the conditions under which a rivalry can stagnate, escalate or dissipate. The model is distinctive in that it pays heed to structural, national and decision-making level factors. The focus on *shocks* provides opportunities to examine the impact of various disjunctures, the issue of *expectations* helps clarify the views of each side of the other, the emphasis on *change-seeking entrepreneurs* as well as *third-party pressures* directs attention to the role of human agency, and, finally, the questions of *reciprocity* and *reinforcement* highlight the importance of the critical need for positive interactions. These variables enable the model to have sufficient flexibility to ensure broad application unlike Mani's model, for example, which requires *democratization* as a precedent for a process of rapprochement to ensue.

Relying on Thompson's model, what might be the key elements of a possible scenario for the de-escalation of the rivalry? It may stem from a situation where the domestic crises in Pakistan become so acute that they constitute an *endogenous shock*. Unable to cope with

widespread domestic disorder and maintain vigilance on its eastern border, and fearful of the safety and security of their nuclear arsenal, Pakistan's civilian and military elites may revise their *expectations* of their ability to compete with India and offer to end their unremitting hostility. Quite fortuitously, a *change-seeking entrepreneur* is on hand in India and responds favorably to the Pakistani gesture. Simultaneously, key external actors (*third parties*), including the United States and the PRC, exert suitable diplomatic pressures, thereby sustaining the momentum for a dialogue. US pressure, of course, happens to be crucial because it signals to India that, unlike in the past, the US is no longer willing to countenance Pakistan's continued intransigence, nor is it willing to perpetuate its continued reliance on the Pakistani military. India then decides to make suitable and viable concessions on the Kashmir question and thereby sets in motion a process of *reciprocity*. Pakistani decision-makers, recognizing that India's concessions are significant, respond favorably and thereby start a virtuous spiral of *reinforcement* which steadily contributes to the eventual de-escalation of the rivalry.

How might the United States then fashion a sustainable national security strategy toward this enduring rivalry? Such a discussion necessitates a focus on risks, enablers and pitfalls. At the outset, three risks in particular should concern US policymakers. First, the Indo-Pakistani rivalry in Afghanistan is likely to intensify as the US drawdown in 2016 approaches. Second, Pakistani policymakers have growing misgivings about the growth in and transformation of Indo-US ties.⁴⁸ Third, the vortex of Pakistan's domestic politics also raises questions about the long-term stability of the state especially given that it possesses a significant nuclear arsenal.

What might be the enablers of such a strategy? One step, though bold, could have a dramatic impact on tamping down the conflict. This would require the United States to declare that it recognizes the LoC as the international border. This would deliver a significant *shock* and could well change Pakistani *expectations*. Also, it would enable India to place its own house in order within the segment of Kashmir that it controls, free of the fear of Pakistani interference.⁴⁹

In the more immediate term, however, as the United States seeks to reduce its presence in Afghanistan, it could benefit from India's cooperation. To that end, it can quietly work to

reduce Indo-Pakistani relations through the pursuit of some concrete, tangible projects. Specifically, the US has expressed an interest in promoting economic ties between Central and South Asia. To that end it could gently prod Indo-Pakistani collaboration on the construction of gas pipelines linking India with various states in Central Asia. Pakistan may well perceive a “relative gains” problem at the outset.⁵⁰ However, given its own dire energy needs it may be amenable to suitable US side payments to overcome these misgivings.

Though US engagement in the region has been intermittent, apart from rare exceptions, its support for the Pakistani military establishment has been consistent. Such backing has helped foster a self-fulfilling prophecy: the military, for all practical purposes, has long emerged as the only functioning institution in the country. In turn, whenever faced with a foreign or security policy exigency in the region, American policymakers have turned to the military to pursue their interests. The military order, in turn, has exacted a price: it has ensured that the bulk of US assistance has helped to strengthen its own position within the Pakistani polity.

Any discussion, of course, would fall short without an examination of possible pitfalls. Accordingly, it will behoove US policymakers to remain alert to these. Three likely and significant dangers need to be highlighted. The first would be yet another Pakistan-backed terrorist attack on India. Unlike in the past, when the Indian state has shown both restraint and forbearance, its patience may not hold on this occasion. Calls for a more vigorous response are likely to ensue from right-wing political parties, hawkish strategic commentators and even segments of the afflicted citizenry. Under these circumstances any US effort to promote the de-escalation of Indo-Pakistani tensions would reach a swift standstill.

In a related vein, any American effort designed to reduce Indo-Pakistani tensions must remain alert to the vagaries of India’s domestic politics. An attempt that is overt and heavy-handed is bound to provoke a backlash amongst India’s attentive public. Such a concern is hardly chimerical. Despite the dramatic improvement in Indo-US relations over the past decade or so, much distrust of American intentions continues to pervade the views of segments of Indian elite

opinion. To reverse Robert Axelrod's famous dictum, the "shadow of the past" continues to haunt Indo-US relations.⁵¹

Furthermore, a US strategy must also be sensitive to the growing fragmentation of Indian politics. Despite the unitary constitutional dispensation of the Indian state, politics in India increasingly resemble those of a highly federal polity. Owing to the presence (and likely persistence) of coalition governments, state-level regimes are today exercising a disproportionate influence on a range of foreign policy issues. Any strategy that is oblivious to this feature of the Indian political terrain is bound to encounter resistance.

Additionally, the PRC, which has long enjoyed a strategic partnership with Pakistan and has used the latter as a strategic surrogate in South Asia, may be disinclined to see the emergence of an Indo-Pakistani rapprochement. The reasons for their unwillingness to see a more cordial relationship develop are straightforward. Such reconciliation could enable India to direct the bulk of its strategic resources to the Sino-Indian frontier and thereby attenuate its security concerns. All of these possible pitfalls are compelling. Any American strategy that hopes to de-escalate the Indo-Pakistani rivalry can ill-afford to ignore these potential limits.

Finally, the United States needs to eventually confront a "moral hazard" problem that it has long overlooked in its attempts to influence and alter Pakistan's behavior.⁵² During the Cold War, Pakistan was at best a partial partner. It did provide the US bases in the country which enabled surveillance flights over the Soviet Union and also provided opportunities for intelligence collection on the USSR. However, weaponry that the US had provided to steel Pakistan's resolve against Communist expansion was used to start a war against India in 1965.⁵³ In 1970, the United States chose to resurrect the relationship after having imposed an arms embargo on Pakistan (and India) in the wake of the war. This renewal of the partnership again came at a cost. The Nixon administration, beholden to Pakistan for enabling a diplomatic opening to the People's Republic of China, chose to ignore its client's resort to a genocidal strategy to quell domestic discontent in East Pakistan.⁵⁴ This episode, thanks to the feckless

actions of the military dictatorship in Pakistan, tainted the United States through its association with the regime.

Later, during the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, Pakistan once again proved to be a limited partner. It did allow the United States to use its territory to train, organize, and arm the Afghan insurgents. However, this relationship came at a price; for all practical purposes the US willfully ignored Pakistan's headlong pursuit of nuclear weapons, thereby undermining US nonproliferation efforts in South Asia and beyond.⁵⁵ In the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States, once again, forged a strategic relationship with Pakistan with the goals of toppling the Taliban regime and eviscerating Al Qaeda. Yet again, Pakistan has proven to be, at best, a reluctant partner. It has acted against Al Qaeda but has consistently failed to rein in key terrorist organizations ranging from the Lashkar-e-Taiba to the Afghan Taliban. In the meanwhile, it has continued to make demands on the United States for both financial and military assistance. US policymakers, in the hope of changing Pakistan's behavior, have continued to provide such assistance. American policy, though designed to alter Pakistan's preferences, yet again is failing. A more appropriate strategy might involve one that shifts support away from the Pakistani military and focuses American assistance towards building up civilian institutions that would discourage Pakistan's continued dalliance with agents of terror. In the absence of these policy shifts it is hard to envisage how the United States might actually further its strategic interests in the region.⁵⁶

¹ For a number of perspectives on the rivalry see T.V. Paul, ed. *The Indo-Pakistani Rivalry: An Enduring Conflict* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

² See Baldev Raj Nayar, "Treat India Seriously," *Foreign Policy*, 18, Spring 1975, pp. 133-54; also see M.S. Venkatramani, *The American Role in Pakistan, 1947-1958* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1982)

³ Stephen P. Cohen, "U.S. Weapons and South Asia: A Policy Analysis," *Pacific Affairs*, 49:1, Spring 1976, pp. 49-69; also see Lawrence Wright, "The Double Game," *The New Yorker*, May 16, 2011.

⁴ On the Indo-Pakistani conflicts see Sumit Ganguly, *Conflict Unending: Indo-Pakistani Tensions Since 1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); on the crises see P.R. Chari, Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema and Stephen P. Cohen,

Four Crises and a Peace Process: American Engagement in South Asia (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2007)

⁵ Sumit Ganguly and Devin T. Hagerty, *Fearful Symmetry: India and Pakistan Under the Shadow of Nuclear Weapons* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003); also see Sumit Ganguly, “Nuclear Stability in South Asia,” *International Security*, 33:2, Fall 2008, pp. 45-70.

⁶ See Chari, et al. 2007.

⁷ Kristina Mani, *Democratization and Military Transformation in Argentina and Chile: Rethinking Rivalry* (Boulder: First Forum Press, 2011)

⁸ The literature on “the democratic peace” is vast and was pioneered by Michael Doyle. See Michael Doyle, *Liberal Peace: Selected Essays* (London: Routledge, 2011); also see Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); John Owen, *Liberal Peace, Liberal War: American Politics and International Security* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000)

⁹ Charles A Kupchan, *How Enemies Become Friends: The Sources of Stable Peace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010)

¹⁰ William R. Thompson, “Expectancy Theory, Strategic Rivalry, De-Escalation and the Evolution of the Sino-Soviet Case,” in William R. Thompson. ed. *Evolutionary Interpretations of World Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2001) ;also see Karen Rasler, William R. Thompson and Sumit Ganguly, *How Rivalries End* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013)

¹¹ Leo E. Rose and Richard Sisson, *War and Secession: Pakistan, India and the creation of Bangladesh* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990)

¹² Robert Jackson, *South Asian Crisis: India, Pakistan and Bangladesh* (New York: Praeger, 1975)

¹³ On this issue see Gary J. Bass, *The Blood Telegram; Nixon, Kissinger and a Forgotten Genocide* (New York: Knopf, 2013)

¹⁴ On this subject see, William Burr. ed. *The Beijing–Washington Back–Channel and Henry Kissinger’s Secret Trip to China: September 1970–July 1971* (Washington, DC: national Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book, Number 66, February 27, 2002) Available at: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB66/>

¹⁵ The best statement on this issue remains, Christopher van Hollen, “The Tilt Policy Revisited: Nixon–Kissinger Geopolitics and South Asia,” *Asian Survey*, 20:4, April 1980, pp.339-361.

¹⁶ On the discrediting of the Pakistani military see Hasan Zaheer, *The Separation of East Pakistan: The Rise and Realization of Bengali Sub-Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997)

¹⁷ The Line of Actual Control reflected the disposition of troops at the conclusion of the 1971 war. It is important to note that the Indian military played little or no role in post war settlement. The entire negotiation with Pakistan was the preserve of civilians. Mrs. Gandhi and a close coterie of advisers participated in the negotiations and were solely responsible for determining the scope of the discussions that ensued. For details pertaining to the bilateral negotiations at Simla in 1972 see P.R. Chari and Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, *The Simla Agreement: Its Wasted Promise*

(New Delhi: Manohar, 2001); also see the discussion in S.M. Burke and Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.420.

¹⁸ Roedad Khan, *Pakistan---A Dream Gone Sour* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp.64-65.

¹⁹ Samina Ahmed, "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons Program: Turning Points and Nuclear Choices," *International Security*, 23:4, Spring 1999, pp.178-204.

²⁰ Marvin Weinbaum and Gautam Sen, "Pakistan Enters the Middle East," *Orbis*

²¹ Mark Tully and Satish Jacob, *Amritsar: Mrs. Gandhi's Last Battle* (Columbia: South Asia Books, 1991)

²² For details see Kanti Bajpai, P.R. Chari, Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, Stephen P. Cohen and Sumit Ganguly, *Brasstacks and Beyond: Perception and the Management of Crisis in South Asia* (New Delhi: Manohar,)

²³ Devin T. Hagerty, *The Consequences of Nuclear Proliferation: Lessons from South Asia* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998)

²⁴ In this context it is important to underscore that this analysis firmly challenges those that seek to link Pakistan's feckless use of asymmetric forces to its acquisition of nuclear weapons. For a statement of that argument see S. Paul Kapur, *Dangerous Deterrent* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007)

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²⁶ Lt. Gen. (retd.), V.R. Raghavan, *Siachen: Conflict Without End* (New Delhi: Vikas, 2003)

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²⁹ Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

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³³ On Pakistan's involvement see Praveen Swami, *India, Pakistan and the Secret Jihad* (London: Routledge, 2007)

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³⁷ On the role of external pressures, especially from the United States, see Strobe Talbott, *Engaging India: Diplomacy, Democracy and the Bomb* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2006)

³⁸ On Pakistan's involvement in the 2001-2002 crisis see Sumit Ganguly and R. Harrison Wagner, "India and Pakistan: Negotiating Under the Shadow of Nuclear War," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*,

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- ⁵⁰ On this subject see Robert Powell, "Absolute and Relative Gains in International Relations Theory," *American Political Science Review*, 85:4, December 1991, pp1303-1320.
- ⁵¹ Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 2006)
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- ⁵³ Robert McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery: The US, India and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)
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