

PACIFISM TO CONFRONTATION: CONFLICT DYNAMICS BETWEEN THE NUCLEAR CONTENDERS (INDIA-PAKISTAN)

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Abstract

India and Pakistan have been attempting to settle disputes through pacifist means. Notable attempts include Liaquat-Nehru approach, Simla Agreement and Lahore Declaration. On the side surge in defence budget on both sides of the border designates that possibility of nuclear clash has not been averted yet. Kargil war was quite alarming but flimsy deterrence worked and South Asia had a narrow escape from nuclear brinkmanship. Terrorism plagued both countries as a consequence of war against terrorism. It also increased the risk of nuclear terrorism. Pakistan and India's participation in Nuclear Security Summits fore shadows nuclear confidence building measures but both the countries are strong contenders for Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) membership and India is seeking permanent membership to United Nations Security Council too. This paper theorizes that balance of power as well as the balance of terror between India and Pakistan are the agents of relative stability. Any asymmetry would likely to push both contenders to armed clash which may turn nuclear at any point. If deterrence sustains for a half century more, both may sign mutual agreements on reduction and limitation of strategic weapons. International regimes may also play a decisive role in furtherance of peace and stability in South Asia.

Keywords: Fragile Peace, Nuclear Terrorism, Nuclear Security Summit, Balance of Power, Relative Peace.

Introduction

India Pakistan rivalry is always in the breaking news of mainstream media, especially whenever there is any terrorist attack in India or a missile test by Pakistan but the brighter side of the picture is not much highlighted by international media. Zia Mian in his article *choosing peace in South Asia* pinpoints the situation that people on both sides of the border neither want war nor arms race, whereas both the governments are spending extravagantly on producing arms. Justifying his argument, he presents a survey of six major cities in India and eight cities, thirty six villages in Pakistan that renounce war and desire to wage peace. Now it's up to the government that how much it weighs the public opinion.¹ Such steps at public level demand the attention of

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the government so that these can further pave the way for sustainable peace between both the countries. India's impulse to dominate the entire region (Asia) through military power is apparent from Indian defence spending and military strategy. In the year 2009, Indian General Deepak Kapoor evinced that Indian military was carving out 'two-front-war strategy' to combat war with Pakistan and China simultaneously. General Deepak also highlighted Indian ambition of projecting power from the Persian Gulf to the Strait of Malacca, the area which spans from Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. Indian massive military budget endorses General Deepak's bold claims. According to a report published by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on military spending; Pakistan spent about \$ 9.5 billion in 2015 whereas India's spending surpassed \$51.3 billion.² This has been the massive surge since Indian nuclear tests of 1998.³

The apparent rationale behind such a huge military budget is to be least dependent on foreign military imports and boost indigenous defence industry of India. According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) report, India has become world's largest weapon importer, whereas Pakistan stands at number five in the ranking.⁴ India's defence spending has direct impact on Pakistan's defence budget. Mounting Indian military buildup, triggers costly military buildup in Pakistan as well. The arms race in the sub-continent gets intensified, the more both states drifting away from peace. Lieutenant General (Retired) Khalid Kidwai, Advisor to National Command Authority (NCA) establishes that nuclear stockpiles in both the countries help de-escalating. He stated that

"However there is little option for war between the two countries because of the nuclear arms possessed by them. War is not an option for resolving the outstanding issues between India and Pakistan, diplomacy and political approach should be given priority."⁵

Contemporary intensity in Indo-Pak rivalry contradicts early years of independence when channels for talks were open between the leadership of both nations. The objectives of the study include underlining of the pacifist approach that can lead both the countries towards a sustainable peace resolution of conflict and also would avert an accidental exchange of nuclear warheads. It also attempts to objectify that, the balance of power is helpful in deterring both the countries from all-out war.

Footprints of Peaceful Resolution of Conflict

India-Pakistan conflict dates back to early years of independence but the current trend of fierce conflict is totally in contravention to the approach that early leadership, Jawaharlal Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan developed for future conflict resolution of India and Pakistan. Following the 1965 war, *Tashkent Agreement* reasoned out that both the countries would "restore normal and peaceful relations

and promote understanding and friendly relations".⁶ The then Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahdur Shastri ordered of initiating nuclear weapons procurement as India had gone to war with China in 1962 and with Pakistan in 1965. India apparently remained affirmed to disarmament approach but also decided not to sign Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT). *Simla Agreement* in post-1971 war urged both the countries to put an end to conflict and confrontational tactics for promoting durable peace. An important feature of the pact was the "mutual commitment to peaceful resolution of all issues through bilateral approach".⁷ *Simla Agreement* after 1971 war laid down the principles to govern future relationship between India and Pakistan. This pact also envisaged measures for further normalization of bilateral relationship. Importantly, it bound both the countries to settle their disputes by pacific approach and bilateral negotiations.⁸ India encroached upon *Simla pact* and declared nuclear status by testing *Smiling Buddha* (May 1974) at Pokhran test range Rajasthan. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was ambitious to establish nuclear deterrence between India and Pakistan. Indian Major General Dipankar (Retired) cites Sumita Kumar that "President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto initiated Pakistan's nuclear program in response to the loss of Bangladesh."⁹ Pakistan's approach has mostly been restrained to calculate Indian strategic moves and then act accordingly. The period that Pakistan spent between May 1974 – May 1998, was absolute restraint because of the nuclear asymmetry. Though Pakistan played nuclear ambiguity to deter India but extensive preparation was underway for next episode of nuclear tests.

After the second set of nuclear tests in May 1998 George Fernandes, then Indian Defense Minister asserted several times that China was the "potential threat number one" to India.¹⁰ Indian nuclear supremacy directly undermined Pakistan's security irrespective of Indian claims of China as main reason of Indian tests. Pakistan's retaliatory response of Chaghi-I was obvious but it kicked off a new phase of rigorous deterrence. Prateek Joshi pens in *The National Interest* "With Pakistan going nuclear, India's superiority in conventional strength got blunted and the more balanced equation gave further impetus to protracted sub-conventional warfare with India."¹¹ Another major thaw between India and Pakistan was the post Kargil '*Lahore Declaration*' where leaders from both sides reiterated to establish "hotline" between them to avoid any future nuclear conflict. That was the reiteration of Nehru-Liaquat approach to settle all disputes through mutual dialogue and peaceful means. *Lahore Declaration* was a positive outcome of fledgling deterrence between two rivals. Ex-Prime Ministers of India (Atal Bihari Vajpayee) and Pakistan (Mian Nawaz Sharif) shared the vision of peace in subcontinent and vowed to stay committed to the Charter of United Nations' universally accepted principal of peaceful co-existence.¹² Because of the deterrence and fear of nuclear catastrophe; both the countries agreed to implement *Simla Agreement* in letter and spirit. An era of Nuclear Conflict Resolution began in which deterrence avoided another major war and Kargil (1999)

remained mere a crisis. Major steps were agreed upon to pacify tensions and bring peace and stability in South Asia, which included intensifying efforts to resolve Kashmir issue and several Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) on nuclear and conventional fields to prevent conflicts in future.¹³

Why Backtrack from Peace?

Potential threat of terrorist attacks on both sides of the border (India-Pakistan) propped up more serious challenges of security for the region. Koblentz proposed recommendation to Obama administration that the U.S. should foster transparency and take effective measures to enhance confidence-building by mitigating arms race in South Asia. Among other recommendations was that Washington should engage other nuclear states into multilateral dialogue to churn out a solution to accidental or unauthorized use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs.)¹⁴ Tom Saur criticizes the role of great powers in strengthening nuclear regimes. In *The National Interest*, he opines that the nuclear weapons would be outlawed in the foreseeable future because of their lethality. The surprising thing is that nuclear weapons have not been declared outlawed yet whereas chemical and biological weapons are illegal. Primary objective of 'The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty' (NPT) is achieving nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament and forbidding the possession of MWDs. Problem with NPT regime is that it advocates nuclear disarmament but simultaneously allows five nuclear powers (US, Russia, UK, France and China) to keep them for self defence purpose.¹⁵ India refused to sign NPT because it is discriminatory in nature, even if India and Pakistan both sign the treaty; they are unlikely to get status of a *de jure* nuclear power like other permanent five of UNSC members.

Mainstream media in the U.S. overstated concerns that, Pakistan's nuclear weapons are not well-guarded and terrorist may take control of them. Such concerns are totally based on bigotry that orchestrates propaganda against Pakistan's strategic assets. No developed country shared similar concerns for India, whereas India has also been targeted multiple times by terrorists. Terrorists attacked Pathankot air-base (2016) and Uri (2016), it means terrorists are targeting Indian military bases and installations which indicated that India is neither safe. But the irony is that Washington expresses complete satisfaction on safety and security of Indian nuclear weapons. Failure to control terrorists' attacks, India allegedly blames Pakistan for backing terrorist attacks in India, whereas, Pakistan is already fighting a deadly war against terrorists since 2001 and has been ranked by *Forbes* amongst the most affected states in wake of war against terrorism.¹⁶ Such a blame game on both sides seriously hampers peace process.

Indian Cold Start Doctrine and Pakistan's Response

In response to Indian inability to react to 2001 terrorists attack on Indian parliament, which India allegedly blamed Pakistan for backing, Indian military announced limited war doctrine in April, 2004. This doctrine would allow Indian forces to attack Pakistan's territory. "Cold Start doctrine," though India contrived with lengthy analysis of its pros and cons but it is dangerous and thoroughly provoking. Walter C. Ladwig sums up, "A history of misperception, poor intelligence, and India's awkward national security, decision-making system suggests that *Cold Start* could be a risky undertaking that may increase instability in South Asia."¹⁷ As it proposes a massive sudden and decisive attack on Pakistan so that international intervention may not come to stop it. Threatening a nuclear neighbor, no matter how powerful Indian military is, such an irresponsible behavior at state-level that needs to be thought upon. Pakistan's former Chief of Army Staff General, Parvez Kayani bristled at Indian military chief General Kapoor's remarks, and said "Proponents of conventional application of military forces, in a nuclear overhang, are chartering an adventurous and dangerous path, the consequences of which could be both unintended and uncontrollable."¹⁸ Indian strategists designed 'cold start doctrine' whereas Pakistan developed tactical nuclear weapons to thwart Indian attacks. This volatility is dangerous for stability at one hand and cast bleak hopes for future improvement of ties between Pakistan and India. Walter C. Ladwig concludes that "Indian doctrine of Cold Start remains more of a concept than a reality".¹⁹

Pakistan has been fighting the war against terrorism in South Waziristan and North Waziristan, whereas the U.S. has consistently been urging Pakistan to do more. Pakistan's all energies are focused on watching Indian military developments as India poses more serious threat to Pakistan than Taliban. In international relations it is quite understandable that internal threats are less dangerous than external threats. Indian development of Cold Start doctrine against Pakistan reflects Indian future ambitions in the region.

Zachary Keck quotes Pakistan's first head of Strategic Plans Division (SPD), Lieutenant General (Retired) Khalid Kidwai back in 2002 outlining following four scenarios which may escalate launching of nuclear weapons on India:

- If India conquers large territory of Pakistan,
- If India attacks on Pakistan's military or air force bases and destroys them,
- If India strangulates Pakistan economically,
- If India destabilizes Pakistan politically by creating internal subversion.²⁰

All of these scenarios are quite likely given Indian hegemonic designs in the region but the fear for India is of massive retaliation from Pakistan.

Indian Cold Start doctrine which aims at quick but limited incursions into Pakistan's territory as a response to perceived Islamabad-sponsored attacks on Indian homeland pose very serious threat of nuclear war. India has repeatedly been blaming Pakistan for terrorist attacks on India, whereas India's internal issues of socio-economic development and minority rights trigger feelings of grievance among them. Terrorist attacks on Indian soil are likely to continue until India resolves Kashmir conflict according to the wishes of Kashmiris. India is waging massive propaganda to snub Kashmir's freedom. Secondly, Indian efforts to destabilize Pakistan through state-sponsored terrorism have also surfaced recently when Indian spy of officer rank Kulbhusahn Jadev was captured in Baluchistan. His goal was to disrupt development of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which is being heralded as game changer in Pakistan. Indian spy also confessed Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) involvement in stoking Baluchistan separatist movement. Furthermore, he admitted of purchasing boats at Iranian port (Chabahar) in order to target ports of Gwadar and Karachi in terrorist attacks.²¹ Such Indian clandestine operations in Pakistan to destabilize the latter may result in limited warfare but there is no guarantee that once the war breaks out would stay limited, it may escalate into full-fledged war and even nuclear war as warned by Lieutenant General (Retired) Khalid Kidwai. Indian efforts at international forums to isolate Pakistan in international community are aimed at discouraging flow of international investors into Pakistan. Whereas, Pakistan is a lynchpin of maintaining peace in the region as President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani urged Pakistan to play role of a mediator,²² because Afghan government and the US forces have lost credibility in the eyes of Afghan Taliban. India is vying to neutralize Pakistan's role in achieving peace and stability.

Nuclear Non Proliferation (NPT): A Reality Check

According to Strobe Talbot, U.S. president J.F Kennedy in 1963 predicted that there would be 25 nuclear weapons states within the span of a decade, but thirty six years later, 182 states and even Taiwan have joined NPT and renounced nuclear acquisition. Most importantly, five nuclear powers accepted disarmament obligation of NPT.²³ Three important actors of world politics India, Pakistan and Israel did not join NPT till the present times because of their respective strategic concerns with the formulation and implementation of the treaty.

India and Pakistan are non-signatories of Nuclear Non-Proliferation (NPT) and that is why remained as cause of concern for international community. India went nuclear ahead of Pakistan in 1974, Jaswant Singh in his article titled "Against Nuclear Apartheid" criticizes NPT regime and says "This treaty, was neither comprehensive nor related to disarmament but rather devoted to ratifying the nuclear *status quo*".²⁴ Indian shrewd diplomacy lampooned NPT by stating that Indian nuclear policy firmly adheres to the principle of global disarmament or principle of equal security for all

nations irrespective of their size, strength and geography. The NPT protects the right of keeping nuclear weapons only for five nations. Justification of Indian nuclear weapons comes from the concept of the absence of universal disarmament, which arbitrarily divides nuclear haves from have-nots. But Indian role in curbing proliferation and for strengthening of NPT regime has been quite minimal as India is not a signatory. Indian high claims of honoring the NPT by not transferring nuclear technology and assiduous efforts towards nuclear disarmament stand false when India keep testing nuclear capable missiles and provokes Pakistan to follow suit. This indeed, triggers arms race in South Asia, which endangers regional stability. Indian diplomacy by trumpeting Indian adherence to NPT of not sharing nuclear technology with other nuclear aspirants and portraying as responsible nuclear actor has helped India getting 'Indo-US nuclear deal' which eventually led to India-specific waiver on nuclear commerce NSG.²⁵ After this deal Indian status has been recognized through Indo-US civil nuclear agreement as the sanctions on nuclear commerce were lifted in 2008 for India.²⁶

Pakistan waged intense diplomatic efforts to get the same deal as the U.S. offered India, but Pakistan was denied the same treatment. The major flaw in the United States diplomacy is that it does not treat Pakistan at par with India. Mr. Henry Sokolski, the executive director of *Non-proliferation Policy Education Centre*, said "When it comes to things nuclear, the prospects of getting Pakistan to do something are pretty slim because you cannot expect them to do something unless we are willing to treat them identically with India."²⁷ Obama administration hoped to consider a conditional civil nuclear deal for Pakistan to limit the scope of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. But they are concerned about the security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. Bush Administration spent \$100 million on a highly classified program to provide physical security and training of security personnel and similar efforts continued during Obama's administration to impart training to Strategic Plans Division staff, which controls Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.²⁸ Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Mr. Aizaz Chaudhary while attending the Nuclear Security Summit 2016 hosted by the U.S. issued a statement that safety of Pakistan's nuclear installations is also acknowledged by International Community. He quoted International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) which recorded 2,734 nuclear incidents globally, including 5 in India as well but no accident or breach has been reported in Pakistan.²⁹

India Pakistan Contenders for NSG

Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) was basically created after the Indian explosion of 1974, which demonstrated that nuclear technology provided to any non-nuclear states could potentially be used for building nuclear devices.³⁰ International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) published guidelines in 1978 to curb unsafeguarded nuclear fuel cycles and developing nuclear devices.

India and Pakistan have entered a new phase of competition in diplomatic realm. If India gets an entry into the nuclear club, it certainly will block Pakistan's entry into it. India advocates merit based approach for its membership to NSG whereas, Pakistan supports criteria based approach. Merit based approach will take into account the track-record of non-proliferation. Whereas India does not qualify for NSG membership, given criteria based approach. Pakistan has strong credentials than India if a uniform criterion is considered. Pakistan's former advisor to PM Mr. Sartaj Aziz stated, "If the group forms such a uniform criteria, then Pakistan has stronger credentials for NSG membership than India."³¹ Indian document of 1999 of NSAB posts Indian nuclear doctrine emphasize "global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament would remain a national security objective, thus emphasizing once again India's commitment to disarmament."³²

Though India became a nuclear power in 1974 by conducting Pokhran tests, but Indian nuclear status did not enjoy legitimacy globally as a nuclear power and it took more than three decades to get involved into nuclear related trade. India finally achieved Indo-US civil nuclear deal in 2008 which ennobled India to certain strategic benefits out of this deal. Though Indo-US civil nuclear cooperation empowered India compared to Pakistan but it was limited to American technology. Indian entrance into NSG as member would provide India access to state-of-the-art technology from rest of the group members. Namibia, being the fourth largest producer of uranium agreed to sell nuclear fuel to India but it could not happen because of the '*Pelindaba Treaty*' which regulates supply of uranium from Africa. The NSG membership is certainly to give such entitlement of buying uranium from other 47 member states of NSG.³³ Being member of BRICS nations, India adheres to the agenda of climate change and to show some progress in this regard India needs to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels and boost nuclear power production. Indian inclusion to NSG would allow India to have latest technology which India cannot get access to by staying out of NSG. Pakistan's concerns about Indian membership to NSG are plausibly valid as once India gets the membership, it would block Pakistan from getting it same as China opposed India recently.³⁴

Pakistan wants to join NSG because it would add value to its nuclear status internationally. Pakistan is pursuing the policy to maintain minimum nuclear deterrence with India therefore; the enlarging gap in nuclear power production would be alarming for Pakistan. In such critical circumstances when India and Pakistan do not enjoy normalized relations, a nuclear arms race is the likely outcome. Indian leadership has already stepped up diplomatic campaigns to garner support for country's inclusion into nuclear elite club. Indian PM Narendra Modi's visit to various developed countries before the 26th plenary meeting of June, 2016 at Seoul reflected Indian diplomatic maneuvers to get NSG membership. Despite United States and

other NSG members' push to Indian bid of membership, India was rejected. Indian Foreign Minister Shushma Swaraj reacted by issuing a statement, "China had created procedural hurdles by questioning how could a non-signatory of NPT become the member of NSG".³⁵ The countries that opposed Indian membership included New Zealand, Turkey, South Africa, Austria and Ireland. Pakistan PM's advisor on foreign affairs Mr. Sartaj Aziz acknowledged that China helped Pakistan by blocking Indian bid to get membership of NSG.³⁶ But India also has say in international institutions where it can hamper smooth sailing of China's strategic interests. China's Foreign minister Wang Yi's visit to India in August, 2016 was aimed at securing Indian assurance that PM Modi would not be joining other members of G-20 summit in raising controversial issues of South China Sea.³⁷ China was much concerned about the U.S. and several other countries, which could raise the issue of Beijing's claim over much of the sea areas that were rejected by an international tribunal which was constituted under the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Seas. China's diplomatic effort to keep the same issue out of ASEAN joint communiqué was not likely at G-20 Summit.³⁸ India also acts as a pressure group for China as was in the case of G-20 summit. Chinese foreign Ministry spokesperson Mr. Hua Chunying stated;

*"As for the expansion of the group, the members should make the decision on consensus after thorough discussions. India's inclusion into this group is an internal matter of the group. It needs prudence, caution and thorough discussions among all members".*³⁹

Not awarding of NSG membership still maintains parity between India and Pakistan in terms of its mainstreaming into global nuclear order.

Diplomatic Maneuvering for NSG Membership

Reports from Vienna where the NSG is based said that majority of the 48-member group backed India's admittance, China along with New Zealand, Ireland, Turkey, South Africa and Austria were opposed to India's admission. On the condition of anonymity a source from opposing countries to India's NSG bid said "By bringing India on board, it's a slap in the face of the entire non-proliferation regime,"⁴⁰ The NSG looks after critical issues relating to nuclear sector and its members are allowed to trade in and export nuclear technology. The group works under the principle of unanimity and even one country's vote against India will scuttle its bid. Beijing is struggling to uphold supremacy of non-proliferation regime, which simply demands that a prerequisite of New Delhi's entry is that it must be a signatory to the NPT while India has long been refusing to sign. Despite acknowledging such legal and systematic demand, Indian media labeled China's stance "obstructionist". Indian access to NSG would leverage New Delhi in retaining the fastest growing economy tag and regulate the global trade of nuclear technology in international market. United States is clear in its deliberation to support Indian NSG membership, being the world's largest

producer of nuclear power; US can sell its nuclear technology to India without any restraint. A US based company is set to build six nuclear reactors in India. That would be the embodiment of agreement that Indian PM Modi signed during his recent visit to US.⁴¹

Jonas Schneider articulates that NSG membership is tied to NPT membership. If Pakistan manages to get the nuclear deal from the United States similar to India, it would be significant in two ways. Firstly, it would gradually bring nuclear outsiders into non-proliferation regime. Secondly, the nuclear deal with Pakistan as envisaged by the US is a rare, which specifically initiates for reducing the threat triggering another nuclear arms race in South Asia.⁴²

Tom Saur in his article titled “A Second Nuclear Revolution: From Nuclear Primacy to Post-existential Deterrence” named five variable that would strengthen their role with the passage of time. He named nuclear proliferation, the risk of nuclear, terrorism, the nuclear taboo, missile defence, and the increased importance of international law.⁴³ Though these variables already exist but they are gaining more vibrancy for nuclear actors and international regimes. After China’s blockage to Indian admittance to NSG, United States is devising a formula that would pave the way for India’s entry but leaves Pakistan outside.⁴⁴ Pakistan pins hopes to get admittance to NSG membership which would provide Pakistan an opportunity to be recognized as de jure nuclear state and also enter into trade of nuclear energy with other members of NSG. Pakistan may also overcome energy crisis and utilize redundant energy for industry for giving boost to economic activities as well.

Arundhati Ghose a former diplomat who served as India’s permanent representative to UN, in Geneva and also Ambassador to the conference of Disarmament cites Mark Fitzpatrick’s *Adelphi* book, *Overcoming Pakistan’s Nuclear Dangers*, where Fitzpatrick identifies four threats that Pakistan nuclear program poses. It includes the possibility of nuclear attack against India, nuclear arms race, involving in nuclear terrorism aimed at India and nuclear proliferation. After overall assessment he proffers a recommendation amongst others that, similar deal like 2008, given to India (Indo-US civil nuclear deal), should be handed to Pakistan for nuclear normalization of Pakistan.⁴⁵ His remark has a lesson for NSG membership panel that awarding NSG membership to India would disturb the balance of power between the nuclear neighbors which does not auger well for the peace and stability of South Asia.

Theorizing Regional Dynamics of Balance of Power: An Analysis

Akhilesh Pillalamarri in his piece published in *The National Interest* writes that Kautilya lays out a theory of “circle of states” that appropriately applies to

international system. This theory posits that those states which border the ruler's state are hostile states and they form a circle around it. In turn the states that surround these hostile states are natural allies. Indian foreign policy is based on the similar rationale that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend."⁴⁶ Akhilesh pens that Japan and Afghanistan are natural allies against China and Pakistan respectively.⁴⁷ But contemporary Indian foreign policy is bit more proactive than depicted by him. Indian strategic ties with Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asian states and most significantly with Israel, the potential allies excogitate that India is empowering smaller states in the areas of economy and politics to strengthen diplomatic position as well as forming alliance. Indian heavy investment in Iran, Afghanistan and surging strategic ties with Israel are depiction of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* whereas, Indian smaller neighbors (Bangladesh & Nepal) in the South Asia perceive India as an overbearing and hegemonic neighbor. According to the obiter dictum of *Arthashastra* the possession of power makes king superior to all others, hence king shall augment his power relative to other competitors to maintain his superiority.⁴⁸ India's aggrandizement of hard power and showcasing of the same regionally and globally is aimed at maintaining regional dominance and acquiring global prestige. Such an approach is identical to offensive realism in International Relations theory and the ultimate objective is not to adhere to balance of power strategy but to establish stability through hegemony.⁴⁹ Whereas the case study of South Asia reveals that the Subcontinent is comparatively stable under the balance of power than in asymmetry.⁵⁰ Balance of Power has played a vital role in stabilizing South Asian region. Even the study of wars (1965, 1971) between India and Pakistan reveals that that every war broke out because of asymmetric balance. India has always perceived itself of prevailing over Pakistan initiated wars. India's ambition to become a great power in world affairs is quite apparent from Indian extensive diplomacy for NSG membership and permanent membership of world's most powerful club i.e. United Nations Security Council. If the peace process is to be taken forward, then spirit of "Liaquat-Nehru approach" and "Lahore declaration" is needed with renewed zest. Only balance of power between both the countries ensures relative peace.

Conclusion

The early approach of conflict resolution, once practiced by Liaquat Ali Khan and Jawaharlal Nehru of resolving all issues through bilateral dialogue was put at the backburner by 1965 war but it was reincarnated by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Indira Gandhi in *Simla Agreement* was once again knocked off after the ouster of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. Nawaz Sharif and Atal Bihari Vajpayee even after nuclear tests when deterrence formally came into force, tried pacifism by reaching a historic *Lahore Declaration*. Terrorist attacks on Indian parliament (2001) and Taj Mahal hotel Mumbai (2008) intensified likelihood of nuclear confrontation and both countries

mobilized their troops as well. Costlier arms race in South Asia with the establishment of India's Cold Start doctrine and Pakistan's response as tactical nuclear weapons and low yield weapons eventually changed approach of conflict resolution. Being the outsiders of NPT and CTBT, India and Pakistan continue expanding their respective arsenals without properly mainstreaming into International nuclear order. *Realist* paradigm of International relations stipulates that states are rational actors but states behave irrationally when it comes to their security concerns. The US-USSR model of rivalry from cold war times deduces that despite spending extravagantly by both nuclear powers, one had to crumble because of the internal weakness, which could be averted by focusing on internal matters of governance and economy. Pakistan and India are vying to get membership to NSG for acquiring state of the art technology for boosting civil nuclear trade on one hand and feathering their cap by getting membership to nuclear club. United States' role is decisive as it favors Indian bid but putting Pakistan's at the backburner. Such a flawed U.S. approach may endanger U.S. interests in the region as Pakistan may once again come in confronting position with the U.S. and may doubt any proposals by Washington to bring Pakistan into the fold of NPT and CTBT. The U.S. support to Indian candidacy into NSG membership and then UNSC membership is likely to make serious dent on regional balance of power. History of the subcontinent narrates that disturbance in balance of power between India and Pakistan caused wars. Such moves may disturb the regional balance of power which may trigger another armed conflict between India and Pakistan which may turn into nuclear clash. India and Pakistan have maintained better level of mutual deterrence and if both are considered for the NSG that would open up new horizons of energy corridor in the region which would suffice energy needs but also help exporting to other energy deficient countries in the region resulting in win-win situation. This approach may encourage both the countries to come into NPT fold otherwise volatility would continue for indefinite period without any plausible solution to the regional challenges of South Asia.

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