The Balance of Power in South Asia: The Strategic Interests and Capabilities of India, China and Pakistan

by

Brian Kenneth Hedrick, B.A., M.Sc.

Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Asian Studies

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

The University of Texas at Austin

December 1999

The Balance of Power in South Asia:
The Strategic Interests and Capabilities of
India, China and Pakistan

APPROVED BY

SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:

_____

Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr.

_____

Gail Minault

The Balance of Power in South Asia: The Strategic Interests and Capabilities of India, China and Pakistan

Brian K. Hedrick, M.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 1999

Supervisor: Robert L. Hardgrave, Jr.

In May 1998, India and Pakistan conduced a series of nuclear tests that immediately attracted world attention. These tests marked a new level for the South Asian arms race that has persisted since the two countries achieved their independence from Great Britain in 1947. Since then, the two countries have fought three wars and had numerous escalations and cross-border fighting, mainly over the state of Jammu and Kashmir. China was an instrumental player in the South Asian arms race by providing a considerable amount of military and technological support to Pakistan, including nuclear technology. It also fought one border war with India. India is clearly the dominant power in South Asia, but this strength is mitigated by a number of factors. This thesis looks at the historical context for conflict in South Asia and how that conflict has driven the South Asian arms race. Important regional strategic interests are also considered in this analysis. The conclusion presents prospects for the future as well as recommendations for U.S. policy in the region.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

ORGANIZATION 2

BACKGROUND OF REGIONAL CONFLICT 4

1947 INDO-PAK WAR 6

THE 1962 INDIA-CHINA BORDER CONFLICT 16

THE 1965 INDO-PAK WAR 24

THE 1971 INDO-PAK WAR 28

OTHER SOUTH ASIAN CONFLICTS 32

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS OF REGIONAL CONFLICT 36

WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT AND ACQUISITION 37

CHINA 37

INDIA 48

PAKISTAN 63

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH ASIA 74

STRATEGIC REGIONAL INTERESTS 76

ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM 76

THE INDIAN OCEAN 82

BORDER DISPUTES 84

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION 88

ASSESSMENT 91

CONCLUSION 93

PROSPECTS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY 95

U.S. POLICY SUGGESTIONS 99

BIBLIOGRAPHY 105

VITA 109

INTRODUCTION

In May of 1998 India and Pakistan each detonated a series of nuclear devices, and as a result the world perception of the strategic situation in South Asia has changed considerably. While the timing of the tests may have caught some analysts off guard, the tests themselves were not overly surprising. It has been understood by many experts in the field for some time that both countries possessed the capability, if not the actual components, to assemble and detonate nuclear weapons. India had tested a crude device in 1974, calling it a "peaceful nuclear explosion," but did not test again until May 1998, pursuing a path of "nuclear ambiguity." Likewise, while Pakistan has maintained an even more ambiguous stance, it nevertheless has hinted at some nuclear weapons capability since the early 1990s. The tests only served to confirm what we already knew about the two countries, but at the same time they place us in a position to explore the strategic interests of the region in the shadow of the tests.

It is for this reason I contend that the 1998 nuclear tests are symptoms of long-term, on going tensions in the region, that they do not necessarily represent a new strategic problem in South Asia, and that the timing was simply one of political expediency. This strategic problem has its roots in the political, economic, and social conditions that existed when the British Empire disengaged from its interests in the subcontinent and has grown in response to evolving perceptions of threat both within and outside the region.

China, a nuclear power to the north of the Himalayas, has come to play a significant role in these threat perceptions as it has shown interest in expanding its influence in the region. It also has fought one war with India.

India occupies an inherent position of dominance in South Asia for reasons relating to its population, natural resources, and its geographical size and position. The size of its economy and military has enhanced these factors. While the other countries of the region are important, India primarily concerns itself with China and Pakistan. The actions of these two countries, and the perceptions and interpretations of these actions, drive India's foreign policy and the role it plays in South Asia. Likewise, Pakistan views its position in terms of India.

This study will look at the strategic interests of each of these countries as they relate to South Asia and assess the capabilities of each country to influence those strategic interests. A clearer picture of the overall strategic situation is obtained by reviewing the historical context for conflict in the region and how that conflict has fueled the regional arms race as we see it today. Finally, as this region has become more visible to United States policymakers, some changes for U.S. policy in the region are proposed.

ORGANIZATION

This thesis is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter the background of the four major wars fought in South Asia since the end of colonialism as well as some other minor conflicts is addressed. Two major points are drawn from each conflict. First, the origins of the conflict in terms of the national interests for the countries involved is

summarized. Second, the strategic implications for the region arising from the conclusion of the conflict are highlighted. The operational and tactical aspects of the operations are not addressed unless specific instances are relevant to the overall strategic problem.

The second chapter looks at the weapons development programs for India, China and Pakistan separately in terms of the strategic implications derived in the preceding chapter. Both nuclear and conventional weapon development programs are addressed. This chapter also addresses the acquisition programs for each country to either address shortcoming of indigenous production capabilities or to simply purchase entire weapon systems "off the shelf."

In the third chapter, an assessment is made of four major regional interests: the Indian Ocean, insurgency, nuclear proliferation and border disputes. This assessment looks specifically at the national interest each country has within the scope of each of these regional interests, and assesses the capability of each nation to exercise some measure of control over their interests. The implications of each country's limitations in exercising control or protection of their strategic interests are addressed.

Finally, the conclusion will look at the prospects for the region in the twenty-first century based on the above assessment and will suggest some options for the United States to establish a more effective policy in the region.

BACKGROUND OF REGIONAL CONFLICT

South Asia has been in a continuous state of conflict in one way or another since the nations of the region achieved their independence from the British Empire in the middle of the twentieth century. Of the major countries, India and Pakistan have not had normal relations since their independence, and while India and China started out on friendly terms, they have only begun to begin normalizing relations after thirty years of tension following the 1962 war. Other ethnic and religious tensions have been pervasive, both between and within the various states. To help understand the background of Indo-Pak conflict, Sumit Ganguly has developed as good a framework as any. He argues that there are three structural factors to South Asian conflict:

1. The nature of British colonial and disengagement policy.
2. The ideological commitments of the leaderships of India and Pakistan.
3. The strength of the irredentist/anti-irredentist relationship between the two countries.[1]

The first of these structural factors stems from the "divide and rule" policies adopted by the British during their tenure, but more specifically from the conditions of their departure from the subcontinent. The second factor is based primarily on the differing ideologies of the All India Muslim League and the Indian National Congress

---

[1] Sumit Ganguly, *The Origins of War in South Asia: Indo-Pakistani Conflicts Since 1947* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 9.

that developed during British colonialism and were carried forward as the founding ideologies of India and Pakistan. For the third structural factor Ganguly uses Myron Weiner's definition of irredentism as "the desire on the part of a state to revise some portion of its international boundaries to incorporate the ethnic/religious/linguistic minority of a contiguous state and the territory that it occupies."[2] Pakistan then has irredentist claims over Kashmir based on its ideology of Islamic Nationalism, while India's ideology of secularism makes it anti-irredentist.

A fourth structural factor, culture, needs some consideration. The three preceding factors all incorporate aspects of cultural variances in South Asia, such as language, religion, ethnic background, etc., but understanding the role culture plays in South Asia is important, even if accounted for by other factors. Additionally, the preceding factors cannot totally account for reasons for other conflicts outside Kashmir, such as insurgency or communal violence.

China must also be accounted for. Since China inherited some colonial-related problems from the British, mainly agreements over Tibet and the Indo-China border problem, the first factor remains relevant. China certainly has ideological differences with the South Asian states, and irredentist desires led to the full annexation of Tibet. Irredentist desires also form a part of China's claim over parts of Bhutan and Indian areas in Sikkim, Aksai Chin, and Arunachal Pradesh. Therefore, factors two and three can also be incorporated with some minor changes to the wording. Finally, with culture being a

---

[2] Ibid., 11.

universal underlying factor, it remains relevant. A modified structural framework for studying South Asian conflict then looks like:

1. The nature of British colonial and disengagement policy.
2. The ideologies of the leaders of India, China, and Pakistan.
3. The strength of irredentist/anti-irredentist relationships.
4. Cultural differences/conflict.

1947 INDO-PAK WAR

On October 22, 1947, barely two months after India and Pakistan achieved independence from the British Empire, about 7,000 Pathan tribesmen crossed the border from Pakistan into the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, thus beginning the first war over Kashmir.[3] Jammu and Kashmir (hereafter referred to as Kashmir) was one of two princely states that by this time had not acceded to join either India or Pakistan.[4] Maharaja of Kashmir Hari Singh's forces were not prepared to match those of the Pathan tribesmen, who were being supported by Pakistan, and he was compelled to call on India for assistance.[5]

---

[3] Rajesh Kadian, *The Kashmir Tangle: Issues and Options* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 79.
[4] Ganguly, *Origins of War*, 32-33. At the time of independence three states chose not to accede to either India or Pakistan and remain independent. Jundagh was a Hindu majority state with a Muslim ruler, who fled to Pakistan shortly after Indian independence leaving the state to India. Hyderabad and the state of Jammu and Kashmir were the remaining two.
[5] Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, "Pakistan, India, and Kashmir: A Historical Review," in *Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in South Asia,* ed. Raju G. C. Thomas (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 103. Other authors, especially those of Pakistani origin, such as Cheema lay the blame for starting the war squarely on the shoulders of India when it launched its offensive into Jammu and Kashmir to oust the "raiders."

The Governor-General of the Dominion of India, Lord Mountbatten, received the message, and the following morning advised Jawaharlal Nehru, the new Indian Prime Minister, that the legality of committing Indian troops to Kashmir without a formal accession was questionable. Nehru sent V. P. Menon, Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of States, to Kashmir to meet with Maharaja Hari Singh and attempt to get him to sign an instrument of accession. By October 24, Menon had the signature of the Maharaja on the instrument of accession, and the Indian troops began moving into Kashmir.[6]

In a move that was opposed by some members of its own government, India sought United Nations (UN) mediation to the Kashmir conflict on December 31, 1947, believing the UN would side in its favor. The UN mediation brought the war to a close on January 1, 1949.[7] Military representatives of both countries met in July 1949 and established a cease-fire line through Kashmir. India lost to Pakistan a large area of sparsely populated northwestern Kashmir consisting of what is now known as the Northern Areas and a narrow strip of western Kashmir known as Azad Kashmir (or Free Kashmir).[8]

Origins of the Conflict

The origins of the Kashmir conflict have basically two dimensions. The first is the internal dimension which accounts for existing social (cultural), economic and political

---

[6] Kadian, 81-83.
[7] James Heitzman and Robert L. Worden, eds., *India: a Country Study* (Washington: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1996), 570-571.
[8] Some scholars refer to the entire portion of Pakistan occupied Kashmir as *Azad Kashmir.*

conditions. The second is the external dimension which primarily involves the power-play between India and Pakistan. It is this second dimension we are primarily concerned with, but, a brief discussion of the internal dimension is highly relevant.

At the time of Indian and Pakistani independence the population of Kashmir consisted of 3,100,000 Muslims, 809,000 Hindus, and approximately 100,000 of other religions, most of them Buddhist, according to the 1941 census.[9] Despite this, the vast majority of the population clearly identified themselves first as Kashmiri, then by religion or other groupings.[10] Part of the reason for this is a long history of domination by outside groups. The Afghans and then the Sikhs were the first to dominate the Kashmiris with oppressive rule, then in the 1800s, the Dogras either conquered or acquired by treaty the areas of Kashmir. Dogra rule continued until the partition of India and Pakistan, with Maharaja Hari Singh as the last Dogra ruler of Kashmir. The fact that the Maharaja was also a Hindu was irrelevant to his rule. It was more important that he was, again, an outsider.[11]

Dogra rule was characterized by both harsh treatment and heavy taxation of all the people of Kashmir. In 1931 a limited movement was launched to alleviate the grievances

---

[9] Gowher Rizvi, "India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Problem, 1947-1972," in *Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in South Asia,* ed. Raju G. C. Thomas (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 49.

[10] Raju Thomas, "Reflections on the Kashmir Problem," in *Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in South Asia,* ed. Raju G. C. Thomas (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 12, argues that Muslims across India tend to have more in common with the Hindus of their own region than with Muslims of another region.

[11] Riyaz Punjabi, "Kashmir: The Bruised Identity," in *Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in South Asia,* ed. Raju G. C. Thomas (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 134-135.

of the educated Muslims known as the Kashmir Freedom Movement (also know as the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference). However, it was not long before the movement expanded its scope to cover grievances of the larger Kashmiri society. In 1939 the movement was renamed the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, a Muslim. A small faction broke away in 1941 to revive the Muslim Conference, but never gained much popularity.[12] Abdullah's primary interest was for the emancipation of Kashmir, and he made a concerted effort to make his organization secular in nature to gain the widest possible following among the Kashmiri people.[13]

As the leader of the Muslim League, Mohammed Ali Jinnah mistakenly confused the Kashmiri Freedom Movement with a desire to join Pakistan. In 1944 he erred by recognizing the breakaway Muslim Conference as the sole representative of the Kashmiri Muslims.[14] After independence, the leadership of Pakistan continued to mistakenly interpret the Kashmiri freedom struggle as Muslim nationalism, thereby creating a rationale for supporting the invasion by the Pathan tribesmen. In fact, the memory of Afghan rule and that the majority of Kashmiri Muslims were followers of *Sufism*[15] was sufficient to prevent a close association with the Muslims of the Northwest Frontier Provence (NWFP) and the orthodox Pathans of the plains respectively.[16] The exception

---

[12] Ibid., 137-138.
[13] Ganguly, *Origins of War*, 35.
[14] Ibid., 140.
[15] Sufism is a form of Islam that embraces mysticism and is significantly different from orthodox Islam as practiced by the majority of Muslims of the Northwest Frontier Provence and the Punjab.
[16] Kadian, 64.

to this is the Muslims of Poonch, in the southwest corner of Kashmir, who have close ties with the Muslims of both the Punjab and the NWFP.[17] Nevertheless, the heated passions as a result of the atrocities along the border following partition and some gentle coaxing by the Pakistani leadership were sufficient to inspire the armed Pathans to "liberate" Kashmir.

Cultural considerations aside, in the wake of partition there were a number of other causes for the war that present a more strategic perspective. In the years leading up to independence, the two major political parties in British India, the All India Muslim League and the Indian National Congress, began to have very different visions for an India after the departure of the British. These visions diverged considerably in the 1940s as independence was apparently on the horizon. Additionally, many negotiations conducted by the British to establish a protocol for the transfer of power only served to widen the ideological gap between the Muslim League and the Congress.

Probably the first significant division between the Muslim League and Congress can be traced back to 1906 when the leaders of the Muslim League at the time demanded the introduction of separate electorates for Hindus and Muslims as part of the first introduction of parliamentary bodies in India under the Minto-Morely reforms.[18] Additionally, the Muslims were against proportional representation arguing that the Muslims would not have a strong enough voice given the four to one ratio of Hindus to

---

[17] Ibid., 66.

[18] These reforms were named for the presiding Viceroy of India, Lord Minto and the Secretary of State for India, John Morely.

Muslims in the general population. Many of these fears stemmed from a perceived loss of prestige, as the Muslims had once been the rulers of India under the Moguls and the positions of the Muslim ruling elites had been eroded by British expansion. The Congress argued that as a secular party it represented all Indians and was fundamentally opposed to reserved seats for Muslims, especially if it would give them a disproportionate advantage. The British embraced the proposals of the Muslims in their reforms of the early twentieth century, with the advantage that it would keep the communities divided and thereby easier to manage.[19]

By the 1940s, the British could not bridge the gap between the Muslim League and Congress. The financial burden of World War II and the growing tide of anti-imperialist attitudes led Britain to the conclusion that it would have to leave India once the war was over. To accomplish this, the British government embarked on what would become a series of negotiations to discuss options and possibilities for India after the war. One of the objectives was to set up an interim government that would handle the transition to independence and construct a new constitution. At one of the first such conferences in 1942, led by Sir Stafford Cripps and known as the "Cripps Mission," the British government offered India full dominion status at the conclusion of the war, or even secession, with the understanding that the Indians would fully support the war effort until then. It also contained the provision that no part of India could be forced to join the new

[19] For a more detailed description of the reforms of this period see Ganguly, *Origins of War*, 14-19.

state.[20] Muslim League leader Mohammed Ali Jinnah had already made a demand for the creation of a Muslim "homeland" for the South Asian Muslims as early as the 1940 Lahore session of the Muslim League Working Committee. Jinnah and the Muslim League supported the proposals of the Cripps Mission since it provided for their demand for Pakistan. The Congress, however, refused to accept it, for basically the same reason. It was immediately following the failure of the Cripps Mission that Mahatma Gandhi launched the "Quit India" movement.[21]

There are two important points worth mentioning about the Quit India Movement at this point. First, while Congress essentially supported the movement, it was primarily Hindu in nature as there was very little participation by the Congress Muslims. Second, as a result of the movement the majority of the Congress leadership was thrown in jail and the party itself was banned for almost a year. The immediate result was that many Congress Muslims defected to the Muslim League, and it gave Jinnah an opportunity to consolidate the League's base of power and take over some local ministries in major provinces such as Sindh, Assam, the Northwest Frontier, and the Punjab.[22]

In 1944, then Viceroy Sir Archibald Wavell held another conference at Simla where it was proposed that an executive council be formed with a representation of caste Hindus and Muslims at 40 percent each, with the remaining seats going to other groups.

---

[20] Judith M. Brown, *Modern India: The Origins of an Asian Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 327.
[21] Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India,* 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 334-335.
[22] R. Suntharalingam, *Indian Nationalism: An Historical Analysis* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1973), 87.

On the surface this seemed reasonable, but Congress and the Muslim League had hardened their positions such that there was no possibility of agreement. Jinnah also insisted that Muslim League was the sole representative of Indian Muslims and therefore should get all of the proposed Muslim seats on the new executive committee, despite the fact that there were still a large number of Muslim supporters of Congress. The leaders of Congress however, saw their organization as secular in nature and were unwilling to concede all the Muslim seats to the Muslim League, as stated by Nehru on June 20, 1945, before the conference even began:

> Any plan to limit Congress representation on the Executive Council to Caste Hindus is totally unacceptable. . . . If only league Muslims were appointed on the Council, all Muslims who have been voting Congress candidates in the years past will be unrepresented.[23]

Following the failure of a third conference, known as the "Cabinet Mission," Lord Louis Mountbatten replaced Wavell as Viceroy and was given only until June 1948 to negotiate a settlement for the British withdrawal. Faced with this pressure, and increasing communal violence, which threatened to cause a break down Britain's imperial power structure in India,[24] Mountbatten finally forged together an agreement between the Congress and Muslim League. This was partially made possible by Congress coming to the conclusion that partitioning off Pakistan would result in a stronger and more unified

---

[23] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 14 (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1972), 10.

[24] Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, *Mountbatten and Independent India* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1984), viii, 26. The same authors provide more evidence of this in their book, *Mountbatten and the Partition of India*. Some scholars also argue that Mountbatten's personal agenda of returning quickly to a position in the Navy was also a factor. See Brown, 338.

India. It also derailed Jinnah's plans to speak for all Indian Muslims, leaving him with what he described in his own words as a "moth-eaten Pakistan."[25] This also set the stage for the mass migrations of Hindus and Muslims across the new border and the ensuing communal violence.

Despite the Indian leadership's agreement to Mountbatten's terms for independence, the many years of ideological differences between Congress and the Muslim League, and more specifically Nehru and Jinnah, led to Kashmir becoming an important test for those ideologies. India and Pakistan both see their arguments as valid for the incorporation of Kashmir into the respective states. The Pakistan leadership saw Kashmir as rightfully theirs, mainly under the terms of the partition which gave Pakistan all Muslim majority provinces (the fact that Kashmir was a princely state not withstanding), but also saw the incorporation of Kashmir into Pakistan as a legitimization of the original basis for Pakistan -- that South Asian Muslims needed a homeland. It is also reasonable to assume that there was some fear of a larger, potentially more powerful India, and the incorporation of the land and population was a step closer to parity. India viewed the incorporation of Kashmir as a legitimization of their creation of a secular state, and one can not completely discount Nehru's own emotional ties to Kashmir, being a Kashmiri Hindu Pandit himself.[26]

The rapid disengagement by the British also posed certain other problems. First, they failed to establish a clear policy over the question of paramountcy of the princely

---

[25] Brown, 338-339.
[26] Thomas, 12.

states, leading to ambiguities in the territorial claims of both countries over the princely states. Ganguly points out that had the British negotiated the status of the princely states rather than simply announcing the lapse of paramountcy, the two countries may not have resorted to war to resolve their differences.[27] The other problem caused by the rapid departure was the lack of preparations for dealing with the disorder and subsequent violence involved in transferring millions of people across the newly established borders.[28]

After independence and partition in August 1947, both India and Pakistan began to realize the strategic importance of Kashmir. Although the state itself was sparsely populated, it had frontiers with China and Afghanistan, and was in close proximity to the Soviet Union. Nehru saw Kashmir as vital to India's international interests with these countries, as well as being economically linked with India. Pakistan was concerned that an Indian occupied Kashmir would enable India to jeopardize Pakistan military security by giving it an approach deep into Pakistan's territory.[29]

Strategic Implications

The conclusion of the first Kashmir war drastically changed the strategic relationships in South Asia. Although the United Nations' agreement ended the fighting and established a cease-fire line, it failed to resolve the issues between the two countries and left the framework for future conflict. The issue of Kashmir became an integral part

---

[27] Ganguly, *Origins of War*, 39.
[28] Ibid., 40.
[29] Ibid., 41.

of the relations between Pakistan and India. In fact, it would be fairly accurate to say that almost nothing could be negotiated between the two countries after the war without involving the Kashmir issue in some way. Both countries were unbending in their resolve over Kashmir, largely because it became an issue of legitimization of the principles upon which each nation was founded. In this respect it became a significant source of ideological and irredentist tension. Additionally, nationalist and communal sentiments in Pakistan and India that were heightened during the violence associated with partition were further intensified during the war. Both countries possess a diverse linguistic, ethnic and religious population, and the issue of Kashmir can ignite communal tensions within each country. Finally, the importance of Kashmir's strategic position between South Asia and the U.S.S.R., and China made it important geographically for both nations.

THE 1962 INDIA-CHINA BORDER CONFLICT

The Chinese Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) began an attack on Indian border outposts on October 20, 1962, along two separate fronts. In the northeast, where the Indian frontier borders Tibet, they attacked the posts in the Dhola and Khinzemane areas, and in the north, where the Ladakh sector of Jammu and Kashmir borders Tibet and Sinkiang, 15 out of 21 outposts were attacked and occupied in the Himalayan plateau known as "Aksai Chin." The superiority of men, firepower, and equipment overwhelmed Indian forces and drove them back substantially on both fronts. By October 24, the

Chinese pushed the Indian forces almost completely out of Aksai Chin in the north[30] and announced that their forces in the northeast would not limit themselves to the McMahon line, which was the line India recognized as the international border. At this point the Chinese made their first offer of peace to resolve the boundary question with India, which India rejected on the basis that there would be no agreement until the Chinese returned to positions occupied before the fighting. Some limited fighting continued through the rest of October and early November.

On November 16, 1962, the Chinese resumed their offensive. India used the apparent lull in fighting to bring reinforcements in from the plains and other areas. These reinforcements, most of whom were brought from near sea-level to fight at altitudes greater than 10,000 feet, were no match for the seasoned Chinese troops who still outnumbered them. The Indian army continued to be pushed back under the Chinese onslaught. Then, on November 21, the Chinese announced a unilateral cease-fire all along the Indian border, and stated they would begin pulling back troops on December 1 to positions twenty kilometers behind the line of actual control that existed before November 7, 1959, in an effort to settle the differences between the two countries.[31] China proposed as part of the cease-fire agreement that India also withdraw to twenty kilometers from the line of control. India refused, and a subsequent proposal by six Asian

---

[30] Because India had not placed its outposts deep into Aksai Chin, much of this territory was overtaken by the Chinese with little or no resistance prior to October 22.

[31] For a more thorough description of the fighting there are a number of good sources available. One such source, albeit from an Indian point of view is Shanti Prasad Varma, *Struggle for the Himalayas*, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1971).

and African nations was worked out which made some concessions to India, but neither party could fully agree to the terms of this agreement either, leaving the status of the line of control unresolved.[32]

Origins of Conflict

The 1962 war between India and China was essentially the result of a dispute over the location of the border between the two countries. The precise location of the border was not demarcated by the British when they left India, and a series of misunderstandings along with political and military posturing only served to increase tensions. To add to the situation, the Chinese Communist government of Mao Zedong was also pursuing a program of expansionism in neighboring Tibet, and India was harboring the exiled Tibetan leader, the Dalai Lama.

The leadership of India attempted to maintain good relations with China from the very beginning. Following the Communist takeover in China, Nehru, with his socialist leanings, along with the Indian leadership embraced a period of good relations with China that was affectionately termed "Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bahi" (China and India are brothers). In the late 1950s, however, tensions between the two countries over the border issue began to increase.

The border problem was an artifact of the British rule and their transfer of power to independent India. During British rule in India no less than three lines demarcating the

---

[32] Steven A. Hoffman, *India and the China Crisis* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1990), 224-228.

border were drawn in the north, and the precise location of the McMahon line in parts of the northeast, especially around Tawang, was both unclear and unrecognized by the Chinese after Indian independence (see figure 1). In the north, the first boundary line was the Ardagh-Johnson line, drawn in 1865 and recognized by the British government in 1897. This line encompassed Aksai Chin in its entirety. The Macartney-MacDonald line was drawn next and was first recognized in 1899. It gave the majority of the Aksai Chin to the Sinkiang Provence of China. The Trewalney-Saunders line was a variation of the Macartney-MacDonald line that put the border along the Karakoram range of mountains. It was the first one recognized in 1873. The Macartney-MacDonald line is the one presented to the Chinese and drawn on an authoritative map in 1909. There is some evidence that there may have been some preference shown to the Ardagh-Johnson line after World War I as it appeared on some of the British and Indian maps of the time (along with some variations).[33]

In the northeast, the British had maintained a form of indirect rule as this area was populated mostly by tribal peoples. As a result of the forward presence of Chinese troops in the area, the McMahon line was demarcated roughly along the top of the Himalayan watershed and negotiated with the Tibetans in the early 1900s. China argued the line was invalid, as Tibet had no authority to negotiate with India directly. The status of all of these possible borders changed numerous times through the first half of the 1900s, and was not resolved by the time of Indian independence. For example, the map given to the

[33] For a detailed discussion of the border issue during British India see Hoffman, 9-22.

Cabinet Mission in 1946 by the Indian Army General Staff did not show the Ardagh-Johnson, Macartney-MacDonald, or McMahon lines.[34]

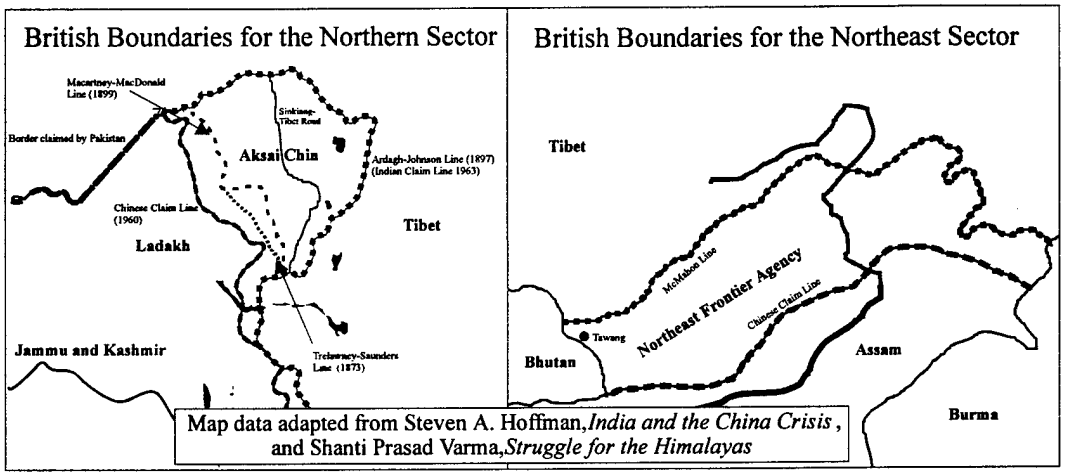

Figure 1 - Indo-China Borders

Independent India's border decisions were based on both strategic and historical considerations. It is believed that India adopted the Ardagh-Johnson line in the north shortly after independence as a result of crises facing the new government, most notably the war with Pakistan over Kashmir. India perceived that a subdivided subcontinent was weaker, and more susceptible to outside aggression. Additionally, the military occupation of Tibet in 1950 was viewed in India as the loss of a buffer between India and China. In response, India took over the remaining disputed areas of the Tawang tract in the northeast and decided in 1953 to "officially" regard Aksai Chin as Indian. Additionally, as India began to "discover" its identity, it began to study the traditional boundaries

[34] Ibid.

(which Britain chose to reinforce or ignore depending on their own strategic reasons) based on trade, migratory, grazing, revenue collection, and pilgrimage patterns,[35] as well as geographical features such as watershed boundaries. From this they concluded that Aksai Chin had been part of the traditional Dogra Kingdom and that the McMahon line, including the Tawang tract, formed the natural geographic divide in the northeast.[36]

Nehru, in an attempt to solidify relations with China, signed the Sino-Indian treaty in April 1954, where India formally recognized China's sovereignty over Tibet and gave up special privileges in Tibet inherited from the British. This agreement included the doctrine of *Panchsheel* (Five Principles), which was

> (1) mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, (2) mutual non-aggression, (3) mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, (4) equality and mutual benefit and (5) peaceful co-existence.[37]

Additionally, during the 1950s India deliberately did not militarize its northern borders because other measures of frontier security were being taken, and India did not want to jeopardize its good relations, based in part on the goodwill of *Panchsheel*, up to this point with China.

In the late 1950s a number of significant events began to change the relationship between the two countries and ultimately led them on the path to war. The first event was a dispute over a small tract of grazing ground on the border between Uttar Pradesh and

---

[35] Varma, 134. The Hindus believe that the areas including Mt. Kailash and Mansarovar lake are the abode of their gods, and their claim to Aksai Chin can be justified through thousands of years of trade and pilgrimage through this area to reach these holy places.
[36] Hoffmann, 23-28, gives a more detailed analysis of this argument.
[37] Varma, 31.

Tibet, which led the Indians to believe that the Chinese were inflexible over the unsettled border. The more significant event was the Chinese announcement that the Tibet-Sinkiang road that crossed through Askai Chin was nearing completion in 1957. India knew the Chinese were using Askai Chin, but did not make an issue of it as it was a traditional trade route. India-China relations soured after 1959 because of increasingly hostile notes and negotiations over the various border issues. Then following the Tibetan revolt in March 1959, India offered asylum to the Dalai Lama and his followers. As negotiations over the border disputes continued, it became apparent that the Chinese were laying claim to Askai Chin and most of the Northeast Frontier Agency (what is today the state of Arunachal Pradesh) and were increasingly unbending in their negotiations.

As a result of the increasing tensions, the government placed formal responsibility for the Northeast Frontier Agency on the Army. The October 21, 1959, Kongka Pass incident, where an Indian police patrol was ambushed, caused India to make the decision to militarize the border from the Indian side and refuse further barter offers made by the Chinese. India also adopted a forward policy of establishing outposts and strong-points across the line claimed by China in the belief that China would not take military action. By September 1962, intermittent fighting was occurring along the border, and with India refusing to negotiate its border claims, China opted to launch an all out offensive to seize territory up to their claim lines in both sectors. This decision was a result of the Chinese

Communist predilection for seizing ground and then negotiating its status and the Indian intransigence over the issue.[38]

Strategic Implications

The ending of the India-China war had two major strategic implications for South Asia. First, it demonstrated that non-alignment and the doctrine of *Panchsheel* were no guarantee of peaceful relations with other countries for India. It also demonstrated that India's reliance on this moral stand had left the Indian military in a position where it was ineffective in protecting its borders. India would embark on a reorganization of its military, effectively doubling its expenditure on defense in the years immediately following the conflict. This would prove to be a blessing in disguise when it went to war with Pakistan less than three years later.

Second, the border dispute and the war ended a peaceful relationship between the two countries. India's refusal to accept the terms of China's cease-fire would ultimately lead to continued confrontations along the border and significant strains in the relations between the two countries until the early 1990s. Because India was now faced with the prospect of fighting a protracted war with Pakistan and a limited war with China, the necessity for further military development was enhanced. This would ultimately lead to India becoming the preeminent power in South Asia, as will be discussed further in the next chapter.

---

[38] Hoffmann, 43-213, describes the Indian decision making process leading up to the Sino-Indian border war in great detail.

THE 1965 INDO-PAK WAR

The second Kashmir war began in much the same way as the first, with the infiltration of Pakistani controlled guerrillas into Indian Kashmir around August 5, 1965. By August 14, Pakistani regular forces were involved in the fighting against the Indian forces, and on the fifteenth, India attacked into Azad Kashmir, achieving sizable gains. In response, Pakistan launched a major attack in the southern sector, led by tanks and followed by two brigades of infantry. The Indian Army was forced to call in air support, which was met the next day by Pakistani air strikes. Air power continued to be used for the remainder of the war.

On September 6, the Indian Army launched a major attack in the Punjab towards the city of Lahore in an effort to draw Pakistan away from their efforts to cut off Kashmir from the rest of India. This plan worked as India intended, but Pakistan soon launched a counteroffensive in the Punjab to draw Indian forces away from Lahore. This counterattack was met by an ambush, as the Indians had anticipated this move, and Pakistan suffered significant casualties. Another armored battle, involving as many as 600 armored vehicles, also began over the town Sialkot in Pakistan. It has been suggested that India had hoped to trade Sialkot for other areas held by Pakistan.[39]

---

[39] Ganguly, *Origins of War*, 47-48, gives a brief, but thorough, description of the events of the war.

The United Nations Security Council passed a unanimous resolution calling for an end to the war on September 20, 1965. By then, both sides had fought to a stalemate and accepted the terms of the cease-fire.

Origins of Conflict

The origins for the second Kashmir war were in many ways simply extensions of the irredentist and ideological leanings of both countries that remained after the first war. Neither side had lived up to the provisions of the U.N. cease-fire, with India's failure to hold a plebiscite and Pakistan's failure to remove its military forces from Kashmir. Minor border clashes occurred frequently, but were of relatively little concern to either side. Then, in the early 1960s the clashes became more frequent in response to a number of events that served to increase tensions between the two countries.

Political developments inside Kashmir formed one source of the tensions. Sheikh Abdullah was installed as the first (interim) Prime Minister of Kashmir by Maharaja Hari Singh shortly after the first war. Under Abdullah, who was never popularly elected, a number of increasingly repressive reforms were undertaken which ultimately resulted in his being removed from office and put in jail. His successor, Bakshi Gulam Mohammed, made some improvements and worked with New Delhi to bring Kashmir closer to the Indian union, including ratification of the instrument of accession signed by Hari Singh. India also began to do away with Article 370 of the Constitution which gave Kashmir special status. Abdullah and his subordinates opposed the accession, and formed the Plebiscite Front, a political party committed to the holding of a UN plebiscite in Kashmir,

with the continued goal of independence. His protests and agitation had little effect on curbing India's integration of Kashmir, but it made Abdullah out to be a hero among many Kashmiri Muslims. Nehru, who still considered Abdullah a close friend tried to use him to help negotiate a settlement with Pakistan, but Abdullah still wanted independence and Nehru died on May 17, 1964, before Abdullah completed the negotiations.[40]

Another incident that occurred before Nehru's death also helped to ignite some of the tensions. In December 1963, the holy relic from the Hazratbal mosque in Kashmir, a sacred hair supposedly belonging to the Prophet Muhammad, was stolen. Communal violence erupted immediately in Kashmir and spread throughout India and parts of Pakistan. The relic was soon located, and it is uncertain whether the disappearance was an accident or was planned. The Pakistan leadership interpreted the Kashmiri demonstrations as a sign that the people were ready to revolt against India and that they would welcome Pakistani support.[41]

Pakistan saw India's slow integration of Kashmir as a blatant disregard for the UN resolutions and the Kashmir people. It also perceived that India was demoralized and weak following the Sino-Indian war and the death of Nehru, but that it would not remain that way for long.[42] Border incidents were on the increase between the two countries, but one in the Rann of Kutch, a tidal flood-plain where the border meets the Arabian Sea, proved to be very important in shaping Pakistan's assessment of India's military

---

[40] Kadian, 121-126.
[41] Rizvi, 69.
[42] Cheema, "Pakistan, India, and Kashmir: A Historical Review," 105.

capability. The April 9, 1965, tank attack by the Pakistanis easily overran the Indian outposts and the military forces made the tactical decision to withdraw rather that loose lives and equipment. Pakistan perceived this to be a military weakness. Believing that India was momentarily weak, Pakistan sought to seize the opportunity and planned "Operation Gibralter," whereby infiltrators would first enter Kashmir to encourage Kashmiris to revolt against India. Pakistan would then send in its army to aid the Kashmiris in their struggle.[43]

As it turned out, Pakistan's assessment was fundamentally wrong on two accounts. First, the Kashmiri Muslims were not rebelling. In fact, they handed over a number of the infiltrators when they crossed over the border. Second, the Indian military was not as weak as Pakistan perceived it to be, and furthermore the Indians were resolved not to loose another war.[44]

Strategic Implications

The second Kashmir war was significant to South Asia both by what it failed to do and by what it demonstrated. First, it failed to resolve the issue of Kashmir in any way. Both countries lost and gained small areas along the border, but these were negligible in the greater scheme of things. The overall problem of Kashmir still existed in the same form as it did prior to the war.

---

[43] Rizvi, 69.
[44] Ibid., 70.

Second, the war was especially significant in the way it defined the balance of power in South Asia. India proved itself to be not weak as Pakistan had assessed, and it showed that it had learned its lesson from the war with China. The war also introduced new weapons such as armor and air power to South Asian warfare, which increased the speed and volatility of war significantly. The introduction of these weapons and their capabilities helped to fuel the arms race in South Asia, which was just in its infancy. Volatility was also seen in the way the war escalated outside the boundaries of Kashmir, demonstrating the potential for small skirmishes to expand.

THE 1971 INDO-PAK WAR

The 1971 war began as a conflict between the East and West wings of Pakistan. As a result of the elections of December 1970, the Awami League of East Pakistan achieved a clear majority in the national assembly of Pakistan, but the military regime and parties of West Pakistan were unwilling to hand power over to the Bengalis of East Pakistan. By March 1971, the Pakistan Army (minus those regiments from East Pakistan) began a major crackdown on the resistance movement that had developed among the Bengalis, who were now demanding complete autonomy from Pakistan. In May, India began helping to train members of the resistance movement, who now called themselves the *Mukti Bahini*, on Indian soil. From May to December the *Mukti Bahini* waged a guerilla war against the Pakistan Army.

Indian involvement increased in November with limited attacks on border outposts. The Indian Army was poised to enter East Pakistan by late November, and probably had

already sent lead elements across the border in preparation for an offensive in early December.[45] Pakistan tripped the trigger for India, bringing it directly into the war on December 3, 1971, by conducting air-strikes on Indian military bases in the northwest and launching ground operations in Kashmir and the Punjab. India retaliated with its own air-strikes and continued to maintain air-superiority for the remainder of the war. The Indian Navy was used to bombard the dock yards at Karachi. India's conduct of the war in the west was limited primarily to repulsing Pakistani attacks, and while many of the battles were fierce, India apparently restrained itself from trying reclaim the rest of Kashmir.

Along the eastern front the Indian Army worked in conjunction with the *Mukti Bahini* to attack along three major thrusts to take the city of Dhaka by December 16. Meanwhile, the Indian Navy effectively blockaded the coast, preventing Pakistan from resupplying or reinforcing its troops. The Pakistani forces in East Pakistan surrendered to the Indian forces on December 16. Indira Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister, ordered a unilateral cease-fire on December 17, which was reciprocated by the Pakistani President, General Yahya Khan, the same day and ended the war in the west as well.[46]

Origins of Conflict

The principle cause of the war has already been eluded to, and Ganguly sums it up best by placing the blame on

---

[45] Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *War and Secession: Pakistan, India, and the Creation of Bangladesh* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 213-214.
[46] For a more detailed synopsis of the war see Sisson, 177-236.

> the fundamental inability of the West Pakistani political leadership to accommodate the hopes and expectations of the majority of the East Pakistanis. Despite the common bond of Islam, profound differences between East and West Pakistan existed: the West Pakistanis were of a different ethnic stock than the East Pakistanis (Bengalis), and they spoke a different language. In addition, the West Pakistanis regarded Bengali Islam as tainted by Hinduism and thus in need of Purification.[47]

India's involvement in the war stems primarily from it desire to create a situation that would facilitate the return of the more than nine million refugees that crossed the border into India following the Pakistan Army crackdown. The refugees were creating both an economic strain on India, as well as creating civil unrest in the state of West Bengal. Additionally, the Indian government was concerned that the communists in West Bengal would use this opportunity to stir up trouble, especially since many of the refugees and the Awami League were pro-communist. The government was also concerned that the refugee influx in the northeast would disrupt volatile and sensitive tribal political systems.[48] India initially chose to assist by providing training to the *Mukti Bahini* because politically it wanted to avoid being seen as an aggressor in the eyes of the international community. Military operations were unfeasible for a number of reasons. Most of the forces of Eastern Command were dispersed into small units to both prevent civil unrest and to help Indira Gandhi's Congress party to win recent elections. Other units could not be brought in due to the necessity for maintaining a defensive posture on the Chinese and West Pakistan borders. The impending arrival of monsoon rains would make the riverine

---

[47] Ibid., 87.
[48] Sisson, 179-181.

delta of East Pakistan much more difficult and costly for India to attack across, and would not be suitable for operations until after October.[49]

Although many Pakistani scholars attribute India's direct involvement in the war to a desire "to dismember Pakistan,"[50] other scholars argue that Indian direct involvement was a result of Pakistan's attacks on Indian airfields.[51] It has also been suggested that Pakistan had hoped to seize a substantial amount of Indian territory in the west that could be used to bargain for other territories, such as Kashmir.[52] As has already been stated, it is almost certain that India was on the verge of entering the war anyway, as its diplomatic moves were not proving fruitful, and despite Bangladeshi claims to the contrary, the *Mukti Bahini* were capable of continuing pressure on the Pakistani forces, but were not capable of a decisive victory. India was resolved to a solution, including direct involvement.

Strategic Implications

The 1971 war was probably one of the most significant defining moments for South Asia because it resulted in the creation of a new state, Bangladesh. As a result, Pakistan was literally cut in half, leaving India as the clear major power of the region in terms of size and population. India's military also became proportionally larger than that

---

[49] Sam Manekshaw, lecture given at Indian Defense Services Staff College, India, April 27, 1998.
[50] Cheema, "Pakistan, India, and Kashmir: A Historical Review," 107.
[51] Rizvi, 72.
[52] Ibid.

of Pakistan at the moment Bangladesh was created. Aside from this, the war had a number of other implications on India and Pakistan.

Pakistan's loss of East Pakistan was not only a loss of territory, but was also a blow to the "two nation theory" that formed the basis for the creation of Pakistan in the first place. The revolt of the Bengali Muslims indicated that the bonds of Islam were not enough to hold the nation together. Because this same ideology was the basis for the claim over Kashmir, that claim was also substantially weakened. The loss of its eastern wing also meant that Pakistan no longer had to defend a territory 1,000 miles away.[53]

India's biggest problem was how to deal with being the dominant power in South Asia. It also had to contend with how to deal with its own separatist movements in the northeast and Kashmir, having just aided a separatist movement in Pakistan. But to its advantage, the breakup of Pakistan helped to shatter the image of Pakistan as a haven for Muslims in the minds of the Muslims living in India. Many Muslims saw this as a "clean break with the past and a decision to stay and struggle for democratic rights."[54]

OTHER SOUTH ASIAN CONFLICTS

After 1971, India and Pakistan continued to wage a "proxy war" along the line of control in Kashmir. The 1970s were relatively calm with regard to Kashmir, although both countries instituted a number of changes that affected the parts of Kashmir held by

---

[53] Ganguly, *Origins of War*, 115.

[54] Omar Khalidi, "Kashmir and Muslim Politics in India," in *Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in South Asia,* ed. Raju G. C. Thomas (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 280-280. Khalidi is quoting Syed Shahabuddin, a member of Parliament.

each side.[55] In the early 1980s, the Indian government began to establish military posts on the Siachen Glacier, an area where the cease-fire line is poorly defined and had been previously unoccupied by either side. By the end of 1984, India had moved a full battalion to these snowy heights, and frequent border clashes have ensued since then. India added to the tension by beginning construction on a dam across the Jhelum river, which from Pakistan's point of view would pose a significant threat as it would give India the capability of either preventing the flow of water to parts of the Pakistan Punjab or of flooding it.[56]

India has spent a considerable amount of resources in Kashmir using the Army to fight an on-going insurgency with mixed results. The roots of the insurgency are significantly tied up in the internal politics of Kashmir. However, India shoulders a large share of the blame for its continuation through its political treatment of the state and the ruthlessness of some of the Army's tactics. India had tried to deflect most of the blame to Pakistan for providing support to the insurgents and inciting civil unrest through its Inter-Services Intelligence Agency (ISI). While Pakistan certainly deserves a share of the blame, they are not the sole culprits. Recently, *Mujahideen* have reportedly been moving

---

[55] Leo E. Rose, "The Politics of Azad Kashmir," in *Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in South Asia,* ed. Raju G. C. Thomas (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 240-251, discusses the Pakistan side of this issue, and Ashutosh Varshney, "Three Compromised Nationalisms: Why Kashmir has been a Problem," 217-222, in the same volume, discusses the Indian side.
[56] Cheema, "Pakistan, India, and Kashmir: A Historical Review," 108-110.

into Kashmir from other areas, such as Afghanistan and Iran, to assist the insurgents. Some of these *Mujahideen* may or may not have Pakistan's backing.[57]

The Kashmir crisis recently came to a head with a group of *Mujahideen* infiltrating from Pakistan and occupying a series of Indian posts in the Kargil sector of Kashmir in May 1999. These posts are vacated during the Winter by the Indian Army and are re-occupied in the Spring. The Indian military was then obliged to expend tremendous effort in its attempts to remove the infiltrators, which resulted in some of the most intense fighting since 1971. Pakistan initially denied that they had a hand in the infiltration, but later admitted to not only supporting it, but providing regular forces as well. The most significant aspect of this battle is that it began less than a year after both India and Pakistan tested nuclear devices. The looming prospect of a major war between the two nuclear states brought significant international pressure, especially from the United States, to end the conflict before it escalated. Pakistan was ultimately convinced to withdraw its forces and the *Mujahideen* from the Kargil heights.[58]

India has become the first South Asian nation to participate in regional peacekeeping operations. In 1987 India deployed a peacekeeping force to Sri Lanka to ensure compliance with a peace accord worked out by the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil insurgents. The Indian Army was also used in the Maldives in 1988 to prevent an attempted coup. The Maldive operation was largely successful while the Sri Lanka one

---

[57] For a detailed analysis of the post 1971 Kashmir crisis see Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1997).
[58] For more information see: "War in Kargil," *Frontline* <http://www.the-hindu.com/fline/fl1612>, 5 June 1999.

was not. The Maldive operation was also significant because the Maldives is an Islamic state and was in the process of strengthening bilateral relations with Pakistan, yet the coup attempt prompted the Maldive President to invite Indian troops over Pakistani.[59] India remains the only South Asian country to exercise military force in the region. In addition, both India and Pakistan have participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations outside the region, sometimes working side-by-side.[60]

The Cold War also had a significant impact on the strategic situation in South Asia. Nehru's socialist leanings drew him to the Soviet Union early on, and Pakistan fostered ties with the United States that were mutually beneficial as each sought to counter the influences of India and the Soviet Union respectively. The U.S. sold arms to Pakistan off and on, and tacitly supported its position during the 1971 war with India by deploying a aircraft carrier battle group to the Bay of Bengal (albeit too late) and suspending general economic assistance to India.[61] The Soviet Union, likewise had a number of arms agreements with India. The war in Afghanistan further polarized the situation as India supported the Soviet position, and the U.S. provided arms to Pakistan, ostensibly to prevent further Soviet expansion. China's conflict with both India and the Soviet Union caused it to form a relationship with Pakistan, and Pakistan even assisted the development of U.S.-China relations in the 1970s.[62]

---

[59] Hasan-Askari Rizvi, *Pakistan and the Geostrategic Environment: A Study of Foreign Policy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 68-69.
[60] Heitzman, 576-579.
[61] Sisson, 261-263.
[62] For a detailed analysis of the triangular relationships between the U.S.-U.S.S.R.-China and India-Pakistan-China see: Xuecheng Liu, *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute and Sino-Indian Relations*

The end of the Cold War has left both India and Pakistan without a significant source for weapons. Russia's internal problems have taken a priority over assistance to India, and the restrictions of the Pressler Amendment have cut off Pakistan's sources in the U.S.. Both countries are now looking for alternate sources for their military hardware.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS OF REGIONAL CONFLICT

Fifty plus years of conflict have shaped the political environment of South Asia, and have contributed to lingering animosities, ideological differences and an arms race. Before moving on to the next chapter, where the specific weapons programs will be addressed, some of the major strategic implications of the conflicts are recapped below:

1. The ideological and irredentist tensions between India and Pakistan have changed little since the first Kashmir war shortly after independence.

2. China's war with India demonstrated the weakness of *Panchsheel* as a doctrine for relations and showed India that China was a formidable and credible adversary.

3. The 1971 War strengthened India's position as the dominant power in the region, a position that was further affirmed through its military involvement in Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

4. The course of the Cold War acted as a catalyst in the polarization of the South Asian states, and its end has left India and Pakistan searching for allies and new ways to establish parity.

(Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1994), 147-181.

WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT AND ACQUISITION

The arms race in South Asia reached another level with the nuclear tests of 1998. In this chapter we look at the weapons development and acquisition programs of China, India, and Pakistan to determine each nation's potential for further defense modernization and expansion. A number of other factors are also considered in the assessment of each country's program. We will rely partly on the historical background of conflict covered in the preceding chapter to assess each country's threat perception to determine internal motivations for military development. Each country's industrial and technological capability is reviewed in order to determine present capabilities and the necessity for reliance on external sources for defense equipment. In addition, we also need to consider the influence that the major powers (namely the U.S. and U.S.S.R.) have had on the region. We will also be concerned with how this influence has changed and what significance it has had for the other factors. Because nuclear weapons are now such an important aspect of the regional balance of power, they are dealt with separately from conventional weapons, although there is an unavoidable connection between the two.

CHINA

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) that brought the Communist Party of Mao Zedong to power in 1949 began as an army of peasants. Much of the military leadership then shifted to political roles in the countryside as the new communist

government was taking over the country. As a result, the early years of the PRC were characterized by a significant lack of equipment and supplies of a military nature. Additionally, Mao's own doctrine, which included such approaches to government as anti-intellectualism and self-reliance,[1] further served to hamper development of new technologies. Nevertheless, China did begin to move forward with new military technologies despite these large obstacles.[2]

Conventional Weapons Development

Self reliance did not necessarily mean no outside help; rather it meant that China should "keep the initiative in [its] own hands."[3] From 1949 to 1958 China received help from its communist brethren in the Soviet Union. Its objective was to acquire the capability to design and build the entire range of weaponry without undue outside assistance. In order to accomplish this China had to quickly change from an agricultural and peasant economy to an industrial one. The Soviet Union was willing to provide the economic and technological support for development of an industrial base in China, although was cautious about creating a military power on its border.[4] A Sino-Soviet accord was signed in 1953 with the Soviet Union agreeing to help in the assembly of 156

---

[1] Kenneth Lieberthal, *Governing China* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1995), 76-77. Mao's vision of self-reliance required each section of the country to produce its own food and develop its own small-scale industries. This ended up being hampering the creation of a larger national industrial base.
[2] Ibid., 55, 62-77.
[3] Ibid., 76.
[4] Paul H. B. Godwin, "Military Technology and Doctrine in Chinese Military Planning," in *Military Capacity and the Risk of War*, ed. Eric Arnett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 39-40.

key industrial facilities, 43 of which were directly related to the production of conventional weapons. More important to China, however, was the two billion U.S. dollars in Soviet credits it received from 1950 to 1959, most of which was funneled into defense related activities.[5]

Mao Zedong realized in the early 1950s that reliance on a "people's war," such as the one that brought the communists to power, could not be relied on for the national defense of China. Furthermore, China's failures in the Korean war demonstrated that technology could in fact be decisive.[6] During the course of the war and afterwards China assessed that its weakest links were in the areas of aviation and electronics. Accordingly, most of the effort of the 1950s was to substantially improve production capabilities in these two areas, with a secondary emphasis on tanks and heavy artillery.[7]

During the first ten years of Mao's government in China, the primary strategic focus was two-pronged. First, China still had the unfinished business of concluding its civil war by taking Taiwan from the Nationalist government that retreated there in 1949. Second, the Korean War and the U.S. decision to recognize the government on Taiwan as the legitimate government for all of China aligned China against the West in general and the U.S. in particular. The Soviets also attempted to use China in their plans for communist expansion. A number of their agreements with China included provisions for

---

[5] John W. Lewis and Xue Litai, *China's Strategic Seapower: Force Modernization in the Nuclear Age* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 76.
[6] Norman Friedman, "Chinese Military Capacity: Industrial and Operational Weakness," in *Military Capacity and the Risk of War*, ed. Eric Arnett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 62-63.
[7] Lewis, 75-76.

special access to territories and port facilities within China[8] and even sought to incorporate China's navy under Soviet command and control, a move that was rejected by Mao.[9]

China's split with the Soviet Union began in the late 1950s when Soviet General Secretary Nikita Khrushchev denounced Stalin and his personality cult, which was interpreted in China as an attack on Mao.[10] In 1958 the Great Leap Forward resulted in China deviating from the Soviet model of governance thereby increasing tensions. The primary consequence of the Great Leap was to consolidate more power under Mao and to throw the country into a nationwide depression. Additionally, to some degree, the increasing border tensions with India and the Soviet Union's support of the Indian position further served to open the rift between the two countries.[11] In June 1960, the Soviet Union withdrew all of its technicians and aid from China.[12] Adding to China's threat perception, Khrushchev visited the United States in 1959, and the apparent thaw in the relations of these two nuclear powers was seen as a potential threat to Chinese interests. China therefore poured the vast majority of its defense resources into development of nuclear weapon and ballistic missile delivery systems at the expense of the conventional forces. The resulting military industrial complex was incapable of

---

[8] Lieberthal, 87-89.
[9] Friedman, 62.
[10] Lieberthal, 99-100. Mao had modeled much of his own ideology after that of Stalin.
[11] John W. Lewis and Xue Litai, *China Builds the Bomb* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 71-72, 127.
[12] For more on the Great Leap period in China see Lieberthal, 102-108.

producing modern arms for the armed forces which were then equipped with outdated equipment copied from Soviet models.[13]

China largely neglected its conventional military forces until after Mao's death when Deng Xiaoping instituted the "Four Modernizations" of agriculture, industry, science and technology, and national defense in December 1978. It did obtain some military technology during the Vietnam war as part of an agreement with the Soviets in conjunction with shipping equipment through China, but the Cultural Revolution, which coincided with the escalation in Vietnam, effectively stalled Chinese industry and it was unable to exploit much of what was made avaliable.[14] As a result, China was two to three decades behind advanced industrialized states in terms of military technology. Still, defense still ranked fourth among the development priorities. Godwin suggests that the justification stems from a certain confidence that there was no immediate military threat from the Soviet Union because of the "quasi-alliance" China had formed with the United States following Kissinger and Nixon's visit.[15]

In 1985 China began to change its military strategy. The strategy prior to 1985 still focused on the defense of continental China through a war of attrition, and after 1964 incorporated the possibility of nuclear retaliation. This strategy was termed a "people's war under modern conditions," and was mostly a consequence of the PLA's technological weakness. It was also based on the assumption that the principal threat would be a major

---

[13] Godwin, 40.
[14] Friedman, 65.
[15] Godwin, 40.

war, possibly involving the use of nuclear weapons. After 1985 the Chinese strategists concluded that the U.S. and Soviet Union were at a stalemate, the multi-polarity of international politics was diluting superpower preeminence, and the emerging security environment was increasing the likelihood of small-scale wars, therefore the most likely threat would be local, limited wars. Additionally, emerging technologies for improving the range and accuracy of standoff weaponry made the defense against a sudden attack far more difficult. Following the 1991 Gulf War, China began using the term "limited war under high-tech conditions" to describe its primary threat.[16] This threat is generally described as a small-scale conflict with one of its neighbors who has the backing or support of one of the major nuclear powers (mainly the U.S. and to a lesser degree Russia).

As a result of this changed threat perception, China began attempting to modernize its conventional forces. Initially, its approach focused on updating existing systems with more advanced armaments and electronics, as they could be procured from foreign suppliers. Western arms manufacturers had some limited sales to China until the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident resulted in the suspension of most military agreements. Russia, on the other hand, has been quite active in arms sales to China. Agreements have been made to sell China a wide range of equipment, including SU-27 fighters, IL-76 transport aircraft, SA-10 air defense missiles, and Kilo Class diesel-electric submarines.[17] While these purchases have helped substantially, this equipment is still not of the highest

---

[16] See Godwin, 41-43, for a more detailed discussion of these changes.
[17] Ibid., 44-45.

technological level. Additionally, China's ability to pay for this equipment is limited, and with Russia's current economic problems they are unwilling to extend large amounts of credit to China for arms purchases. China is therefore faced with a dilemma of having requirements for new military technologies that its technology research base cannot develop and its industrial base cannot produce.[18]

Nuclear Weapons Development

Mao Zedong declared as early as 1946 that nuclear weapons were nothing more than "paper tigers." However, by 1955 he had changed his mind in light of the U.S. threat to use nuclear weapons in Korea or the Taiwan Straits if necessary.[19] The Chinese then included nuclear weapons on their list of technologies to be acquired from the Soviet Union. In 1956, the Soviet Union agreed to provide assistance to China's nuclear industries and research facilities, but refused to provide assistance on the nuclear weapons themselves or on construction of nuclear submarines.

The Chinese began to receive some support from the Soviets in 1957 because of the New Defense Technical Accord signed between the two countries. This accord provided Soviet scientists to assist China in the design phase of both research facilities and the weapon itself. Additionally, the Soviet Union agreed to provide a prototype nuclear device to China, but delivery was first delayed and then canceled as a result of the

---

[18] Ian Anthony, "Arms Exports to Southern Asia," in *Military Capacity and the Risk of War*, ed. Eric Arnett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 293-294.
[19] Di Hua, "Threat Perception and Military Planning in China: Domestic Instability and the importance of Prestige," in *Military Capacity and the Risk of War*, ed. Eric Arnett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 29.

deteriorating relations. Lewis and Xue suggest that the information provided to China before the pullout of the last Soviet scientists in 1960 was mainly of a general theoretical nature, and did not contain some of the most advanced Soviet technologies.[20] Between 1960 and 1964 China had to rely on the information it had obtained from the Soviet Union, a basic understanding of nuclear fission principles, and a handful of western and Soviet educated scientists to complete the work on its first atomic weapon.

Following China's first nuclear explosion on October 16, 1964, the effort then focused on development and production of air-dropped and then missile-delivered weapons systems. At the same time, the focus also shifted to the development of a hydrogen (or fusion) weapon. After some delay caused by the Cultural Revolution, China tested its first H-Bomb on June 17, 1967.

Although the details of its nuclear policy are unclear, China was apparently striving toward a position of nuclear deterrence. China's primary focus was on deterring the United States, but it also began targeting Soviet cities and installations in the wake of the 1969 Sino-Soviet border conflicts. Initially, China was only able to reach U.S. bases in Japan and the Philippines with its DF-2 and DF-3 missiles respectively in the 1960s. In 1971, the DF-4, with a range of 4,800 kilometers, was deployed and able to strike the U.S. territory of Guam. Both the DF-3 and DF-4 are capable of reaching most targets in India. The DF-5 was deployed in the late 1970s or early 1980s and with a range of 13,000 kilometers is considered a limited-range intercontinental missile.[21]

---

[20] Lewis, *China Builds the Bomb*, 139-141.
[21] Ibid., 210-218.

China provided both nuclear weapon and missile technology to a number of countries, most notably Pakistan, Iran, and North Korea. It is interesting to note that in the years of isolation from the West (1949-1972) China pursued a posture that favored nuclear proliferation, mostly to third-world countries, which it viewed as a vehicle of anti-imperialism. After opening to the West it began to gradually shift its position to one of non-proliferation, although it continued to provide support to a number of countries until 1992, when it joined the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). In the case of Pakistan, Chinese assistance may have been crucial to its weapons program.[22] The specifics of Chinese involvement in Pakistan's nuclear program will be discussed later in this chapter.

China signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996 after conducting a total of forty-five tests over the life of its nuclear weapons program. According to Ming Zhang, as a policy, China currently encourages existing nuclear powers to abandon their nuclear deterrence policies and reduce stockpiles. It also pledges unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states.[23] An elimination or reduction of the nuclear threat would permit China to focus more resources on its conventional programs.

---

[22] Rodney W. Jones, Mark G. McDonough, et. al., *Tracking Nuclear Proliferation: a Guide in Maps and Charts* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1998), 49-50.
[23] Ming Zhang, *China's Changing Nuclear Posture: Reactions to the South Asian Nuclear Tests* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999), 7.

Assessment

China's military is one of sharp contrasts in terms of capability. On the one hand, it has managed to design and field a credible nuclear arsenal. While this arsenal is indeed one of much lower levels of technology than western or even Russian systems, it is still a credible arsenal given that the twenty or so DF-5 missiles can deliver nuclear warheads to Europe or even America. On the other hand, over forty years of neglect to its conventional forces has left China with a military that Bates Gill and Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institute have called "hollow and incapable of projecting power abroad."[24]

China's PLA includes about 2.8 million soldiers, sailors, and airmen. The ground forces comprise approximately two million of this total, and have the primary responsibility of protecting the borders and ensuring domestic order. The Pentagon estimates that only 20 percent of the ground forces are equipped to move within China, let alone project power abroad. It also assesses that most of the soldiers are semi-literate, rural peasants and that political and family connections, not ability, predominate in officer promotions.[25]

China's naval forces are no better off. The bulk of its fleet remains oriented on coastal defense and is based on aging Soviet technology of the 1950s. China has poured a tremendous effort into their submarine fleet, yet among its sixty or so strong force, it has

---

[24] Bates Gill and Michael O'Hanlon, "China's Hollow Military," *The National Interest*, no. 56 <http://www.brookings.org/views/articles/ohanlon>, Summer 1999.
[25] Ibid.

only five indigenously produced Han nuclear-powered submarines and three Kilo class subs purchased from Russia. The only aircraft carrier China has acquired has been anchored off Macao and turned into a recreation center.[26] Without suitable air cover, China's Navy is strictly relegated to a "brown water" capability. Any aspirations to acquire a "blue water" capability are decades away. The Navy cannot even fully support its claims on the Spratley Islands in the South China sea, and any aspirations of projecting power into the Indian Ocean are even more unrealistic.[27]

The assessment of China's Air Force is even bleaker. Well over 80 percent of China's Air Force relies on 1960s or older technology. It has limited air to air refueling capability and almost no capability for any form of airborne electronic warfare. Recent acquisitions of transport aircraft only bring its lift capability up to roughly 6,000 troops.[28]

The weaknesses of the individual services are compounded in China's significant lack of training in joint operations. China only began joint training in the last three years and is untested in actual operations.[29] Moreover, China's resources are also divided among a number of potential trouble areas. The Navy is occupied with the Spratleys, Taiwan, and problems with its off shore islands. Besides their internal duties, the ground forces are spread among missions involving potential border problems with Vietnam, North Korea, Russia, Mongolia, and India. The newly created Central Asian republics have created a whole new set of problems with existing border disputes and new Islamic

---

[26] Ibid.
[27] Friedman, 73.
[28] Gill, "China's Hollow Military."
[29] Ibid.

nationalism in southwestern China. South Asia is only one of many concerns for the Chinese right now, and a small one at that.

INDIA

India inherited the beginnings of its military establishment from the British in 1947 following independence. However, the Indian National Congress, which took control of the new independent government and whose past was primarily focused on the independence movement, had little experience in matters of national defense. There was a tendency to downplay defense problems, which stemmed in part from the non-cooperation and non-violence thinking imbued by Mahatma Gandhi in the years of the independence struggle. Also, the leaders of the Congress party held the belief that India was already well protected by its natural boundaries, and they failed to fully comprehend the implications arising from partition.[30] The 1947 war over Kashmir, and the 1962 war with China significantly changed India's defense perceptions and resulted in major changes in defense policy.

Conventional Weapons Development

Nehru and the Indian government did not altogether neglect Indian defense policy after independence. The pre-independence doctrine of economic nationalism (or *swadeshi*) was transformed in post-independence India into a program of self-sufficiency in industrial production, which Nehru believed would naturally bolster the defense sector

---

[30] Chris Smith, *India's Ad Hoc Arsenal: Direction or Drift in Defense Policy?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 42-46.

without actually focusing specifically on defense development and production. Also, because of having a potentially hostile Pakistan to the west, Nehru commissioned his British friend Lord Professor P.M.S. Blackett to prepare a report outlining the measures required for India to become nearly self-sufficient in defense production within seven years. The Blackett Report, as it became known, recommended purchasing surplus weapons left over from World War II to meet its immediate defense needs, emphasizing economic and industrial development over defense, and a reduction in defense expenditure. Much of the rationale for this was based on a very limited perception of the threat from China and that India was very unlikely to be involved in a major war in the near future. Any incursion by Pakistan into Kashmir was thought to be mainly by armed tribesmen rather than regular forces, therefore only a small, limited war would be necessary in that instance.[31]

It is unclear just how much of the Blackett Report was actually implemented,[32] but until the 1962 war with China the defense expenditure of India never rose above 3 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP). However, during this period the accession of Pakistan into the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in 1954 and the agreement by the United States to sell up to $2 billion worth of arms to Pakistan alarmed India.[33] As a

---

[31] For more on the Blackett Report see Smith, 48-55.
[32] Ibid., 55.
[33] Sandy Gordon, *India's Rise to Power in the Twentieth Century and Beyond* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 22-23. Actual figures for delivered material were closer to $500 million. It also needs to be noted that India was also offered the opportunity to secure an arms agreement from the U.S. under similar terms, but its refusal and alignment with the U.S.S.R. and China were intended as a protest measure against the arming of Pakistan. See Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, *Pakistan's Defense Policy, 1947-58* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 130.

result, Nehru and Defense Minister Krishna Menon decided to establish the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO), which was founded in 1958 to create a fully indigenous arms industry and research and development capacity.[34] India also purchased as many as 200 Centurion tanks and a number of aircraft and ships, including an aircraft carrier, from Britain to offset Pakistan's purchases.[35]

The 1962 border war with China caught India drastically off-guard in terms of its military capacity. As a result of its defeat, India increased its defense spending to more than 4 percent of its GNP and embarked on a rearmament program beginning in 1964. The Army was increased from eleven to twenty-one divisions and a new emphasis was placed on mountain warfare with the expansion of the High Altitude Warfare School. Despite the desire for self reliance, India's technological level had not met expectations and procurement from outside sources as well as licenced production in India increased substantially. Britain, France, Japan, and the Soviet Union all established procurement and licencing agreements with India.[36]

Indian defense relations with the Soviet Union increased during this period as western nations gradually became more reluctant to provide advanced technology and the Soviets provided a much more cost effective alternative to modernization.[37] However, ties to the Soviet Union predate the 1962 war beginning with the unofficial visit of Nehru's daughter and later Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, to Moscow in 1953.

---

[34] Gordon, 22-23.
[35] Smith, 55-61.
[36] Ibid., 80-82.
[37] Gordon, 71.

Following this visit, trade between the two nations increased substantially, and many agreements for weapons purchases, such as the T-55 tank, were negotiated well before the war with China. Transfers of aircraft also occurred in this period. As an added benefit, the U.S.S.R. took a neutral stand as tensions between India and China increased prior to the war. This proved to be an advantage for India while being a disadvantage for China.[38] It is entirely likely that the Soviet Union also began providing favorable trade terms for military hardware to India in order to offset China with India after the Sino-Soviet split.

Following the 1965 war with Pakistan, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi began an active attempt to consolidate India's regional position as one of strength. Gandhi, however, became embroiled in India's internal problems, and in the late 1960s Indo-Soviet relations cooled significantly. This in turn restricted India's ability to modernize its forces, but the Army and Air Force used the opportunity to make some operational improvements. On the other hand, the Indian Navy, which had little involvement in the previous wars, began arguing to increase its status. The principal reason for this seems to stem from the British withdrawal from east of the Suez, leaving a power vacuum in the Indian Ocean that the Indian Chief of Naval Staff sought to exploit.[39]

In the second half of the 1960s, India became concerned as the Soviet Union began increasing its ties to Pakistan in an effort to place a wedge between Pakistan and China. Pakistan was also looking for alternative arms suppliers as its supply from the U.S. had dwindled as a result of sanctions imposed in 1965. The arms trade between the U.S.S.R.

---

[38] Smith, 83-84.
[39] Ibid., 88-92.

and Pakistan was negligible, but the political implications for India were significant. In the end, Pakistan did not alter its relations with China, and the Soviet Union backed off from its engagement with Pakistan during the 1971 war.[40]

The period from 1971 to 1980 was relatively low key in terms of procurement of new systems and technologies. The reasons for this are multifaceted. First of all, the 1970s was one of the most turbulent decades for India, with both economic and political chaos because of deficit financing, a significant loss of foreign capital reserves, and Indira Gandhi's declaration of a state of emergency. It has also been argued that the government was becoming uncomfortable with the high level of dependence on the Soviet Union and the armed forces were unhappy with the performance of the equipment they had received from it. It was during this decade that decisions were taken to increase indigenous weapons production of systems such as the Arjun main battle tank (which is yet to be fielded). The Navy was the principal benefactor during this period, as the Indians were generally happy with the performance of Soviet naval equipment and both India and the U.S.S.R. had a mutual desire to strengthen India's blue water capability. Toward the end of the decade, a series of new arms deals were concluded to purchase a variety of systems from a number of different countries. Among these were the Jaguar and Harrier aircraft from Europe, T-72 tanks and BMP-1 armored personnel carriers from the Soviet Union, and the Navy looked at several European options for purchase of a new submarine.[41]

---

[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid., 94-101.

The December 1979 invasion of Afghanistan significantly altered international politics and heightened the Cold War in a way that had significant impact on South Asian security. The U.S. resumption of shipping arms to Pakistan and its establishment of littoral naval bases in the Indian Ocean were of primary concern to India. India was also in a difficult position with regard to the Soviet Union, as most of the world powers were quick to condemn the invasion of Afghanistan. Nevertheless, India began to significantly increase its arms purchases from the Soviets in the early 1980s, partly because of an unexpectedly good offer from Moscow that also required India to refrain from publically criticizing the Soviet Union's actions in Afghanistan.[42] It is alleged that this offer was made to woo India away from its increasing purchases from other countries. In the end, the deal was massive, including MiG-21 part production for export, MiG-23s and 29s, advanced versions of the Kilo class submarines, new technologies for the T-72 tank, and options for the T-80 tank once production began. In the late 1980s the flow of Soviet equipment began to slow again as a result of mounting Indian debit, the devaluation of the rupee and rouble, and a renewed desire for indiginization of defense technologies.[43]

As part of its move toward self-reliance, India began to seek technologies rather than specific weapon systems from the West in the 1980s. Most of these technologies have been listed in the category of "dual use technologies" that can be used for either civilian or military purposes and as a result, have resulted in a series of on again-off again

---

[42] Sumit Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II," *International Security* 23, no. 4 (Spring 1999), 163.
[43] Gordon, 71-75.

agreements. Cryogenic engine technology for missiles or space launch vehicles is one such technology India has found difficult to obtain. Others, such as computers, integrated circuits, and computer software, have been more forthcoming.[44]

The 1991 Gulf War struck another cord in the Indian defense establishment. Significantly, it demonstrated to India an apparent inferiority of Soviet weapons technology over similar western systems. Since then India has had a near obsession with the Gulf War and its associated western technologies, as well as many of the military tactics and procedures involved. Among these are technologies and tactics for air-to-air refueling, Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS), Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence (C^3I), information warfare, and satellite imagery.[45]

In the wake of the 1999 Kargil crisis, India is currently exploring a new round of arms purchases to bolster its position against Pakistan. Russia may provide its Smerch multi-barrel rocket system with a range of up to 70 kilometers to the Army. The Army is also considering advanced Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and battlefield surveillance radar from Israel. It is also reviewing the possibility of purchasing the G-6 self-propelled howitzer from South Africa. The Navy has ordered frigates from Russia and is considering the Barak ship defense system from Israel. India and Russia have also tentatively negotiated a deal to transfer the aircraft carrier "Admiral Gorshkov" and at

---

[44] Ibid., 76-79.

[45] This information is based on my own experiences and conversations at the Indian Defense Services Staff College in 1997 and 1998.

least forty MiG-29K aircraft to India early in the next decade.[46] The Air Force is pressing for more Mirage 2000s from France as well as several modernization packages for its current aircraft,[47] and has announced its intention to lease a number of AWACS aircraft from Russia.[48] This diverse sourcing seems to confirm some shift away from Russian arms purchases, although Russian agreements still figure heavily.

Nuclear Weapons Development

India's nuclear program dates back to the period just after independence when Nehru saw nuclear power, in its peaceful form, as a way to "leapfrog" Indian development by bypassing other technologies. However, he was opposed to development of nuclear weapons at this time, but was willing to concede the possibility for an "option."[49] Homi Bhabha, the director of India's atomic energy program, believed in keeping the weapon option open, which he did despite Nehru's and Congress' pressures against it. Following the Chinese tests and Nehru's death in 1964, Bhabha was able to convince Prime Minister Bahadur Shastri to approve a plan for an underground nuclear explosion. However, Bhabha's and Shastri's deaths in 1966 were a short setback to the program.[50]

---

[46] Atul Aneja, "Russia to lease out AWACS to India," *The Hindu* <http://www.the-hindu.com/stories /01060003.htm>, 6 November 1999.
[47] Atul Aneja, "Arms Purchases Being Finalized," *The Hindu* <http://www.the-hindu.com/stories/01040007.htm>, 4 September 1999.
[48] Atul Aneja, "Russia to lease out AWACS to India."
[49] Steven Cohen, "Nuclear Weapons and Conflict in South Asia," paper presented to the Harvard/MIT Transnational Security Project Seminar <http://www.brook.edu/views/articles/cohenS>, 23 November 1998.
[50] Smith, 179-180.

Following the 1967 hydrogen bomb test by China, the Indian government under Indira Gandhi became more receptive to the prospect of developing a nuclear weapon, and it appears that public opinion in India favored a nuclear test.[51] India tried to get the existing nuclear states minus China to agree to a non-proliferation regime and mutual defense guarantees for the non-nuclear states in 1966/7, but the terms of the proposed treaty became twisted to suit the agendas of the U.S., U.K., and U.S.S.R. India then refused to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) because it permitted unlimited proliferation among the existing nuclear states, but banned all other states from acquisition of nuclear weapons.[52] Nuclear weapons development continued as an "option" under the umbrella of India's other "peaceful" nuclear programs.

The Indian decision to finally test a nuclear device in 1974 is a complex one that involves domestic politicking as much as anything on the regional or international front. Domestically, the Congress party split in 1969, with most of the anti-nuclear supporters leaving the Indira Gandhi camp and following Morarji Desai. This initially strengthened Gandhi's position at about the time the decision to test was taken. The decision to actually conduct the test in May 1974 coincidentally corresponds to a period of center-state tensions, the 1973 oil crisis, and a rail strike that was bringing political and popular opposition to the Gandhi government.[53] Regionally, India's victory over Pakistan

---

[51] Ibid., 181.
[52] K. Subrahmanyam, "Indian Nuclear Policy -- 1964-98," in *Nuclear India*, ed. Jasjit Singh (New Delhi: Institute for Defense Study and Analysis, 1998), 28-29.
[53] Smith, 186-187, mentions the rail strike and center-state tensions and Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II," 160, mentions the 1973 oil crisis.

prompted the latter to begin its own nuclear program, and the U.S. tilt toward Pakistan in pursuit of its China relations was seen as a threat to India's position of predominance in the region.[54] Finally, K. Subrahmanyam suggests that the initial go ahead for the test was given in 1972 in response to a perceived nuclear intimidation by the presence of the USS Enterprise task force in the Bay of Bengal during the Bangladesh war.[55]

The test explosion of May 18, 1974, brought a wave of international criticism on India. The most significant fallout was the complete withdrawal of all Canadian support for India's nuclear program. Before the tests, Canada was the primary supplier of technology and assistance to India and had provided several nuclear power stations. The U.S. also refused to supply enriched uranium and spare parts for its existing facilities. Several other countries, with the notable exception of France, also withdrew their support to India. The result was a slowing of the Indian nuclear program to a standstill by the beginning of the 1980s.[56]

As increasing evidence of Pakistan's nuclear program became known and as a result of increasing U.S. arms sales to Pakistan in the wake of the Afghanistan invasion, India began to redouble its efforts to secure its "nuclear option." Reports that India was possibly preparing for additional tests surfaced in 1981 and 1983. Indira Gandhi responded that India does not "believe in the deterrent theory" and does not "know how it would help if India is to have nuclear weapons," exploiting India's policy of "nuclear

---

[54] Smith, 186.
[55] Subrahmanyam, "Indian Nuclear Policy," 31.
[56] Smith, 187-188.

ambiguity."[57] It was also reported in the *New York Times* in 1983 that India had the capability to produce weapons grade plutonium from its own plants.[58]

India also sought to develop a missile capability during the 1980s. In 1983 the DRDO was given additional funding specifically for missile research and development. The space scientist A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was shifted from the Indian Space Research Organization to the DRDO to head this new project. In 1989 the DRDO test fired India's first intermediate range ballistic missile, the Agni, and has since expanded its arsenal significantly.[59] Among these are the Prithvi short range ballistic missile and the Agni II medium range missile, which was tested in April of 1999 to a range of 2,000 kilometers.[60]

In 1987 India conducted a multi-divisional exercise code named "Brasstacks" that brought India and Pakistan to the brink of war. While the nuclear component of this exercise is unclear, it did prompt Pakistan to announce shortly after the exercise that it had succeeded in producing weapons grade uranium. India obviously took this as a serious threat. It again saw Pakistan as a threat to India in 1990 when Pakistan fanned the flames of insurgency in Kashmir by sending infiltrators across the border. The U.S. urged Pakistan not to provoke India because all its simulations of a war between the two countries indicated Pakistan would lose. Pakistan announced a short time later that it had acquired the ability to produce nuclear weapons.[61]

---

[57] Ibid., 190.
[58] Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II," 163.
[59] Ibid., 163-164.
[60] Neil Joeck, "Nuclear Developments in India and Pakistan," *Access Asia Review* 2, no. 2 (July 1999), 37.
[61] Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II," 165-167.

India was watching Pakistan's developments on the nuclear front very carefully, and it is apparent that at several points during the 1990s India was wrestling with the decision to test again to offset Pakistan's developments. The first direct evidence occurred in 1995 when the U.S. detected increased activity at the Pokhran test site and threatened the Prime Minister with severe sanctions if the tests went through. India denied that tests were impending, but did not remove the test equipment. It has also been speculated that Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee tried to test in 1996 when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came briefly to power, but was unable follow through as his government could not muster a vote of confidence in the Parliament. Meanwhile, the nuclear energy establishment was moving forward with fast-breeder and plutonium reprocessing programs.[62]

A series of nuclear explosions was conducted by India on May 11 and 13, 1998. India claims to have detonated a "Hiroshima-size" device, a thermonuclear device, and a low yield tactical device in the first test, and two additional low yield devices in the second test. Analysis of the seismic shock from these detonations confirmed "nuclear" events, but ruled out the possibility of a true thermonuclear explosion, but permitted the possibility of what is called a "boosted" device.[63] The reasoning for these tests, like the one in 1974, is multifaceted. Sumit Ganguly presents the clearest argument attributing

---

[62] Jones, et. al., *Tracking Nuclear Proliferation*, 115-116.
[63] Ibid., 119, note 1.

the tests to the natural momentum of the Indian nuclear program, the ideology of the Indian leadership, and the perception of external security threats.[64]

Before departing this section, some mention must be made of India's development of nuclear propulsion technologies. This is one of India's most secret programs, but there is some evidence that it is attempting to construct a power plant for a submarine based either on the Soviet Charlie class design or perhaps a more advanced design. It is believed that the lease of a Charlie class submarine from the Soviet Union in the late 1980s was a part of a technology transfer deal that involved the plans for either the Charlie or a more advanced design. The only evidence that India has overcome the design problems of a mini reactor is its offer to sell the same to Iran in 1991.[65]

Assessment

India's preoccupation with indiginization has yielded limited successes, mainly in the areas of nuclear weapons, missile technology, artillery systems, and some aspects of ship building. Despite considerable success with its licenced production of imported weapons, India had been unable to make the leap to self reliance in both technology and production. Raju Thomas suggests this is due in part to the vicious circle that India creates for itself. India's lust for the latest technologies forces it to either import or agree to licenced production, which in turn competes with the fledgling technology base and

---

[64] Ganguly, "India's Pathway to Pokhran II," 171-172.
[65] Smith, 90-92.

thereby stifles its growth.[66] Other scholars also argue that India's history of "doing science for science sake" and the limited interaction between the laboratories and industry have also been a contributing factor.[67] Another problem stems from the absolute control the DRDO has over the design of military hardware. Competition is not encouraged at a level that inspires direct innovation, and when innovation does occur outside the DRDO, it is promptly ignored.[68]

India's potential for self sufficiency is not altogether bleak, and two current indigenous projects may help to bridge the gap. The Arjun tank and the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) have both been plagued by cost overruns, being behind schedule, and now incorporate over 50 percent foreign components. However, a considerable amount of Indian technology and resources have also gone into these systems and if they can be put into production before their technologies become obsolete, they will be a significant boost for India's indigenous programs. Besides the significant moral boost that these systems will provide to the defense industry, they will be the first major systems produced in India that are not simply licenced copies of someone else's design.[69]

---

[66] Raju G. C. Thomas, "Arms Production in India: Military Self-reliance versus Technological Self-sufficiency," in *Military Capacity and the Risk of War*, ed. Eric Arnett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 114.

[67] Gordon, 24.

[68] My own conversation with the CEO of a private Indian corporation involved in defense production in March 1998 revealed his frustrations with the government because it has on all accounts refused to incorporate any design improvements, even when the improvement will decrease costs and extend the life and functionality of the product.

[69] Gordon, 147-150, also eludes to this conclusion.

There are approximately 1.1 million personnel serving in the armed forces of India, with an additional 760,000 in the paramilitary forces.[70] The Army is by far the largest of the services with over 900,000 troops. The majority of these troops are deployed either along or near India's borders with Pakistan and China and are either augmented by or work in tandem with the Border Security Forces (from the paramilitary total) to secure India's borders and, in the case of Kashmir, to also combat insurgency. Other units are deployed to combat insurgency in the east and northeast. Many of the soldiers are semi-literate and from poor village families. Because the Indian military is a volunteer force, the Army has been experiencing difficulty in obtaining qualified recruits and has a reported critical shortage of 13,000 captains and majors.[71] The quality of military equipment in service varies drastically from the out of date T-55 tanks to the more modern T-72 tank and BOFORS 155mm artillery pieces which are 1980s technology.

India's Navy is mainly focused on coastal defense and protection of its islands, fishing interests, and oilfields. While it has one remaining aircraft carrier (the other was recently decommissioned), giving it some blue water capability, it would be a stretch to call it a "blue water navy." Additionally, the Navy has taken a hit from the defense cutbacks of the 1990s that have been a setback to its modernization program.[72] Due to its bases on the Andaman Islands, the Navy is capable of limited power projection as far as

---

[70] *India: A Country Study*, 660-661.
[71] Jaswant Singh, *Defending India* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 112.
[72] Ibid., 127.

the Straits of Malacca. If the pending aircraft carrier transfer goes through this will significantly increase India's blue water capability.

The Air Force comprises about 110,000 of the defense personnel and, like the other services, holds a mixed bag of old and modern equipment. Its older aircraft are primarily used for training now, and its front line aircraft are mostly late 1970s and 1980s vintage. The most advanced aircraft, the Mirage 2000, is still held in fairly low numbers. India's air transport capability is approximately 15,000 troops, but only the twenty-four IL-76s have an extended range capability. The Air Force is pursuing, but has not yet obtained, aerial refueling and AWACS capability.

Joint operations among services have been taught at the Indian service schools since at least 1962,[73] but inter-service rivalry and the lack of any joint type commands have prevented any meaningful demonstration of truly joint operations.[74] India's recent conflict in Kashmir over the Kargil heights indicates a somewhat better integration of air and army assets, but until better details of tactics involved are forthcoming firm conclusions cannot be made.

PAKISTAN

Pakistan shares its military origins with India, and when both countries obtained their independence in 1947, Pakistan received approximately one third of the military

---

[73] R. D. Palsokar, *Defense Services Staff College Wellington 1947-1987* (Wellington, India: Defense Services Staff College, 1987), 190-192.
[74] Jaswant Singh, 135-136.

units left by the British, but very little equipment[75] and none of the seventeen installations built for the production of equipment and ordinance. It is precisely at that point that the development histories of these two countries' defense establishments diverges. Pakistan has seen India as a hostile adversary from the beginning and has realized that it is at a significant numerical disadvantage when compared to India. To offset this disadvantage, Pakistan has sought to purchase superior military technologies and protective alliances rather than focus on an indigenous program of development. As we will see in this section, this approach has had its share of advantages and pitfalls.

Conventional Weapons Development

The foundations of Pakistan's defense industry began with the completion of the Wah Ordinance Factory in 1951 for the production of Lee Enfield .303 rifles with British assistance. Because western arms were relatively easy to obtain, very little activity was seen in the industrial sector until 1965, except that there was an apparent emphasis on production of small arms and ammunition that led to near self-sufficiency in this area by 1953.[76] The 1965 war with India resulted in the imposition of a U.S. arms embargo. Pakistan implemented a series of quick fixes that focused mainly on cultivating a relationship with China and developing some further capacity for ammunition production.

---

[75] Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, *Pakistan's Defense Policy, 1947-58* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 31-32, mentions that out of 165,000 tons of military stores allotted to Pakistan it received 4,703 tons, and of 249 tanks, none were received.
[76] Ibid., 126.

It was the 1971 war and the reinforcement of U.S. sanctions that finally gave Pakistan the motivation to expand its military industrial base.[77]

Pakistan's path of weapons procurement has largely been focused on western technologies. However, because the United States placed an arms embargo on Pakistan (and India) as a consequence of the 1947 war over Kashmir, Pakistan was unable to secure any meaningful arms agreements until 1953. During this year the U.S. government, under the new administration of President Eisenhower, became increasingly concerned about the spread of communism to the Middle East. As a result, the U.S.-Pakistan Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement was signed in May 1954 and Pakistan joined the South-East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and CENTO shortly afterwards. This agreement gave military assistance to Pakistan for the purposes of strengthening the defensive capabilities of the Middle East.[78] Between 1954 and 1965 the United States was the primary supplier of weapons to Pakistan, including major systems such as M-48 tanks, armored personnel carriers, and F-104 aircraft.

The 1965 Indo-Pakistan war resulted in U.S. sanctions being placed on both countries that cut off military aid. Since 80 percent of Pakistan's arms imports were from the U.S., compared to only 20 percent for India, it was a significant setback to Pakistan's defense program. On the other hand, it inspired Pakistan to diversify its procurement program. Both China and France figured prominently, but a number of factors

---

[77] Yezid Sayigh, "Arms Production in Pakistan and Iran: The Limits of Self Reliance," in *Military Capacity and the Risk of War*, ed. Eric Arnett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 163.
[78] Cheema, *Pakistan's Defense Policy*, 120-128.

contributed to China becoming Pakistan's main trading partner. First, China's desire to offset India's strength in the region and its open support for Pakistan in the 1965 war created public support for closer ties to China. Second, Chinese credit was available on easier repayment terms and Chinese weapons were much cheaper than western counterparts, although they were technologically inferior. Third, China was considered a more reliable partner than the west.[79]

The 1971 war with India was significant for Pakistan's procurement policies as it cemented many of the views created after 1965. Despite the public support Nixon gave to Pakistan, virtually no material support came from the U.S. as the country was dismembered. Also, having fought two wars with India in a relatively close time frame, Pakistan's American military equipment was wearing out and needed replacement. Pakistan was also moving away from its alignment with SEATO and CENTO, having seen little benefit to membership in these organizations during its last two wars. By 1972 it was a de facto nonaligned state and was officially admitted to the Non-aligned Movement in the late 1970s after formally leaving SEATO and CENTO. It also became one of the leaders of the Pan-Islamic Movement.[80]

China's support to Pakistan steadily increased throughout the 1970s. By 1982 it gave Pakistan 75 percent of its tanks, 65 percent of its aircraft, and assisted in the

---

[79] Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, "Arms Procurement in Pakistan: Balancing the Needs for Quality, Self-reliance and Diversity of Supply," in *Military Capacity and the Risk of War*, ed. Eric Arnett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 157-158.
[80] Steven Cohen, *The Pakistan Army* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 139.

development and strengthening of Pakistan's military industries. China also assisted in the development of Pakistan's Hatf-I and Hatf-II tactical missiles.[81]

In the late 1970s, the United States began to review its arms supply policy in South Asia. This review was prompted by a number of significant factors: India's 1974 nuclear explosion, a realization that the embargo against Pakistan pushed it closer to China and introduced new arms suppliers, the Iran hostage crisis, and Pakistan's increasing military linkages with Gulf States. The real turning point though was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. The first economic assistance and military sales packages were signed in 1981. Pakistan used the military sales component to acquire 40 F-16 fighter aircraft and other equipment. A second package was signed in 1987 worth $4 billion in economic assistance and military sales. However, this was curtailed in 1990 by the Pressler Amendment for Pakistan's efforts to develop nuclear weapons.[82]

The last decade of the twentieth century has been a particularly difficult one for Pakistan's defense establishment. Beginning with the enforcement of the Pressler Amendment in 1990, its sources of arms and ammunition have increasingly been drying up. Pakistan initially thought that the Soviet breakup would be to their advantage, creating a number of Islamic states in Central Asia that it could ally itself with. These states continue to align themselves with Russia politically and have their own share of problems to contend with at present. Pakistan's relations with China have also begun to dwindle, in

---

[81] Cheema, "Arms Procurement in Pakistan," 158.
[82] Ibid., 158-159.

part due to China's own developmental problems,[83] but also as a result of stricter application of the nuclear non-proliferation regimes, China has backed away from providing support to Pakistan, mainly in the areas of nuclear and missile technology, so as not to upset its trading partners in the west.

Pakistan's indigenous production capability remains very limited. The most developed portion of its arms production is in the area of small arms, various antitank weapons, mortars up to 120mm, and ballistic missiles. It does have various industries dedicated to aircraft and armored vehicles, but they are mainly for upgrading existing systems. There is some indigenous production of trainer aircraft and the M113 armored personnel carrier, but these are very simple designs. To its credit, Pakistan is capable of producing ammunition for virtually all of its land-based weapons, as well as unguided ammunition for its aircraft.[84] Pakistan's Heavy Industries Taxilla has also been working with NORINCO of China on the production of an indigenous main battle tank known as the Al-Khalid. Pilot production of this tank began in August 1999,[85] but it will probably be limited to the assembly of a Chinese design based on the T-80 or T-85 with very little indigenous technology.[86]

---

[83] Maqsudul Hasan Nuri, "Pakistan's Security Perceptions in the Post-Cold War Era," in *South Asia After the Cold War* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 94.
[84] Sayigh, "Arms Production in Pakistan and Iran," 168-176.
[85] "Production of Al-Khalid battle tank begins," *Dawn - Internet Edition* <http://www.dawn.com/daily/19990809/>, 9 August 1999.
[86] *Janes Armour and Artillery 1996-97* <http://www.janes.com/defense/editors/jaa96>.

Nuclear Weapons Development

Pakistan's decision to pursue a nuclear weapons program was taken by Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1972 following its defeat to India in the 1971 Bangladesh war. However, Pakistan began to think in terms of developing a "nuclear option" several years earlier. In 1957, it set up the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) to train scientists and set up a research reactor, but these activities were primarily focused on nuclear power generation. Samina Ahmed suggests that Bhutto may have wanted to explore the nuclear option as early as 1958 when he was Foreign Minister.[87] The year 1965 was really the turning point as the U.S. sanctions imposed that year began to enlarge the disparity between India and Pakistan's conventional forces. Bhutto assessed that India was embarking on a nuclear weapons program in 1966 and called again for Pakistan to begin work in this area. He was only able to adopt the nuclear program after he became Prime Minister in 1971.[88]

The Indian nuclear test of 1974 invigorated the Pakistani desire to build a bomb. Shortly afterward, a separate nuclear weapons program, the Engineering Research Laboratories, was started in 1976 by Dr. A.Q. Khan.[89] It is alleged that Dr. Khan brought plans for uranium enrichment facilities with him from the Netherlands. The same year,

---

[87] Samina Ahmed, "Pakistan's Nuclear Program," *International Security* 23, no. 4 (Spring 1999), 182.
[88] Ibid., 180-183.
[89] Joeck, "Nuclear Developments in India and Pakistan," 26.

Pakistan signed a deal with France to purchase a plutonium enrichment facility. The deal was later scraped due to pressure from the United States.[90]

Bhutto was ousted in 1977 by a military coup led by Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq, and later executed in 1979. The military also assumed full control of the nuclear weapons program and Zia established a spy network in Western Europe to acquire nuclear weapons related technology. China also became the major supporter of the Pakistan program as part of its efforts to counter India's domination of the region. Chinese scientists helped in setting up the centrifuge at Kahuta in the mid 1980s for the enrichment of uranium, and U.S. intelligence reports suggested in 1983 and 1984 that China had even provided Pakistan with designs for a low yield device.[91]

The U.S. implemented military and economic sanctions against Pakistan in 1977 as a result of the Glenn-Symington Amendment to the International Security and Assistance Act, which denied military and economic assistance to any country importing nuclear technology and refused to place it under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspection. The full force of these sanctions were placed on Pakistan in 1979 for importing the equipment for the Kahuta enrichment plant. Using the fairly flexible waiver option in the law, the U.S. suspended the sanctions in 1981 because of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan under the belief that if Pakistan's overall security were enhanced, the desire to acquire nuclear weapons would decrease. However, in 1983, a U.S. State Department analysis revealed that Pakistan was still actively pursuing a weapons

---

[90] Ahmed, 184-185.
[91] Ibid., 186-187.

program. The debate over this ultimately resulted in the enactment of the Pakistan specific Pressler Amendment in 1985, which required the President to certify every year that Pakistan "did not possess a nuclear explosive device and that the proposed U.S. assistance program will significantly reduce the risk that Pakistan will possess a nuclear explosive device."[92] Presidents Reagan and Bush made the necessary certification through 1989.

In late 1989 and early 1990 Pakistan's tensions with India increased over Kashmir on top of tensions that had been brewing over the 1987 "Brasstacks" exercise. Pakistan apparently fabricated cores for several nuclear weapons at about this time. Consequently, in October 1990, President Bush did not re-certify Pakistan under the Pressler Amendment and all arms supplies and assistance stopped. In 1991, the Pakistan Prime Minister re-instated the freeze on production of weapons grade uranium, but the U.S. did not restore assistance. In the mean time, other Pakistani nuclear projects, such as a forty-megawatt reactor at Khushab that is not subject to IAEA inspection and can possibly be used for plutonium production, have gone forward. In 1993, after losing the Prime Minister position to Benazir Bhutto (Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's daughter) Nawaz Sharif openly stated that Pakistan possessed an atomic bomb. Bhutto kept a more ambiguous official line that Pakistan "possessed the knowledge and capability" to assemble a nuclear weapon.[93]

---

[92] Jones, et. al., *Tracking Nuclear Proliferation*, 131-132.
[93] Ibid.

Pakistan's decision to finally test in 1998 was partially a direct response to the Indian tests, but had other motivations as well. According to Neil Joeck, the decision to respond was based on Prime Minister Sharif's (now back in office) belief that "Pakistan had little to gain strategically but that he had a lot to loose politically."[94] Samina Ahmed points to the issue of prestige for Pakistan in the wake of India's test as being a factor. She also points out that the lack of severe international condemnation of India's tests led Pakistan to believe they had little to loose.[95] Remember, Pakistan was already under sanctions by the U.S. as a result of the Pressler Amendment. One could probably argue that they had little to loose strategically as well.

Pakistan claimed to have tested five nuclear devices on May 28, 1998, and one on May, 30. According to analysis of the seismic shocks, both events produced roughly Hiroshima sized explosions suggesting crude weapons and ruling out the possibility of a thermonuclear device.[96]

Assessment

Pakistan's heavy reliance on outside purchase to meet its defense needs has enabled it to remain competitive with India in terms of technological capability and in some instances to exceed it. However, the country's ability to produce its own defense material has suffered greatly. Western sanctions have cut off many sources for both supply and economic assistance that is necessary to maintain the current arsenal as well as

---

[94] Joeck, 29.
[95] Ahmed, 195.
[96] Jones, 119.

making new purchases and upgrades more difficult. The end of the Cold War has opened up new arms markets for Pakistan, but mainly for less advanced Soviet technology. It has also reduced the availability of attractive loans or grants from China.

Pakistan's active duty armed forces total approximately 587,000, with 520,000 soldiers serving in the Army making it the largest service by far. The Navy and Air Force comprise 22,000 and 45,000 respectively.[97] The Pakistan Army's singular primary focus is India. Within this focus are two goals: to defend against an Indian attack anywhere along the shared border and to "liberate" Kashmir from India. However, some forces are involved in assisting the paramilitary forces and police with internal law and order, and with refugee control along the Afghan border. The majority of the Army's heavy equipment is based on 1960s technology with some upgrades, especially to its artillery, tanks and helicopters, bringing them up to early 1980s technology. The Army is currently trying to acquire T-80 and T-85 tanks from the Ukraine and China respectively.

The Air Force has a fairly mixed fleet of fighter aircraft ranging from the modern U.S. F-16 to the older Chinese A-5s and F-6s. Only one tenth of its aircraft are of the modern variety. It would like to upgrade some of its fleet to Mirage 2000s in lieu of the F-16s that the U.S. has refused to sell to them. Additionally, the existing fleet of modern aircraft (predominately the F-16s) suffer from a lack of spare parts, and at least one third are probably inoperable. Pakistan's air transport capability is fairly limited and consists mainly of a few C-130 aircraft.

---

[97] Richard N. Haass and Gideon Rose, *A New U.S. Policy Toward India and Pakistan* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1997), 79-80.

Pakistan's Navy, while quite small in absolute numbers, is actually proportionately quite large considering the size of Pakistan's coast and the fact that it has only one major port. Most of the surface vessels are of older vintages, but are still capable of coastal defense. Pakistan has placed a significant investment on its submarine fleet which is centered around the French Agosta submarines which are equipped with submerged-launch Exocet missiles.[98]

Pakistan's missile program is centered around the Hatf-I, Hatf-II, and Ghauri missile systems. The Hatf series are relatively short range missiles, but the Ghauri was tested to a range of 1,500 kilometers in 1998, giving it the ability to deliver a nuclear payload to many of India's northwestern cities, including New Delhi.[99] Pakistan tested the Ghauri II in April 1999, in response to India's Agni tests. The test flight covered only 1,165 kilometers, but the missile is estimated to have a maximum range of 2,000 to 2,300 kilometers making it capable of ranging most of India.[100]

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH ASIA

The last fifty years of weapons development and procurement have largely established the potential defense capabilities of the future. If we look at the overall defense situation in South Asia from this point of view, Pakistan clearly comes out the

---

[98] Eric Grove, "Maritime Forces and Stability in Southern Asia," in *Military Capacity and the Risk of War*, ed. Eric Arnett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 303-304.
[99] Eas Bokhari, "'Ghauri' (Hatf-V) and World Missiles," *Defense Journal* <http://www.defensejournal.com/may98/>, May 1998.
[100] Umer Farooq, "Pakistan Ghauri test for 'national security,'" *Jane's Defence Weekley*, 21 April 1999, 3.

loser. India and China have both established formidable defense industries an/or civilian industry that is capable of supporting at least some aspects of defense production. This will be the important factor as many of the arms producing countries are significantly reducing their output of arms to focus on other economic problems and as a result of tension reduction following the Cold War. Pakistan is working on building its capabilities, but if we look at the economic potential for Pakistan to "catch up" it clearly is not there. India and China both have strong industrial bases, but are both limited to a certain extent by domestic development problems. China at this point has greater access to necessary foreign capital to sustain and improve its industries. However, India has the resources to keep pace with China if it can return to the growth rates of the mid-1990s.

The nuclear issue presents another set of problems and can be viewed from a number of perspectives. If we look at the nuclear issue from the numbers point of view, India and Pakistan are far behind China, and Pakistan trails India when counting warheads and comparing missile ranges. However, the more significant factor is the "terror" factor which is not concerned with numbers, because even a single nuclear explosion over a country's city would ignite domestic and world opinion to find a solution. It only took two nuclear bombs to end World War II, and even then the second may have been unnecessary. None of the countries concerned possesses the guidance or intelligence capability at this point to make the concept of "second strike capability" an issue. These and other aspects of both the conventional and nuclear programs are discussed in greater detail in the next chapter as we look at their context within the strategic regional interests.

STRATEGIC REGIONAL INTERESTS

The balance of power in a geographic region is closely related to the abilities of the nations within that region to exercise control over *their* strategic interests in the region. This section looks at the important aspects of some significant strategic interests in the region to determine the relative importance of the interests to specific countries. Then, an assessment of each nation's capabilities in relationship to the strategic interests is presented. To simplify matters, the following four strategic interests have been selected to highlight the major concerns of this argument: ethnic and religious nationalism, the Indian Ocean, border disputes, and nuclear proliferation. It should be understood that there are many more important interests in the region, but it is almost impossible to conduct a thorough analysis of all of them and recent events have caused these four to become topics of particular interest.

ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM

Nationalism, in its many forms, is the basis for many of the problems and conflict in South Asia. In fact, it is almost impossible to discuss the region without making some reference to some form of nationalism. The nationalist forces in South Asia generally tend to be of a destructive nature, although they can have certain positive consequences as well. We will primarily be concerned with the former, as it is from this destructive nature of nationalism that problems of terrorism, insurgency, and communal violence flow. On

the surface these may appear to be strictly internal problems, with little relevance to the strategic dimension. However, as Sandy Gordon points out, the "relationship between what happens outside India and politics within is a two way process."[1] This statement is equally relevant to all the South Asian states.

China has fifty-six recognized national minorities, each having some potential to produce nationalist tensions for the country. The most notable issues involve Tibet, Taiwan,[2] and the Muslims in the Xinjiang Provence. Within the South Asian context, the issue of Tibetan autonomy is the only significant nationalist issue for China at the moment. India has about 100,000 Tibetans living within its borders, including the exiled government of Tibet under the Dalai Lama. While the government of India has been careful to avoid officially recognizing the Dalai Lama's "government" and has been careful about its statements on Tibet's status, China understands the potential embarrassment that the Tibetans in India could cause.[3] China's primary concern stems from a fear that the United States and other western countries may attempt to "sever" Tibet from China by stirring up nationalist fervor among the Tibetans in Tibet through those in India connected to the Dalai Lama. While this may seem preposterous to many scholars of the region, China has been watching the actions in Kosovo very carefully and anticipating that Tibet could be one of the next places for similar western actions.[4] In the

---

[1] Gordon, 208.
[2] Taiwan's nationalism is of a political nature rather than religious or ethnic.
[3] Ibid., 301.
[4] "The Heart of Chinese Sovereignty," *South China Morning Post* <http://web.lexis-nexis.com>, 12 June 1999. This article's views are probably more extreme than the Chinese government's position, but it serves to highlight how extreme some of the views can be.

Chinese mind the threat is real, but there is little evidence that the Tibetans in India have either the ability or the will to engage in activities that could be potentially destabilizing to the region.[5]

One of the most significant issues of religious nationalism in South Asia is that of the Hindu-Muslim divide in India. While India promotes itself as a secular state, it still has a number of problems integrating its religious minorities. Muslims, who account for about 12 percent of the population, have been involved in a number of confrontational incidents with Hindus that have had significant implications for the Indian government. The Shah Bano Begum Supreme Court case created a crisis by supporting a universal civil code over Muslim personal law.[6] Another crisis was caused by the destruction of the mosque at Ayodhya by Hindu nationalists, which was believed to be built on the remains of a Hindu temple marking the birthplace of Lord Ram.[7] Both resulted in severe outbreaks of violence all over India and have been invoked as rallying cries for subsequent outbreaks of communal violence. It is particularly ironic that Hindus and Muslims generally seem to get along well together except when these and other communal issues are brought to the forefront of politics.[8]

---

[5] For a thorough discussion of Tibetan nationalism see Warren W. Smith Jr., *Tibetan Nation - A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996).
[6] For the details of this issue see, Gerald James Larson, *India's Agony over Religion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 265-261.
[7] Ibid., 266-274.
[8] John Chalmers, "Hindu, Muslim Protagonists Still Share Tea in Ayodhya," *India Times*, 30 January 1998, 17.

The importance of this religious nationalism for India's strategic interests is significant. First, Pakistan uses the violence committed against Muslims in India as a justification for its ideology and irredentist claims on Kashmir as discussed in chapter 2. Additionally, activities of the Hindu nationalist organizations, such as the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Shiv Sena, only serve to enhance Pakistan's view of India as a "Hindu State." Second, there is some evidence that Pakistan has used its ISI to instigate some of these incidents and India has sought to exploit this for its own purposes by claiming ISI involvement in nearly all the incidents of violence and terrorism in the country.[9] The Indian Muslims are frequently portrayed as a "foreign hand" in India, not only because of the ISI involvement, but also as a result of the obvious religious ties with Pakistan and Bangladesh, and the ties that the migrant workers have with the Middle East.[10] Third, there is a tangible connection between acts of violence, especially against Muslims, and India's relations with Pakistan and Bangladesh. For example, following the 1992 Ayodhya incident there was anti-India rioting in both Pakistan and Bangladesh, and there was a corresponding strain on India's relations with both countries.[11]

Insurgency in India has an ethnic component as well as a religious one. Although insurgency can be found in many areas of India, it is particularly concentrated in the states of Punjab, Kashmir, and Assam. The situation in the Punjab is connected with the

---

[9] Most incidents where the evidence clearly implicates the ISI are in Kashmir and are connected to the insurgency.
[10] Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 10.
[11] Gordon, 208.

Sikhs' desire for a homeland (Khalistan or Sikhistan). This movement has been on the decline in recent years after its peak in 1984 when extremists took over the Golden Temple and had to be forced out by the Indian Army. In fact, most of the support for this movement now seems to come from the Sikh expatriate communities in the U.S. and Britain. The situation in Kashmir is extremely significant for India and is the major source of discontent between it and Pakistan. The insurgency there clearly has a domestic ethnic and religious component, but is easily stirred up by Pakistan. India spends a tremendous amount of resources combating the insurgency in Kashmir and is frequently accused of human rights violations when its military and para-military forces become over-zealous. The insurgency in Assam is primarily ethnic based, with a number of tribal groups competing with the influx of other ethnic groups (primarily ethnic Bengalis). India also commits a lot of resources to this region, but frequently runs into problems, as many of the groups have established training camps outside of India in neighboring Myanmar and Bangladesh.[12]

The activities of various ethnic and religious groups in Pakistan pose a significant threat to the immediate well-being of the country. On October 12, 1999, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, General Pervez Musharraf, removed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from office and took over the country in a bloodless coup. In his address to the nation on October 17, he stated, "Today, we have reached a stage where our economy has

---

[12] For more on these areas of insurgency see, Baladas Ghoshal, "Internal Sources of Conflict in South Asia," in *South Asia After the Cold War*, ed. Kanti P. Bajpai and Stephen P. Cohen (Boulder, Westview Press, 1993), 72-78.

crumbled, our credibility is lost, state institutions lie demolished; provincial disharmony has caused cracks in the federation, and people who were once brothers are now at each other's throat."[13] Clearly, communal and sectarian violence played a role in this decision, but to what extent we can not be sure at this point.

The conflict between Sunni and Shia Muslims goes back over a thousand years, but the groups generally coexisted in Pakistan until the late 1970s when the last military ruler, General Zia, enacted legislation for a Sunni *zakat* (Islamic taxation) system. This move angered the Shia population, which comprise about 15 percent of the Muslims in Pakistan. The Iranian revolution, the Iran-Iraq war, and recently the Afghan civil war have continued to fan the flames of discontent between these groups. Most recently, Nawaz Sharif's withdrawal of troops from Kargil has not only fueled Sunni-Shia violence, but has also triggered other forms of violence throughout the country. In the province of Sind, where the vast majority of *Mohajirs* (Muslims who immigrated to Pakistan) are settled, violence has been a normal part of life with various conflicts between this and other ethnic groups.[14] The Pakistan government frequently asserts that this violence has been instigated by India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), an equivalent organization to Pakistan's ISI.[15] However, Pakistan's strategic concerns with

---

[13] "Text of Gen Pervez Musharraf's Speech," *Dawn - Internet Edition* <http://www.dawn.com/daily/ 19991018/top1.htm>, 18 October 1999. It is significant to note that Prime Minister Sharif dismissed General Musharraf as Army Chief a few hours before the coup.
[14] Abbas Rashid and Farida Shaheed, *Pakistan: Ethno-Politics and Contending Elites* (New York: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, June 1993), 13-21.
[15] For more on this topic see, "The Politics of Religion," *The Economist* , 9 October 1999; "Pakistan's New Old Rulers," *The Economist*, 16 October 1999; and Anthony Davis, "Pakistan: State of Unrest," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 1 January 1999, 33.

nationalism are less about the foreign hand of an intransigent India than about keeping Pakistan from tearing itself apart at the seams. The violence has become so bad at times that the Army has been brought in to restore order, especially in the city of Karachi.

THE INDIAN OCEAN

The strategic importance of the Indian Ocean stems not just from its rich mineral resources of polymetallic sulphide, manganese nodules, oil, and gas, but also from the sea lines of communication (SLOC) that pass through it. China's interest in the Indian Ocean appears to be relatively limited as it has no coastline on the Indian Ocean, and its limited naval capacity prevents it from staging naval forces there on a regular basis. It has from time to time conducted limited operations there, but its littoral disputes with Japan, Indonesia, Vietnam, Taiwan, and others have recently directed its focus elsewhere.[16] India has expressed some concerns about Chinese assistance to Myanmar in establishing bases on the Hianggyi and Coco islands, which are relatively close to the northern most of India's Nicobar Islands, but there is little evidence that China intends to base naval forces there in the near future.[17]

India has by far the strongest interest in the Indian Ocean and is the dominant naval power in the region. Despite its relative strength in the region, India's Navy is stretched thin as it tries to protect its interests in the two million square kilometer exclusive economic zone (EEZ) that is comprised of over 350 island territories, over 200 major and

---

[16] Gordon, 318-321.
[17] Paul H. Kreisberg, *South Asia and the Indian Ocean: The Strategic Environment, 1995-2010* (Alexandria: Center for Naval Analysis, March 1996), 24.

minor ports, and a 7,600 kilometer coastline.[18] India's most precious resource, the Bombay High oilfield, is within striking distance of Pakistan's Navy and consumes a large portion of the Indian Navy's mission. The Navy is also preoccupied with increased poaching of prawns, lobsters and other marine life as the Southeast Asian countries deplete their fishing grounds.[19] It is modestly capable of satisfactorily protecting most of its current interests given current threats, but because its assets are spread so thinly it is unable to mass quickly to respond to larger threats. Also, India has yet to fully exploit many of its other maritime resources and as it does the requirements of the Navy will also increase.

India's main interests in the Indian Ocean are presently focused on its immediate vicinity, but George Tanham points out that it has others beyond its EEZ. As a holder of pioneer status under the Law of the Seas, India has significant exploration privileges over a large area of the Indian Ocean as well as the Antarctic region. India also has close relations with Mauritius and the Seychelles and has intervened militarily on behalf of the Maldives and Sri Lanka. India also shares the interest of keeping the major Indian Ocean choke points such as the straits of Malacca, Hormuz, and the Red Sea with many other nations. Tanham also suggests that the reduction of U.S. naval forces leaves a power

---

[18] Gordon, 318.
[19] Mihir K. Roy, "The Littoral Countries at the Crossroads," in *South Asia After the Cold War*, ed. Kanti P. Bajpai and Stephen P. Cohen (Boulder, Westview Press, 1993), 249-250.

vacuum that causes some concern among Indian officials as to who can or will fill the vacuum.[20]

Pakistan's situation is somewhat different. While its navy is smaller than India's, it is still of a significant size that it can effectively conduct sea-denial operation from Karachi to the Strait of Hormuz. Moreover, it only has an EEZ of 250,000 square kilometers, a 700 kilometer coastline, and one major port to protect.[21] Clearly, the size and capability of Pakistan's Navy is intended to offset India's preeminence. Some 25 percent of India's trade (especially oil) passes through SLOCs that Pakistan is capable of threatening.[22] Combine this with the ability to threaten India's major offshore oilfields and it is easy to see the strategic significance for both countries.

BORDER DISPUTES

South Asia has two major border disputes that have yet to be resolved. The first of these is the dispute between India and China over parts of the North and Northeast. Since the 1962 war little progress was made on this issue until September 6, 1992, when Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao visited China and signed an agreement whereby both sides agreed to "maintain peace and tranquility" and to respect the "line of actual control." It has been suggested that the end of the Cold War is partly responsible for this apparent thaw in Sino-Indian relations, as the reduction of superpower intervention in

---

[20] George K. Tanham, *Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretive Essay* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1992), 66.
[21] Roy, 248-249.
[22] Gordon, 319.

South Asia caused a corresponding reduction of tension between India and China. Both countries were feeling the economic strains of heavy defense expenditure, and China in particular wanted to concentrate more on its economic development programs.[23] Subsequent talks between the two countries in August 1995, resulted in the pullback of troops from highly contested points in the Sumdurong Cho sector of India's northeastern border. Since 1988 India has withdrawn three divisions from its border with China, ultimately moving them to the border with Pakistan. Indian pilgrims have been permitted to visit sites in Tibet for years and trade across the border with Tibet is slowly increasing.[24]

The strains between India and China still have not altogether disappeared. Despite the 1992 agreement, the dispute itself remains. This has prevented India from tapping the hydroelectric potential in Arunachal Pradesh for fear of another crisis with China. China also continues to oppose India's incorporation of Sikkim into the Indian Union.[25] The tensions between India and China increased again in May 1998 after India declared that China was its number one threat as justification for its nuclear tests that month. However, in June 1999, Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh visited China and both countries agreed to boost trade, increase economic cooperation, and conduct more reciprocal visits. While no time line was set, both countries have at least agreed to hold further talks on

---

[23] "Hands Across the Himalayas," *The Economist*, 11 September 1993, 31.
[24] "India and China: Peace on the Border," *The Economist*, 26 August 1995, 30.
[25] Ibid.

resolving the border dispute.[26] It is likely that the current "line of actual control" will be resolved into the international border between the two countries.

The situation in the second major dispute is far less rosy. The border disputes between India and Pakistan are actually only a small part of the much larger issue of Kashmir. The origins of this dispute were covered in chapter 2, as well as the irredentist and ideological differences that continue to keep the conflict going. The conflict itself also presents a number of important strategic problems for both countries. For India, one of the most significant strategic factors is that Kashmir involves a significant amount of defense expenditure that India could be spending more constructively. We have already discussed the shortfalls that prevent India from fully exploiting its Indian Ocean resources. More importantly, India should be spending less on defense and more on its economic growth. The Kashmir problem detracts significantly from this. The most recent struggle for the Kargil heights brought more troops and equipment into Kashmir, increasing the economic burden further. India is also concerned about the increasing terrorism and insurgency in Kashmir, some of which flows in across the border from Pakistan.[27]

Pakistan and India share an issue over Kashmir that is domestic in nature, but strategic in its implications. That is the importance of domestic politics on the Kashmir issue. Both countries find Kashmir to be a highly charged issue, and any attempt at moving forward on the issue by offering some concession to the other country can be

---

[26] Rahul Bedi, "India and China Talking Again," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 30 June 1999.
[27] Tanham, 31-32.

disastrous for the ruling party.[28] Another of the reasons cited for the coup in Pakistan was the apparent concession made by Prime Minister Sharif when he ordered the withdrawal of troops from Kargil. Most scholars, and probably many in the Indian and Pakistan governments, suggest that making the current line of control the international border is the most viable solution. Opposition parties and groups then use the issue to discredit those in power, even if they privately agree with the proposal in principle. Because Kashmir has become so intertwined in the relations between India and Pakistan, it has become almost impossible for the two countries to successfully negotiate over other issues, such as trade, that are completely unrelated.

Pakistan has additional interests in Kashmir, as the Indus river and many of its tributaries originate in India. Despite the existence of the Indus Water Treaty, India has attempted to construct dams across some of these rivers, thereby threatening vital sources of water for Pakistan. India's construction of the Wuller Lake dam was a significant source of tension between the two countries in the 1980s.[29] Pakistan is also burdened with its defense expenditure, and since it is almost twice that of India in terms of percentage of GDP, it has an even greater effect on the overall health of Pakistan's economy.

---

[28] Rizvi, *Pakistan and the Geostrategic Environment*, 22.
[29] Ibid., 46.

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

The 1998 nuclear tests by India and Pakistan have not added a new dimension to strategic thought in South Asia; they have merely brought the nuclear proliferation issue to the forefront of strategic issues. India and Pakistan both have had the ability for some time, and these tests merely represent both countries coming out of the closet of "nuclear ambiguity." However, the prospects of an accelerated arms race are of significant concern to the countries inside and outside the region.

China is in some ways partly to blame because of its previous assistance to Pakistan, but its interests then were guided by Cold War posturing, an interest that has lost its viability today. China's strategic nuclear concerns are focused primarily in the United States and to a lesser degree on Russia. Its strategic interest in South Asia is linked with its general international policies on nuclear proliferation. China generally advocates the complete elimination of nuclear weapons world wide, but in the absence of this goal proclaims a policy of "no first use" to nuclear capable states and declares unconditionally to not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states.[30]

China's reaction to India's tests was at first muted, but following the second test explosion became much more condemning of India for initiating another arms race in South Asia. China, it appears, was actually more concerned with the anti-China rhetoric coming out of the new BJP government in New Delhi than the tests themselves. India-China relations had been on the mend for over a decade, and the statements by the Indian

---

[30] Zhang, *China's Changing Nuclear Posture*, 6-8.

Defense Minister George Fernandes and others proclaiming China as "India's biggest enemy" threatened to destroy the work already done. Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed and India toned down its rhetoric at the urging of Prime Minister Vajpayee. China also expressed regret at Pakistan's decision to answer India's tests with its own, but understood its compulsion to do so. Continuing to blame India for initiating this series of events, China's relations with Pakistan did not change except for a few public statements urging restraint.[31] It does not appear that China has made any changes to its policy towards South Asia at the time of this writing. However, should India or Pakistan begin a weaponization and deployment program China may be compelled to alter its policy in some fashion.

India's decision to test and the reasons behind it have been the subject of much speculation, some of which was addressed in the previous chapter. Regardless, India now has to grapple with how nuclear weapons fit into its overall national strategy. India's August 17, 1999, release of the *Draft Report of National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine* has been widely criticized, but most of this criticism is based on the lack of specific guidelines in the report. Essentially, the report simply reiterates general principles without giving specific guidance. For example, the report call for a credible nuclear deterrence, but fails to spell out, even in the simplest terms, what this means in terms of numbers of weapons, types of delivery systems, or deployment

---

[31] Ibid., 25-32.

options.[32] The document also reiterates earlier Indian policy calling for global nuclear disarmament and declares no first use against nuclear states and no use against non-nuclear states.[33]

One cannot quicky discount India's use of the "Chinese threat" to justify its nuclear posturing. There are still a number of unresolved issues between the two countries that could degenerate into conflict, even though progress was made recently on many of these issues. However, more important is the fact that China has provided nuclear and missile assistance to Pakistan, a point that India can not easily overlook. The possibility of Chinese involvement in a war between India and Pakistan weighs heavily, and the Indians seek to deter that involvement through possession of nuclear weapons.[34]

Pakistan's strategic interest in nuclear weapons is based almost exclusively on establishing a counterbalance to India. Pakistan also embraces the strategy of a minimum credible deterrent, but has not officially declared adherence to the idea of no first use. It has traditionally said that it would sign any of the non-proliferation agreements if India

---

[32] R. Ramachandran, "Unclear Nuclear Identity," *Frontline* <http://www.the-hindu.com/fline/fl1618/>, 28 August 1999. The author attacks the document on many different levels. Other criticisms have been similar, but much less detailed.

[33] *Draft Report of National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine*, Embassy of India <http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/CTBT/nuclear_doctrine_aug_17_1999.html>, 17 August 1999.

[34] John W. Garver, "Nuclear Weapons and the China-India Relationship" <http://india.indiagov.org/govt/johngarver.htm>, Paper presented at conference on South Asia's Nuclear Dilemma, Harvard University, 18-19 February 1999.

does. There was an indication that former Prime Minister Sharif might sign the CTBT without India doing so, but that possibility was probably deposed along with him.[35]

One final item of strategic importance is that of command and control of the nuclear arsenals if, when, and to what extent they are deployed. Little is known about these systems in any of the three countries, but China has a fairly good track record to date, as well as a fairly stable government. India's defense structure has significant inherent weaknesses in the chain of command between the services and the Ministry of Defense that need to be restructured to effectively manage a nuclear arsenal. Pakistan's situation is probably the most dangerous given the strong historical role of the military.[36] Some concern has been raised over the fact that the recent coup in Pakistan represents the first time a nuclear weapons state has been taken over in a coup attempt. The loss of control over any one of the arsenals in times of crisis is a far greater threat than what individual governments holding the "trigger" might do.

ASSESSMENT

Kashmir continues to be the focal point of most of South Asia's strategic interests. The Indian Ocean is important to India, but India does not have the resources to effectively safeguard all of its interests there. This is in part due to the overwhelming preoccupation with Kashmir and the significant defense resources that are expended there. Issues of nationalism are either directly or indirectly linked to events or issues over

---

[35] "India and Pakistan: Defining Security with the Bomb," *South Asia Monitor* <http://www.csis.org /saprog/sam5.html>, 1 February 1999.
[36] Ibid.

Kashmir, and even the Sino-Indian border dispute has a Kashmir component. The nuclear issue in South Asia has become even more sensitive, especially to the international community, since the conflict over Kargil. The unfortunate thing is that there is no indication of a change in the Kashmir situation, and hence no significant changes in other issues as well.

CONCLUSION

South Asia is a region of great diversity. It is the birthplace of several religions and has become the home of many others. The languages and dialects of the region are numbered in the hundreds, each with it own corresponding cultural variations. Wars and migrations have brought diverse ethnic groups to the region, and in many instances have changed the shape of the ethnic and cultural landscape. It is against this backdrop that South Asia is experiencing resurgent nationalism, communal violence, terrorism, and insurgency, all integral parts of the on-going struggle for power.

India, a secular state with a significant Hindu majority, dominates the region physically, economically, and militarily. But this dominance is not absolute. China, India's communist neighbor to the north, defeated it in the only war fought between the two countries, and India has felt threatened by China's nuclear superiority since China tested its first nuclear device in 1964. Pakistan, the Muslim country currently under military rule to the west, has sought to undermine India's dominance through a number of alliances with larger powers including the United States and China. It is either directly or indirectly responsible for at least some of India's internal problems with insurgency and violence, and the conflict over Kashmir has been costly for both countries. Even though India has clearly won the last two wars with Pakistan, it is still very conscious of the threat Pakistan can pose to its strength in the region.

There are a number of factors contributing to India's strength that cannot be negated. It is the only country in South Asia that possesses strategic depth, which in turn provides a tremendous amount of security in times of war. It also has a functioning industrial complex that has many of the necessary ingredients for true self-sufficiency and is fully capable of providing military ammunition and spare parts for most of its equipment. India's vast untapped natural resources far exceed those of other South Asian countries. In short, India's dominance in the region is secure.

China, while not a South Asian state per se, has had a considerable influence on the region. However, over the last decade or so relations with India have improved, it has become more concerned about internal problems of economic development, and it has sought greater influence in the South China Sea. As a result, it has backed away from South Asian involvement, as evidenced by its lack of support to Pakistan during the Kargil crisis.

Kashmir continues to be the most volatile flashpoint in the region. India insists on maintaining it as a bilateral issue to be negotiated independently of all other issues between the two countries, while Pakistan seeks to internationalize it and tie it to all other aspects of Indo-Pak relations. Artillery and small arms fire occurs across the line of control on an almost daily basis, and the recent incursions by Pakistan and the resulting battles over the Kargil heights indicate little room for a solution.

The nuclear weapon tests of 1998 brought a significant amount of international attention to South Asia. The fact that both India and Pakistan had now tested weapons

caused greater scrutiny and involvement by the U.S. and G-8 countries over the Kargil fighting and increased concerns when General Musharraf ousted Prime Minister Sharif in the Pakistan coup. Nevertheless, nuclear weapons have not significantly altered the balance of power between the two countries.

South Asia will continue to be a region of increasingly significant interest. The following two sections outline some of the prospects for security and stability in the twenty-first century and will outline some possible changes to U.S. foreign policy that will assist in securing a greater level of stability for the region.

PROSPECTS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The prospects for South Asia in the twenty-first century are mixed. On one hand, there is much to be hopeful about such as increased economic growth, a reduction in Sino-Indian tensions, and the possibility of greater regional and intra-regional cooperation. On the other hand, the Kashmir dispute, nuclear proliferation, internal unrest, poverty, and illiteracy will continue to hold the South Asian states back from achieving their full potential. Looking out ten to twenty years, I have made some general assessments as to how the strategic situation in South Asia will be affected.

Kashmir will continue to dominate South Asian strategic thought

If there is one lesson that can be taken from the recent fighting between India and Pakistan over the Kargil heights, it is that there is no hope for a quick solution to the whole Kashmir conundrum. Some of the irredentist and ideological differences between

the two states may have given way to other issues, but are still a present and significant force. The most viable solution to the problem, to make the line of control the international border, has its opponents in both countries. Many in India support this alternative, but there is a significant populist attitude that refuses to give up the claim to areas that are presently occupied by Pakistan. Alternatively, Pakistan still seeks retribution for its loss to India in 1971, and consequently sees any compromise with India as a weakness. Added to this are the various separatist groups within Kashmir that are advocating independence for the former princely state. I do not see a solution for the foreseeable future.

The end of the Cold War creates a new dynamic for South Asia

At the height of the Cold War the major powers asserted their influence in South Asia primarily through the sale of arms. The U.S. and China provided Pakistan varying levels of assistance and favorable repayment terms for weapon purchases. The Soviet Union did the same for India. While providing this support, these countries were generally careful not to significantly alter the balance of power in the region. Ten years after the end of the Cold war, India and Pakistan are just now beginning to realize its implications. While many weapons are more readily available, the low prices and favorable payment options no longer are. They must now make their purchases on the "open market" under the same terms as other nations. Both countries will now look harder at their purchases in order to maximize the available budgets. At the same time there is no longer an external restraining influence that would prevent one country from

initiating a conventional arms race, as there was during the Cold War. I see these two factors as generally mitigating each other, resulting in a maintenance of the status-quo for the foreseeable future.

The end of the Cold war has also seen a significant increase in the internationalization of internal and intra-state disputes. Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor, and Somalia are but a few examples of this. While Kashmir has largely remained a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan, the recent nuclear tests and the battle over Kargil have attracted the attention of the international community. If some progress towards resolving the issue is not forthcoming in the near future, it will become increasingly likely that the international community will become involved in some way. Pakistan's calls for international intervention, and a significant increase in human rights violations or communal violence could be the necessary justification for international intervention.

Nuclear weapons will bring greater international involvement in South Asia

The May 1998 nuclear tests by India and Pakistan brought an immediate international reaction in the form of various sanctions and condemnations. Now that both countries have declared their nuclear capability, the international community is going to be watching these two countries much more closely. They will be looking specifically to see how each country handles its new found capability. For instance, they will look for indications of further nuclear tests, the level of weaponization each country seeks, and the pace of missile development and whether or not nuclear weapons will be mated to those missiles. Nuclear proliferation from India and Pakistan will also be watched very

carefully, especially since the current Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) does not permit the recognition of new nuclear states. The signatory countries may make some provisions for this, but it is unlikely India or Pakistan will accede unless given the same status as the current members. In the short term both countries will find it difficult to obtain "dual use" technology, and this will especially hurt India's fledgling space industry. Over the long term, many of these restrictions will gradually be lifted unless further testing or weaponization occurs.

Both countries will find that there is a much greater interest in their domestic and bilateral affairs, such as the aforementioned Kashmir crisis. There is going to be an increasing concern over the command and control mechanisms for the nuclear arsenal, especially if one or both countries deploy weapons. Civil unrest, unstable political regimes, and even military exercises will be watched much more closely.

On a positive note, India and Pakistan have a short lived opportunity to use the international attention to their advantage. Through constructive dialogue with the international community, especially the five nuclear powers, over the CTBT, NPT, and other treaties they are in a position to negotiate positive reforms to these treaties and to obtain concessions in other areas for themselves. However, it is my opinion that this opportunity will pass by before anything constructive can be done, leaving South Asia at the mercy of the major powers.

Nuclear weapons may help resolve the Sino-Indian border dispute.

Another interesting outcome of the nuclear tests might be an indirect boost towards a final settlement of the Sino-Indian border dispute. India has traditionally felt that it was negotiating with China from a position of inferiority due to its defeat in 1963 and by the belief that China has had a nuclear advantage over India. India might now be in a position to negotiate from a position of perceived equality, further enhancing the prospects for a positive outcome.

A resolution of the Sino-Indian border dispute would have other implications for South Asia. It would free up at least eight divisions from the border that India could either inactivate or move to other areas of concern. If India were to move these units closer to Pakistan, it could upset the current balance of power and set off another buildup in Pakistan that would be extremely costly as it tries to keep up with India. On the other hand, an inactivation of even some of these divisions would yield tremendous defense savings for India that it could use elsewhere.

U.S. POLICY SUGGESTIONS

The United States' relations with India have historically been strained by Cold War politics. In light of the recent developments in South Asia and elsewhere, I am concluding this paper with some suggestions that I believe will enhance the relationships between the South Asian states and the U.S. and will be of mutual benefit to all concerned.

Shift from punitive to constructive policy

The United States had used punitive measures, usually in the form of sanctions, to try to impose its will on other countries. Evidence is beginning to accumulate that indicates that sanctions rarely, if ever, work as intended. One only has to look at the lack of success that sanctions have had in Iraq, the Balkans, and many other countries to get a feel for their ineffectiveness. In most cases, sanctions hurt the general population, but do little to alter the behavior of the country's leadership. One argument in favor of sanctions suggests that if things get bad enough for the people, they will change the leadership, yet this has not happened in Iraq or North Korea.

Following the May 1998 nuclear tests, the United States imposed mandatory sanctions on India and Pakistan in accordance with the Glenn Amendment (Pakistan was already under most of the sanctions because of the Pressler Amendment). It soon became clear that sanctions were not going to achieve the desired results, including signing of the CTBT among other things, from India and Pakistan. Sanctions against India have since been lifted by President Clinton under the terms of the Brownback Amendment, which permits the President to waive sanctions for up to five years at a time. The sanctions against Pakistan remain as a result of the October 1999 coup.

I contend that these sanctions are ineffective and ultimately against the best interests of the Unites States for a number of reasons. First, India is the worlds' largest democracy and, as a purveyor of democratic ideals, shares many of the same global interests as the U.S. Pakistan, while currently under military rule, is a country struggling

to hold on to its democratic principles and therefore needs help to maintain its stability. Blanket sanctions do not serve U.S. interests in maintaining solid ties with other democracies. Second, the U.S. policy of implementing sanctions has not been universally fair. For example, China was not punished for violations of the NPT by its sending nuclear technology to Pakistan, for human rights violations, or for stealing nuclear secrets from the U.S. Without a universal policy regarding the imposition of sanctions, they can appear unfair. Third, as discussed before, they seldom achieve their objective.[37]

What the U.S. should do is make an effort to reduce the number of sanctions against the South Asian states to a bare minimum. (Certain technology restrictions are understandable.) Instead, offer a carrot. The U.S. can provide considerable assistance on various fronts to both countries. In connection with the nuclear proliferation issue, the U.S. has considerable experience in command and control protocols for safeguarding nuclear weapons.[38] These can be shared with the Indians and Pakistanis in exchange for certain concessions on existing treaties. This is just one example of possible cooperation that will serve the interests of both countries. (The obvious hitch is that they have to want the assistance.)

---

[37] These views and other arguments for U.S. policy changes are shared by Stephen P. Cohen, Testimony before the Near East and South Asia Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Hearing on Political and Military Developments in India* <http://www.brookings.org/views /testimony/cohens/1990525.htm>, 25 May 1999.

[38] These protocols are equally important to the safeguarding of components as they are to assembled weapons.

Increase military and other exchange programs

When the U.S. imposed sanctions against Pakistan in the early 1990s as a result of the Pressler Amendment, almost all of the programs that permitted Pakistani military personnel to train in the United States were also cut. Similarly, India's participation was also cut briefly following the 1998 nuclear tests. Any time programs of this type are suspended, both the U.S. and the South Asian states concerned lose valuable opportunities and gain almost nothing.

For the United States, the losses may not be readily apparent, but are nevertheless present. First, while it is unlikely that the basic ideologies of the individual foreign officers will be changed, they do get to see how a functioning democracy operates and what the military's role is in that democracy (especially important in the case of Pakistan). Since these countries generally send their very best officers, it follows that over time these officers will rise to positions where they can make a difference that will likely be in America's interest. Second, it gives U.S. officers exposure to officers from these countries, fostering a greater understanding in the U.S. of the South Asian countries' military personnel. Third, it has been my own experience that the officers who have trained outside of South Asia have a much more enlightened view of world affairs and consequently are less likely to harbor the conspiracy theories and anti-west rhetoric that is often found in the region.[39] This is also generally in the interests of the U.S.

[39] I have found this is also true of Indian officers who have served abroad on U.N. missions.

For the South Asian states there are also obvious benefits. The ability for personnel to participate in these exchanges is frequently seen as a mark of prestige both for the individual and his country. These officers return to their countries having gained knowledge of tactics, techniques, and procedures from the U.S. military institutions that in many ways can help improve the efficiency of their own operations. It is also important to note that these officers are frequently placed in instructor positions where they are able to pass on much of their knowledge to others in their respective countries.

In addition to individual training opportunities, mil-to-mil contacts and exercises also need to be increased as quickly as diplomacy allows. The more opportunity both sides have to see each other in action, the greater the relationship and benefit to both. This system of exchanges needs to also include other elements of the government and even the technology sector where appropriate.

Continue to work towards inclusion of India and Pakistan in non-proliferation regimes

It probably goes without saying that the United States needs to continue to work on including India and Pakistan in all non-proliferation regimes. However, the U.S. has a vital interest in getting Pakistan and India to become signatories to all of the relevant non-proliferation treaties. As mentioned previously, this needs to be done with a carrot rather than a stick. It will probably require changes to some of these treaties, most of which have provisions for change. The U.S. needs to take the lead in carefully assessing the grievances the South Asian states have with the treaties and pushing for appropriate changes. This point is amplified by the fact that many of the grievances aired in the U.S.

Senate's rejection of the CTBT ratification closely parallel many of those aired by India in its refusal to sign.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ahmed, Samina. "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons Program: Turning Points and Nuclear Choices." *International Security* 23, no. 4 (Spring 1999): 178-204.

Arnett, Eric. ed. *Military Capacity and the Risk of War: China, India, Pakistan and Iran.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1997.

Bajpai, Kanti P. and Stephen P. Cohen, eds. *South Asia after the Cold War: International Perspectives*. Boulder: Westview Press. 1993.

Brown, Judith M. *Modern India: The Origins of an Asian Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1994.

Carter, Ashton B., William J. Perry, and John D. Steinbruner. *A New Concept of Cooperative Security*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution. 1992.

Cheema, Pervaiz Iqbal. *Pakistan's Defense Policy, 1947-58.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990.

Cohen, Stephen P. *The Pakistan Army*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1984.

Collins, Larry and Dominique Lapierre. *Mountbatten and Independent India.* New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House. 1984.

Ganguly, Sumit. *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace*. Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press. 1997.

____. "India's Pathway to Pokhran II: The Prospects and Sources of New Delhi's Nuclear Weapons Program." *International Security* 23, no. 4 (Spring 1999): 148-177.

____. *The Origins of War in South Asia: The Indo-Pakistani Conflicts Since 1947.* Boulder: Westview Press. 1993.

Gill, Bates and Michael O'Hanlon. "China's Hollow Military." *The National Interest.* no. 56 <http://www.brookings.org/views/articles/ohanlon>, Summer 1999.

Gordon, Sandy. *India's Rise to Power in the Twentieth Century and Beyond.* New York: St. Martin's Press. 1995.

Haass, Richard N. and Gideon Rose. *A New U.S. Policy Toward India and Pakistan.* New York: Council on Foreign Relations. 1997.

Hardgrave, Robert L. and Stanley A. Kochanek, *India: Government and Politics in a Developing Nation.* 6th ed. Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers, 1999.

Heitzman, James and Robert L. Worden, eds. *India: a Country Study.* Washington: Federal Research Division: Library of Congress. 1996.

Hoffmann, Steven A. *India and the China Crisis.* Berkeley: University of California Press. 1990.

Joeck, Neil. "Nuclear Developments in India and Pakistan." *Access Asia Review* 2, no. 2 (July 1999): 5-46.

Jones, Rodney, Mark G. McDonough, et. al. *Tracking Nuclear Proliferation: A Guide in Maps and Charts.* Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press. 1998.

Kadian, Rajesh. *The Kashmir Tangle: Issues and Options.* Boulder: Westview Press. 1993.

Kreisberg, Paul H. *South Asia and the Indian Ocean: The Strategic Environment, 1995-2010.* Alexandria, V.A.: Center for Naval Analysis. March 1996.

Larson, Gerald James. *India's Agony Over Religion.* Albany: State University of New York Press. 1995.

Lewis, John W. and Xue Litai. *China's Strategic Seapower: The Politics of Force Modernization in the Nuclear Age.* Stanford: Stanford University Press. 1994.

____. *China Builds the Bomb.* Stanford: Stanford University Press. 1988.

Lieberthal, Kenneth. *Governing China.* New York: W. W. Norton and Company. 1995.

Liu, Xuecheng. *The Sino-Indian Border Dispute and Sino-Indian Relations.* Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America. 1994.

Nehru, Jawaharlal. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru.* vol. 14. New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund. 1972.

Palsokar, R. D. *Defense Services Staff College Wellington 1947-1987.* Wellington, India: Defense Services Staff College. 1987.

Rizvi, Hasan-Askari. *Pakistan and the Geostrategic Environment: A Study of Foreign Policy.* New York: St. Martin's Press. 1993.

Singh, Jasjit. *Nuclear India.* New Delhi: Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis. 1998.

Singh, Jaswant. *Defending India.* New York: St. Martin's Press. 1999.

Sisson, Richard and Leo E. Rose. Ear and Secession: Pakistan, India and the Creation of Bangladesh. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1990.

Smith, Chris. *India's Ad Hoc Arsenal: Direction or Drift in Defense Policy?* Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1994.

Smith, Warren W., Jr. *Tibetan Nation - A History of Tibetan Nationalism and Sino-Tibetan Relations.* Boulder, Colorado. Westview Press, Inc. 1996.

Subramanian, R. R. *India Pakistan China: Defence and Nuclear Tangle in South Asia.* New Delhi: ABC Publishing House. 1989.

Suntharalingam, R. *Indian Nationalism: An Historical Analysis.* New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House. 1973.

Tanham, George K. *Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretive Essay.* Santa Monica: RAND Corporation. 1992.

Thomas, Raju G. C. ed. *Perspectives on Kashmir: The roots of Conflict in South Asia.* Boulder: Westview Press. 1992.

Van der Veer, Peter. *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India.* Berkeley: University of California Press. 1994.

Varma, Shanti Prasad. Struggle for the Himalayas. 2nd ed. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers (P) Ltd. 1971.

Wavell, Archibald. *The Viceroy's Journal.* ed. Penderel Moon. London: Oxford University Press. 1973.

Wolpert, Stanley. *A New History of India.* 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press. 1993.

Zhang, Ming. *China's Changing Nuclear Posture: Reactions to the South Asian Nuclear Tests.* Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 1999.

News Magazines and Periodicals

The Dawn (Karachi, daily): http://www.dawn.com

The Economist (London, weekly)

Frontline (Chennai, biweekly): http://www.the-hindu.com/fline

The Hindu (Chennai, daily): http://www.the-hindu.com

India Abroad (New York, weekly): http://www.indiaabroad.com

Jane's Defence Weekly (London, weekly): http://www.janes.com

South Asia Monitor (Washington, D.C., monthly): http://www.csis.org/saprog

VITA

Brian Kenneth Hedrick was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico on February 11, 1966, the son of Robley J. Hedrick and Diane (Ellington) Hedrick. After receiving his diploma from New Mexico Military Institute High School, Roswell, New Mexico, in 1984, he continued with the New Mexico Military Institute Junior College for two years. He received his Associate of Arts degree from NMMI in May 1986 along with a commission in the Army Reserve. While in college, he served in the New Mexico Army National Guard. He completed his undergraduate education at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, receiving a Bachelor of University Studies degree in December, 1989. During the following years he served as an army artillery officer on active service. He was accepted into the Army Foreign Area Officer program and attended the Defense Services Staff College and University of Madras, India in 1997-98, where he received a Master of Science degree in Defense and Strategic Studies. In August, 1998, he entered the Graduate School at The University of Texas.

Permanent Address: 4909 Larchmont NE
Albuquerque, NM 87111

This thesis was typed by the author.