

Balance of Power in South Asia: The Politics of Nuclear Deterrence between Pakistan and India

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Abstract

Balance of Power mechanism is meant to ensure the existence of the nation state in the international system through creating a balancing mechanism or equilibrium of power. Political scene of Europe has been witnessing this mechanism for the last 400 years, though in varied forms. The arrival of nuclear weapons transformed the dynamics of the balance of power system. This factor has raised the relevance of balance of power in favor of political forces at the expense of military power. The realists, nonetheless, argue that it is the interplay of military and political dimensions of balance of power i.e. the characteristics of the nation state's balancing approach vis-a-vis the dominant player in the system. The concept of power equilibrium has led the Italian born political scientist A.F.K. Organski to opine that it is not equilibrium of power that guarantees peace, but the preponderance of power between great powers that leads to lasting peace and order in the international politics. Relatively weak players in the international system get engaged with strong ones to minimize their opponent's military threats and may opt for deterrence capability. As a result strategic balancing comes into effect. The focus of this study is to analyze the conventional power imbalance between India and Pakistan since independence. Super powers' struggle for influence in the South Asian region has been a great disturbing factor for regional equilibrium. It will also be analyzed in this study as to how the conventional and

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nuclear forces have been used by both India and Pakistan to counterbalance not only each other's moves but also the intentions. An interesting paradox of the power moves of both countries will be studied in which the regional outreach of one country (India) is straight away considered as a threat to the very survival of the other country (Pakistan).

Theoretical Framework

The year 1947 brought about new lessons to the history and alterations to the geography of the world. The emergence of two new states in South Asia created new opportunities with corresponding challenges in the international system. The Indo-Pak hostility, right from the partition of the South Asian Subcontinent, owes its origin to the external actor i.e. the role of Great Britain. Having been indecisive to resolve the Kashmir issue before its departure from India was the first sign of sowing the seeds of hostility by Britain between the two South Asian neighbours. Rajiv Dogra argues that by favouring Pakistan the British tried to kill two birds with one stone: "Pakistan provided Britain a window to the Muslim world in the future and by cutting India it was deprived of its prospective status to be a great power in the future".¹

The hostile attitude of India towards Pakistan from the very start compelled the latter to seek and invite foreign influence to the region and the same was manifested in the larger Cold War confrontation.² Faced with the security dilemma posed by a preponderant India, Pakistan joined the US sponsored military pacts i.e. SEATO and CENTO in 1950s, while India made the counter move by showing a tilt towards the Soviet Union. In the eyes of realists, both the powers of South Asia embarked upon the courses of real-politic relying excessively on hard military power and trying everything possible to counter the preponderance of each other. Here comes the paradox: India was bent upon assuming the role of regional power and Pakistan was endeavouring hard to survive in its own territorial boundaries. Every

¹Rajiv Dogra. *Where Borders Bleed*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Pvt Ltd, 2015.

²Margaret Bourke-White. *Halfway to Freedom: A Report on the New India in the Words and Photographs of Margaret Bourke-White*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1949. p. 91-93

action of India (the preponderant power) was viewed by Pakistan (the weaker player) as an existential threat. In the words of Jan Hornat, when a balance of power system comes into operation, the main objective of all players involved is to avoid the emergence of an imbalance or a tilt of the equilibrium in favour of one state or alliance. The means to maintain the state of power equilibrium are numerous including preventive wars. As the staunch practitioners and theorists of balance of power-Matternich and Castlereagh state: "all thought of war as an instrument to preserve or restore balance of power, is merely pretended as a formula for peace".³

The shift of focus of balance of power from conventional to nuclear is because of the imbalance between the size, resources, outreach and perceptions of India and Pakistan. In the words of Manpreet Sethi, "in Pakistan's nuclear strategy, the primary task of its nuclear weapons is not to deter India's nuclear weapons, but to avoid an engagement with a superior military capability."⁴ The study of the dynamics of expansionary policies of India and contradictory reactions of Pakistan constitutes the theoretical framework for the study of balance of power in South Asia where every action of India has been inviting a prompt reaction from Pakistan. India outlines its security arch extending from the Strait of Hormuz in the West to the Strait of Malacca in the Southeast. As a reaction, Pakistan has been promoting the rhetoric of being a member of the Islamic Ummah stretching from Morocco in the West to Malaysia in the Southeast. So it can safely be assumed that joining of the Western camp by Pakistan in 1950s, having friendship with China in 1960s, playing a pivotal role against Soviet Union during 1979 and 1989, and envisaging a role of pioneer of the Pan-Islamism in 1990s were all reactions to the Indian moves of becoming a regional hegemon.⁵ During the early phase of its independence, India's tilt toward the Soviet Union and later on its new role as a champion of the Non-Aligned Movement were the manifestations of its policy of playing one great power against another for its national gains. Similarly the Arab world's tilt towards India

³John Hornat. "Say No to Balance of Power in Asia." *The National Interest*. 2014. p 37-42.

⁴Manpreet Sethi. "Responding to Pakistan's Tactical Nuclear Weapon: A Strategy for India." *Journal of ICPS*, 2014.

⁵Zafrullah Khan. "Pakistan's Place in Asia." *International Journal* 6, no. 4. 1951. p. 265-274.

after the Cold War was another sign of India realizing its dream of getting strategic preponderance within its strategic arch. In the following lines we will be studying the push and pull factors of the two powers of South Asia that have shaped the balance of power structures right from the partition of India.

In the Arena: India's Vision of Akhand Bharat (in the Light of Chanakya's Arthashastra) and Pakistan's Reaction

Chanakya was the famous Indian politician, strategist and writer during the period 350 BC-283 BC. He was an adviser and a prime minister to the first Maurya Emperor Chandragupta (340-293 BC), and is the architect of his rise to power. Chanakya studied at Takshashila, nowadays called Taxila in Pakistan. Takshashila was a great centre of learning and the teachers here were highly knowledgeable who used to teach sons of kings. Later Chanakya himself became a teacher at Takshashila University. So famous was Chanakya in the vicinity of the university that he had many nicknames namely – Vishnugupta, Kautilya etc. etc. He lived his life working to his capacity in pursuit of his vision of a happy, strong and prosperous India. It is widely believed that Chanakya was the first person to propagate the idea of the first Indian Empire or Akhand Bharat.⁶

The partition of the South Asian Sub-continent has not been recognized from the core of its heart by India even today and resorting to use the phrase of Akhand Bharat by some political hawks in the country spells out the real intent of the Indian political leadership's mind. India's bitter relations with almost all of its neighbours has been a testimony to this aggrandizing policy.⁷ When Chanakya was Prime Minister of first Maurya Emperor Chandragupta, he was able to consolidate the emperor's authority in ancient India and make a strong federation. In his recent book, 'World Order,' Henry Kissinger refers to the ancient Indian treatise, the Arthashastra, written by Chanakya, as a book that lays out the requirements of power, which is the "dominant reality" in politics. For Kissinger, the Arthashastra contained a realist vision of politics long before The Prince. Kissinger deems Arthashastra as a "combination of

⁶Susil Kumar Sahoo. <http://www.quora.com>. May 31, 2015.

⁷Frederic Grare. "India and Pakistan: Improbable War, Impossible Peace." *Pakistan at the Crossroads: Domestic Dynamics and External Pressures*. Haryana: Random House India, 2016. pp 335-345.

Machiavelli and Clausewitz.” Meanwhile, the German sociologist Max Weber once called it “truly radical Machiavellianism”, and that compared to it, Machiavelli's ‘The Prince’ is harmless.⁸ The mainstream political parties, like Baharatiya Janata Party (BJP), argue that countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Burma are part of undivided India. These countries are part of Akhand Bharat.

Pakistan has been instrumental in resisting this mindset of the Indian leadership since its inception and it is primarily because of this Indian action that has defined all of Pakistan's reactions. Pakistan's rhetoric of being a member of the Islamic Ummah stretching from Morocco to Malaysia is the most conspicuous example of countering India's vision of Akhand Bharat. The very existence of the state of Pakistan is thus the stumbling block in the way of India realizing the design of Akhand Bharat. The changing patterns / dynamics of balance of power between India and Pakistan can be seen in this perspective.

Patterns/Dynamics of Balance of Power in South Asia

India's Designs in Regional Context (India's actions vis-a-vis its neighbors)

Having a strategic look at India's neighborhood, it encompasses the entire region from the Strait of Hormuz to the Strait of Malacca. India views it its security parameter. Any development in this arch has a great impact on India's security. On the Western side, almost six million Indians are having their jobs in the Gulf, sending remittances of over \$50 billion to their home country annually.⁹ This region is the largest supplier of oil and gas to India. At the same time, this area is the heart of Islam and influences and ideologies emanating from here impact on India's immediate external and internal environment. In any case, had India not been partitioned in 1947, so says Kanwal Sibal, former foreign secretary of India, its Western frontier would have extended to the Persian Gulf. In the East, India's possession of the Andaman and Nicobar islands stretches her frontiers to the other choke-point, the Malacca Strait. The Bay of Bengal has Bangladesh, Myanmar and Thailand as littoral states. This stretch of the sea is the link to Southeast Asia and beyond. For buttressing India's 'Look East' policy, this area is of vital importance. Apart from India forging bilateral ties with these countries, the security

⁸Henry Kissinger. *World Order*. New York: Penguin Press, 2014.

⁹Kanwal Sibal. "India and the South Asian Neighbourhood." *Indian Defence Review*, 2013.

of the sea lanes of communication in an area where the only regional blue water navy is Indian, devolves some special responsibilities on India.¹⁰

Seeing geographically, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives constitute the core of India's neighborhood. Myanmar is a contiguous neighbor. However, since India has been looking at the SAARC countries over the years as her neighbors, Myanmar lost its importance despite its critical geographical location adjacent to the Northeastern region of the country. Afghanistan is not a direct geographic neighbor. However, with the inclusion of Afghanistan as a full member of SAARC, the political case for treating Afghanistan as an integral part of India's neighborhood stands reinforced.¹¹

With China's occupation of Tibet, the former has become direct neighbor of India. The unresolved border dispute between India and China constitutes a major Indian foreign policy problem. This issue is coloring India's relationship with the world's foremost rising power. Moreover, in India's perception, China has adversely influenced India's relations with its South Asian neighbors. China, therefore, qualifies as India's most formidable neighbor, affecting India's role not only in the South Asian region, but in Asia as a whole and even at the global level.¹²

The management of relations with neighbors is always a declared priority in any country's foreign policy. The credibility of a country's regional and global posture is undermined if it is seen as bogged down in disputes and conflicts with neighbors. The established view is that the time and energy consumed in manipulating events in the immediate neighborhood is at the cost of pursuing wider interests at the regional and international level. In this context, India had problems with Bangle Dash (India's endeavors to influence its domestic as well as foreign policy), Sri Lanka (India's interference in its internal affairs in the form of supporting LTTE), Bhutan (water sharing dispute), Nepal (India's strict control of its economy and foreign relations) and its simmering territorial and water sharing disputes with Pakistan have left scars on the body politic of India having dire consequences for its becoming a regional power. Adding insult to injury is its fragile peace with China which has

¹⁰Ibid

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

been a source of constant anxiety for its foreign policy. However, having set for itself a regional as well as international role, India had been able to extract concessions both from former Soviet Union in the past and the US during the Cold War.¹³ The concept of any regional cooperation is nullified when the only regional organization i.e. SAARC is not able to discuss bilateral political issues.¹⁴ Even after the Cold War, India has been able to attract the US to its fold and has successfully courted Iran and Afghanistan. The new alignment in the region now holds India, the US, Russia, Iran and Afghanistan in its orbit. It clearly illustrates that international relations are conducted not on emotional desires but purely on national interests, which are permanent.

Pakistan's Reaction

Pakistan has been pursuing a policy that would ensure its existence vis-a-vis preponderant conventional power of India. Pakistan's inability to match military superiority of India took it to the Western bloc in the 1950s. However, the disillusionment with the Western powers and the US during the 1965 Indo-Pak war led Pakistan to seek friendship with China.¹⁵ The notion of inviting foreign powers to regional balance of power mechanism was in full swing then during 1950s and 1960s. Pakistan's getting closer to China was dictated by the Sino-Indian war of 1962. 'The enemy of my enemy is my friend' concept guided Pakistan's policy to embrace China. As Pakistan had a window towards the West (having been a member of SEATO and CENTO), the US seized the opportunity and used good offices of Pakistan to have access to China. This behavior of Pakistan, by playing the role of bridge between the US and China, was exploited by India to the fullest possible extent and India concluded a security and defence treaty with the Soviet Union in August 1971 which culminated in the dismemberment of Pakistan in December the same year.

¹³Andrew Small. *The China Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics*. Haryana: Random House Publishers Pvt Ltd India. 2015

¹⁴Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury. "SAARC Membership: India blocks China's entry for the time being", *Economic Times*, December 2, 2014, http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2014-12-02/news/56648834_1_shanghai_xi_jinping_observers

¹⁵Altaf Gauhar. *Ayub Khan: Pakistan's First Military Ruler*. Lahore: Oxford University Press, 1993. P. 345

This was the turning point in the South Asian affairs which compelled Pakistan to seek something else, something more trustworthy to guarantee its survival in the face of heavy odds. Resorting to nuclear option provided one such panacea. Nuclear tests by India in 1974 fuelled Pakistan's quest to pursue a nuclear agenda that was allegedly assisted by China and funded by the oil rich Arab countries of the Gulf,¹⁶ the last having been proven entirely untrue. The exploration of oil in the Middle East and Gulf had reinforced the power capabilities of the Arab World with which Pakistan exploited its religious, cultural and historical ties. This situation took a new turn. Being adamant in for its quest for survival, Pakistan came down in its banking on the US, then China and finally to the Arab world. The dynamics of this shifting association of Pakistan were obvious: its alignment with the US earned her isolation from the Soviet bloc, its alignment with China and facilitating a Sino-US rapprochement resulted in earning the wrath of both India and the Soviet Union and its subsequent strengthening of ties with the Arab World led Iran to seek friends in the Arab world who were already under the Soviet influence.¹⁷ Thus Indo-Pakistan rivalry led to the regional alignment in which Saudi Arabia, China and Pakistan with little bit support of the US were on one side and Soviet Union/Russia, India, the radical Arab countries of Egypt, Iraq, Libya and Syria were on the other.¹⁸

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan provided a set of new opportunities to Pakistan and its drive for nuclearization went unabated.¹⁹ In order to benefit Pakistan's role in containing the communist threat across the Durand Line, the US turned a blind eye on Pakistan's nuclear programme until 1989-90. However, the Afghan war posed Pakistan with new challenges and opportunities. During this war, Saudi clout increased not only in Pakistan but also in the length and breadth of Afghanistan, thereby invoking Iran's anxiety. In turn, Iran also

¹⁶Andrew Small. *The China Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics*. Haryana: Random House Publishers Pvt Ltd India. 2015. pp. 28-29.

¹⁷Sana Haroon. "Pakistan Between Saudi Arabia and Iran: Islam in the Politics and Economics of Western Asia." *Pakistan at the Crossroads: Domestic Dynamics and External Pressures*. Haryana: Random House India, 2016. pp. 301-325.

¹⁸Shahid Amin, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: A Reappraisal*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010.

¹⁹Ayesha Jalal. *The Struggle for Pakistan: A Muslim Homeland and Global Politics*. Noida: Gopsons Papers Ltd. India, 2014. p. 234-235

started exerting its influence in Afghanistan through its surrogates. The emergence of Taliban on the political horizon of Afghanistan presented Iran with a reasonable pretext to come with daggers drawn against Pakistan in Afghanistan. The advances of Taliban in Afghanistan were viewed by Tehran as a challenge to its monopoly of the so-called leadership of the Islamic world and she started influencing the course of action in Pakistan through strengthening and supporting the Shia community in Pakistan.²⁰ The new dimensions of balance of power between India and Pakistan brought Iran on India's side and Saudi Arabia on Pakistan's. The actions of India and reactions of Pakistan led to the introduction of new foreign actors on the South Asian horizon.

External Actors (Opportunities afforded to them by India's actions and Pakistan's reactions) UK, USA, USSR/Russia, China, KSA, Iran, Non-State Actors

Pakistan faced the security dilemma immediately after independence and she joined SEATO and CENTO in the 1950s. This led to Indo-Pak hostility becoming encompassed into the larger Cold War confrontation. India had already showed its tilt towards the Soviet Union because, her policy of non-alignment coincided with the Soviet objective of checking the growing power of the US military alliances. These military pacts had a direct impact on the Indo-Pak ties. The most important phase so far started after the 9/11 attack on the US, after which, the US policy makers realized the importance of South Asia once again in their "Global War on Terror (GWT)". Now the US administration focused its attention on South Asia, with a key objective to find partners in their war on terrorism.²¹

In the 21st century, the strengthening of US-India strategic partnership, particularly in the nuclear field, is a cause of concern for South Asian security.²² Pakistan needs to gauge and closely monitor the US objectives in this backdrop. The US-Indian deal (through strengthening India) could further impose Indian hegemony in South Asia. So far, Pakistan had tried to play the role of a balancer in the region.

²⁰Saeed S. Khan, *Reasserting International Islam*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001.

²¹Jamshaid Khan. "India Pakistan Relations: An Enduring Rivalry." http://www.slideshare.net/.../termpaper-india_pakistan_relations:_an_enduring_rivalry.jamshaidkhan. august 31, 2010.

²²C. Chrisitne Faire. *The Counter terror Coalitions: Cooperation with Pakistan and India*. California: RAND Corporation. 2004

This role, to some extent, did dilute Indian hegemony in the South Asian region. Unless the US takes into account the military, political, economic and societal nature of the region, its strategic partnership with India could aggravate the smaller countries' concerns vis-à-vis the hegemonic power—India. This would imply that if it was based on Indian security interests alone, the partnership would give a free hand to India vis-à-vis the smaller South Asian states.

According to Agha Shahi, the US declaration in March 2005 to help India become a “major world power in the 21st century” would enable India to project its power in its “neighborhood and beyond”. Agha Shahi rightly objected to this move that the agreement ignores the “maintenance of strategic balance in South Asia”. Pakistan and other South Asian states are much more vulnerable to external influence. This is partly because they are smaller and partly they look at the external world as a counterweight to the overwhelming power of India. Pakistan is intrinsically inclined to resist India's political dominance, by diplomacy when possible and by force when necessary. The stage is thus set for continued rivalry between the two states.²³

The tension between India and Pakistan provided an excellent opportunity to China to raise its stature in the Indian subcontinent. India-Pakistan animosity is deep-rooted in religion, history, and the politics of revenge and thus predates India-China hostility. China's shrewd strategists recognized the enduring nature of the India-Pakistan enmity and exploited it to Beijing's advantage. Former Director of China's Peoples' Liberation Army's General Staff Intelligence Department, General Xiong Guangkai had once remarked that Pakistan is China's Israel.²⁴ Beijing has long been an active player in the India-Pakistan-China triangular relationship. Since the Sino-Indian border war of 1962, China has aligned itself with Pakistan and made huge strategic and economic investments with a view to keep the common enemy, India under strategic pressure (this included Karakoram Highway (KKH), construction and development of Gawadar port, and now China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

²³Jamshaid Khan. "India Pakistan Relations: An Enduring Rivalry."

<http://www.slideshare.net/.../termpaper-india-pakistan-relations:an-enduring-rivalry.jamshaidkhan>. august 31, 2010.

²⁴Mohan Malik. “The China Factor in the India-Pakistan Conflict.” *Parameters*. Spring 2003. p. 62

In this triangular power balance game, the South Asian military balance of power is neither pro-India nor pro-Pakistan; rather it has always been pro-China. And Beijing will take all means possible, including war, to ensure that the regional power balance does not tilt in India's favour. Even in the absence of war, Pakistan hopes to continue to reap significant military and economic payoffs not only from the intensifying Sino-Indian geopolitical rivalry in South Asia but also from what many believe is the coming showdown between China and the US. Should this happen, it will further increase the significance of China's strategic ties with Pakistan.²⁵ Along with the role of great powers in the South Asian region, there are some other potent powers / non state actors that are in operation in the region and causing challenges to the peace between India and Pakistan. Through different terrorist activities in both countries, they generate tensions, distrust and misperceptions on both sides.

Another paradox developed here. The traditional Saudi-Iran rivalry of gaining mastery of the Gulf and the Middle East found a new battle ground in Pakistan as well. The soil of Pakistan now started to be used for the proxy wars of Saudi Arabia and Iran. This was one of the corollaries of the balance of power between India and Pakistan. Iran and Saudi Arabia are also active in fuelling the already volatile atmosphere of South Asia by choosing strategic sides in the region.²⁶

Nuclearization of South Asia

The primary task of Pakistan's nuclear capability is not to deter India's nuclear weapons, but to avoid an engagement with a superior military capability. Pakistan believes that its nuclear weapons constrain India from resorting to an active military adventurism. Pakistani strategic establishment is determined to uphold balance of terror with India to deter its aggression or blackmailing tactics.²⁷ The deterring capabilities can be acquired through internal build-up and/or via alliance formation. Pakistan's alliances (SEATO & CENTO) and band wagoning (the US & China) did not prevent its dismemberment in 1971 war with India. Since 1971, therefore, it has been focusing on internal build up.

²⁵Ibid

²⁶Vali Nasr. *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Will Shape the Future*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2007.

²⁷Manpreet Sethi. "Responding to Pakistan's Tactical Nuclear Weapon: A Strategy for India." *Journal of ICPS*, 2014.

While quoting Ayub Khan, the former President of Pakistan, as having said in his January 1968 diary, the former Indian diplomat Rajiv Dogra writes, "two things have unbalanced India completely; the 1962 clash with China and the 1965 war with Pakistan....So, whilst wanting a Kashmir solution, we should show no undue anxiety. Let India bleed till she can no longer bear the burden of big power chauvinism. She may then come to her senses".²⁸ Though the author has not provided any proof/reference of the writings of Ayub Khan's diary, it shows the preoccupation of India's mind with the Pakistan phobia that preoccupies its leadership. After the dismemberment of Pakistan in December 1971, it was Indira Gandhi who ordered '*Buddha is smiling*'.²⁹ The smile on Buddha's face was a nightmare for Pakistan. That is why, despite the opposition, economic sanctions (1970s, 1980s, 1990s) and negative signaling over safety and security of its nuclear weapons programme (since 9/11) by the US and like-minded states, Islamabad has been up surging its nuclear arsenal. The nuclear weapon of Pakistan was meant only to correct the strategic imbalance in South Asia that had caused Pakistan half of its body. But India has perceived this situation in quite another way. Rajiv Dogra writes in his book, 'Where the Borders Bleed', "actor George Clooney recalls in an interview in December 2012 issue of Esquire magazine:

I talked with the President [Obama] at one of those fundraisers some months back, and I asked him, 'What keeps you up at night?'

And he said, 'Everything. Everything that gets to my desk is a critical mass. If it gets to my desk, then no one else could have handled it.'

So I said, 'So what's the one that keeps you up at night?'

He goes, 'There are quite a few.,

So I go, 'What's that the one? Period'

And he says, 'Pakistan.'"³⁰

²⁸Rajiv Dogra. *Where Borders Bleed*. New Delhi: Rupa publications india pvt ltd, 2015.

²⁹Smiling Buddha was the assigned code name of India's first nuclear bomb test on 18 May 1974. The bomb was detonated on the army base, Pokhran Test Range, in Rajasthan, India.

³⁰Rajiv Dogra. *Where Borders Bleed*. New Delhi: Rupa publications india pvt ltd, 2015.

Rajiv's strenuous effort to invoke the American actor's interview with the US President and quoting his dread for Pakistan's nuclear weapon shows something more than the substance of the balance of power mechanism in the region; it is the mindset of India's elite vis-a-vis Pakistan that echoes as the backdrop music in the balance of power drama being played on the South Asian stage. In this back drop, the entire spectrum of balance of power between India and Pakistan has undergone a new transformation which needs further elaboration.

Balance of Power Revisited

War as the ultimate recourse of the nation state has been at its disposal ever since the history has begun to be recorded. Preventive wars, as were espoused by the 19th century British statesmen Castlereagh and Austrian Matternich, were the common panacea for peace. These wars were fought sometimes unilaterally by some powerful state while sometimes a cluster of nations fought a war against the preponderant power of the time. However, the emergence of the balance of power system in Europe limited the nature and scope of war during the 19th century.³¹ Whenever some power tried to disrupt the general equilibrium of the international system, the mechanism of balance of power came into operation.³² However, the system of balance of power would require a power guarantor to ensure smooth functioning of the system. Similarly the similarity of culture and a shared historical perception would be another galvanizing factor of the balance of power system. In case of balance of power between India and Pakistan, all the important prerequisites of the system are conspicuous by their absence.

Pakistan came into being as a result of the partition of India which the Congress leadership considered as the vivisection of 'Mother India'. On the other hand, the leadership of the Muslim League declared that, 'we will have India divided, or we will have India destroyed'. This was the level of emotions that ran during the time of partition and the subsequent trauma of migration appalled the people on both sides of the divide. Till 1857, Muslims were the rulers of India who had ruled the land for almost 1000 years. In the 90 years, till 1947, Hindus had a taste of

³¹Henry Kissinger. *Diplomacy*. Glasgow: Simon & Schuster Ltd, 1994.

³²Ibid

³³Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre. *Freedom at Midnight*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1975.

power due to their compliance with the British and were now bent upon revenging the 1000 years of Muslim rule. Thus it was neither the shared historical perspective nor the cultural affinity that could have provided glue to their shared vision of the future. And the erstwhile great power (Britain) had left the area leaving even more quagmires than before; the Kashmir issue was planted by Britain and left unresolved between the two new dominions. No guarantor was present in the region to ensure the orderly functioning of the international system in this part of the world. Thus, instead of resolving their disputes bilaterally (which was not possible) or through some regional mechanism (which was not available), both India and Pakistan entered the Cold war political system by mortgaging their security on the false hope that the super powers would help them resolve their outstanding issues.³⁴ The super powers could not develop a viable system of balance of power in the region and the imbalance led to the dismemberment of one of the players [Pakistan] of the game.

The disillusionment of 1971 debacle led Pakistan to reconsider its options. At the other end of the tunnel, the nuclear option looked brighter than banking on others for own security. The same was done by India and its nuclear tests of 1974 provided fillip to the nuclearization drive of Pakistan. The technology (the nuclear weapon) to make the war more dreadful and the enemy more frightened, however, limited the scope of war. The powerful states equipped with nuclear technology could now only project force over limited distance, in certain quantities and against so many targets. Ambitious leaders were constrained and radical courses of action were inhibited by the pace at which they unfold. The same went well with both powers of the South Asia and the clouds of war never caused rain in the region ever since the nuclearization of the region. Previously it was the weaker state of Pakistan that yearned for security, now it is the US President, as said by actor George Clooney, who spends sleepless nights worrying lest the world peace is destroyed by the nuclear weapon of Pakistan.³⁵

³⁴C. Christine Fair. *Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

³⁵Rajiv Dogra. *Where Borders Bleed*. New Delhi: Rupa publications India pvt Ltd, 2015

India and Pakistan are not afraid of each other anymore. A sort of rough balance exists between the two nuclear armed neighbours. The race now is for maximizing the national gains and for projecting national power much beyond national frontiers. It is now not Pakistan that is worried about its existence but the great powers [to be more specific, China] that are worried about courting Pakistan to further its national interest in the region. In the words of Vali Nasr, "Indeed, while we scratched our heads about how to turn Pakistan our way during my tenure in Obama administration, Chinese leaders were serenading Pakistan with assurances that Sino-Pakistani relations are 'higher than the mountains, deeper than the oceans, stronger than steel, and sweeter than honey.'"³⁶

And the arrival of the nuclear weapons has changed the contents of the security stories in South Asia. In the words of Manpreet Sethi, "the threat implied by Pakistan's Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNW) is based on two assumptions. One, Pakistan believes that the use of TNW would bring about such a material and psychological shift in hostilities as to stun India into a halt. Confronted with the prospect of further escalation, the nature of Indian polity and the 'softness of the state' would make India choose war-termination over escalation. So, Pakistan believes that India would be deterred from using its superior military capability since it would not have the will or the motivation to act. She doubts whether India, with a strategic culture of military restraint, would find it prudent to inflict damage (and risk more on itself) in response to a threat that is not itself mortal. Second, Pakistan assumes that the battlefield use of a small nuclear weapon would not be seen as provocation enough by India, or the rest of the world, to merit massive retaliation. It tends to assume that the international community will stop India from continuing its conventional campaign or undertaking nuclear retaliation. Therefore, in Pakistani perception, the TNW is a deterrent at best, and a war termination weapon at worst."³⁷

³⁶Vali Nasr. *The Dispensable Nation: American Foreign Policy in Retreat*. New York: Anchor Books, 2014.

³⁷Manpreet Sethi. "Responding to Pakistan's Tactical Nuclear Weapon: A Strategy for India." *Journal of ICPS*, 2014.

Analysis

If an impartial analysis is ever made of the forces that ultimately led to the nuclearization of South Asia, one thing will be conspicuously clear; the failure of the classical balance of power mechanism led to the dreadful balance of terror system. Neither was India in a position to act as a guarantor of the balance of power nor was Pakistan accustomed to its dynamics. Being at daggers drawn against each other, both India and Pakistan became the objects of the system by themselves with the Soviet Union and the US respectively governing their fates. But the Cold War priorities of both the super powers were different from those of India and Pakistan. The reliance of India and Pakistan on the Cold War adversaries kept them from developing their regional model of balance of power. Since India's geographical size, economic resources and military capabilities were far superior to Pakistan's, the former was able to mobilize international support to its foreign policy overtures.³⁸ On the other hand the smaller power (Pakistan) was neither able to attract international attention to its security concerns nor was it in a position to alter the regional security parameter in its favor.

The acquisition of nuclear weapon by Pakistan with corresponding delivery system was meant to neutralize the preponderant Indian military threat. Pakistan made the point. So far the existential threat to Pakistan is over; however, this nuclear capability of Pakistan has brought in its wake new challenges. The US in particular and the West in general are particularly worried about the scenario that this dreadful weapon might be used immaturely by the Pakistani authorities.³⁹ Given the anti-American and anti-Indian sentiments in the length and breadth of the country, the US President is rightfully alarmed about that scenario (George Clooney's talk with Obama is relevant here). But the strong command and control of the nuclear arsenal and the responsible behavior that Pakistan has evinced ever since its acquisition of the nuclear capability has belied all such worries. Nuclear regimes of the two adversaries have shown sufficient resilience and maturity to pass the tests of Kargil conflict in 1999; Compound Crisis of 2002; Mumbai Crisis;

³⁸Frederic Grare. "India and Pakistan: Improbable War, Impossible Peace." *Pakistan at the Crossroads: Domestic Dynamics and External Pressures*. Haryana: Random House India, 2016. P. 335-345.

³⁹David E. Sanger. *The Inheritance: The World Obama Confronts and the Challenges to American Power*. New York: Harmony Books, 2009.

and recently Pathan Kot & Uri Incidents. Thus President Obama was knocking the wrong door. He better get worried about the places where humanitarian disaster is more exposed than Pakistan. He must focus on Syria, creation of Palestine, intransigence of North Korea, and challenges posed by Daa'ish.

The rise of China to a prominent position in the region and the immense influence it enjoys with Pakistan is another factor that is contributing to regional stability and the viability of the balance of power system in the region. India's obsession with economic development and its prospective competition with China in Asia have also provided a breathing space for Pakistan. The situation in Afghanistan, however, is a source of friction between India and Pakistan where both the powers for compete gaining considerable clout in Kabul. However, the US willingness to initiate dialogue with Taliban and Kabul's gesture to be ready to bring Taliban to the mainstream political arena, especially with the agreement of President Dr Ashraf Ghani with Gulbadin Hikmatyar, hold encouraging prospects for peace. Once situation in Afghanistan changes for the better, the rivalry between India and Pakistan may also take the form of an economic tug of war between them. Should that happen, further impetus would be provided to the ongoing process of change of behavior in New Delhi and Islamabad, leading to the galvanization of the balance of power system in the region.

Conclusion

Historically the Indian subcontinent has always been a land of attraction for great powers of the world. Its vast plains suitable for various agricultural activities, immense deposits of natural resources and its hardworking people have been watering the mouths of the imperialists in the past. After the last imperial power decided to leave the area in 1940s, the ground realities of the contemporary world compelled Britain to carve out two new nation states out of its erstwhile Indian empire. The new states of India and Pakistan were neither accustomed to self-rule nor having the required skills of statecraft. Excessive delusions about each others' perception and lack of confidence in own capacities on the part of both the countries led them to seek support of the extra regional powers and South Asia was plunged into the hotbed of Cold War politics. Till early 1970s, both the powers relied on foreign powers. However, after arming themselves with nuclear weapons covertly and overtly, body languages of both the powers changed and

instead of devising local security parameters and a regional balance of power model, these powers started a new arms race in the region which appalled the world and South Asia once again became the hub of world politics. After the terrorist attacks on the US in September 2001, India and Pakistan engaged in a new balance of power mechanism that resembled the one designed by the German Chancellor Bismarck in the mid 19th century by shifting the alliances swiftly and isolating the opponent. The South Asian kaleidoscope now represents India, Iran, the US on one hand and Pakistan, China and likely Russia on the other. In this fluid situation, the real balancing role seems to be assumed by the new rising power, i.e. China. At last Pakistan's maneuvering seems to be succeeding by cultivating reasonable partnership with China.⁴⁰ Given the ever increasing ties between India and the US and especially after entering into a mutual civil nuclear partnership, Pakistan once again feels desperate to have been pushed to the wall. In this backdrop, Pakistan's strategic ties with China will surely bend the Indo-US strategic sword. However, one thing needs to be understood by both the powers. In the 21st century, the balance of power will be maintained not through the stockpiling of lethal and dreadful weapons in the arsenals but buttressing the economic power through multilateral economic activities by the states on one hand and infusing a sense of ownership in the people that live outside the economic parameters of the state on the other, who have not benefited from the welfare nature of the state. Once the economies of the states are strong and the state provides health, education and other economic and social services to its masses, the attitude of the people on both sides of the divide will surely change for the better and that will lead to a lasting peace in South Asia.

⁴⁰Farah Jan and Serge Granger. "Pakistan-China Symbiotic Relations." *Pakistan at the Crossroads: Domestic Dynamics and External Pressures*. Haryana: Random House India, 2016, pp. 279-296.