

Round Two

Coercive Diplomacy Beyond Deterrence

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President Pervez Musharraf's ambivalent promise to 'permanently end' Pakistani sponsored terrorism in the State of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K)¹ and the American assurance to validate it, may have been construed as amounting to the declaration of an Indo-Pakistani cease-fire,² and were certainly

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¹ Speaking to the media in New Delhi, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Nirupama Rao said on June 24, "It has been conveyed to us (by Washington) in categorical terms that commitments about permanently ending infiltration of terrorism across the Line of Control (LoC) have repeatedly been given by General Musharraf." Separately, a US Embassy spokesman in New Delhi said that Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage "was given assurances by President Musharraf on June six that ending of infiltration across the Line of Control (LoC) would be permanent." See "India warns Pak against backtracking on pledges", *The Times of India*, New Delhi, June 25, 2002. Since then, however, Musharraf has given out a number of contradictory statements, alternately reaffirming and denying this position. For example, during an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation on August 29, 2002, Musharraf said that he had not given any timeframe to the international community to stop infiltration across the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir. See, "No timeframe given to end infiltration: Musharraf", *Indian Express*, New Delhi, August 30, 2002.

² After the Kaluchak (Jammu) massacre of May 14, 2002, international pressure on Pakistan to end infiltration from across the border was particularly intense. A number of Bush Administration officials, including Secretary of State Colin Powell, Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage interacted with leaders in India and Pakistan. After Richard Armitage's visit, India also agreed to ease diplomatic sanctions and asked the navy to withdraw from the western seaboard. For an account of the recent American role in South Asia, see "Referee's Whistle", *Outlook*, New Delhi, June 24, 2002, "Code of Conduct", *India Today*, New Delhi, June 17, 2002 and "The Growing U.S. role" *Frontline*, Chennai, vol. 19, June 22-July 5, 2002.

the first direct admission of Pakistan's role in fomenting such cross-border terrorism. Such a pronouncement in itself – despite its ambiguous translation into 'facts on the ground' in J&K – reflects the effectiveness of Indian coercive diplomacy, and the use of the Indian army and air force pressure in the north, and of naval pressure in the south, to create a situation, which required the international community to force Pakistan's concessions.³

The emergence of effective Indian military movement shows the importance of the Prime Minister-armed forces interface which worked well despite all the noise by the Delhi Press which imprudently talked up the American and Pakistani line that war, escalating into nuclear war, was round the corner. Such a discourse helps create panic rather than to inform public opinion, and the latter is what the Press is supposed to do. The military mobilisation since December 2001 should be an object lesson to Indian commentators that controlled military escalation is sometimes necessary to induce external attention to one's interests, that there is no such thing as 'deft diplomacy' unless it has the backing of punishment that is tied to political purpose.

Moreover, Indian armchair strategists must not forget that, historically, Indian diplomacy on the Kashmir issue has been anything but deft. It was Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister, under the advice of Lord Mountbatten and his Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) advisers, who took the Kashmir issue

³ India withdrew its naval forces from forward positions in the western seaboard after Richard Armitage's visit in June. However, the army's position along the international border with Pakistan remains unchanged. Three of the army's strike corps – 1, 2 and 21 – was moved to the border from their bases after the December 13, 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament. Almost the entire force of Southern and Western Army Commands was shifted to the international border with Pakistan along the States of Gujarat, Rajasthan and Punjab. The Northern Command was also deployed to its full capacity on the border and the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu & Kashmir. The number of army personnel in J&K rose to an all-time high, with the deployment of additional forces, including its divisions 6 and 39, each with an approximate strength of 8,000 fighting troops. Besides, Prithvi missiles on strategic locations were also deployed. Deployment by the navy included, missile boats, destroyers, submarines and the aircraft carrier, INS Viraat. Fighter jets of the Indian Air Force were also put in its forward bases along the Pakistan border on high alert. See "How prepared are we?", www.rediff.com/news/2002/jan/23spec.htm.

to the United Nations (UN) and internationalised it.⁴ Nehru ignored the advice of the then Union Home Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and General Kulwant Singh who wanted a few weeks to liberate the entire Kashmir region.⁵ Baiters of the ruling dispensation should also not forget that the Congress party under Indira Gandhi was in the habit of interfering with State Legislative Assembly elections in J&K and elsewhere, so the Kashmiris are right to insist on free and fair elections.⁶

It is, however, now up to the Indian leadership not to take a long summer siesta till the next crisis erupts. Instead, it should build on the success of coercive diplomacy and secure a strong combination of military movement (to show the prospect of punishment if the enemy miscalculates), political movement which targets external and internal political constituencies who require re-calibration of the mind and attitude (strategy is a mind game), and diplomatic movement which recognizes and rewards India's true friends in the recent crisis and which identifies those who are playing a double game. The orchestration of this combination has to be conducted outside the MEA and it must involve the armed forces and thinkers in the intelligence services who are not given to embroidering intelligence to suit the mood of their political masters. The central importance of the military-political-diplomatic combination must be grasped because Indian diplomatic officials have little experience or understanding of the role of force in creating strategic opportunities. Here, one must learn from China's experience. Chou-en-Lai was a fine diplomatic practitioner but his deftness (say at the 1955 Bandung Conference and in his negotiations with the Americans and others) was based

⁴ See for instance, "The roots of the conflict", *Frontline*, vol. 15, no 13, June 20-July 03, 1998. Also see "The Real Kashmir Story" www.rediff.com/news/1999/may/28jk.htm.

For full text of the United Nations Resolution passed on August 13, 1948, see www.kashmir-information.com/LegalDocs/UNResolutions.html

⁵ Brigadier Mohinder Singh, during an interview with Onkar Singh in the year 1999 pointed out that General Kulwant Singh had asked for a 48-hour time to complete the Kashmir 'operation', and Indian leaders did not accept this. Source: www.rediff.com/news/1999/jun/24onk.htm.

⁶ Noted scholar Paul Brass observes in this regard, "Once Mrs. Gandhi had established her supremacy in national politics, she extended her interventionist strategy to Kashmir politics..." See *The Politics of India since Independence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p 220.

on the Maoist principle that power comes from the barrel of the gun.⁷

In the present context, Islamabad, under pressure from Washington, gave in because the Indian navy was sitting across Karachi, and the other services sat across the Line of Control (LoC). Even Colin Powell, a political general and an unreformed Cold War type, who is more of an executor of political orders than a strategic visionary, understood the importance of responding to Indian demands.

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee should be thinking about a strategy and policy that recognizes the importance of the role of the armed forces in the formulation of effective coercive diplomacy vis-à-vis Pakistan, and its supporters in America and China. Secondly, he should think about new initiatives to consolidate the recent gains. Coercive diplomacy is as much about war as it is about propaganda, where psychological warfare is used to mislead and to panic the leadership into a wrong assessment and a wrong policy. China, Pakistan, several American think tanks and some prominent commentators are sources of such wrong assessments, which need to be challenged.

To shape the second round, which will inevitably happen in a few months, Indian practitioners will have to understand the critical parameters in which Indian coercive diplomacy functions. What are the parameters that India should keep in mind as it takes the lead in Kashmir, Indo-Pakistan and international affairs? How can India create a fabric of military, diplomatic and political movement in dealing with audiences in the Indian Ocean area, China, the USA, Russia and Europe? Is there a single endgame, which culminates with the acceptance of the LoC as the international border?

There are, in fact, several endgames that require a combination of military strategy, psychological warfare, diplomatic work and political work to develop a sound Indian foreign policy/Indian strategy. The challenge is huge because it requires the Indian Premier and his inner circle not to project India with the mindset and policies of a landlocked country as

⁷ Mao Tse Tung, "Problems of War and Strategy" Selected Works, vol. II, p. 224.

Nehru did, despite the powerful messages about the importance of sea power in Asian history by K.M. Panikkar.⁸ Instead, India should be projected as a land as well as a sea power with a continental and an oceanic vision and policy that go beyond Pakistan, beyond China and beyond nuclear deterrence. India has to discard the Nehruvian fixations with Pakistan, China and nuclear disarmament, to create a new nation, confident and prepared for the 21st century.

1. Our first parameter is that India has been a reluctant power thus far, and this is the result of a reactive way of thinking about strategic affairs, which in turn reflects an inclination to think through a Nehruvian lens. Nehru's views are like old shoes, which remain comfortable even though they are worn out. Also, Nehru left behind several ideological widows and orphans who are lost without the old slogans. However, recent experiences show that, although India's political class is slow on the uptake, it is not irrational. Three lessons are noteworthy. One, India has learnt to recognize the value of nuclear weapons for diplomacy and even business, where the image of power counts; at the same time her ability to exercise restraint during the Kargil War and also in the recent crisis despite the pressure to go to war is memorable. Two, Kargil and the recent crisis of military mobilisation demonstrated the effective use of military power in the pursuit of national interests. Three, Indian nuclear and military activities show that skilled coercion facilitates the development of a pattern of *negotiated restraints*, which is better than *unilateral restraint* where the obligations are one sided, not common. Still, there is a continuing need to manage difficult situations and to relate them to negotiating possibilities through coercive diplomacy. It is not enough to recognize the contributions to modern Indian military science research and development by A.P.J. Abdul Kalam by selecting him for the post of the President of India. Such symbolism is important, but it must be followed by a

⁸ K. M. Panikkar, *India and the Indian Ocean*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1945.

continuous practice of coercive diplomacy in relation to complex neighbourhood situations.

2. American policy towards India has complexities and these create opportunities as well as challenges for India. The US government is a divided house. Richard Armitage, Deputy Secretary of State, has a negative view of Pakistan but Secretary of State Colin Powell is considered to be pro-Musharraf and pro-Pakistan, as are State Department officials like Richard Haas (head of policy planning), who are still mired in Cold War perceptions of India. The Central Command, which runs the US operations in Afghanistan, is pro-Pakistan, and historically so. The Pentagon, White House and the Pacific Command see Indian partnership in longer and strategic terms and value India's role on the eastern side of the Indian Ocean from the Gulf of Hormuz to the Malacca Straits. Presidents Vladimir Putin of Russia and Jacques Chirac of France appreciate India's perspective, but the British leadership does not. Israel is on good terms with India, and when the US is reluctant to help India directly on issues other than counter-terrorism, Israel steps in. The bottom line is that Pakistan feels threatened by India's diplomatic and military build-up and the US needs Pakistan. The US is at odds with the Islamic world except for Pakistan and so Pakistani assistance is needed for the US aims in the Middle East (Palestine, Iraq and Iran). As in the past (e.g. Zia-ul-Haq's time) the US helps draft Musharraf's policy statements.⁹ America is, thus, working on both sides of the street.
3. There are also non-governmental forces within Washington whose thinking is mired in the past and who follow the Pakistani line about the linkage between Kashmir and the nuclear issue.¹⁰ They argue that Indian nuclear tests enabled

⁹ This was obvious when the US announced that Musharraf would be making very dramatic policy statements in his address to the nation well before he delivered the address on January 12, 2002. For full text of the address see www.pak.gov.pk/President_Addresses/presidential_addresses_index.htm.

¹⁰ In the aftermath of 1999 Kargil war between India and Pakistan, Stephen P Cohen, a Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Studies programme of the Brookings Institution, Washington D. C., expressed a similar view. In an article that appeared in the Asian Wall Street Journal on June 12, 1999, he

Pakistani testing and this gave Pakistan a nuclear cover to project militancy into Kashmir and to assert the moral ground of Kashmiri rights. The theory of Kashmir as a nuclear flashpoint gave non-proliferation in Washington (and Delhi) a new lease of life at a time when non-proliferation was failing as an international issue vis-à-vis India. But the view that India miscalculated by going nuclear is deeply flawed. For one, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had decided in January 1972 to go nuclear, two years before the 1974 Pokhran I tests.¹¹ Two, Generals Zia-ul-Haq and Aslam Beg made two simultaneous decisions – to acquire nuclear weaponry and to intensify insurgency in Punjab, Kashmir and Afghanistan to give Pakistan ‘strategic depth’.¹² Musharraf and the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), Pakistan’s external intelligence agency, have followed the Zia/Beg line. Thus, Pakistan’s policy had a logic of its own, which was pursued independently of India’s behaviour; Pakistan was pro-active and India was reactive. In retrospect, the miscalculation was Pakistan’s because the Pakistani frame of reference was to use its nuclear capability to deter Indian military action. Kargil and the recent crisis show that India’s frame of reference with Pakistan goes

observes, “... given the two sides’ newly developed nuclear capabilities, the conflict in Kashmir is no longer just an ugly sideshow; it is a serious threat to stability in South Asia...”. For full text, see, “South Asia Needs a Peace Process”<http://brookings.org/dybdocroot/views/op-ed/cohens/19990612.htm>.

¹¹ See G Parthasarthy, “Pakistan’s Nuclear and Missile Programme: The Multiple Dimensions”, www.rediff.com/news/2000/aug/30gp.htm.

Also, “Pakistan Nuclear Weapons”, www.fas.org/nuke/guide/pakistan/nuke/.

¹² That Pakistan would gain nothing in a conventional war with India was realised by Pakistani leaders and made them to think of an ‘alternative strategy.’ It was under this alternative that General Zia-ul-Haq devised what a group of Indian analysts projected as *Operation Topac*. This was an ambitious three-phase plan to ‘liberate’ Kashmir. Under phase one, low-level insurgency would target important establishments and security forces in the States of Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. Phase two would engage the Indian armed forces in the Poonch or Siachen sectors in J&K so that military aid would not reach the Kashmir Valley. Simultaneously, base depots, airfields and radio stations of Indian Army would also be targeted. Besides, Banihal tunnel and Kargil-Leh highway blockade with the help of Afghan Mujahideen from Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) would also be the part of this phase. Finally, Kashmir was to be ‘liberated’ from India, and an independent Islamic state was to be set up. See “OP TOPAC: The Kashmir Imbroglia”, Indian Defence Review, New Delhi, vol. 14, no. 2, April-June 1999, pp 19-34. Also see, “Rhetoric and Reality”, *Frontline*, vol. 15, no 12, June 6-19, 1998.

beyond deterrence; it is that of coercive diplomacy. Before the present National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition came to power it was the lack of Indian political will about using coercive diplomacy by conventional means, rather than Pakistani nuclear capability, that gave the misleading impression that the Pakistani strategy was working. Pakistan never had a first strike option (a statement does not create an option) because a first strike is credible if it destroys India's military and economic infrastructure. However, Pakistan's use of the Bomb would guarantee a general war, which could mean the destruction of Pakistan. Thus, Pakistan's nuclear umbrella was to provide cover to the Islamic generals in Pakistan and to Washington-based think tanks, who played the South Asian nuclear card to seek Indian nuclear disarmament. The same Washington strategists looked the other way when China transferred (and still does) missiles and nuclear components to Pakistan.¹³ Think tanks like the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Henry L. Stimson Centre and Brookings Institution also assumed that it was right to accept Pakistani views about Kashmiri self-determination. How ironic that they should side with the Pakistan Army, which has never shown an inclination to have elections or self-determination for the Pakistanis themselves, or even during brief intervals of civilian rule, 'democratic' governments which have denied the basic democratic right of adult franchise to the people in large parts of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, particularly in the Northern Areas.¹⁴ In any event, Indian coercive diplomacy during the recent crises, and India's nuclear and missile build-up have put Pakistan's Kashmir and nuclear strategy to the test. This is significant, particularly, in view of the fact that the Pakistan Army has never won a war with India and the effectiveness of their political diplomacy depends on Indian failures to act

¹³ Alleged Chinese support to Pakistan's nuclear and missile programme was even confirmed in US intelligence reports, but the actions taken were never stringent. For an account of Pakistani missile programme and external support, see "Missile match", *Frontline*, June 21, 2002.

¹⁴ See, for instance, Abdul Hamid Khan, "Balawaristan: The Heart of Darkness," *South Asia Intelligence Review*, 1.5, August 19, 2002, www.satp.org.

forcefully in a timely manner. Indian political weakness, not Pakistani strength, gives Islamabad a political and psychological edge.

4. There is no single endgame for India but there are many endgames that require anticipation of enemy moves and preparation of a co-ordinated plan of military-diplomatic and political-psychological movement in different strategic arenas. One endgame is to build on the recent US recognition – expressed first by the then US President, Bill Clinton, in relation to the Kargil operation, and more recently by the Bush administration, of the sanctity of the LoC.¹⁵ Why not lobby to make this a permanent international border? The suggestion has been on the table at least since 1955 (Nehru and Ghulam Mohammed talks),¹⁶ 1963 (Bhutto-Swaran Singh talks),¹⁷ 1972 (Bhutto-Indira Gandhi talks),¹⁸ and even earlier, in the Ayub-Cariappa conversations.¹⁹ Another

¹⁵ Clinton had prevailed upon the then Pakistani Premier, Nawaz Sharief, to maintain the sanctity of Line of Control in Kashmir during the 1999 Kargil War. See “Maintaining the sanctity of LoC”, *The Hindu*, Chennai, August 8, 2001. President George W. Bush has also repeatedly warned Pakistan to stop ‘incursions from across the Line of Control’. See “Bush warns Pakistan over Kashmir”

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/south_asia/newsid_2017000/2017250.stm.

¹⁶ Ghulam Mohammed, the then Pakistani Governor-General, had offered a four-point proposal to resolve the Kashmir issue during his visit to Delhi in the year 1955. This included *inter alia* ‘partition’ of Kashmir. See the first part of A G Noorani’s article, “Of the India-Pakistan summit, 1955”, *Frontline*, vol. 18, July 21-August 3, 2001. For further details, see the second series of Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, vol. 28, Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, Distributed by Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

¹⁷ India, led by Sardar Swaran Singh, the then Minister of Railways, and Pakistan, led by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the then Minister of Industries, held six rounds of talks between December 1962 and May 1963. The Indian approach was to modify the existing cease-fire line between India and Pakistan into an international boundary. See “The LoC & Kashmir”, *Hindu*, May 19, 2001.

¹⁸ After the 1971 India-Pakistan War and liberation of Bangladesh, an agreement was signed between the then Indian Premier, Indira Gandhi, and her Pakistani counterpart, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, on July 3, 1972 in Shimla. By this agreement, *inter alia*, all previous pronouncements on Kashmir were superseded, both the countries decided to settle all Kashmir-related issues bilaterally and the cease-fire line was converted into Line of Control. For full text of the 1972 Shimla Agreement see www.subcontinent.com/sapra/regional/regional20010714b.html.

¹⁹ The Ayub Khan and K M Cariappa talks in the early nineteen sixties also centred on converting the existing Line of Control into an international

endgame is to plant the idea in Asian circles that neither Pakistani-inspired militancy nor its nuclear capacity (which is mostly Chinese and North Korean ordnance)²⁰ give Pakistan an advantage, but Indian missiles and nukes make sense in the policies of the Powers in Asia and the Indian Ocean, where current power imbalances exist. India is thinking beyond deterrence; it is thinking about stable relationships in Asia, about a balance of power that involves America, Russia, Japan, China, itself, and regional powers like Indonesia and Australia, as well as influential nodal countries like Myanmar. The broader aim is to construct the foundation for stable regional security structures in Asia where many Powers are involved on a non-exclusive basis. The third endgame is to build links between likeminded Indian and American educators and practitioners who see India as a mature democracy, a liberal economy, a reliable strategic partner in the Indian Ocean area, a barrier against the spread of Islamic militancy, and are believers in a stable Pakistan under a reform-minded Musharraf and his army colleagues. Here, the intellectual battlefield is Washington and New York. Much work is needed to build an intellectual base to engage the pro-Pakistani and pro-Chinese biases in the American policy establishment and think tanks like the Council of Foreign Relations. It is too late to alter the anti-Indian biases of the likes of Henry Kissinger,²¹ whose thought processes are mired in the Cold War experiences. However, there are many influential American experts of a younger vintage who think of India's growing importance in the context of Middle Eastern turbulence and Asian uncertainties. The affinity between India and Israel, and emerging alignments with Japan and Australia (even Canada is beginning to rethink its India stance) are assets in the battle for the American mind. India will need to be creative and pro-active in re-calibrating and reorienting the Cold War

border. See "Explore Multilateral Option", *The Statesman*, Kolkata, April 4, 2002.

²⁰ "Missile match", *Frontline*, June 21, 2002.

²¹ For instance see Henry Kissinger, *White House Years and Years of Upheaval*, Boston: Little Brown, 1979.

orphans in Washington and New York, as well as in the popular US, and particularly electronic, media. The State Department is a legitimate target in this venture. The fourth endgame is to challenge Delhi Press commentators who are constantly looking for Indian concessions and are fixated with the question: what will Beijing think? Instead of misleading Indian public opinion with half-baked ideas about nuclear war, the new mantra should stress on the value of coercive diplomacy in a world of power imbalances, and emphasise changing Indian alignments with seasoned international practitioners like Putin and Chirac, and strategic planners at the Pentagon and the Pacific Command. Indian practitioners need to carry out a comparative study of the political culture and the institutional history of the insular Central Command and the internationalist sea-oriented Pacific Command, which is America's lifeline to Asia. Such a study will show that the measurement of success lies in an ability to facilitate movement across the landmass and the oceans, i.e., beyond a country's borders. Such movement is measured by an ability to move military forces and economic goods, and organize transfer of wealth – not from India to Swiss banks but from the international environment to India, and to promote ideas and beliefs that create like-mindedness among nations.