ADM Mullen reviews Pakistani troops in Islamabad

U.S. Navy (Chad J. McNeeley)

NUCLEAR ARMS AND THE FUTURE OF South Asia

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Trend lines have shaped the nuclear past and will shape the nuclear future. But trend lines are usually set by major events, and major events usually have crosscutting effects. The use of atomic weapons to end World War II and the appearance of the hydrogen bomb, close calls such as the Cuban missile crisis, and game-changing events such as the dissolution of the Soviet Union generate countervailing impulses to control the atom and to build bombs.

Alternative nuclear futures exist; some are far better than others. The choice of a nuclear future does not occur in a vacuum or by happenstance. Nor can the future be masterfully engineered by deliberate choice. Game-changing events can waylay the best made plans. Whether the net effect of such events is negative or positive depends on the nature of the event and how national leaders and their publics react to it. These reactions, in turn, will be shaped not only by the shock of the new, but also by the political context that precedes major headline events. If that context is generally positive, the probability increases that damage can be contained and the net

effect will be positive. If the preceding context is negative, the headline event is likely to accelerate negative trends.

This article looks initially at nuclear shocks globally and then at shocks and trends in South Asia specifically. Dreadful acts of terrorism occur in this region, although with less frequency than in the past. Acts of terrorism that can do the most damage occur in periods of deteriorating relations, in the context of high infiltration rates across the Kashmir divide and prior incidences of terrorism. If a headline act of terrorism occurs in the context of a deep crisis or border skirmish, it can generate military mobilizations and an escalatory spiral, especially if that act involves a mushroom cloud or, to a lesser extent, radiological material, or conventional explosives are used that produce large-scale loss of life, or an act of terror occurs at a highly symbolic national monument or religious shrine. If, however, a headline act of terrorism occurs during a period when national leaders are working

Nagasaki in ruins, August 1945

U.S. Air Force

to improve bilateral relations, are making progress, and are seeking a settlement to the Kashmir dispute, there is a reasonable chance that the leaders will redouble their efforts, or at least insulate the process of reconciliation from those who attempt to reverse it.

Trends can build imperceptibly at first and unmistakably over time. Headline events can accentuate these trends, slow them down, or reverse them. Change will have positive as well as negative elements. Opportunity can flow from misfortune, or it can encourage hubris. Choice matters, especially when confronted by game-changing events. It is easier to predict major events—at least in generic form—than to forecast their net consequences. This article thus focuses initially on the major events that could lie ahead because they are the axes on which the nuclear future may turn. Constructive actions now and in the years ahead—or sins of omission and commission—will shape the trend lines that follow, for good or ill.

This is, of course, a speculative exercise. The difficulty in following George Santayana's famous dictum about being condemned to repeat history is determining which lessons among the large menu of choices bear remembering. Our shared nuclear history will assuredly shape future choices, but as Bernard Brodie, the first great analyst of the nuclear age, observed, "The phrase 'history proves' usually signals poor logic and worse history." International relations theorist Kenneth N. Waltz agrees: "History tells us only what we want to know."

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Unpleasant as well as pleasant surprises happen in life, and it would be quite extraordinary if they did not apply to the bomb as well. Some big events make sense in retrospect but still come as surprises. Continuities can accumulate to the tipping point, where they produce significant discontinuities. Sound analysis and common sense suggest that every act of proliferation has unique aspects, but every new aspect of proliferation also connects in some fashion to some preceding step. The hipbone, in this business, is usually connected to the thighbone. One permutation of the problem can lead to the next, and as this organism grows, it can become more complex, less predictable, and less manageable.

The flip side of this process could also apply: one wise decision or fortunate development can lead to the next, and the scope of the proliferation dangers can progressively contract. Wise decisions that produce fortunate consequences may produce only temporary relief from proliferation problems. But in the nuclear business, buying time can often be considered a victory.

Shocks and trends in South Asia do not happen in a vacuum, especially those related to nuclear issues. Therefore, before looking at South Asia, let us first consider headline events that can shape our global nuclear future. Perhaps the easiest way to tackle this question—and to identify and prioritize preventive measures—is to identify the events that would produce the most harm. Troubling events could generate positive reactions that contain damage and make subsequent troubling events less likely. Alternatively, negative events could trigger more backsliding. A short list of negative game-changing developments must therefore factor in the potential for even worse downstream consequences. In order of potential damage to nonproliferation norms, rules, and treaties, my list of the nine worst drivers for a negative nuclear future is:

- use of a nuclear weapon in warfare between states
- failure to stop and reverse the Iranian and North Korean nuclear weapons programs
- breakdown and radical change of governance within Pakistan
- further spread of enrichment and reprocessing plants to nations that are hedging their bets and might want to be a "screwdriver's turn" away from the bomb
- failure to lock down and properly safeguard dangerous weapons and nuclear materials that already exist
- acts of nuclear terrorism directed against states by extremist groups
- demise of international inspections and other nuclear monitoring arrangements
- resumption and cascade of nuclear weapons testing
- continued production of highly enriched uranium and plutonium for nuclear weapons.

This list does not presume to be definitive, and good cases can no doubt be made for additions and reordering. Since my primary intent is to address shocks and trends in South Asia, I will not provide analysis to defend all of these choices, but the third negative driver, the breakdown and radical change of governance within Pakistan, demands comment.

Pakistan has been poorly governed for so long—by both military rulers and civilians—that its demise has been predicted repeatedly. The nation's cadres of civil servants and its public education system and social services have progressively degraded. Political leadership positions within Pakistan have become lifetime appointments; few business opportunities offer as much prospect of success as being an elected official. National elections are rarely fair and usually do not produce representative governments.

Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari addresses UN General Assembly, September 2008

United Nations (Marco Castro)

Growing areas within the country have become autonomous from central rule, not only the tribal belt adjacent to Afghanistan, but also parts of Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province. Islamic extremism, once a favored tool of the Pakistan military to dislodge the Soviet Union from Afghanistan and punish India across the Kashmir divide, has turned against the organs of the state. Acts of violence are on the rise within Pakistan and have been directed against former paymasters in the military.

Pakistan's strains have grown appreciably since the 9/11 attacks, when the ruling chief of army staff, Pervez Musharraf, abruptly turned against al Qaeda and repositioned his country as a U.S. ally in the "war on terror." The army's links to the Taliban have proved harder to sever. To do so would create rifts within the country's ethnic Pashtun population, which lives astride the border with Afghanistan; to avoid doing so would create a wider rift with the United States. Musharraf did, however, engineer a quieting of the Kashmir divide. Pakistan's military leaders follow the precept that one inflamed border is manageable, while two constitute a severe threat to the state. Consequently, the army seeks to avoid severe crises with India prompted by high rates of infiltration and acts of terror while the Afghanistan border remains explosive. The military leadership also faces growing domestic discontent over its extended stay in power. The army has been trained, equipped, and led to fight India, not to counter extremist groups that engage in domestic violence.

Despite Pakistan's many weaknesses, the country has managed to hold together, and its populace has long been forbearing of misrule. Religious parties have historically received little more than 10 percent of the vote in relatively fair elections. Pakistan remains a rare example of an Islamic state in which the two largest political parties do not define themselves primarily in religious terms. Both parties, however, have suffered from the weaknesses of their leaders, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, who spent most of Musharraf's rule in foreign exile. The Bhutto and Sharif families oversee the only truly national parties within the country. The assassination of Benazir Bhutto raises the possibility that her party will fissure.

Pakistan's multiple weaknesses have long raised concerns that it could suffer a massive upheaval from below, akin to the Iranian political revolution. Iran under the shah was also a secular, progressive Islamic state until many Iranians and their religious leaders rebelled and engineered a toxic shift in national orientation. The United States had little ability to monitor and predict a revolution from below because its ties to Iranian society were from the top down. The same holds true for Pakistan; Washington is poorly situated to track bottom-up changes in Pakistani society that could result in a breakdown and radical change of governance within the country. U.S. concerns over the country's future stability have reinforced Washington's support for military rule, which in turn has accentuated the very trends Washington fears most. The progressive destabilization of Pakistan could reach the point of no return, but sufficient capabilities remain within the

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United Nations

UN observers monitor Indian and Pakistani forces along the long-disputed Line of Control in Kashmir in 1949 (left) and 2005 (right)

United Nations (Evan Schneider)

country to avoid this outcome. The departure of military strongmen who create conditions of great political instability is a necessary step before national equilibrium is restored.

Dominant Trends

Dominant trends can be defined as significant drivers in the security calculus on the subcontinent. These trends are not necessarily irreversible, but changing course would be hard.

The first such dominant trend is that Pakistan and India will probably keep viewing economic growth as essential to national well-being, domestic cohesion, and national security. Trade between the countries presumably will continue to grow. While the perceived primacy of economic growth does not ensure peaceful relations between Pakistan and India, the pursuit of this goal is likely to further ameliorate animosity. Pakistan's future growth is limited in part by constrained trading partnerships with India and states in Central Asia. As long as Pakistan's ties to neighboring India and Afghanistan remain conflicted, these natural trade routes will generate far less than optimal results. This dominant trend is conducive to improved bilateral relationships on the subcontinent.

Second, in view of the primacy of economics in the national security calculations of Pakistan and India, it is probable that the leadership in both countries will seek to avoid major crises and border skirmishes in the years ahead. Pakistan's interest in nonhostile relations with India is likely to be reinforced by continued difficulties along its border with Afghanistan. The leadership goal of peaceful borders between Pakistan and India could, however, be challenged by significant acts of terrorism perpetrated by extremists with quite different agendas. Nonetheless, there are greater buffers against escalation arising from significant acts of terrorism than in previous years. This dominant trend also points in the direction of improved bilateral relations on the subcontinent. It is hard to envision another standoff like that of the "Twin Peaks" crisis in 2001–2002.[1] This does not, however, exclude lesser cases in which extremist acts trigger retaliatory measures.

A third dominant trend is that Pakistani and Indian leaders will seek to avoid arms racing, which characterized the U.S.-Soviet competition during the Cold War and resulted in extreme vertical proliferation. With the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union, arms races have been replaced by asymmetric warfare. No nation is interested in replicating the U.S.-Soviet model, which resulted in grotesquely large nuclear stockpiles. Instead, national leaders in Pakistan, India, and China have repeatedly declared their intention to follow the requirements of minimal credible deterrence.

While Pakistan acknowledges the disparity in conventional military capability with India, this imbalance also appears to reinforce its inclination to compete with India in nuclear weapons and delivery systems. India appears intent on being able to deliver nuclear weapons from land, sea, and air, as does Pakistan. India also seems determined to complement a diverse family of ballistic missiles with cruise missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons. Pakistan does as well. Thus, the requirements of minimal credible nuclear deterrence in both countries appear to be relative and not absolute.

If this analysis is accurate, Pakistan and India will avoid arms racing, but they will still compete in fielding more capable nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. Thus, if India resumes nuclear testing, Pakistan likely will as well. Countries that acquire more and more nuclear weapons and more sophisticated ways to deliver them typically do not feel more secure as a result. Instead, they feel increased concern over the improved nuclear capabilities of a potential adversary. This dynamic is likely to apply to South Asia.

The nuclear arms competition between Pakistan and India has an additional driver: Chinese reactions to U.S. national security policies that seek "decisive" victory in the event of warfare with China over Taiwan. Beijing has long pursued what, in Cold War terms, has been a lackadaisical strategic modernization program. This relaxed pace is changing. The Bush administration's incorporation of conventional strike capabilities into strategic war plans, the proposed deployment of more than 40 ground-based interceptors in Alaska and

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California, the revised U.S. Air Force guidance related to space superiority, and other military initiatives have gained Beijing's attention, as they have particular relevance vis-à-vis contingencies related to Taiwan.

The accelerating pace of China's strategic modernization programs will feed into India's calculations for a minimal nuclear deterrent, which in turn will feed into Pakistan's perceived needs. The China-India-Pakistan nuclear triangle is likely to be the primary axis of vertical proliferation over the next 10 years or more. While this competition will fall well short of an arms race—at least in Cold War terms—it will work against nuclear stabilization on the subcontinent.

The fourth dominant trend is that internal security concerns will continue to be paramount for both Pakistan and India. Pakistan's domestic cohesion is being stressed by several separate but mutually reinforcing factors, including the strains generated by prolonged military rule, the resurgence of al Qaeda and the Taliban, and the difficulties generated by being an ally of the Bush administration in its war on terror. Tensions between provinces and Islamabad have been acute under military rule. Competing demands over resources, particularly water, are likely to exacerbate these tensions in the future. Pakistan's leaders also must work toward ameliorating sectarian and communal friction.

India, too, must focus on internal security concerns in the northeast, which are growing, and in Kashmir, which appear to be waning. Violence against the state perpetrated by the Muslim minority also must preoccupy India's leadership. It is a rare conjunction when internal security concerns are greater than external ones in both Pakistan and India. This trend could be conducive to improved relations between New Delhi and Islamabad unless Pakistan's military and intelligence leaders seek to revive militancy in Kashmir.

A fifth dominant trend is that the United States will seek to maintain strong ties with both governments. This has been a rare occurrence in the diplomatic history of independent India and Pakistan. For most of the Cold War, American diplomacy toward the subcontinent was an either/or proposition: when U.S. ties with Pakistan were strong, they were troubled with India, and vice versa. The Bush administration made a concerted effort to improve ties with both countries, and the events of September 11, 2001, have resulted in better, but by no means uncomplicated, relations with both governments.

U.S. ties with India have never been stronger. While overly optimistic views are likely to lead to disappointment, the upswing in bilateral relations can be expected to continue, bolstered by increased economic ties and trade as well as the increasingly active role in U.S. politics of the Indian-American community.

The United States also has an important stake in Pakistan's future. If Pakistan transitions to a progressive, moderate Islamic state, it will become a model for other nations and will contain Islamic extremism, which has become a permanent element of national life. Given Islamabad's importance, Washington will continue to seek improved ties despite lingering issues of contention. Nonetheless, the legacy of the past and the mutual mistrust will not go away. Pakistan's prior support for the Taliban, its ties to extremist groups that have been active in Kashmir and Afghanistan, and its export of nuclear weapon–making equipment and designs to Iran, North Korea, and elsewhere continue to shadow bilateral relations. The other side of the coin is that many Pakistanis remember the imposition of sanctions over their nuclear program shortly after their country helped Washington succeed in prompting the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. There is a widespread view that the United States can be counted on to advance its own interests but not to be a reliable supporter of Pakistan.

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Even with this recent history, Washington and Islamabad have managed to keep bilateral relations on a mostly even keel. The biggest stumbling block at present is the resurgence of al Qaeda and the Taliban, which have established sanctuaries on Pakistani soil along the Afghan border, from which cross-border military operations are carried out. Extremist groups within the country are not confined to border regions, however. They can carry out acts of violence in all of Pakistan's cities. Washington understands that the Federally Administered Tribal Areas along the Afghan border have always had considerable autonomy and resent efforts by the central government to exercise direct control. Nonetheless, Washington cannot accept this as a reason to allow sanctuaries and training camps that carry out attacks against U.S. and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces and undermine the government of Afghanistan.

Both Islamabad and Washington understand that this issue carries the possibility of another break in relations, which could have severely negative consequences for Pakistan's national security and domestic politics, regional stability, and U.S. national security. Both capitals can therefore be expected to try to prevent these outcomes. Another sharp break in U.S.-Pakistan ties likely would remove an important shock absorber in the subcontinent.

Influencing Factors

Influencing factors are those that could reinforce both positive and negative trend lines on the subcontinent but that are unlikely to sharply accentuate or reverse them. The India-U.S. nuclear cooperation agreement, China's test of an antisatellite weapon, India's testing and pursuit of theater missile defenses, and India's and Pakistan's military modernization programs can all be defined as influencing factors. Leadership changes in both New Delhi and Islamabad also could become important influencing factors.

The India-U.S. nuclear cooperation agreement is a significant initiative that is likely to have negative repercussions for global nonproliferation norms, but it is unlikely to markedly impact the nuclear balance on the subcontinent. Even assuming that all of the national and international hurdles are surmounted to proceed with this agreement, the construction of nuclear facilities is a lengthy and expensive process. It is far from clear at this writing whether domestic sensitivities concerning the proposed agreement would allow the Indian government to proceed. It is also unclear, after the 1984 industrial accident at a Union Carbide facility in Bhopal, that the Indian parliament would approve legislation to limit liability to foreign companies in the event of a nuclear accident. This may not prevent Russia and France from building nuclear power stations in India, but it would likely foreclose U.S. investment in this energy sector.

Ground-based interceptor missile lifts off from Vandenberg Air Force Base

U.S. Air Force (Joe Davila)

If existing hurdles could be overcome, Indian and U.S. approvals of the nuclear cooperation agreement would further bolster India's standing as an exceptional nation and heighten Pakistan's sense of grievance. Even so, if past remains prologue, Indian governmental entities are likely to proceed with civil nuclear power generation at a measured pace, given the entrenched bureaucratic and political hurdles associated with building nuclear power plants. If this projection is accurate, significant energy dividends resulting from the nuclear agreement are unlikely to materialize over the next decade or more—including the growth of civil nuclear infrastructure that could be redirected to India's military nuclear programs. The most likely nuclear accord would not lead to a convergence of Indian and U.S. strategic objectives. With or without the nuclear deal, New Delhi would seek to improve ties with both Beijing and Washington. And with or without the nuclear deal, New Delhi would seek to cover growing energy needs, including dealing with Iran.

China's successful test of an antisatellite weapon in January 2007, like the India-U.S. nuclear cooperation agreement, is a significant development. It does not, however, fundamentally change security calculations on the subcontinent or elsewhere. Satellites are inherently vulnerable and extremely difficult to defend. Any nation that possesses medium-range missiles and nuclear weapons has the means to do great harm to satellites in low Earth orbit. In this context, India, Pakistan, and China all possess rudimentary, indiscriminate means of harming satellites. Some spacefaring nations also possess the means of destroying or disabling satellites by using hit-to-kill technologies—as China and the United States have demonstrated—or by using lasers and jammers. China has invested substantially in these capabilities.

the Chinese antisatellite test might accelerate Indian research and development programs related to space warfare applications

China's demonstrated antisatellite capabilities could be used against India as well as the United States. It therefore would not be surprising if India's military space sector is also investigating such capabilities. Pakistan relies less on satellites than India, but neither country's military capabilities appear heavily dependent on satellites for warfighting. The same can be said regarding China. Over time, all three countries are likely to become more dependent on satellites, but this timeline is likely to be extended. Moreover, dominant trends suggest that the likelihood of warfare between Pakistan and India or between India and China is low and decreasing. And if the dominant trends were reversed and war were to occur, it would likely be focused on the ground, not in space.

It can be expected that the Chinese antisatellite test might somewhat accelerate Indian research and development programs related to space warfare applications. It is probable that hedging strategies will be further developed in Pakistan as well. But it is even more likely that other security concerns will continue to dominate Pakistani and Indian military plans and programs.

Pakistan's military plans also must take into account India's interest in theater ballistic missile defense programs, as well as the possibility that New Delhi might invest considerable resources to acquire and field such defenses. India's demonstrated interest in such capabilities has been greater than its interest in space warfare capabilities. Nonetheless, Pakistani military planners appear to have a well-founded appreciation of the technical difficulties associated with deploying effective missile defenses. Indian officials are also likely to be keenly aware of the opportunity costs of investing in missile defenses that may be ineffective compared to, say, investments in improved offensive military capabilities of proven effectiveness. If, despite these calculations, India chooses to invest in ballistic missile defenses, Pakistan can decide to increase investments in both ballistic and cruise missiles.

Thus, while Pakistan is likely to view India's interest in missile defenses warily, the primary concern in Rawalpindi, headquarters of Pakistan's army, may relate to New Delhi's acquisition of multipurpose military technologies rather than the deployment of effective missile defenses. The acquisition of such technologies would further extend India's conventional military advantages over the next decade but would not fundamentally change dominant trends or the continuation of mutual vulnerability to nuclear attack.

India and Pakistan will modernize and expand their conventional military capabilities over the next decade through domestic and foreign procurement. These programs are most likely to accentuate the growing disparity between the power projection capabilities of India and Pakistan, but not fundamentally change dominant trends, which include more normal bilateral relations, increased trade, and a mutual unwillingness to turn back the clock to intense crises, brinkmanship, or another limited war. India's conventional advantages over Pakistan relate to domestic infrastructure, purchasing power, and a larger set of military suppliers. Over the next decade, New Delhi can be expected to make its procurement decisions increasingly with an eye toward China rather than Pakistan.

Pakistan cannot match India's conventional capabilities, but it appears intent on keeping pace with respect to nuclear modernization. Islamabad has invested heavily in this competition and might well view its nuclear stockpile, fissile material production capacity, and delivery vehicles as compensation for the growing conventional imbalance. Both countries, as well as China, are likely to test and acquire more effective ballistic and cruise missiles. Over the next decade, all three countries are likely to obtain improved means of delivering nuclear weapons from seabased platforms. The possibility of resuming nuclear weapons testing cannot be ruled out, but leaders in all three countries would prefer that their nation not be the first to break a global moratorium on nuclear testing. Modestly paced nuclear force modernization programs should not fundamentally alter the subcontinent's strategic environment.

The last potential influencing factor relates to the possibility of leadership changes that disrupt positive trends or accentuate negative ones. Changing leadership in both countries has slowed efforts at normalization and could do so again. Successive coalition governments in New Delhi have spanned the political spectrum, but they have all pursued similar national security policies. India's contentious domestic politics can, however, seek to accentuate differences, as is now the case with respect to the Bharatiya Janata Party's opposition to the civil nuclear cooperation agreement it previously sought. The likely conclusion from this record is that changes in Indian governance and the vigorous domestic political challenges that sitting governments face are likely to slow but not greatly alter dominant trends.

DOD (Jerry Morrison)

Secretary Gates and ADM Mullen meet with People's Liberation Army deputy chief of staff at Asia Security Summit

While potential changes in governance in Pakistan offer a wider range of choices, there is little reason to believe, as is expressed in some quarters, that Pakistan could experience a significant shift in which religious extremists gain the levers of power. Nothing in Pakistan's history lends credence to this scenario. If the two major political parties, which do not define themselves primarily in religious terms, are allowed to compete freely in national elections and to mobilize their respective political bases, this scenario becomes even more remote. Nonetheless, political destabilization within Pakistan will surely slow positive regional trends.

Shocks, Wild Cards, and Game Changers

Shocks, wild cards, and game changers are developments that could greatly impact political, national, and regional security on the subcontinent. These developments could significantly accentuate or shift the dominant trends already identified.

The biggest shock would be a radical change in governance in Pakistan. One contributing factor could be U.S. military operations within the country to combat the resurgence of the Taliban and al Qaeda, and their continued use of Pakistani territory to carry out attacks on U.S. and NATO forces operating across the border in Afghanistan. The resurgence of the Taliban, the widely presumed location of Taliban and al Qaeda leaders on Pakistani soil, and unrest in Pakistan's tribal belt along the Afghan border pose major challenges for U.S.-Pakistan ties and the Islamabad government. If the executive and/or legislative branches in the United States conclude that Pakistan is unwilling or unable to control the Taliban and al Qaeda, bilateral ties will face rough sledding. Pressures would likely build on U.S. military and political leaders to undertake cross-border actions against perceived sanctuaries for the Taliban and al Qaeda leadership, which could have negative impacts on relations between Washington and Islamabad and for Pakistan's domestic politics.

fears of nuclear terrorism could eclipse concerns over the India-Pakistan nuclear balance over the next decade

A second shock would be an incident of nuclear terrorism on the subcontinent. Concerns about nuclear terrorism are well founded in this region; there are extremist groups operating in both countries that could have the means as well as the motive to acquire radiological and perhaps even fissile materials. Fears of nuclear terrorism could eclipse concerns over the India-Pakistan nuclear balance during the next decade.

Warfighting scenarios involving total mobilization along the two traditional fighting corridors, as well as the deliberate escalation of a conventional conflict across the nuclear threshold, do not appear likely for the foreseeable future, although these scenarios cannot entirely be ruled out. New

crises could still unfold, and the use of nuclear weapons—whether by accident or a breakdown of command and control—cannot be dismissed by relying on an academic theory such as the stability-instability paradox. One possible driver of unwanted crises and escalation could be an act of nuclear terrorism in either India or Pakistan that is attributed to extremists who have received foreign support. An act of nuclear terrorism could be particularly hard to contain if it occurs in the context of ongoing deterioration of Pakistan-India relations.

The use of a radiological dispersal device or "dirty bomb" is more plausible than the detonation of a nuclear weapon that has been stolen or constructed out of highly enriched uranium. In both India and Pakistan, as elsewhere, materials that could be used to make dirty bombs are widely available and poorly guarded in the civil sector. These devices would not cause great loss of life, but they could provoke widespread public anxiety and economic disruption.

A third shock, wild card, or game changer on the subcontinent could be a crisis between the United States and Iran in which Washington uses military force against Tehran, perhaps to delay its nuclear programs or in retaliation for Iranian-backed attacks against U.S. interests or forces in the region. In these scenarios, Washington would expect diplomatic support from Islamabad and New Delhi. If support were not forthcoming in one or both cases, the U.S. executive and/or legislative branches might reevaluate ongoing bilateral cooperation efforts, particularly with respect to military assistance and, in the case of India, civil nuclear cooperation.

A clash between the United States and Iran would likely be problematic for both U.S.-Pakistan and U.S.-India relations. Domestic backlash against the United States could be expected in both countries. Pakistani authorities might also face increased sectarian violence and domestic unrest. Leaders in both countries would find it difficult to improve ties with Washington. Instead, backsliding could occur.

A fourth potential shock, wild card, and game changer would be a U.S.-China clash over Taiwan. Another Taiwan crisis also could become a test of U.S. ties with both Islamabad and New Delhi. India seeks improved ties with Beijing as well as Washington and would seek to avoid antagonizing either capital. Pakistan also would be placed in a tough spot in the event of a possible clash between its two most important patrons. Depending on how a U.S.-China confrontation over Taiwan were to play out, Pakistan and India could choose different sides. In that event, U.S. ties with India could improve even more, while ties with Pakistan could deteriorate further.

Not all shocks, wild cards, and game-changing developments are negative. A Pakistan-India agreement on the key elements for settling the Kashmir dispute would be a significant accomplishment, even if negotiations on implementing details take considerable time. Agreement on the key elements of a Kashmir settlement would likely generate extremist acts as well as provide insulation against a downturn in bilateral Pakistan-India ties. It would facilitate economic growth and cross-border and regional trade, providing one basis for greater domestic tranquility in both countries, and a counter to the negative wild cards described above.

Policy Consequences

What policy consequences that flow from this analysis would apply more narrowly to the Pentagon, and what should the Pentagon do as a result? First, it should strive to improve military-to-military ties with both Pakistan and India. Clearly, this would be more challenging with Pakistan, but solid ties with both countries would help prevent unintended escalation arising from the triggering events discussed above.

Second, two standard instruments for improved military-to-military ties are bilateral training exercises and arms sales. What kind of training exercises and arms sales deserve prioritization? Some major U.S. arms sales with India could, ironically, become a casualty of the civil nuclear cooperation agreement; others are likely to proceed. It is unavoidable that conventional arms sales to India will reinforce Pakistani reasoning in favor of more nuclear weapons programs to compensate for conventional imbalances. This reasoning can be accentuated by engaging in arms sales, such as missile defense programs, that have a more direct bearing on presumed nuclear requirements. The more indirect the connection between U.S. arms sales to India and Pakistan's nuclear requirements, the better. The more direct the connection between U.S. arms transfers and monitoring the Kashmir divide, the better.

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Third, the Pakistan army's raison d'être since its inception has been to defend against the Indian army. A relatively small fraction is trained and equipped to deal with internal security and counterterrorism operations. The primary focus of the Pentagon's arms sales and training programs for Pakistan should accordingly be explicitly oriented toward those requirements. This approach is obviously needed and has the added benefit of providing the best chance of sustaining a domestic political consensus in the United States for continued military ties to Pakistan.

Similarly, the Pentagon should seek, over time, to engage in trilateral counterterrorism military exercises with India and Pakistan. In addition, U.S. Defense Department leadership should seek to accelerate and broaden cooperative threat reduction programs that fall under its purview with India and Pakistan. Finally, despite time constraints, high-level Pentagon visitors should make it a point to request meetings with a range of political and military leaders when they visit Pakistan. **JFQ**

NOTE

[1] This crisis was triggered by an attack on the Indian parliament in December 2001 and reached another fevered peak with attacks against the families of Indian servicemen in battle-ready formations in May 2002.