

p-ISSN : 2708-2121 | e-ISSN : 2708-3616

DOI(Journal): 10.31703/gsssr  
DOI(Volume): 10.31703/gsssr/.2024(IX)  
DOI(Issue): 10.31703/gsssr.2024(IX.I)



# GSSSR

**GLOBAL STRATEGIC & SECURITY STUDIES REVIEW**

**VOL. IX, ISSUE I, WINTER (MARCH-2024)**



Double-blind Peer-review Research Journal  
www.gsssrjournal.com  
© Global Strategic & Security Studies Review

**Article Title**

**Possession of Nuclear Deterrence as Security Dilemma: Impacting Regional Stability of South Asia**

**Global Strategic & Security Studies Review**

p-ISSN: 2708-2121e-ISSN: 2708-3616

DOI(journal):10.31703/gsssr

Volume: IX (2024)

DOI (volume):10.31703/gsssr.2024(IX)

Issue: I (Winter-March 2024)

DOI(Issue):10.31703/gsssr.2024(IX-I)

**Home Page**

[www.gsssrjournal.com](http://www.gsssrjournal.com)

**Volume: IX (2024)**

<https://www.gsssrjournal.com/Current-issues>

**Issue: I-Winter (March-2024)**

<https://www.gsssrjournal.com/Current-issues/9/1/20234>

**Scope**

<https://www.gsssrjournal.com/about-us/scope>

**Submission**

<https://humaglobe.com/index.php/gsssr/submissions>

**Google Scholar**



**Visit Us**



**Abstract**

*This paper uses qualitative research tools to unearth the nuanced features of nuclear deterrence and security dilemmas in South Asia. The study focuses on India and Pakistan's nuclear capabilities, the historical background of nuclearization, the basics of deterrence in today's context as well as an elaborate analysis of their security landscape. The research focuses on the more complex question of 'Nuclear Strategy and Regional Stability: What is India Thinking?' in its precis, and involves qualitative analysis through case studies like the Kargil Conflict. The paper elaborates further on the part of international actors with reference to nuclear non-proliferation and potential challenges in the days ahead. By prioritizing qualitative data, this paper shows that the security dilemma remains a potent force and one that requires collective endeavors to address regional insecurities and foster greater peace across South Asia.*

**Keywords:** Nuclear Deterrence, India, Pakistan, Regional, South Asia, Security Dilemma, Regional Stability

**Authors:**

**Maryam Ali:** PhD Scholar, Department of International Relations, Government College University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

**Ghulam Mustafa:**(Corresponding Author)  
Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, Government College University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.  
(Email: [ghulammustafa@gcuf.edu.pk](mailto:ghulammustafa@gcuf.edu.pk))

**Fatima Rasheed Ahmad:** PhD Scholar, Department of International Relations, Government College University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

**Pages:** 66-75

**DOI:**10.31703/gsssr.2024(IX-I).06

**DOI link:**[https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsssr.2024\(IX-I\).06](https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsssr.2024(IX-I).06)

**Article link:** <http://www.gsssrjournal.com/article/A-b-c>

**Full-text Link:** <https://gsssrjournal.com/fulltext/>

**Pdf link:** <https://www.gsssrjournal.com/jadmin/Auther/31rv1olA2.pdf>

Citing this Article

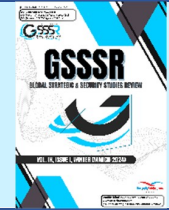
o6		Possession of Nuclear Deterrence as Security Dilemma: Impacting Regional Stability of South Asia					
		Author	Maryam Ali Ghulam Mustafa Fatima Rasheed Ahmad		DOI	10.31703/gsssr.2024(IX-I).o6	
Pages	66-75	Year	2024	Volume	IX	Issue	I
Referencing & Citing Styles	APA	Ali, M., Mustafa, G., & Ahmad, F. R. (2024). Possession of Nuclear Deterrence as Security Dilemma: Impacting Regional Stability of South Asia. <i>Global Strategic &amp; Security Studies Review</i> , IX(1), 66-75. <a href="https://doi.org/10.31703/gsssr.2024(IX-I).o6">https://doi.org/10.31703/gsssr.2024(IX-I).o6</a>					
	CHICAGO	Ali, Maryam, Ghulam Mustafa, and Fatima Rasheed Ahmad. 2024. "Possession of Nuclear Deterrence as Security Dilemma: Impacting Regional Stability of South Asia." <i>Global Strategic &amp; Security Studies Review</i> IX (I):66-75. doi: 10.31703/gsssr.2024(IX-I).o6.					
	HARVARD	ALI, M., MUSTAFA, G. & AHMAD, F. R. 2024. Possession of Nuclear Deterrence as Security Dilemma: Impacting Regional Stability of South Asia. <i>Global Strategic &amp; Security Studies Review</i> , IX, 66-75.					
	MHRA	Ali, Maryam, Ghulam Mustafa, and Fatima Rasheed Ahmad. 2024. 'Possession of Nuclear Deterrence as Security Dilemma: Impacting Regional Stability of South Asia', <i>Global Strategic &amp; Security Studies Review</i> , IX: 66-75.					
	MLA	Ali, Maryam, Ghulam Mustafa, and Fatima Rasheed Ahmad. "Possession of Nuclear Deterrence as Security Dilemma: Impacting Regional Stability of South Asia." <i>Global Strategic &amp; Security Studies Review</i> IX.I (2024): 66-75. Print.					
	OXFORD	Ali, Maryam, Mustafa, Ghulam, and Ahmad, Fatima Rasheed (2024), 'Possession of Nuclear Deterrence as Security Dilemma: Impacting Regional Stability of South Asia', <i>Global Strategic &amp; Security Studies Review</i> , IX (I), 66-75.					
	TURABIAN	Ali, Maryam, Ghulam Mustafa, and Fatima Rasheed Ahmad. "Possession of Nuclear Deterrence as Security Dilemma: Impacting Regional Stability of South Asia." <i>Global Strategic &amp; Security Studies Review</i> IX, no. I (2024): 66-75. <a href="https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsssr.2024(IX-I).o6">https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsssr.2024(IX-I).o6</a> .					



# Global Strategic & Security Studies Review

[www.gprjournal.com](http://www.gprjournal.com)

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/glsr>



Pages:66-75

URL:[https://doi.org/10.31703/gsssr.2024\(IX-I\).06](https://doi.org/10.31703/gsssr.2024(IX-I).06)

Doi: 10.31703/gsssr.2024(IX-I).06



Cite Us



## Title

### Possession of Nuclear Deterrence as Security Dilemma: Impacting Regional Stability of South Asia

#### Contents

- [Introduction](#)
- [Literature Review](#)
- [Theoretical Framework](#)
- [Historical Context of Nuclearization](#)
- [Impact on Regional Security](#)
- [Paradox of Stability vs Instability](#)
- [Mitigation Strategies](#)
- [Conclusion](#)
- [References](#)

#### Abstract

*This paper uses qualitative research tools to unearth the nuanced features of nuclear deterrence and security dilemmas in South Asia. The study focuses on India and Pakistan's nuclear capabilities, the historical background of nuclearization, the basics of deterrence in today's context as well as an elaborate analysis of their security landscape. The research focuses on the more complex question of 'Nuclear Strategy and Regional Stability: What is India Thinking?' in its precis, and involves qualitative analysis through case studies like the Kargil Conflict. The paper elaborates further on the part of international actors with reference to nuclear non-proliferation and potential challenges in the days ahead. By prioritizing qualitative data, this paper shows that the security dilemma remains a potent force and one that requires collective endeavors to address regional insecurities and foster greater peace across South Asia.*

#### Authors:

##### Maryam Ali:

PhD Scholar, Department of International Relations, Government College University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

##### Ghulam Mustafa:(Corresponding Author)

Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, Government College University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.  
(Email:[ghulammustafa@gcuf.edu.pk](mailto:ghulammustafa@gcuf.edu.pk))

**Fatima Rasheed Ahmad:** PhD Scholar, Department of International Relations, Government College University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

**Keywords:** [Nuclear Deterrence, India, Pakistan, Regional, South Asia, Security Dilemma, Regional Stability](#)

## Introduction

South Asia is at a critical location to act as this gateway between the East and West as well as a locus for some of the significant global actors including China, Russia, and even the Middle East. In addition, in the context of world history, this territory has even more significance as lying in close proximity to two vital maritime chokepoints—the Strait of Hormuz and the Malacca Strait. However, the region's political landscape remains filled with simmering disputes and latent rivalries (most notably the Indo-Pakistani rivalry over Kashmir) In addition to making it harder to keep the region stable, this also has repercussions for

international security. Moreover, as South Asia is home to nuclear weapons states the odds of a conflict turning into a war involving these weapons raise alarm bells throughout the world. South Asia is important globally, and its strategic significance runs into global proportions because of its huge population and more on account of economy as well as geopolitics. As a population that amounts to more than 25% of the world's aggregate, the area oversees considerable influence on global trends and dynamics. The high-population region of South Asia hints at the vast cultural diversity but also it is sheer consumer mass and labour pool. As a result, the regional population size is influential in





triggering economic development and growth within the country, regionally as well as globally (Sadiq & Ali, [2022](#)).

The concept of nuclear deterrence — the cornerstone of 21st-century international relations — has played an enormous role in shaping the South Asia security environment. Since both India and Pakistan developed nuclear weapons, this region has become a critical case study for understanding the complexities and challenges of applying deterrence in practice. The roots of nuclear deterrence in South Asia can be traced to the Indian nuclear tests of 1974, followed by those carried out by Pakistan in 1998. Such tests were key turning points in the nuclearization process in South Asia and brought about a sea change in both countries' strategic calculations. Likewise, the nuclearization of South Asia was a product of some too-old geopolitical enmities combined with territorial and external threat perceptions. With the advent of nuclear weapons and mutual annihilation as a deterrent against total war new meaning to deterrence was introduced. After all, it is only another to express that three Direct Simple Principles were developed by India and Pakistan in answer to their opponent possessing nuclear weapons with a view to deterrence and defense. India's nuclear strategy is based on "credible minimum deterrence" and no-first-use. That stresses the retaliatory component of its nuclear arsenal and the pledge to use them only in response to a nuclear strike. Nevertheless, this much talked about ambiguity is the driving force of Pakistan's abstruse and supple nuclear doctrine which actually has an extensive deterrence objective under the shield of a minimum deterrent strategy aimed at war prevention. The tactic endorses the use of nuclear weapons in response to non-nuclear provocations. Still, these differences are rooted in divergent security imperatives and strategic calculi between India and Pakistan that increasingly complicate the nuclear deterrence dynamics of South Asia (Masood & Baig, [2023](#)).

This security dilemma is clearly visible in South Asia too where historical rivalries and the presence of nuclear archrivals further compound regional issues. Other states perceive this expansion of military capabilities as either a provocation or simply a menace to its own security within the balance, which will then logically trigger highly probable conflict. The situation is even more

dangerous in light of the presence of nuclear weapons by both India and Pakistan, as security measures designed to deter aggression paradoxically escalate uncertainties and risks of catastrophic escalation. The security imperative in South Asia is exacerbating regional instability by creating an atmosphere of fear and mistrust that complicates, oftentimes thwarts, diplomatic efforts to defuse conflicts and increase the risks of a deadly nuclear showdown. To solve this dilemma, concerted efforts must be made to promote the adoption of confidence-building measures, advance diplomatic means, and resolve conflict commencing at their root causes. As such it is expected to greatly reduce the risk of war and thus reinforce peace and stability throughout the region (Akhtar & Ullah, [2021](#)).

### Literature Review

The book *"Deterrence Instability & Nuclear Weapons in South Asia"* was written by Michael Krepon, Joshua T. White, Julia Thompson [2015](#), and Shane Mason and was released in 2015. The book depicts the India-Pakistan nuclear standoff as grim, highlighting deterrence instability where misunderstandings or blunders could lead to nuclear escalation. It examines how third parties, particularly the US, might lessen instability through moderation, communication, confidence-building, and openness. The book's deep and comprehensive study of complicated dynamics is outstanding. It may have emphasized stabilizing forces like nuclear winter deterrence. Overall, "Deterrence Instability and Nuclear Weapons in South Asia" contributes to the nuclear security discourse, emphasizing the necessity for greater diplomatic and arms control studies to improve regional stability.

The author Isaac Nunoo in his article *"21st Century Nuclear Proliferation in Asia and the Politics of World Security: The Complexity of Security Dilemma in East and South Asia"* (2017). Isaac Nunoo wrote in [2017](#) that China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Japan are competing for atomic bombs for self-defense and national pride. This increases security threats, encouraging proliferation. This scenario might escalate the security crisis, changing power balances, alliances, and social, economic, and geopolitical interests. Nunoo studies (1) states' desire to build nuclear capacity, (2) neoliberal policy as a way to

incentivize proliferation behavior and foreign influence within problematic/threatening state practices domestically, and (3) state or non-state actors like ISIS in the Middle East gaining power through clientelist relations with weaker states. In trying to understand how changing power dynamics and geopolitical alignments affect nuclear proliferation in 21st-century Asia, he finds a striking blind spot.

In his article, “*Nuclear Doctrine and Deterrence Stability in South Asia*” (2019), author Muhammad Tehsin analyses that powers throughout the world are paying close attention to the two nuclear-weapon states (NWS) in South Asia. In his 2019 article “Nuclear Doctrine and Deterrence Stability in South Asia,” Muhammad Tehsin<sup>2009</sup>, examines how nuclear doctrines affect India and Pakistan. He also notes that a 2019 UN Security Council resolution discussed Kashmir for the third time since India and Pakistan obtained nuclear weapons in 1998. Tehsin believes that maintaining a deterrent force can prevent political instability, arms races, and clashes. Deterrence stability requires no first nuclear use, strong responses during arms race competition to prevent being outmatched, and force stimuli to modify policies. To avoid state exploitation (accidental or criminal) of nuclear potential, segregate these functions and ensure all stakeholders comprehend rising uproar to avoid inferring their own annihilation. He believes a nuclear war between India and Pakistan is unlikely if both act responsibly. Cyber dangers and technology difficulties in nuclear deterrents may also need investigation, according to Tehsin.

The paper “*The Efficacy of Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia: A Case Study of Pakistan and India*”(2020)written by the authors, Dr. Abdul Wadood, Faisal Khan, and Dr. Aziz Ahmed aims to clarify and explain the idea of strategic stability, which is closely related to nuclear weapons and their deterrent. This process-tracing study examines stability determinants in a post-Cold War Pakistan-India context. This shows that nuclear non-use maintains equilibrium and supports both countries' nuclear deterrence. Paranoia claims nuclear weapons cause Armageddon, while advocates say they prevent war. Before nuclear deterrence, India worried about conventional confrontation with Pakistan. Atomic deterrence amid changing regional dynamics and non-conventional security threats is examined.

The book “*Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia: New Technologies and Challenges to Sustainable Peace*” (2020) by Zafar Khan and RizwanaAbbasi<sup>2020</sup>, offers a new perspective on the region's strategic culture. The book's six chapters examine how great power politics has wrought security instability in South Asia. Thus, it shows the interdependence between Pakistan-India competition and US-China conflicts that cause systemic security issues. The tension stems from Pakistan-India's conflictual history of rivalry, as shown in the book, with specific national-strategic objectives and advantages. As long as we're stuck in India-U.S. bilateralism, geopolitical interconnectedness will trump regional peace in South Asia. The book discusses Pulwama's consequences and calls for pre- and post-nuclear knowledge of South Asian issues. The final chapters highlight the Beijing-Washington dynamics' effects on South Asian nuclear politics and call for future research into diplomatic strategies, arms control, and anti-proliferation to stabilize this volatile region without disrupting an international system shaped by evolving technologies and nuclear deterrence.

The author Devin T. Hagerty's<sup>2020</sup> book “*Nuclear Weapons and Deterrence Stability in South Asia*” explores the role of nuclear deterrence in the post-1998 Indo-Pak crisis Hagerty asserts that nuclear deterrence is crucial for maintaining peace between Pakistan and India. However, he cautions that tensions may escalate, particularly when both countries engage in covert underground interference operations or maintain a state of high alert due to their large military forces, which could be mobilized by policies such as India's Cold Start Doctrine. He is of the opinion that normalization would facilitate the establishment of more robust ties in order to prevent and manage threats. Hagerty's study emphasizes the significance of confidence-building programs, diplomatic endeavors, and conflict resolution frameworks in comprehending South Asian security, particularly in situations where a nuclear deterrent is a concern.

The authors Dr. Robina Khan,<sup>2022</sup> IsrarRasool, Umme Laila, Abdul Waheed, and Dr. Ghulam Mustafa in their research paper (<sup>2023</sup>)“*Deterrence Stability in Nuclear South Asia: Issues and Complexities*” examine the impact of India's significant strategic shift from a defensive stance during the pre-detonation era to an aggressive stance in the post-detonation era on the stability of

deterrence in South Asia. Specifically, it intends to analyze how this shift has given legitimacy to Pakistan's alternatives for deterrence. As a result of the significant events and developments in the 20th century, the regional nuclear powers are currently trapped in a security conundrum due to their long-lasting competition and growing mutual distrust. As a result, the limited resources in the region have been focused on acquiring more modern and sensitive military technologies, whether developed domestically or imported, in order to counter any potential advancements by the enemy. Given the intricate geostrategic positioning of these nuclear adversaries, any initiated confrontation might result in disastrous consequences. This might have catastrophic ramifications not only for the entire region but also for the rest of the world. South Asia, which is home to one-third of the world's population, is widely regarded as a nuclear hotspot or the most perilous region on the planet. In order to strengthen this research, secondary resources have been utilized.

The authors Robina Khan, Dr Ghulam Mustafa, and Muhammad Ramzan(2022)“*NUCLEARIZATION OF SOUTH ASIA: ROLE OF EXTRA REGIONAL POWERS* Since achieving independence in 1947, Pakistan and India have always maintained a posture of hostility and animosity towards each other. Even the purported "Peaceful phases" were characterized by unease and were of limited duration. Analyst Ashley Tellis introduced the phrase "ugly stability" to describe the situation where two nations engaged in three wars against each other in 1948, 1965, and 1971. In addition, there were several instances of minor escalations that had the potential to escalate into a full-scale conflict throughout the region. The threat perception and security problem in South Asia facilitates the interference of extra-regional powers, who exploit the regional powers for their own vested interests. This study seeks to analyze the extent to which external powers are accountable for the nuclearization of South Asia. This research study has chosen to utilize qualitative methodologies in order to enhance the representativeness and purposefulness of the study. Both primary and secondary sources have been employed to achieve this goal.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The South Asian experience of nuclear deterrent

has a lot to teach us about the regional security dynamics and Regional Security Complex Theory offers critical insights in this regard. A Theory of Immigration Control Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, adopting this category from their traditional theorization regarding security complex consider the way a group of governments in an area looks at each other as well as how they interpret the security dilemmas. At the heart of these factors are exacerbated economic difficulties experienced by virtually all states in this region, driving us further into a traditional regional security complex of South Asia. At the heart of it all though, India and Pakistan are incontestably hegemonic. Nevertheless, the possession by these states of nuclear arsenals has further deepened the security dilemma. This concept describes a situation where actions from one state to protect itself, appear as threats to the other state, setting off an unending cycle of suspicion and insecurity. As a result, South Asia is not the only brewing point between the fake entities Pakistan and India with their overt wars that even went nuclear; notable global powers such as the U.S., China, and Russia are also fueling this brew making it a further security continental challenge. Regional stakeholders, moreover—actors frequently with interests of a strategic sort in the region itself—intervene regularly to try and influence government policy, sometimes escalating tension while others serve to quell it. And the addition of smaller regional states like Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka to sub-regional dynamics complicates its security environment further. That makes the security challenge particularly potent in terms of its implications for regional stability in South Asia. The fear of accidental, escalatory conflict persists and has only increased the prospect of a catastrophic nuclear strike. To be genuine disconnection and a better bifurcation strategy are needed for South Asia to face the security challenges head-on. This is followed by conflict resolution processes, which must be effective to reduce tensions and eventually bring them down through confidence-building measures, the use of diplomacy, and other similar peaceful methods. In addition, these same governments can crack down on rudimentary security issues much more effectively (and in so doing establish trust between them) by actively approaching other organizations. The future of the region can be peaceful and stable only if the authorities

understand this security complex properly to tackle its root causes. Conflict. This helps only to add another twist to the tale of animosity and mistrust between India and Pakistan therefore making it difficult for any diplomatic option, or confidence-building exercise to break this cycle. These are compounded by inefficient, broken forms of communication and crisis management, which raise the possibility for misidentification, miscalculation, or an unnecessary escalation to violence during one.

### Historical Context of Nuclearization

Nuclear weapons in South Asia can be understood through a complex history where one event and response catalyzing the other have emerged and progressed over decades. The order of nuclear development in India and Pakistan provides insights into the causes & circumstances under which they acquired nuclear capability. India embarked on a quest for nuclear technology shortly after independence in 1947 with the goal of achieving security and strategic independence. The Atomic Energy Commission was created in 1948, and India carried out its first nuclear bomb test dubbed "Smiling Buddha" in the year 1974. This landmark achievement established India's entry into the nuclear fraternity and helped unleash its peer competitive behavior in the region (Adnan, 2014).

The nuclear trajectory of Pakistan is largely explained by the aftermath of the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War which resulted in the secession of East Pakistan and the birth of Bangladesh. Pakistan's nuclear development was motivated to a large extent, by the same security concerns India had: Promised help failed to materialize in 1971 and matters were not improved by geopolitical events or military arms races. Pakistan's nuclear program, which had begun in earnest during the 1970s, but then accelerated rapidly through the 1980s while changing hands from one military president to another (General Zia-ul-Haq) with what some believe is involved backing from China and control over procurement networks of covert inter-network-bargaining on black market for necessary materials both legal and illegal after having made efforts toward renouncing nuclear ambitions at international level. In May 1998, Pakistan responded with its own nuclear tests, and it achieved the capability to detonate a nuclear bomb.

The move was aimed at underlining Pakistan's commitment to maintaining a credible nuclear deterrence.

The reasons for nuclear adventurism in South Asia are complex, stemming from a history of conflict and rivalry, struggles for regional ascendancy, and external influences. In India, a combination of security imperatives, technological aspirations, and geopolitical challenges induced the country to conduct peaceful nuclear tests in 2008. This irrational quest for nuclear weapons stemmed from a fear of India, was exacerbated by the military imbalance in favor of Indian conventional might, and was rooted in historical memories left over from the traumatic partition of British India. Reactions and Responses from Neighbouring States to the Nuclearization of India and Pakistan: In view of their different interests, these countries reacted differently to the nuclearization of India and Pakistan. China, a major power player in the region was also concerned whether if India had tested nuclear weapons how this would have changed the balance of power within the region and what effects it may have on changing its own state of security. The robust China-Pakistan strategic partnership and the role of China as a supplier to Pakistan's nuclear program further complicated things. Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka are among the neighboring countries that have sounded the alarm over rising tensions and what they fear may spill into regional stability. Moreover, the response of the international community to nuclearization in South Asia ranged from strong condemnation and sanctions on one extreme to diplomatic initiatives leading towards non-proliferation plus conflict resolution (Sulaiman, 2002).

### Impact on Regional Security

#### Paradox of Stability vs Instability

Across discussions on regional security in South Asia, the stability-instability paradox always features prominently among questions about whether nuclearization has a stabilizing or destabilizing influence. Proponents, on the one hand, claim that the fact that nuclear weapons do exist creates a deterrence system preventing major wars between rivals having nukes. From this angle, the threat of mutual destruction is a powerful call to be moderate and stable. Both sides understand this, some famous examples that are often cited



include the Cold War confrontation between the United States and USSR where it is believed that MAD doctrine deterred them from direct military showdown.

However, critics say that relying only on nuclear deterrence is a dangerous paradox where the threat of weapons designed to prevent war can also increase the risk of it happening. The Kargil War of 1999 and the stand-off along the Line of Control in 2019 are some of the living examples of these contradictions in the South Asian Region; (i) India & Pakistan's ongoing conflicts between each other, and many baited wars never given development a chance to start there. In both instances, the presence of nuclear weapons on all sides almost certainly aggravated hostilities and in turn raised the Specter of a cascading progression to catastrophic conflict, reinforcing just how fragile nuclear stability is region. But while this enduring fear of nuclear war is meant to inhibit large-scale military clashes, it can also create an atmosphere defined by uncertainty and opacity that increases the risk of unintended slippage or misperception (KAPUR, [2003](#)).

### **Impact on Traditional Military Tactics**

The presence of nuclear weapons in South Asia has a profound effect on the concepts and tactics of conventional warfare. Both Pakistan and India have developed military doctrines that cater to their nuclear environment. A prime example is India's "Cold Start" doctrine, which calls for rapid mobilization and limited offensives in pursuit of tactical objectives below the nuclear threshold. This will allow India to answer Pakistan's dirty challenges right on time and with a very clear showing onslaught, addressing the normal asymmetries it is insisted to be the source of for its baleful indictees. Status honours. Given that any military war could flare up and become nuclear, the concept of a limited conventional battle with the shadow of nukes looming over it is second only to crazy.

Similarly, Pakistan's "Full Spectrum Deterrence" doctrine retains the option of nuclear escalation to deter Indian aggression across the full conventional spectrum when and if needed. The credibility of Pakistan's nuclear deterrent envisages integrating nukes with conventional weapons to combat India's huge military. The support of Pakistan to tactical

nuclear weapons and nuclear red lines further complicates the security calculation among other concerns for inadvertent escalation during a crisis (Carranza, [2017](#)).

### **Mitigation Strategies**

South Asia is one of the few regions in the world where confidence-building measures (CBMs) have been instrumental in reducing animosities and promoting peace between India and Pakistan. The idea is to use these instruments which would allow us to increase functioning and build trust, prevent tensions from escalating into conflicts. The region has seen the implementation of several historical CBMs, each with a different level of success including.

#### **Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities (1988)**

One important confidence-building measure (CBM) between India and Pakistan is the 1988 Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities. It is an important step to prevent misjudgment or inadvertent escalation. Among its key provisions is an obligation to exchange annually detailed lists of nuclear sites and facilities. It promotes transparency between the two countries, which reduces the chances of unintentional offensives on important nuclear installations. By creating a common view of the boundaries of each side's nuclear capabilities and sites, the agreement only lowers the odds of escalation to war by reducing the probability of misunderstanding or even guesstimation.

While the Agreement on Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities has similarly contributed to trust building, it is limited in its ability to prevent conflicts beyond the nuclear realm. While it acknowledges the problems with nuclear infrastructure, it does not address the broader political or geographical issues relating to conflicts between India and Pakistan as a whole. It is of great importance in the nuclear context, but it can serve only to paper over cracks and provide little or no relief on other fronts. Still, the value of transparency in this respect and reducing the risk of nuclear accidents means its contribution towards stability in South Asia cannot be overstated (Gul, [2008](#)).

## Lahore Declaration (1999)

The Lahore Declaration sealed in 1999 between India and Pakistan has been a game changer in their attempts to generate calmness and cooperation between the two neighboring countries. This agreement outlined a comprehensive mechanism for the resolution of bilateral issues and creating an environment of trust and understanding. Key features included a number of confidence-building measures designed to improve dialogue and reduce tensions within the context of military activities. The steps included the renewing of communication between nations through dialogue, establishing direct lines for communications between military leadership to improve crisis management, and directing efforts toward facilitating greater people-to-people contacts. The Lahore Declaration tried to create opportunities for productive engagement and assistance in reaching significant progress on underlying conflicts.

However, the implementation of the Lahore Declaration faced severe challenges, especially after the Kargil War in 1999. The battle, which began soon after the announcement at any rate unveiled an inherent doubt and stretched the nature of connections between India and Pakistan. Conflict in Kargil escalated hostilities between the two countries, exacerbating difficulties from the Lahore Declaration. The profound difficulties of achieving lasting peace and stability for the region were seen in the crisis' inability to be effectively managed, while still preserving a process of peace. As a result, while the Lahore Declaration was once seen as an important step away from hostilities this has proved not to be the case upon further flare-up of tensions which goes far in illustrating just how complex and tenuous peace initiatives we are likely to see in South Asia.

## Composite Dialogue Process (early 2000s)

The Composite Dialogue Process was a framework for discussing the full agenda of India-Pakistan relations, which was launched in 2004 when both states agreed to address issues such as the Siachen conflict, Wular Barrage, and problems of the Tulbul project. It aimed to settle a number of bilateral issues, besides working for the environment in which two countries could co-exist harmoniously.

This comprehensive dialogue format has covered every aspect of the Indo-Pak matrix, from contentious matters like Kashmir to terrorism-related issues and trade. The composite dialogue process was an attempt to leave trust and it looked for common interests in troubled interactions between organizations. Which acted as a conversational bridge between both sides and would talk about how they share their problems, ask for suggestions or advice, agreeing on common consensus in those regards. This is the step that can lead to peace for years down the line.

NEW DELHI: The composite dialogue may be a grand idea that even hardliners in India and Pakistan do not appear able to abjure, but it stumbled for years on one of the most difficult diplomatic grounds. ISLAMABAD: Even though the Composite Dialogue Process that was launched between India and Pakistan might boast an expansionist vision board – It never took any great step forward due a number of reasons why its functionality was frail until recent past. These conversations were sometimes stymied, and not in exactly so by disruptions & are setbacks; mostly due to political denialism followed by external pressure. Longtime conflict over Kashmir between India and Pakistan along with rival stances on substantial issues also presented serious challenges to productive negotiation. The Composite Dialogue Process was a critical conversation vehicle, yet the constraints to any effort to commit at a much deeper level to addressing structural grievances and historically grounded mistrust pointed again to the twin complexity of ironing out South Asian disputes that linger for decades.

## Thimphu Talks (2011)

Thimphu Talks, 2011: — In an attempt to further the friendly resolution of the long-standing issues between both countries the talks were held between Foreign Secretaries from India and Pakistan which were also marked as Thimphu II. The conversations were focused on discussing a concerted plan to build trust one productive conversation at a time and explore opportunities for collaboration. During the discussions, several topics were covered, including enhancing trade between both countries with specific initiatives to be undertaken to encourage people-to-people interaction and steps aimed at building trust so as to create a proper environment conducive to peace

and stability. Despite its good intentions and the wide range of substantial issues discussed, the Thimphu Talks did not lead to any seminal developments in bilateral relations.

While the Thimphu Talks were seen as a positive development leading to peace, they remained limited in their effectiveness by the embedded tensions and structural obstacles in the Indo-Pakistani relationship. Barriers such as differences in strategic objectives, historical grievances, and domestic political factors remained — threatening the possibility of making extraordinary progress. In addition, the failure to translate these discussions into practical actions or agreements revealed lingering roots of complexities holding back progress for Indo-Pakistani relations. They may not have led to substantial immediate dividends at the time, but the Thimphu Talks were symbolic of how dialogue and diplomacy need to constantly be part of the journey toward peace and security in South Asia (Pande, [2017](#)).

### **Kartarpur Corridor (2019)**

In 2019 the creation of the Kartarpur corridor was seen as a diplomatic milestone for people-people contact and religious tourism. The pilgrimage of Sikhs to the Corridor between Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur in Pakistan and Dera Baba Nanak Sahib in India has been one of the most important religio-political issues for the global Sikh community. This sets an example of bonhomie between Pakistan and India as the corridor allows Indian Sikh pilgrims to visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib without a visa. It creates a sense of goodwill, favor, or affection for warmer associations. The Kartarpur Corridor was hailed as an unprecedented act of good faith, illustrating a tangible example of cross-border cooperation, and showing a faint hope for the ideal neighborly relations between India and Pakistan.

While the Kartarpur Corridor is symbolically important well as its impact could change companies of religious tourism, it seems to have little bearing on the broader Indo-Pakistani narrative. Despite being a positive step forward in engaging the societies of both sides and facilitating cultural interaction, it did very little to tackle the deeper fundamental political problems related to security at large that have been straining relations between these two nations for quite some time.

The Kartarpur Corridor, however, was operating within a narrow perspective of religious tourism and did not have the power to change larger geopolitical dynamics or solve deep-seated underlying reasons that led India-Pakistan almost always end up on different sides of an ideological cleavage. But the establishment of that built its focus on how tiny steps can build trust and those could spur more widespread gains down the line. This highlights the importance of dialogue and collaboration in tackling the complex problems that South Asia has already (Yousaf, [2021](#)).

### **Conclusion**

In short, the convergence of nuclear deterrence and security dilemma in the South Asian perspective unveils multifaceted challenges pertaining to regional security dynamics. India and Pakistan both have nukes, so the potential for further conflict remains because of distrust and long-standing animosity. Even in cases where these measures have been implemented to recreate friendships, the underlying causes of discord remain unchanged, it appears unlikely that peace would be restored for long. In solution for both changes, it must be a top task of all parties to initiate dialogue, partnership, and conflict resolution. In order to do that, South Asia must address these pressing issues and begin instilling trust amongst one another forging a newfound grounding for their collective future of peace and growth within the region. At present, a deterrence hangs over South Asia — and although it has not yet achieved the force of iconic mass destruction- enough to seem so for a far less evolved security predicament with profound regional repercussions. Paradoxically, nuclear weapons—with built-in deterring effect to aggression (not actual use)—also seemed to magnify Indo-Pakistani passions. This in the long run feeds into an arms race dynamic particularly when it is combined with age-old enmities and disputes between countries further perpetuating a vicious circle of distrust and insincerity. Even with fits-and-starts of diplomacy — be it in the forms of confidence-building measures or negotiation processes — peace remains a mirage. Finding a way out of this conundrum requires more than negotiations and arms control; it will also take steps to redress sources of grievances that give voice to advocates. International Cooperation and assistance are also important for regional stability.

If, however, those stakeholders' emphasis on dialogue and cooperation deprioritizing conflict resolution to number 4 or beyond then they are working a very long time horizon such that

weapons are completely banished from South Asia even if remains a weapon-less region used for the betterment of life of UNSA (unborn sons & daughters of South Asia) in our future.



## References

- Adnan, M. (2014). Nuclearization of South Asia 1998: Pakistan's Domestic Constraints. *South Asian Studies*, 29(1).  
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Akhtar, A., & Ullah, S. (2021). India's se-based nuclear forces and strategic stability in South Asia. *Australian Journal of Maritime & Ocean Affairs*, 15(1), 54-68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18366503.2021.1961352>  
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Carranza, M. E. (2017). Managing nuclear risk in South Asia. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 73(1), 64-66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00963402.2016.1264215>  
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Abdul Wadood, F. K. (2020). The Efficacy of Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia: A Case Study of Pakistan and India. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review* 4(2), 751-762. [http://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2020\(4-II\)61](http://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2020(4-II)61)  
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- RobinaKhan, D. G. (2022). Nuclear Deterrence and South Asia: Theory and its Pre-Requisites. *Annals of Human and Social Sciences* 3(2), 284-291.: [https://doi.org/10.35484/ahss.2022\(3-II\)27](https://doi.org/10.35484/ahss.2022(3-II)27)  
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Gul, N. (2008). Pakistan-India Composite Dialogue. *Pakistan Horizon*, 61(3), 11-17. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23725980>  
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Hagerty, D. T. (2020). *Nuclear weapons and deterrence stability in South Asia*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.  
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- KAPUR, S. (2003). Nuclear Proliferation, the Kargil Conflict, and South Asian Security. *Security Studies*, 13(1), 79-105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636410490493868>  
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Masood, M., & Baig, M. A. (2023). Potential impact of lethal autonomous weapon systems on strategic stability and nuclear deterrence in South Asia. *Margalla Papers*, 27(2), 27-43. <https://doi.org/10.54690/margallapapers.27.2.173>  
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Muhammad SharrehQazi, P. D. (2021). Understanding Role of Security Dilemma in South Asia: Implications for Strategic Stability. *Journal of Politics and International Studies* 7(1), 63-74.  
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Nunoo, I. (2017). 21st Century Nuclear Proliferation in Asia and the Politics of World Security: The Complexity of Security Dilemma in East and South Asia. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies (IJIMS)*, 4(3), 25-36. <https://europub.co.uk/articles/-A-31113>  
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Pande, S. (2017). *India as a Factor in Pakistan's Policy*. Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Pakistan. Routledge, 457-441.  
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Panwar, D. S. (2021). Nuclear Deterrence Stability in South Asia. *Research Journal of Philosophy & Social Sciences* XLVII (2), 289-296. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-21398-5>  
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- RizwanaAbbasi, Z. K. (2020). *Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia: New Technologies and Challenges to Sustainable Peace*. New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.  
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Sadiq, M., & Ali, I. (2022). Challenges of Nuclear Deterrence Stability in South Asia. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 58(8), 1511-1527. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096221090636>  
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Sulaiman, S. (2002). The Nuclearization of South Asia. *Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad*, 22(1), 251-258.  
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Tehsin, M. (2019). Nuclear Doctrine and Deterrence Stability in South Asia. *Global Social Sciences Review* IV(IV), 525 – 530.  
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Thompson, J. (2015). *Deterrence Instability and Nuclear Weapons in South Asia*. Washington, D.C: Stimson Center.  
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)
- Yousaf, S. (2021). Tourism and reconciliation in an enduring rivalry: The case of Kartarpur Corridor on India-Pakistan border. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 39. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2021.100833>  
[Google Scholar](#) [Worldcat](#) [Fulltext](#)