

HERE is a vociferous lobby that uses every political and economic crisis in Pakistan to attack the concept of a security state. Many of the arguments that this lobby advances have considerable merit in them. What is often lacking is a sense of historical perspective on the dynamics that turned all the states of South Asia, and not just Pakistan, into security states. There is also a poor grasp of the fact that the traditional security state can be wound down only through a joint and cooperative effort by all the regional states, and not unilaterally by Pakistan. South Asia needs a paradigm shift not only because the traditional security thinking has run its course but also because of the growing complexity and acuteness of new threats to each one of them, says **Tanvir Ahmad Khan**

of a powerful centrist state. There is hardly a year since 1947 when the Indian army has not been in action against dissidents and insurgents in one part of its vast territories or the other.

The grand narratives of the security drama in South Asia come from the continuing rivalry and antagonism between India and Pakistan. The addition of the risk of a nuclear exchange to the existing dangers invests this drama with consequences of global magnitude. There are, indeed, many intrinsic reasons why the ruling elite that emerged in Pakistan after the death of Jinnah and the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan would depend on alarmist concepts of national security for the perpetuation of its stranglehold on power. But none of them would have exerted a compelling influence if the biggest state, India, had not built the use of force into a cardinal factor in its regional policy from the very beginning.

India applied coercion freely to secure the accession of princely states to the Union. Using diametrically opposite criteria to justify it, India resorted to the use of force in Hyderabad, Junagadh and Kashmir. With its self-image of being the only true successor to the British Raj, India has defended, with great violence, the concept

to inter-state problems and, therefore, increasingly concentrates on extracting concessions from Pakistan to achieve its overriding objective of preventing a full-scale subcontinental conflict. Pakistan regards it as blackmail but finds it increasingly difficult to thwart it.

Pakistan's transformation into a post-colonial security state was inherent in the circumstances of its emergence as an independent nation. The chaos of partition, the communal carnage, the flood of refugees, the conflict in Kashmir and the general apprehension that India wanted Kashmir as an additional lever to turn Pakistan's flank created a sense of siege. A deep sense of historical injustice done in the delineation of the 1947 frontiers by a compromised and unfair British arbiter, leading to a planned seizure of a large part of Jammu and Kashmir, provided an excellent foundation for a security state.

In the subsequent decades, there was hardly any credible demonstration by the United Nations or the international community that procedures for pacific settlement of disputes were at all applicable to South Asia. Pakistan's quest for nuclear deterrence was also spurred by the discriminatory nuclear proliferation policies of the United States which made a minimal, if any, impact

This phenomenon is gather-

ing force at a time when for various reasons the traditional state is weakening. Deprivation, marginalization of conditions that continue to be essentially elitist, widespread hunger and demographic pressures make an increasing number of persons amenable to violence and terrorism.

While Bangladesh and the Maldives are relatively homogeneous nation-states, the other states of South Asia are multi-ethnic and multicultural. In Nepal and Bhutan, the pluralistic character of their societies is the result of the innate generosity of numerically larger groups in welcoming outsiders to live long enough on their soil to strike deep roots. Sri Lanka has paid dearly for external interference in the contest between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority for power and influence. India and Pakistan can also find their problems of maintaining a viable federal balance if their security policies aim at aggravating internal tensions in the body politic of the neighbouring state.

There are considerable disparities in the state of preparedness of South Asian countries for the challenge of globalization. All of them are engaged in liberalization, an important aspect of which is a much greater receptivity to foreign investment. The experience of East Asia has shown that spec-

tacular growth achieved in the process is not immune from outside manipulation, including speculative pressures on national currencies. An optimal degree of regionalization can act as a dyke against such unforeseen flood-tides, at least in the short run. South Asia, with its pathetic internal inter-state trade and cooperation in manufacturing, has obvious vulnerabilities.

There is undeniably a case for a shift to cooperative security. In the post-Kargil situation, India and Pakistan may take months before they can address the agenda implicit in the Lahore Declaration. Yet some kind of beginning would have to be made to bring about a basic change in South Asian security thinking. A relatively achievable objective could be a SAARC-sponsored no-war declaration by all the seven states. It would make it easier for India and Pakistan to negotiate the solution of their disputes if such a declaration renouncing the use of force could be made.

The international community weighed heavily against Pakistan during the Kargil crisis. It is now incumbent upon it to remain engaged with the elimination of the underlying causes of Kargil. Notwithstanding the self-serving hype in Pakistan, this engagement is as yet weak and prone to one-sided pressure on Pakistan to make further sacrifices by scaling down its national objectives and commitments. One does not share the perception that the Kargil situation had brought India and Pakistan to the brink of an all-out war. Hard evidence points to a con-

tinuing localization of the conflict. But that does not detract from the fact that preponderance in conventional arms predisposes India to hold out this threat.

South Asia will need an arms control regime if the demands for winding down the security state would have any credibility. The failure so far of the US-led non-proliferation project, relying heavily on supply-side restrictions and arbitrary sanctions, should not have come as a surprise. However, the dangers underlined by the US project remain a valid subject for future discourse. The quest for a stable nuclear restraint regime should not be cast aside because of the current bitterness between India and Pakistan.

Romanticizing President Clinton's 'personal interest' is not going to take us very far. In fact, we are likely to encounter considerable Indian resistance to Pakistan. We have no choice but to wait and see how Clinton fulfills the promises reportedly made by him.

Meanwhile, Pakistan should step up its regional diplomacy as an additional means of identifying avenues leading to cooperative security in South Asia. This effort would be a necessary adjunct to SAARC's continuing search for ways and means to create a free trading area. At the very minimum, regional diplomacy may highlight ideas that in due course of time could replace the concept of security against the neighbouring states.

Courtesy: *The Dawn of Pakistan*

Benefits from Kargil

by **Madhavan K. Palat**

INDIA'S DIPLOMATIC advantage vis-a-vis Kargil seems bewildering only because the long-term evolution of the post-Cold War strategies has not been considered adequately. The United States has for the first time in half a century put Pakistan on the mat and publicly ordered it to withdraw; Russia has unequivocally come out in India's favour, a habit it lost after the Cold War, and China has provided Islamabad only the cold comfort of neutrality. This has not been due to the excellence of our diplomacy or the justness of our cause, both of which are self-evident except when the Defence Minister rushes to the defence of India.

The end of the Cold War has inexorably pushed Pakistan to the margins in the U.S. grand strategy. During the Cold War, Pakistan was an important link in the chain around the USSR and was maintained as a permanent menace to India for the latter's non-alignment and later overt friendship with the Soviet Union. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan vastly augmented Pakistan's role as the base from which the U.S. was to fight its proxy war against the Soviet Union in the Eighties; and India's public support to the Soviet cause invited America's baleful anger and cold indifference to Pakistan sponsoring the terrorist outrages in Punjab during that decade of assassinations.

Given India's nuclear ambitions, the U.S. also endorsed the Pakistani nuclear development and the Chinese nuclear proliferation to Pakistan. It was an awesome line-up of the U.S.-Pakistan-China against India and the USSR. With the self-destruction of the USSR between 1985 and 1991, the American strategy toward Russia shifted from confrontation to fore-stalling the rerudescence of a strategic challenge and the re-consolidation of the former Soviet space under Russian leadership. That has been achieved through the destruction of Iraq and Yugoslavia, the detachment of Central Asia, the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation deep into eastern Europe, and the imposition of a debilitating economic reform on Russia.

As the deliquescent Russian state flails about for a magical formula for reform and recovery,

the next objective is to prevent Moscow losing control over its nuclear arsenal and exporting terrorism. Russia must not degenerate, in American parlance, into 'the mother of all rogue states'. This is very far indeed from the Cold War, and it sharply alters the functions of Pakistan, India and China in American strategy. Beijing's role is diminished as the 'China card' against the former Soviet Union has lost its function, but Pakistan has lost the most as it is no longer a springboard for any kind of action against Russia. Yet, the American reorientation occurred only now, in 1999, not in the early Nineties after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The Russian capacity for action then was not as feeble as it seems today. But since then the Russian communists have been trounced repeatedly through privatization in 1992, the bombing of the Supreme Soviet in 1993, the establishment of a dictatorial anti-communist presidency under Mr. Boris Yeltsin and a series of legislative humiliations for the communists. The communists have ceased to be communists; they are nationalists bereft of conviction or nation. There remains no major ideological force in Russia with the capacity and commitment to confront the West.

Further, it was not then clear which way Central Asia would head and whether the Russian leadership would be maintained. From 1992, Russia was defending Tajikistan against Islamic militants backed by Afghanistan; and Iran remained a significant ideological force whose revolutionary enthusiasm had not entirely dissipated. Pakistan, therefore, retained a role in U.S. strategy. It was to hold off Iranian ambitions in Afghanistan and Central Asia, provide back-up to Islamic forces in the anti-communist civil war in Tajikistan, and more generally, act as one of the many Islamic magnets for the partially-Islamising states of partially-communist Central Asia.

The Pakistani establishment was permitted to nurture its fantasies of blossoming into a distant successor to Lord Curzon in Central Asia and to investigate and participate in Afghan civil wars, the latest being the sponsorship of the Taliban.

Although America has no conflict with China that demands Indian friendship, Beijing would need to be balanced

ibian. What Israel is to the Arab states in American strategic calculations, Pakistan aspired to become in Central Asia. As usual, given such U.S. backing, India had to take the shock, this time as renewed insurgency in Kashmir during the post-Cold War Nineties.

But the irrevocable decline of Russia has further altered the picture. Russia does not seem set to reassert its leadership over Central Asia. Uzbekistan aspires to play the local leader with American support, which move leaves little room for Pakistan. By playing the Islamic militancy card, Pakistan is losing control of such radical forces. The Taliban has excited worldwide outrage rather than admiration; and Osama bin Laden's targeting of both the Saudis and Americans has further exposed the Pakistani establishment as adventurous rather than dynamic. Pakistan now seems to have only the residual function of containing Iran, which is already mending its fences with the U.S.

Finally, Indian friendship with an impotent and decomposing Russia portends no evil. Pakistan has virtually lost its strategic purpose to the U.S. and the West. American planners are faced with at least four options: India does not have to be 'contained' given the senescence of Russia; Pakistan is on the verge of mutating into a 'rogue state'; both India and Pakistan are nuclear weapons powers, and China no longer faces the pressure of a hostile superpower in Russia.

'Containing' Pakistan would now become a priority as it is a nuclear weapons power. One way of doing so would be to nudge Pakistan and India toward a strategic coordination instead of sustaining the Pakistani establishment's military adventurism and narco-terrorism. This does not conflict with any other priority regarding India, since American hostility to India derived from the Cold War and Indo-Soviet friendship, not from any other source. America is now the undisputed leader of the world, unprecedented in history; and leaders have no friends, only followers who have to be ceaselessly balanced against one another.

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in the long-term. India could be the candidate for that role. Of course, India here means the subcontinent, not the Republic. The strategic coordination between India and Pakistan would be the premise to such a strategy. If these are the reasons for America's unnatural warmth towards India over Kargil, it accords well with our purposes.

In the short-term, while we must win the Kargil war to the Line of Control, we should not entertain any fantasies about 'recovering our sacred territory' lost to Pakistan half a century ago. Anything that smacks of invasion of Pakistan would forfeit American support and compel America to 'mediate', that is, knock our heads together into a settlement where we lose the initiative. It would also drag us into a guerrilla war on the other side, whatever the short-term military gains.

We are unable to contain insurgency on our side of the LoC; we would be still less capable of doing so on the other side. Most of all, it would unite the Pakistani public wholly behind their military establishment, whereas we are now witness to the pretty sight of the Pakistani army's growing isolation, even from the civilian structures. Instead, we should exploit to the full the American 'tilt', maroon the Pakistani army on its own island of fantasy and intensify people-to-people contact.

The Kashmir problem cannot be solved bilaterally because it has been sustained by a hostile international configuration against us. Our bilateral dogma is our defence mechanism which served us well in such circumstances. But if the international environment changes to our advantage, we should exploit it to the sweet strains of Pakistani bilateralism pleading. And while we do so, we could end on the ironic reflection that the extinction of our loyal Soviet comrade and the decrepitude of its Russian successor have opened the possibility of our solving our most ancient problem, the civil war on the subcontinent.

Presumably, the military manoeuvre in Kargil was part of this strategy. The success of the Mujahideen and other forces in occupying the dominating heights overlooking the strategic Kargil-Leh highway was meant to provide political leverage for the settlement of the large problem of Kashmir. The tactical gains were to be converted into political and strategic assets. The way, however, events unfolded, Pakistan was not only unable to sustain this advantage but in fact suffered a major reversal bordering on defeat. The Indian caretaker government, facing an election within a few weeks, was resolutely determined to regain the lost ridges, failing which it would widen the conflict.

Pakistan had to choose between reinforcing the Mujahideen and risking an all-out war, which it could ill afford except at its own peril, or opt for a withdrawal. The latter was considered a more prudent course, as it would avert a greater catastrophe. This was also what the prime minister said in his address to the nation to justify the Washington agreement. It will be erroneous to place blame on any one party, be it the politicians, armed forces or the Mujahideen for this debacle.

The sad part of the whole exercise is that the valour and tactical brilliance of the Mujahideen and the army has gone in vain, demonstrating once again the famous dictum that there is no wisdom in winning small battles and losing a war. The Indian strategy all along has been to suppress the indigenous uprising in Kashmir. It feels that it has the resources to keep the problem under manageable limits and continue the oppression till the resistance runs out of steam. This has not materialised so far and is unlikely to happen in the future.

Pakistan, on the other hand, wants to keep the issue alive by giving diplomatic, moral, logistic, and even military support to the Mujahideen. Being the aggrieved party and finding itself pitted against a much larger power and an indifferent world, it has been taking recourse to high-risk policies to attract world attention and move India to the negotiating table.

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For instance, it is pointed out, if the intention to talk with the Tamils reflected one end of the spectrum, the decision to go on an all-out 'war' against the LTTE symbolised another extreme of political tactic. While the full-scale 'war for peace' is supported by rationale, dealing with insurrections, especially separatist, would require a greater commitment, and more important, a dedicated team to implement the executive decisions.

However, nothing much has happened and the blame for the lack of progress has been apportioned to the unresolved ethnic crisis between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils to its promise of the low-intensity conflict and take greater risks that would otherwise be the case. But what is critical is that it failed to influence the outcome in their favour. For India the nuclear party and the fear of internationalizing the issue of Kashmir may well have been a restraining factor in preventing the widening of the conflict.

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Lessons to Learn from Kargil

by **Talat Masood**

THE Kargil crisis has once again exposed the bankruptcy of Pakistan's management of national policy. Events in and around Kargil brought India and Pakistan dangerously close to an all-out war, dealt a shattering blow to the peace process, has done immense damage to the already faltering economy, isolated Pakistan internationally and has proved highly divisive internally.

The sad part of the whole exercise is that the valour and tactical brilliance of the Mujahideen and the army has gone in vain, demonstrating once again the famous dictum that there is no wisdom in winning small battles and losing a war.

The Indian strategy all along has been to suppress the indigenous uprising in Kashmir. It feels that it has the resources to keep the problem under manageable limits and continue the oppression till the resistance runs out of steam. This has not materialised so far and is unlikely to happen in the future.

Let us be honest with ourselves: Kargil was not an aberration but a natural product of our political culture that has been in vogue for decades.

Indeed, the greatest challenge now before the political and military leadership is to contain the crisis and restore normalcy on the domestic front, reduce tensions with India, rehabilitate our tarnished image abroad and, at the same time, not resile from our principled stand on Kashmir.

Pakistan cannot — and should not — allow total freedom of action to these groups. No sovereign country allows its policies to be dictated by radical groups, however just and admirable their motivations may be.

Then there is the danger of these groups turning inwards as frustrations on the external front mount. Besides, the higher the militant pitch in Kashmir the greater is the possibility of radicalization of society and the corresponding decisions.

Besides, when the armed forces have to rely heavily on foreign sources of supply for their critical weapon systems, they cannot fight a war for a long duration without the backing and full support of major powers. Mujahideen forces need to be controlled.

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There has to be a continuous flow of information between the ministries, intelligence services and other major organs of the state on the basis of which sound policy options can be evolved and implemented. This can only happen if there is institutional back-up of the NSC. India too cannot succeed with its present policy in Kashmir.

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During the last Presidential polls, Ms. Kumaraatunga had a total sway over the electorate, though the Parliamentary elections which preceded the Presidential polls were won by a razor-thin margin. Indications from the recent Provincial Council polls are that the Tamil voters, who played a significant part in making Ms. Kumaraatunga President, are moving away from the party. More important, the electorate would go to the national polls, as and when called, not in a mood of euphoria, but with dejection over missed opportunities.

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Saarc Business to Go on Despite Kargil

by **P. Jayaram** writes from New Delhi

THE conflict between India and Pakistan appears not to have materially affected the working of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), with the seven-nation grouping all set to discuss a common stand to be taken at the Seattle Round of talks of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The commerce ministers of the seven countries are scheduled to meet at Male, capital of the Maldives, in the first week of August to discuss a common stand on the intellectual property rights and other issues of concern at the Seattle meeting in late November.

Despite their latest stand-off in Kargil, both India and Pakistan were expected to attend the meeting.

Official sources here confirmed that Indian Commerce Minister Ramakrishna Hegde would attend the meeting. SAARC comprises India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives. The fact that the (Male) meeting is taking place as per