

PREFACE

Ellen Laipson

Dear Colleague,

I am pleased to present the latest publication of the Stimson Center's South Asia program. This report, by former government expert Polly Nayak and the Stimson Center's cofounder, Michael Krepon, tells a tale about recent history in South Asia that has important and broad foreign policy salience. The authors examine the interactions between India and Pakistan during a tense period between December 2001 and October 2002, when war was a distinct possibility. It is a compelling story about the enduring dispute over Kashmir that has become more consequential with the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Islamabad and New Delhi.

The report focuses on how Washington coped with a crisis of potentially catastrophic proportions. Polly Nayak and Michael Krepon offer keen insight into how policymakers in Washington "managed" a crisis half a world away in capitals where American influence might not have been sufficient to determine the outcome. It provides a window, through valuable interviews with senior policymakers and US embassy officials implementing policy in the field, into how Washington receives information and develops its responses to foreign policy emergencies. It reminds us of how differently Washington and the field sometimes perceive US interests and how difficult it is to capture and learn the lessons of regional crises.

The South Asia program at the Stimson Center, which is directed by Michael Krepon, focuses on regional stability, nuclear stabilization, and Kashmir. The Center has promoted confidence-building and nuclear risk-reduction measures in South Asia through workshops with knowledgeable and well connected Indian, Pakistani, and US participants; private meetings with key officials and field work and in all three countries; research and publications; public forums in Washington; and a Visiting Fellows program. Whatever form the Center's programming takes, its function is the same: to encourage the consideration of useful ideas that could provide short-term relief from potential dangers and the long-term basis for a durable peace.

The Stimson Center is able to carry out this ambitious agenda because of the generous support we receive from funders. We wish to express our gratitude to the Nuclear Threat Initiative, its co-chairman and CEO, Senator Sam Nunn, and to Joan Rohlfing, NTI's Senior Vice President for Programs and Operations. We also receive essential programming support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. We are grateful to the Carnegie Corporation's President, Vartan Gregorian and to Stephen J. Del Rosso, the Chair of Carnegie's International Peace and Security Program. In addition, the Center benefits greatly from grant support provided by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Our thanks go to President Jonathan Fanton, and to Gary Samore, the Vice President of MacArthur's Global Security and Sustainability Program.

This case study of US crisis management is part of a larger effort to assess the ten-month-long standoff initiated by the attack on the Indian parliament building in December 2001. Working with funds from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Peter Lavoy of the Naval Postgraduate School has also commissioned studies of decision making by the Indian and Pakistani governments during this crisis. This larger body of work will subsequently appear in book form.

The Stimson Center is pleased to partner with regional expert Polly Nayak on this important case study. The story of US crisis management makes for a compelling read. We hope it will be instructive for regional experts and for general foreign policy practitioners and analysts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ellen Laipson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "E".

Ellen Laipson
President and CEO