

## THE PAST AND FUTURE OF SOUTH ASIAN CRISES

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### Featuring:

Congressman Ami Bera, Vice Ranking Member, House Foreign Affairs Committee

Riaz Khan, Former Foreign Secretary, Pakistan

Shyam Saran, Former Foreign Secretary, India

Polly Nayak, Independent Consultant

Sameer Lalwani, Senior Associate & Co-Director, South Asia Program, Stimson Center

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### Opening Remarks

Brian Finlay:

Well, a very good morning to you, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome. My name is Brian Finlay, the president and CEO here at the Stimson Center. I'm so pleased to welcome you all, and grateful to you all for joining us this morning for the launch of this volume, edited by our own Sameer Lalwani and Hannah Haegeland. From the earliest days of this organization, we have focused on various aspects of reducing nuclear tensions around the world, most notably in South Asia. Much of the work that has informed this volume really builds on a 30-year history that Stimson has. Much of that work was, and continues to be, spearheaded by our own co-founder, Michael Krepon, who, unfortunately, was not able to join us today, but his work and the work of the wider team that you are going to hear from this morning has certainly generated interest, not just in this town, but across the region, and perhaps now, as a result of this volume, in Beijing as well.

I think it's no understatement to say that a full two decades after India and Pakistan tested their nuclear weapons, South Asia remains one of the most conflict prone regions of the world. With changing policy here in Washington DC as a result of a new administration, with growing tensions in the region itself, this event comes at a regrettably fortuitous moment. Over the course of the morning, you will hear from a distinguished group of panelists, whom we have asked not just to recall previous instances of tension and conflict in the region, but to draw some lessons learned that might be applicable as we all wrestle with future policy in the region. And helping us do that, as I mentioned, is a

most distinguished group of panelists that will include two former foreign secretaries, our former ambassador to India, experts from the U.S. Intelligence Community, and others in the policy community from the region and here in DC.

We are also delighted to be joined by Congressman Bera from California, who will deliver our keynote address. We understand there are a few other things that you and your colleagues are working on, so it's a true delight to welcome you here to Stimson, and we're very grateful to you. And with that, and without further ado, I will turn this over to the man who is the Pied Piper of our event here this morning. He's really the visionary behind, not just this event and this volume, but of our South Asia program. If you do not know Sameer Lalwani, I will ask you where have you been? You need to get to know Sameer Lalwani. Sameer serves, of course, as a senior associate here at Stimson as well as the co-director of our South Asia Program. Sameer Lalwani.

Sameer Lalwani: All right, thank you, Brian. Thank you all for joining us. I just want to go through a few things quickly before I introduce Congressman Bera.

We're very pleased to launch this book: *Investigating Crises: South Asia's Lessons, Evolving Dynamics, and Trajectories*. It's the fruit of a couple years of work, and, as Brian mentioned, the Stimson Center has long been involved in studying the dynamics and the cadence of crises in South Asia over the last three decades in the effort to better inform policymakers in Washington, New Delhi, Islamabad, and Beijing. This book continues in that tradition of the body work that particularly Michael Krepon has led at the Stimson Center. The book tries to answer three particular questions. What have we as scholars and as parties to crises in the past learned from past crises? What are the stakes and new variables that are present? And what can we expect in the future?

And for the answers to those questions, we encourage you to go to [investigatingcrises.org](http://investigatingcrises.org), and there you can download the full PDF. You can download individual chapters. You can read it directly on your handheld device. It's a very dynamic website that you can basically glean all the insights pretty quickly from the edited volume.

I want to thank our partners who made this project and our efforts and our research possible, the MacArthur Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, and National Nuclear Security Administration, who have all been key supporters of our efforts for a long time, and we hope they will continue to support these efforts, so we can continue to produce research like this. A couple quick housekeeping bits. If you have a cellphone, please turn the ringer off, so we don't disrupt the panelists when they're making their presentations. If you happen to be tweeting today, use the hashtag "investigatingcrises," so that everyone can catch on to your great insights.

And so now it's my pleasure to introduce our keynote speaker, Congressman Ami Bera. The 2017 South Asia Strategy Review revealed that the United States still has high stakes in the region of South Asia. We obviously have thousands of

troops deployed there in harm's way with more on their way. It continues to be a nuclear flash points for the world, and it's also a critical note of this administration's Indo-Pacific strategy and the previous administration's efforts to bring geopolitical pluralism and balancing to the Asian continent. And, if you consider tweets to be policy statements, then you could say one of the first policy statements that came out of the administration this year focus on subcontinents, so I think we can expect this to be high on the agenda. And to reflect a little bit more on U.S. stakes and the Trump administration's policies towards India and Pakistan, we're joined by Congressman Ami Bera, who's one of the foremost South Asia watchers on Capitol Hill. The congressman represents the California 7<sup>th</sup> congressional district. He's a vice ranking member on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and is the longest serving Indian American and South Asian American currently in Congress.

Before being elected to Congress, he practiced medicine and served as chief medical officer for Sacramento County, and drawing on his extensive medical background, Congressman Bera led efforts with the Foreign Affairs Committee to address the global Zika epidemic and is a strong sport of American leadership and global health. He sits on the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific as well as the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Human Rights, and International Organizations. He's proud to work with members of both parties in strengthening America's security and global leadership, and also the security of our allies.

Congressman Bera lives in Elk Grove, California with his wife, Janine, who is also a medical doctor, and his daughter. He's also been a great supporter of our South Asian Voices Visiting Fellows program. In fact, he's one of the first people in Capitol Hill to whom we reached out to set up meetings with our visiting fellows who come in a couple times a year from India and Pakistan to get a lay of the land of DC, understand how the bureaucratic and political processes produce foreign policy, and the congressman's always been a willing participant to host them and lend his insights, so we're greatly appreciative of that. And, without further ado, Congressman Bera.

### **Keynote Address**

Ami Bera:

Well, thank you, Sameer. I think part of this is Sameer happens to be a neighbor of my chief of staff, so in the interests of keeping peace in the neighborhood, which is the topic of today's conversation: how do we keep peace in the neighborhood? When I think about my three terms in Congress, when I first got here, being the only South Asian member of Congress when I first arrived, I knew I would focus on South Asia, and certainly, I strategically wanted to get on the Foreign Affairs Committee. But what surprised me was how few of my colleagues were actually focused on what I think is an incredibly complicated, but incredibly vibrant, region of the world. I mean, I would argue there's an over weighted focus in Congress on the Middle East and North Africa, certainly very complicated, very big challenges, but I was very supportive of President Obama's pivot to Asia and understanding that, again, my opinion in the 21<sup>st</sup>

century, the opportunities and the challenges, frankly, that we will see in the Asia and Pacific and certainly in South Asia in the Indo-Pacific are going to be very important.

Part of my mission in my time in Congress has been to try to encourage and engage many of my colleagues to become interested in the region. To try to get more people to travel to the region. And also understand how the region looks at the United States and the things that we may say on the floor of the House. The things that we may feel are somewhat innocuous often end up on the front page of the newspapers in India and Pakistan. An errant Tweet here or there becomes policy. It's incredibly important for us to understand that.

Now, I'll stand up here and be very honest with the folks in this room. Much of my focus has been on U.S.-India and the opportunities there, but you can't think of the U.S.-India relationship without thinking of the India-Pakistan relationship. You can't think of what our missions in Afghanistan is without thinking about India and Pakistan in relation to that entire mission. And I am not a stable genius on the issue of India and Pakistan, and I will readily acknowledge that I'm in a room full of people who focus on this issue.

So, in my comments I thought I would lay out the flip side of investigating crisis, because I think it's incredibly important to understand what could go wrong. And how you avoid what could go wrong. But the flip side of that coin is what's the opportunity as well. If we understand what could go wrong, and we have a desire to avoid what goes wrong, how do we as the United States and Congress, as well as the administration, try to recognize what could go right. And how do we work towards what could go right?

So, if I frame my thinking around the relationship, let me touch on a couple areas. As we look at India, we look at India as economic growth. I was in Japan recently, and certainly there's a lot of conversation going on between Prime Minister Abe and Prime Minister Modi and the relationship between Japan and India. Lots of discussion on the strategic dialogue between the United States, India, and Japan. The Japanese would like to be a quadrilateral conversation with Australia in terms of security interests in the Indo-Pacific region.

And as those dynamics in the U.S. relationship become a little bit more India centric, as India's economy starts to grow, as the conversation around India becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council, as the rest of the world starts to welcome India to the table, how does Pakistan perceive that? And what does that do to the relationship? And I think it's incredibly important for us to think about that dynamic. And does that push Pakistan towards China? Do they start to develop different relationships with the world?

And in that, none of these are isolated relationships. How does China see itself in the region, and in the world? And how do we as the United States certainly try to bring China in as a partner in creating stability? Where's the Chinese ego? Where are their sensibilities? Again, incredibly complicated.

As India's role with Russia changes, and so forth, and I think India will continue to have a relationship with Russia. What are the dynamics there? India and Iran, what are the dynamics there? Pakistan and Iran, what are the dynamics there? And as we try to bring those players in to have a bigger role in diplomacy, India offers the ability to have conversations with Iran that we're not able to have because of their deeper and historical relationship.

Again, what I'm doing is I'm framing how I'm thinking about this and how I think those of us on the Asian-Pacific Subcommittee ought to be thinking about this. What's the United States' role in foreign policy going forward? Certainly, I think I'm stating the obvious that President Trump has been a disruptive force. Certainly, challenging what in past administrations we probably would have just agreed were norms. Well, what's the opportunity in that disruption?

I think what the Trump administration certainly has gotten our allies around the world to question is American commitment and American engagement, and I would argue, many of us are traveling more than we ever have. Mostly because we recognize now is the time for congressional engagement. If we don't have our diplomats on the ground, well, it matters when a member of Congress shows up in another country to talk about who we are, and to reassure our allies that we will remain committed to the world and to the region.

But our commitment may be different, and I would argue that in the 70 years post-World War II, American leadership was absolutely necessary. Our economy was the dominant economy. It was necessary that we rebuild Europe, that we rebuild and engage in Japan, and engage in South Korea. And I think that engagement was incredibly important in lifting people out of poverty and creating stable democracies.

I could also argue that the next 70 years may be different in terms of how the United States engages. We have our own domestic challenges and being a physician, and being pragmatic, I try to understand where we are as a nation, and there certainly are domestic challenges that we have here. That doesn't mean we withdraw from the world, that means maybe we engage in the world in a slightly different way, partnering with countries and allies that share similar values, values of democracy, values of free market, and values of opportunity.

My comments at the Mount Fuji dialogue in Japan, it was about how we partner with these nations to then go into third regions, and in this case, I do think it's important that as potentially the United States, Japan, and China go in to South Asia, and think about those solutions, that it's not just the United States leading these conversations, but it is, again, partners looking for similar opportunities.

What are the opportunities between India and Pakistan? As India's economy develops, are there opportunities to increase trade between India and Pakistan? As Pakistan addresses some of its energy needs, and insecurities, its electrical grid, are there opportunities there to work and create a dialogue where India

may help Pakistan? These are pipe dreams, and in some ways very complicated issues, but can you create a context where they work together?

I'm an optimist. I think you have to be an optimist if you want to run for Congress right now, and you want to hop on a plane every week and fly across the country. But outside of the crisis, a war erupting on the Korean Peninsula, or a war erupting in South Asia, everything else is an opportunity, right? And I think it's important for us to think about it in that context.

So, I'll stop with that and I'm happy to take a couple questions.

Sameer Lalwani:

All right. So, the Congressman's going to take a few questions, and surprise, surprise, I'm going to ask the first one. So Congressman, picking up on your point about this administration sort of bucking past behavior from the United States, and being a little bit of a disruptive force, one of the insights I think that the Simpson Center has generated over the last 10 or 15 years of work by Michael Krepon as well as by Polly Nayak on the U.S. role in past crises, is that the United States has been very active and very present in order to ratchet down temperatures, and to try to stabilize things when they flare up.

So, if there is another South Asian crisis between India and Pakistan, will the Trump administration need to be as active as its predecessors, as the Obama administration, the Bush administration, the Clinton administration, as well, in managing these crises to ensure U.S. interests? Or, can it allow the two countries to work things out themselves or allow for another third party to play that role?

Ami Bera:

Right. I think that's a great question. I, for one, think the United States has to be involved and engaged in those conversations. But, sticking to the theme of what I think our diplomatic role in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it may not be the United States by itself. It may be looking for other nations that have deeper relationships in that region to partner with us, to have that dialogue, at the same time empowering both India and Pakistan to resolve some of their own conflicts and dialogues.

And again, in some ways, it's that role of being facilitator. It's complicated, right? I mean, as Madeline Albright will say, in diplomacy, you don't have to like the person who's sitting on the other side of the table. You just have to get to the table often, and start the conversation.

I don't think the United States, at this particular point, or the Trump administration, at this particular point, can dictate what path forward occurs. I think we have to have an honest recognition that China is going to have a bigger role in the region, and I think it would be in our interest to focus on how do we help guide China's role in that region?

China certainly wants to be seen as a world leader, and as a player. That doesn't threaten me, as an American. In fact, I'd like to China to have a bigger role as a

world leader. Russia certainly wants to reestablish its ego and, again, that doesn't threaten me, as an American, and I don't think it should threaten us. But how do we help guide them to be responsible leaders? That, I think, is an important question.

Again, I can't see a 21<sup>st</sup> century conflict between India and Pakistan where China doesn't have a role in helping resolve that. Now, will China do it in solely a China-centric way? I think there is some question as how they engage in diplomacy and development. Often, it's in a China-centric way. I'd argue the United States, when we engage diplomatically in development, it's a little bit more benevolent, but let's not fool ourselves. We're also looking at what's in America's interests when we engage as well.

Sameer Lalwani: Well, we should've had you write a chapter on this. Maybe next time.

All right, so I can take a couple questions from the audience for the Congressman.

Ami Bera: This is always dangerous, when you're in a room full of smarter people than yourself.

Sharon Squassoni: Thank you, Congressman. Sharon Squassoni. I'm with George Washington University.

First question is a little bit of a tough one. Do you think the Trump administration, by cutting off aid to Pakistan, has just taken away the table? The second question is with regard to China's role. China has had a very different approach towards Pakistan's nuclear arsenal than the United States has. That's kind of understating it. One thing I worry about, as a non-proliferation expert, is if we cede more influence to China, what hope is there, actually, for reducing risks with respect to Pakistan's nuclear arsenal? Thanks.

Ami Bera: Yeah. I wish I could answer the first question. I hope there was a strategy behind the tweet, that it was thought through, that it wasn't just in error, and based on something the president may have recently read or seen, but there was a strategy behind it.

Yeah, I think my frustration, as a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, is historically, when we've looked at foreign policy, we may have different approaches, Democrats or Republicans, or with one administration or another, but we've always recognized we're on the same team when we were speaking to the rest of the world. First off, let me say this. If there are former State Department employees, or current State Department employees, thank you for your service. You do a remarkable job representing us around the world. That said, I do worry a lot about the understaffing at State, and the fact that we don't have all our undersecretary positions filled, and for South Asia, certainly.

I would wish, if there is a strategy there, that they would bring us in, as members of Congress. Prior administrations have done that, and we've had that open dialogue, whether in classified or open settings, because we also recognize, when we have a hearing, or when we make statements to the press, we can reinforce the strategy, or we can raise issues that the administration sometimes can't.

So, I can't necessarily answer that question, because they haven't had that conversation with us, to talk about what their strategic goal with that tweet is. I'd be speculating on where it is ... I do think, even under the Obama administration, the U.S.-Pakistan relationship, and the relationship with regards to aid to Pakistan was changing as it was. But it's complicated, right? We worry about the rapid proliferation of nuclear weapons in Pakistan, and making a smaller and more mobile nuclear arsenal as well is pretty worrisome.

Certainly, I understand some of why we've supported, through aid, the military government, in terms of trying to secure that arsenal. I do think there's a potential strategy of how do we strengthen civilian institutions in Pakistan, how do we strengthen a civilian government, and that's a conversation for all of you to have. Then, when you come up with an answer, please deliver that to members of Congress, and let us know how we can be of assistance.

The China question is a complicated one. So, let's acknowledge that China will have a role in the region. Let's acknowledge that China's role could be beneficial. It could make things more complicated. Then, let's think of what is that strategy, to make it more beneficial.

When you speak to the Indians, they don't want to be a pawn in U.S.-China. They don't want to be pushed to say, "Okay, we're going to ally with America or China." I think they recognize that in their neighborhood, they're going to have to have relationships with both China and the United States.

Again, I'm not giving you a direct answer, other than I think it's worth our thinking through how do we allow China to be a more benevolent partner in the region, understanding that China will always be China-centric. I think we, as members of Congress... We need to understand the Chinese ego in the broad sense. They're going to be a world power. They are a world power. How do we make them a responsible world power, and not a competitor, but in some ways a collaborator, and a leader in the region? Again, not easy to do, but we ought to be thinking about this in the long term, decade or two.

Sameer Lalwani: I really like your idea that when our diplomatic game is on the back foot, that members of Congress can sort of step in, and fill that void.

Ami Bera: We absolutely have to, right now.

Sameer Lalwani: Yeah. All right, so we have time for one more question.

Beverly Lindsay: Beverly Lindsay, University of California, Multi-campus. Thank you, Congressman, for your comments. Since I'm at a university, and of course our system is quite extensive, what are there two or three main areas that you think that, as universities, we can contribute to you and other congresspersons, but also, in terms of partnerships? Because we have a number of research partnerships with countries throughout the world, but are there other areas that we should also consider?

Ami Bera: I think, in the '60s and '70s, probably one of our best diplomatic moves was the foreign exchange program. The vast number of students that we allowed to come here, and get their education, to understand who we are as a people, to experience what it means to be in America, and the values of America... Many of those students in the '60s and '70s are now the leaders in their own country, and in fact, I think the leader in Pakistan had his education here at UCLA.

That is a good thing, because they have the ability... Many of those people have the ability of separating who we are as Americans, certainly, at times, from our government policy. So, one thing we absolutely could do is be more welcoming to students. There's a real desire for folks to come here and get their education.

But let's use the flip. I don't think we've done a great job sending our students to India, or to Pakistan, and I think we really ought to do more of that in a proactive way. So, I think that type of academic exchange certainly is incredibly important. I think a second thing and this is something that I've certainly thought about and tried to focus on in my three terms in Congress, you have a South Asian diaspora, a Pakistani-American, and an Indian-American diaspora that really is maturing... the Pakistani-American community has actually been more politically engaged than I think the Indian American community, but how can you engage the diaspora here to help solve some of the challenges in South Asia in a strategic and meaningful way?

The Indian-American community now is the most affluent community in America. How can you harness some of those resources to make investments in that region? It's also complicated because some of the Indian-American diaspora is still fighting battles from 40 or 50 years ago, but the generation rising doesn't see those battles and how do you engage the two communities to potentially be partners in solving some of these issues because again certainly there are resources in both communities? I think certainly the Pakistani-American diaspora has a real desire and I think deeper connections to politics in Pakistan, but how do we... and maybe that's something Simpson ought to do is think about bringing some of the leaders from both communities together to talk about how the two diasporas, and it's not just a U.S. diaspora. You see both diasporas all around the world and in England, in Africa and other places. Maybe there's an opportunity there.

Sameer Lalwani: Awesome. Thank you so much for your time and for your insights.

Ami Bera: Okay, thank you.

## **Panel 1: Lessons Learned and Future Risks? Reflections from the Subcontinent**

Sameer Lalwani: All right, we're running a little bit behind schedule, but why don't I ask the first panel to join me on the podium here and we'll get started.

Okay, I'm joined here by a fairly impressive group of practitioners, scholars who've served many years in respective governments and thought about, lived through, and worked on crises in South Asia and so this is an opportunity for a reflection on their insights based on their practices and experience and then through reflections afterwards. Ambassador Saran and Ambassador Khan were both foreign secretaries in India and Pakistan, respectively. They're also contributors to this volume, so I encourage you to take a look at their chapters they wrote on some very interesting aspects of crisis we don't necessarily think about all the time, the role of organization and organizational dynamics, and a way that those hold up under pressure, under stress in crises. Then the role of communication between bilateral communication, internal communications and whether those remain durable during downturns and relations and what opportunities or costs there are to maintaining those channels of communication.

Then of course Polly Nayak has authored a number of publications published by Stimson reflecting on the United States as a third-party crisis manager. When we know there's a crisis, how we react to it, what potential set of actions that the United States can take in order to subdue, stifle, or mitigate the consequences of the future crisis. I've asked each of them to prepare some opening remarks based on their past writings and just reflections about the state of play in South Asia today. In fact, hopefully we'll learn a little bit more about what we've learned from past crises, what this means for a future challenge or contingency in the future and even with Congressman Bera referred to as opportunities that can be harnessed from future crisis contingencies.

We'll go down the list of presenters. We have Ambassador Riaz Khan who spent nearly 40 years in Pakistan's foreign service holding various assignments at Pakistani missions around the world. His diplomatic career included stints as foreign secretary from 2005 to 2008, ambassador to China prior to that, spokesman of the foreign office, and a number of other postings. He served as the head of the Pakistani delegation to the Pakistan-India Composite Dialogue and prior to joining, this is what I think is the most interesting thing I learned about Ambassador Khan, he taught quantum physics at Punjab University. He's a mathematician by training and he would love to tell you more about advanced mathematics and things that we can't fully comprehend as policymakers and practitioners, but he's up there in the clouds in terms of his cerebral production.

Ambassador Shyam Saran is an Indian career diplomat. He joined the Indian foreign service in 1970, became foreign secretary to the government of India in 2004 to 2006. So, these gentlemen have a history together as you can tell. Prior to his appointment as foreign secretary he served as India's ambassador to

Myanmar, Indonesia, and Nepal, and high commissioner to Mauritius. He was also the prime minister of special envoy for the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal and he's a senior fellow at the Center for Policy Research and a member of the Institute of Chinese Studies Governing Council.

Finally, Polly Nayak retired in 2002. She was a senior government executive after a wide-ranging intelligence career and as a long time South Asia expert she was the intelligence community's most senior expert in manager in South Asia from 1995 to 2001. It was a pretty quiet time around then as I understand. Her publications with the Simpson Center include *U.S. Crisis Management and South Asia's Twin Peaks Crisis* and *The Unfinished Crisis: U.S. Crisis Management After the 2008 Mumbai Attacks*. With this eminent panel, we'll start with Ambassador Riaz Khan. I'll ask each of the panelist to speak for maybe eight to 10 minutes, and then we'll try to play catch up a little bit with Q and A as well.

Riaz Khan:

Thank you very much, Dr. Lalwani, first for inviting me here and I must say that we had the comments from Congressman Bera to be positive and it's a good start for your endeavor today. We are missing our good friend Michael Krepon. I'm really happy to see my old friend, Shyam Saran. We have been together in many meetings and conferences, but I think this is the first time that we are together in a seminar setting.

About conflict and crises, lessons from the past, I have a chapter where I have contributed and I have gone in some detail there and I hope that you find it worthwhile to glance through it whenever you have the time. Here I would like to throw light on three aspects. First, what can we learn from experiences of past conflicts and crisis in relations between Pakistan and India? Second, the present dangerous situation following the two countries become overt nuclear weapons states. And third, some of the key points I have made with regard to avoiding another conflict and how crises can be brought under control or diverted.

What can we learn from past experiences? First point in this regard is that Kashmir lies at the heart of the 70 years of conflict and tension in Pakistan-India relations, if Kashmir were resolved perhaps the trajectory of this relationship could have been very different. Pakistan would have had no motivation to respond and pursue a nuclear option. This is what I believe, if Kashmir were resolved. Perhaps the two countries could have lived together, as the founder of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah had once envisioned, like the United States and Canada. Instead however we have had three wars over the dispute. Even now there is a simmering agitation in the valley. Only a couple of months back, you may have seen a statement by former Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh and the former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah expressing concern over Kashmiri alienation, which they say has to be addressed.

One thing is very clear. The disputes and problems, if left unaddressed, do not necessarily fade away. Especially if these relate to the lives of the people. Kashmir, I always believed, is resolvable. It is a political, not an ideological,

dispute. We have in two other areas, Siachen and Sir Creek, two disputes which are entirely territorial, as I look at it. Again, these two issues can also be resolved in innovative ways, turning them from areas of conflict to areas of cooperation for the benefit of the two countries, and importantly the environment.

The second point is the question of terrorism. It has a wider context, especially in the greater Middle East, what is happening there, and that affects very deeply Pakistan. I'll make a few comments in the context of the Pakistan-India relationship. Pakistan absolutely gains nothing from any acts of terrorism against India. I have dwelt on this argument in some detail in the chapter which I have contributed in this book. Following the Mumbai attacks, almost a decade ago, which Pakistan had condemned, India moved this issue to the center stage of dialogue between the two countries. Pakistan agrees to discuss terrorism, and cooperation to combat it, and there have even been some instances of cooperation. But Pakistan insists that the dialogue must be inclusive and address all issues. Something similar to the composite dialogue that we had, but in my view the question of format and how to go about it, nomenclature, they are secondary matters. The current absence of a formal dialogue between the two countries is, in my view, risky and dangerous.

The third point I would make in this context of experience, relates to the assumption that progress on soft issues such as trade, culture, and people-to-people context can help transform political atmosphere and even pave the way for resolution of political disputes. While there can be no denial of the desirability of progress on soft issues, experience shows that it proves to be fragile, and whittles away under a crisis. Or even sometimes when there is a change of government in one capital or the other. On the other hand, resolution of a political dispute can become a more solid foundation for mutual trust. In my view, progress on resolving Siachen in 2011, when Pakistan had lost more than 140 soldiers in Gayari avalanche, that could have become a game changer. In fact, both sides are losing more lives there because of the weather conditions rather than because of the fight between the two.

The fourth point, on every issue which involves Pakistan and India, there are different perceptions on both sides. Be it Kashmir, be it terrorism. I have the experience that on such minor matters like allowing movement of diplomatic personnel in the respective capitals, when the two sides will sit down at the technical level, one would find that very soon they would paint themselves into corners. So, there are these differing perceptions. If and when possible, when it becomes possible, we need to look for a way forward, rather than try to convince the other from your own point of view. Positions need to be stated as long as they're held, but a serious diplomatic effort has to rest on finding accommodation and common ground.

Lastly in this context, I would say that while both countries have been through many conflicts and crises, they have resorted, and accepted a rich catalog of modalities and approaches to contain these crises and conflicts, and to address

them. These have involved resort to the United Nations, third-party intercession, including the United States and the erstwhile Soviet Union, international mediation, bilateral contacts, unilateral steps. Nothing has been a taboo. This must remain so in the future. Here both countries have a responsibility, and the international community too has an obligation to be sensitive, and remain engaged to the need for containing and help arresting crises from escalation.

The second aspect which I had mentioned relates to the danger of the current situation. These are most poignantly evident in India's Cold Start doctrine, and Pakistan's riposte, that contemplates going beyond tactical nuclear weapons to miniaturization, and battlefield nuclear weapons. I have argued in this chapter which I have contributed that these are dangerous doctrines, and the two sides should retract, retreat from them. Citing from the chapter, I have said: "The premise that a sub-conventional terrorist act should provoke a massive conventional retaliation, which in turn must be countered by an unconventional limited nuclear response, is deeply flawed. The key assumptions underlying this spiral of escalation must be questioned. These precepts are too dangerous for hard ball war gaming by those steeped in a military culture of suspicion, and strategies of action / counter-action. Any scenario inexorably leading to a nuclear exchange is insane in the extreme, such a trajectory should be considered only to develop mutually agreed intercepts, wire trips, and mechanisms, to contain the crisis. Diplomacy and dialogue must intervene at every point of the trajectory toward a catastrophe." This is what I'm quoting from, the chapter that I have contributed. Nuclear deterrence is now an integral part of the security paradigms of the two countries. This poses a classic dilemma. They must learn to live with this reality while making a nuclear exchange unthinkable.

The third and last aspect relates to suggestions for avoiding and managing crisis. In this book chapter I have grouped these so-called recommendations or suggestions into six baskets: 1) revive dialogue, 2) expand dialogue process, 3) improve existing CMBs, 4) eliminate nuclear exchange possibility, 5) avoid communication breakdown, and 6) acknowledging both states' nuclear statuses.

These are essentially security-related measures, but there can be others. For example, a friend of mine who was former deputy head of UNEF, he once told me that an agreement between the two sides under the Indus Water Basin Treaty, for a regular exchange of telemetry data, has become a vital CBM to avoid the water issues. Apart from a better understanding of water flows in a scenario of climate change. I have not included this or similar, other possible CBMs in my list, in the chapter, but here I'll only flag three points.

First, I have suggested regular bilateral summit level meetings, and as Congressman Bera had mentioned, that whether we like each other or not, I think this is an important. This ought to be considered as an important arrangement, when conceived. At least, say, once in three years. Experience shows that bilateral summits are always better prepared. Summit level meetings

have always led to some cooling off and even progress. Such an arrangement, regardless of the state of relations, should be beneficial and needed for the two countries, which happen to be nuclear weapon states and neighbors.

Second, regular top-level military and intelligence contacts, say, once in two years. These could be under wraps or open. Today there is no denying of the important role that military plays in critical decisions relating to security and foreign policy issues, not just in Pakistan, but almost in any other country. Militaries have a particular perspective, and such contacts can contribute to confidence building. You may have noted that a week ago there were reports of an unpublicized meeting between the national security advisors of the two countries in Bangkok. If so, if it has taken place, it is a salutary development.

Third point is the role of the international community. Regional and extra-regional powers have played a positive role in defusing crises in the past, bringing down tension. This role should remain available to the two countries. Now much of what I have said here, or in the chapter which I have contributed, may appear to be under the present circumstances, as Congressman Bera had said, a pipe dream. Nonetheless, this does not change the realities of the two countries being neighbors, and being nuclear weapon states. Therefore, they cannot hold back, and this is one of the conclusions that I have in the chapter, for long, on a step similar to those which have been proposed for a long time. Thank you.

Shyam Saran:

Thank you very much, and let me congratulate the Stimson Center on the publication of this book on managing crises, which has a set of very useful contributions, and I'm very happy to have an opportunity to once again meet my old friend, Riaz Khan. He and I were foreign secretaries during the period 2004 to 2006, and I may perhaps also say that that was one of the greater periods, although I don't know whether I should credit ourselves for that. But it just so happened that they were somewhat better than they normally are.

So, my chapter of course does not go into the dynamics of India-Pakistan relations as much as looking at crisis management from an Indian perspective, and to see how, whether or not India has in place the kind of mechanisms which are necessary in order to deal with crisis, and perhaps prevent crises from escalating. I have shown that, in some cases, we have been more successful, other cases we have not been so successful. So, the lesson that I've drawn is that in fact what has worked has been the reliance on very well-established institutions and procedures. When we have allowed them to work they have actually delivered in terms of managing crisis. It is when we have, for whatever reason, moved away from those established institutions and procedures that crises have actually escalated. It's my belief that, had we allowed those institutions and processes to actually work, perhaps the kind of escalation which eventually came about could have been prevented. So, they would not have become a bigger crisis if they had been contained right in the initial stages. That's not just with respect to India-Pakistan, just a more general kind of conclusion that I come to.

Let me also say that although I would have hoped that much more would have been done, in terms of learning from past experience, we are still some distance away from that. But in the recent couple of years, perhaps there has been a greater recognition in India that we need to have a much stronger focus on the institutional aspects than the processes that need to be followed in dealing with crisis.

As far as the India-Pakistan relationship is concerned, of course I have certainly no difference of opinion with Riaz on the need to have a constant engagement between the two sides, that there should be even summit-level meetings between the two countries. Engagement is, in fact, one of the best ways of dealing, or preventing crises from emerging. My own experience, for example, in the relationship with China, which is another very important relationship for us, where also there are differences of opinion and sometimes crises do erupt, but it has been our experience that the willingness of the leadership of the two countries to engage in very regular summits and meetings has actually played a very important role in keeping the relationship on some kind of an even keel. That was most recently demonstrated by the manner in which the two countries were able to deal with what is known as the Doklam issue.

Can that be a lesson for India and Pakistan? Yes, it could be, but the problem is that every time perhaps an effort is made on the Indian side to reach out, at the leadership level, there are perhaps forces at work who make certain that the positive impact of the summit is appreciated. So, even Mr. Modi, who's regarded as somewhat tough leader, he took a huge political gamble by going to Lahore and visiting Sharif, and there was an expectation that this would lead to a better relationship. But as we saw, like also in the past, the initiative was again sort of followed by some major cross-border terrorist attacks, and that could pay to whatever positive impact there would have been from such summit meetings.

If you remember the same thing happened with Atal Bihari Vajpayee and his famous bus trip to Lahore and, subsequently, the Kargil incident which took place.

So, what seems to have worked and the case of India-China, does not always seem to work in the India-Pakistan case.

I would agree with Riaz on one point, which is that part of the difficulty in managing the India-Pakistan relationship is precisely the very different historical narratives that the two countries have. Why did partition occur? If you ask Pakistan, there will be a different answer. If you ask anybody in India, there will be a different answer. Why did the Kashmir war erupt immediately after? Again, there will be very different answers to that question. Why did 1965 happen? Why did 1971 happen? Why did Kargil happen? Or more recently whatever happened? There are very different interpretations on the Pakistani side, on the Indian side. I'm not going into which interpretation is correct, or which

interpretation is wrong, but the fact is that there are very, very different interpretations.

Which makes me believe that any kind of improvement of relations between the two countries will not be in the form of some kind of grand reconciliation, problems are all resolved, Kashmir issue resolved, and we're back on track. No, I don't think that will happen. I think what will have to happen for some kind of a positive relationship to be established between the two countries, will only be through a gradual alignment of the historical narratives on both sides. As long as these narratives continue to be diametrically opposed to one another, I do not see the possibility of any kind of grand reconciliation or improvement of their relationship.

Which appoints me to the need for, perhaps, focusing attention on what modest steps that you can take to improve relations. They may be very ordinary kind of measures, you know, like some of the measures which we undertook earlier, encouraging people-to-people relations and pilgrimages between the two countries. Various other such measures, which Riaz says, if the main issue is not resolved, these may not really work in terms of improving relationship.

My answer to that is that the more complicated the dispute between the two countries, chances are that they will be a greater prospect of resolving those issues, provided the overall atmosphere of the relationship is better. In fact, in situation of acute hostility, it is even less likely that the problems will be resolved.

So, I think while we should not shy away from trying to deal with what he describes as the whole issue of the Pakistani point of view, but I think there will be better chances of dealing with that, if we were also engaged in those modest steps to improve the relationship. And the improvement in relationship to my mind will come as a cumulative result of these smaller steps, rather than one big step of say resolving the Kashmir issue.

Also, my sense is that being engaged in these modest measures is perhaps more realistic at this point of time, precisely because of what I mentioned. As soon as there is a prospect of some very major change in the relationship in a positive direction, we always find that there is a reaction to that. For whatever reason, whether it is the Pakistani military, or whether it is the Pakistani establishment, feels very threatened that there is a real prospect of improvement of relations. That is just the reality that has been our experience. So, I think we have to take that into account.

As far as the nuclear issue is concerned, I think it is perhaps very important for both sides not to give into the temptation of brinkmanship and trying to raise the antes so that the other side feels constrained. The problem with this is that we do not know at which point we can actually prevent this condition from happening. So, when we have spoken on the Indian side, that when we talk about any kind of nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan, that exchange

will probably end up in a strategic exchange. So even if there may be the intention to limit it to nearly a tactical exchange, our own experience tells us that nothing can be contained. Once nuclear weapons have been used, once that threshold has been crossed, whatever exercises we do seem to point to escalation to the strategic level. So, I don't think that one should even talk about how nuclear weapons could be used in the context of the India-Pakistan conflict.

With respect to this exercise that has been carried out, I would say that while it is a good account of how crises have erupted, and how they have unfolded, and it's good to look at the theoretical aspect in terms of what are the drivers of crises, or what are the warning signs with respect to crises. But as you have yourself pointed out, Sameer, in your chapter, that it is very difficult to actually reduce crisis to simply a function of specific conditions, the exact variables or distinct thresholds. Instead it is a very subjective position. And it is clearly influenced by whatever may be at that point of time political considerations or even the perceptions and reactions of leadership. This is something that we have to just accept, that there is no objective way of actually dealing with crisis.

Secondly, I think a point has been made that if we look at the various crises, at least since '86-'87, and Michael's chapter has reference to that. He says that all subsequent to '86-'87, all nuclear-tinged crises have been prompted by actions originating from within Pakistan. Now, why have those actions originated from Pakistan? What are the drivers of those trigger points? I think that may be worth also looking at.

And also it has been mentioned that if crises have not escalated, it is mainly on account of Indian restraint, and perhaps it might be worth looking at why Indians have been restrained despite the fact that there has been such kind of crisis, which has not been India's. Because that I think would perhaps give us more useful information as to what is really involved in terms of crisis origination and also crisis escalation. Now, I would like to just end by saying that it certainly remains my view that engagement between India and Pakistan at all levels is something that I would certainly welcome, even when there are really difficult relations between the two sides. And I'm encouraged to know that despite the very difficult relationship that exists at this point of time, channels of communication continue to be used, and we also sometimes made mention to the fact that the national security advisors of the two countries are in touch with another, one another. And also, I will say that diplomatic channels between the two sides continue to be active.

So, it's not as if communications are not taking place. We would have hoped, of course, that these are raised to a much higher than what we see today. Thank you.

Polly Nayak:

Yes. Well, these were two extremely interesting presentations that are, in some ways, reflective of the chapters in the book. Not just the chapters by these two gentlemen, but also other chapters concerning the different perspectives, the opposing approaches.

And, to a lesser degree, the differing structural issues in how the countries approach relations with each other. You know, it seems to be very logical that the chapters on India should focus on mechanisms within India, because the policy apparatus for relations and security is much more complex, has far more moving parts than is true in Pakistan, where the military has a lead role in both, there are simply less complex institutional arrangements than in India.

India, like the United States, has a messy collection of different pieces that have to constantly adapt and work more efficiently together. So, I think the different focuses of these two conversations reflect in part institutional differences in their internal workings.

I thought this book was magnificent. I have to agree with Ambassador Saran that, when all is said and done, and I think you and Hannah said this very explicitly, the decision as to what comprises a crisis is a very political decision. There's nothing really objective that can define it. And I would add something to that, which I think is quite important. And again, I think both ambassadors have alluded to it.

And that is that anger. I don't think you alluded to it directly. But anger is also a factor. You talked about leadership, and that's certainly two different leaders, different personalities. But when I go back and think about Shivshankar Menon's book *Choices*, and I look back at his reaction to the 2008 Mumbai attacks, his anger was what he led with. It's not what defined the final Indian response, which was very restrained.

But I think we sometimes forget how much interpersonal dynamics and discussions among different parts of leaderships affect outcomes. I think that very dialectic process, and the conclusions that different parties bring to the table, play into the outcome, depending on, again, group dynamics. So, it seems to me that outcomes are far more specific, and reflect the roles of different personalities as well as institutions than some of the more theoretical discussions suggest.

I was very impressed by the chapters, in addition to those of the two ambassadors, on media, the role of media, which I think is very important and often ignored. And the question on the Indian side of informing public opinion in a more systematic way, rather than simply responding to it. I think that was really fascinating. And in fact, that was part of your chapter, Ambassador as well. So very, very interesting.

The chapter on intelligence, particularly in India, was fascinating. And I was struck particularly by the similarity of some of the suggestions for improving internal mechanisms in India to discussions that have gone on in the United States in the past, again, because we both have messy systems with lots of moving parts.

I thought the discussion of how capacity sometimes becomes the defining element in an outcome, was fascinating because I think it's true in the United States as well. What can we do, comes up as right at the front end. What are actually realistic options? And having sat through a lot of senior decision meetings, that I think is a common strand.

Another is your recommendation to develop more regional expertise, and to have closer ties between government and outside experts, think tank as well as university. And that's something U.S. foreign policymakers and the foreign policy establishment have intermittently emphasized. And it's actually become quite an important piece of the foreign policy relationship with the private sector.

So, all of those things are common and very interesting. The lack of durable institutional mechanisms in both countries, really, is I think particularly striking. And I'm also struck by the fact that, in India, some of the difficulties in coordinating between the security, or military establishment, and the civilian policymaking establishment, are the result of India's tremendous effort to keep the military secondary in foreign policymaking. So, it's a different dynamic from what we see in Pakistan. So, it seems to me that, again, as in the United States, some of these consequences follow from deliberate policies, deliberate emphases that are special to India and, to a great degree, to the United States as well.

So, I thought these recommendations, with their different focuses, Ambassador Khan's on altering the structure and focus of the dialogue, and Ambassador Saran's on trying to build from the bottom up, reflect some of the reasons why much of the discussion between the two governments remains short of summitry. Very, very different narratives, but also very different concepts of what has to come first.

The question of why India is restrained, and the twin question of why there are spoiler attacks when summits do occur between India and Pakistan, and seem to be bearing fruit, or obviously questions going forward that analysts will continue to study.

We'll be talking shortly about the role of outside third-parties, governments primarily, in buffering and perhaps preventing over-reaction by both sides. And many analysts believe that both governments, India's and Pakistan's, however unhappy they may be, to need to rely on outside parties, actually count on it. And so the question going forward, which this book has raised and which Representative Bera also raised, is whether the United States will be as available, and whether it will be able in a different, perhaps less-proactive role, than it has adopted before to serve as a coordinator, which has been its past role in outside discussions with leaders in both India and Pakistan in times of crisis. Those are our real questions.

I wanted to raise a point about having processes for government crisis response, and even for dialogue between India and Pakistan in times of crisis. I realize that India and Pakistan have their own informal mechanisms. There is conversation that's simply not public in difficult times. It's not as though everything that happens in public is the sum total of what's actually occurring between two quite responsible governments.

I do want to mention the value of having government crisis responses in place, even if they are not actually completely utilized in the face of a crisis. Seems to me that the value of having such a process in place lies partly in the making of the plan, and the making of the response because devising it requires thinking through the best ways to proceed, what the mechanics are, what the logistics look like, and in a worse case, the survival of government. It was the very process of devising this is educational and forces senior people in a government to consider at least the elements, if not follow the procedures in a difficult time.

I have to ask, how many of us if we're faced with a smoke-filled corridor in a hotel would try to read the emergency exit recommendations on the back of the door before leaving? I do think there is value, but I wanted to bring to the conversation a point that has been raised in a number of research studies. That is that unless the people who are actually going to be doing the crisis management, that is very senior officials in a country are involved in drills or whatever, they have very little value. That's the finding of several studies because having a proxy run through a drill in lieu of the person who will actually be making the decision doesn't educate the senior policymaker who will be on the front line not the proxy.

I raise that simply because it argues for having the top officials themselves be involved in any sort of exercise rather than sending someone who's a couple of levels below and won't actually have decision authority.

With that, I would particularly be interested in hearing if either of you cares to comment on the value of track two discussions, which is a question that has come up in regard to other dyads of countries that have stressed relations, whether track two is actually a good mechanism for at least trial balloons short of official exploration at higher levels, or whether back-channel discussions that don't involve outside parties or non-government people are more valuable. I suspect you each have an opinion based on your experience. That would be a subject I'd be interested in hearing you pursue.

Sameer Lalwani: Why don't we turn that over then to the question of utility of track two's, but also Ambassador Saran has already talked about modest steps being a one way to go. Are those advanced through these track two mechanisms? Do they require track one institutionalized structures that Ambassador Khan talked about, or just use every mechanism available?

Riaz Khan: Thank you. I'll address this track to question, but before that I just want to make one point that unfortunately I have not read the book. I only read my chapter. I

don't know what is there written by Michael in his essay. It was referred to by Shyam that all the problems that were initiated somehow from Pakistan. There are a few instances which come readily to mind. For example, Siachen. Was it initiated in Pakistan or there were also incursions in Chorbit La and other sectors.

But far bigger than that 1971. I don't want to touch on Kashmir because it's a category apart. It probably started even before Pakistan and the old partition. The thing is that I don't want to dwell on this because I have not read that particular essay and it would be unfair for me to comment on that.

Now the track two discussions. To my mind track two discussions are useful. They're useful because in the world today, which is very complex, there is a need for interaction, interaction which can lead things to a positive direction even if at a given point of time it doesn't appear to be very productive. Otherwise if you go on judging that this thing is how useful it is or how useful it is not, people are not doubting whether diplomacy at all has any usefulness, whether it is the military strength and the economic strength what basically is the arbiter of decisions which shifts the relations between the twin countries. Being a diplomat and I think I can say for Shyam also, who probably had a longer career than myself, diplomacy is vital for the health of the world affairs and how we interact.

Singularly, track two, it is a point of totality for considering things there are sometimes very useful ideas which are generated, or at least they are discussed, which sometimes it is very difficult to discuss in very formal settings. That would be my response.

The argument that I have made is not that we deny that there is no utility of discussing softer issues, and if they respond with some softer issues, good. One can also understand that there cannot be uniform progress on all the issues that we discuss, but when there is a dialogue that all the issues should be discussed. That was the argument that was being made by me. Thank you.

Shyam Saran:

Let me, of course, agree entirely that engagement at all levels amongst very different kind of actors, all these avenues... so in India, Pakistan context, I think Riaz has also taken part in some of those track twos, so have I. There are also, which I certainly would encourage of Indian and Pakistanis from different spheres of life meeting each other, whether they are, I know filmmakers coming and working in India, or performers from India going in and performing in Pakistan.

There is a very strong culture affinity between the two sides, and those cultural affinities, in my experience has been, they have always had some positive impact in times of the relationship between the two countries. I'm all for those kinds of engagements.

I think one has to recognize that ultimately the resolving issues are even managing the adversity of relationship between the two countries requires work on the part of states. On that issue, I think he has made a very important point, and that is the value of diplomacy, in terms of if not resolving issues, at least managing issues. And diplomacy should be quite apparent. You can only operate in grays. If you pose issues in black and white, you will shrink the space for diplomacy. Therefore, whatever helps in creating some grayness in the relationship where diplomacy can work I think is very, very critical.

And I also share the apprehension that, perhaps, that space for diplomacy... Those gray spaces may be shrinking. And I think it is extremely important that we do not allow that shrinkage to take place.

I would agree with you with regard to the need for the officials of who are going to be dealing with crisis, to be actually engaged in the exercise or working out the processes and the building up of the institution. I think you will see from my chapter that that is precisely what has been done in India.

So, the problem is not that the institution is not there, or the drills have not been laid out. Very, very elaborate drills have been laid out. And the people who will be actually taking the decisions are very much part and parcel of that. So, if you look at the central crisis management group, all key actors are represented then. They know exactly what each one has to do and has the authority to do.

It is when you do not use it that problems arise. And why do you not use it? Well, sometimes there is a sense "Oh, this is a very delicate, sensitive, political issue. Maybe it should be handled in some different manner," which is the wrong thing to do, obviously.

This may not be the experience in other companies. And I'm not so sure whether that's the experience in the United States, but you seemed to indicate that maybe it's a problem here as well.

But it's not so much that the solutions are not there. But if you constantly keep putting them aside, then do not be surprised if surprises occur.

Polly Nayak:

Yeah, it seems to me... I just wanted to add one other thought to this, which is that as a crisis moves in, one tendency that seems to be quite universal is to narrow the group of people who are involved in the discussion, and that works against the kind of coordinated, whole of government and the response that...

Shyam Saran:

True. And what is the best advice which is coming to the one person where the buck stops. In the case of India, the prime minister. So, I can only recall what happened after Mumbai because I could see what was happening. It would have been better if he had constantly made kind of inputs that could have come to him from this kind of a group, where all the moving parts that you are talking about would have been represented, because everyone was getting only a small

bit of the picture, not the complete picture. So, you needed a platform where all of this would come together, and then you could go to the political leadership who would still have to take the decision. But I think though he took the decision, despite the pressure on him to retaliate, though he took the decision not to retaliate, I cannot say that that was based on a very careful assemblage of intelligence, information, which then allowed him to take that decision. I think that decision was something of an instinctive reaction that retaliation may lead to worse consequences than would address even though there was this kind of pressure.

Polly Nayak: Interesting. Thank you.

Sameer Lalwani: Well, I've failed my job to moderate this now because I've been so captivated with the discussion, but I will try to have a firmer hand here in Q&A. We've got a little bit of time. I'll try to bundle some questions. Please introduce yourself. Wait for the microphone. Limit yourself to one question as succinctly as possible. And we'll start with this gentleman over here.

James Clad: Good morning. My name is James Clad. I was in the OSD policy defense under the last years of the W. Bush administration. I just wanted to add my voice to Polly's call for recurrent exercises ahead of crises and just say he may have been involved. I can't remember. But we had a series of fire drills, we'd call them... 2007, early 2008, which had the great effect of acclimatizing the building, the Pentagon itself, to some of the issues involved. It turned out to be a very helpful exercise ahead of the Mumbai business. So that's absolutely essential thing to do and to keep doing.

Sameer Lalwani: Thank you. Let's take a couple more.

Muhammad Umar: Muhammad Umar, a writer from Pakistan. I have a question for both the ambassadors. What factor do you credit in the restraint India's shown in the past, crises in the past two decades, if not nuclear deterrence and does that not justify Pakistan's dependence on nuclear weapons?

Sameer Lalwani: Okay, let's get one more. This gentleman here.

Saleem Ali: Saleem Ali, Professor at University of Delaware. Question to Ambassador Saran. I concur with you in terms of the role the Pakistani military played in impeding conflict resolution, but in your own recent book, you have noted that in the case of Siachen, it was General J. J. Sing and the Indians' national security advisor who thwarted the last-minute peace deal on Siachen. And so, I'm wondering if the more productive conversation might be around how collectively the military can be made to see value in peace on both sides, rather than this constant incrimination of one side's military, which is the narrative in DC. And going back to General Eisenhower's caution about the military industrial complex, I think that might be a more productive way, and I wonder if you could comment on that.

- Sameer Lalwani: Okay, so we'll take these three questions. Fire drills, deterrence, Siachen, and the military.
- Riaz Khan: I take this point. First of all, yes, militaries have varying roles, in some countries more, in some countries less. But when it comes to Pakistan-India relationship, I don't think that the Indian military has a lesser role than the Pakistani military has on this particular issue.
- Muhammad Umar: How do you explain India's restraint in the crises that have happened in the past two decades if not nuclear deterrence? And does that not justify Pakistan's dependence on nuclear weapons?
- Riaz Khan: Well, nuclear weapons, the development of nuclear weapons, that's a very separate issue. Pakistan did not pursue this course right in the beginning from 1960s or so. It started pursuing it earnestly from 1974 onwards. So, this is one thing. We had to do it. There may be a difference of opinions in Pakistan on this issue, but I think that today, the nuclear deterrence is an integral part of our security, there should be no question about it. That's what the Pakistani establishment is concerned with, is both the civilian and the military, there are no doubts on this question.
- The crises, they have happened. Crises have happened before. But the argument that I have made in this chapter is that there's need for formal and solid institutional mechanisms, which can help the two countries to prevent crises from happening, or if they happen, then to arrest them.
- Shyam Saran: Yeah. So, I have a different opinion about the role of the armed forces in India. That the armed forces have a very important input into decisionmaking, that is certainly true. And even if we talk about the specific instance of Siachen. The issues that were raised were not raised by the military institution. They were raised by the security establishment, which at that particular point of time was endorsed by the military, but it was not the perception of the military. The most important role was played by the national security advisor and the defense minister, home minister, and others.
- Felt this was not the right time to be able to help with this. The reason being that there had been a terrorist attack before that and that have sort of colored the perception of decision makers at that time. So, what came first is you can keep going into this, what led to the change in the situation, well I'm not sure that that's so useful. The fact is that as I said it is very important that the room for diplomacy needs to be maintained.
- As far as nuclear deterrence is concerned, again I do not think it is useful to go into what role nuclear deterrence has played. I'd rather see it as a fact of life now. Both countries are nuclear weapon states. Both regard these weapons as being not weapons of use, hopefully, but weapons of deterrence. And in all this,

it is if you also ask American strategists or Chinese strategists or others, it is more a mind game rather than anything actually to do with the weapons.

So, it's perceptions about what the weapons do that really create the sense of deterrence. How do you see the role of the weapons? I think I can't speak about Pakistan but certainly on the Indian side we do not see these as weapons that can be used. We see that as weapons which deterred the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons. So, there's also a difference in that.

We do not see these as deterrents against a conventional threat. We see these as deterrents against the possible use of nuclear weapons. Once deterrence breaks, so this is the point we always make, once deterrence breaks, then the consequences are totally unpredictable. Most likely once that threshold is crossed, our sense is that it will go right up to the strategic exchange.

But the very dynamic of the use of weapons is such that you cannot contain it at any particular threshold. Now, that may be wrong, you're up into a graduated response, finally came to the conclusion there was not such a thing as a graduated response.

I do not think that that applies in the case of whether it is in the nuclear standoff between India and Pakistan, India and China or any other situation, I do not think that works.

Sameer Lalwani: So, as often is the case in panels that I ran, we are running overtime. So, I want to ask everyone to just give one final set of comments that can be responses to past questions. But maybe we can start with Polly and just final remarks before we move on to the next panel.

Polly Nayak: I just wanted to raise an issue that I had intended to raise earlier. And that is just a comment about what Michael, who is not here to make the comment himself, would call the U.S. playbook in response of South Asian crisis. And that really comes back to what both of you have talked about. Really rather benign diplomatic moves that are in any government's portfolio. Getting on a plane and going to talk to leaders, counseling restraint, bringing in other people who have equities and preventing tensions from escalating. I think that these are precisely the sort of international diplomacy the next panel will talk about.

But I did want to clarify what I think Michael means by the U.S. playbook. It has followed the same pattern, pretty much under every administration, up until now. We'll see what happens.

Shyam Saran: I don't know whether I have anything to add. On the playbook, let me say, yes, certainly I think it is always welcomed to have friends who come and try to help resolve these kinds of crises.

But let me say this, I think ultimately it is the main actors involved to have to decide that they do not wish to escalate the situation. In that respect, whatever may be the nature of the relationship between India and Pakistan, and my own sense is that leaders of both countries have actually proved to be reasonably, sensible and sober people.

Riaz Khan: I agree that basically it is the leadership, it is the formal settings, which have to decide things, the governments. But all the other efforts are important.

I just want to make one clarification regarding this question of nuclear weapons. That is that Pakistan does not contemplate use of nuclear weapons literally or otherwise unless its own territory is occupied. That would be a desperate situation. There what do you do?

So that is one scenario. And this is all thought experiment. Mind games. So, let's not go into the discussion of it, want to avoid that. As I have said that these mind games should be played in order to see, to develop wire trips, to develop how we can prevent that situation from happening.

Sameer Lalwani: Thank you for that. And I think our work on Stimson has focused a lot on recognizing that deterrence is a fact of life but there are different doctrines and postures that can be more or less stable, more or less crisis-prone, incur more or less risk. And obviously we try to find ways in which we can both reduce risk and increase stability.

So, thank you very much to the panelists and contributors to our edited volume. Now I would like the second panel to come on up.

## **Panel 2: How Do We Anticipate and Manage Crises? Approaches by Third Parties**

Hannah Haegeland: Thank you for joining us today for our second panel on anticipating and thinking about third-party approaches to crises in South Asia. This discussion is meant to think about the threats and opportunities that potential new future crises could pose for U.S. interests and Chinese interests. We will focus on the United States and China, both with long histories in the region.

For the United States, as many of us know, we've played a primary third-party, crisis-manager role. China has historically played a fairly limited role, but we've seen an increasing trend line of involvement and that's what the chapter that Yun Sun and I have written addresses. All of this is unfolding as new actors in South Asia and the Indo-Pacific are interacting.

We have a rising China. We have a U.S. role in south Asia shifting. Simultaneously, we're seeing, on the one hand, a deepening in U.S.-India relations and a souring of U.S.-Pakistan relations. On the other hand, we're seeing China developing its relationship with Pakistan and encountering some tension with India.

Meanwhile, we have live fire occurring across the Line of Control. What this means for our panel today is that we're looking in a new crisis landscape. So, with that, it's my pleasure to introduce our panelists. We are looking at three very distinguished people. The first is an ambassador and we'll go through his bio in just a moment. The second is Moeed Yusuf from the USIP. The third is our panelist joining us over the phone, Yun Sun, who is our resident China scholar. So, I'll go ahead and introduce her very briefly, and then we are going to hear remarks from her. Yun Sun is unfortunately not going to join us for the Q&A. If you have questions for Yun, we will be happy to connect you with her at a later time or via email.

Yun is our senior associate with the East Asia Program at the Stimson Center. Her expertise is in Chinese foreign policy, U.S.-China relations, and China's relations with neighboring countries and authoritarian regimes. She joined Stimson from the Brookings Institution.

So, Yun, if you can hear us, I'll ask you to go ahead, and give us your remarks now.

Yun Sun:

So, thank you for having me at the panel. I was asked to discuss China's role in the crisis management in South Asia. In the process, I am developing this chapter, indicating a fascinating question on what role is China capable of playing, and, at the same time, is willing to play.

The answers to these questions is rather complicated. It starts with China's perceived strategy in the South Asia region. The part of China's immediate periphery, the peace and stability of South Asia's subcontinent, constitutes a key area for China's national interest.

A potential crisis between India and Pakistan due to de facto nuclear sites could have catastrophic implications for China's critical national interest.

China pursues a delicate and a balanced approach between India and Pakistan for a period of crisis that is unconventional for it. It advocates for dialogue, de-escalation of tensions, and the resulting of diplomatic negotiations between the two.

So, ostensibly it will look from the surface, China's position is rather neutral. However, China's apparently neutral position on a tactical level does not negate or disguise a geo-strategic instinct often in part to the core Pakistan. China has pursued a balance in diplomacy between India and Pakistan and this choice is based on several judgements regarding China's national interests, regionally and globally.

So fundamentally, China feels that it has to work with India, due to India's size, India's influence, and that the so-called developing countries solidarity vis-a-vis the developed countries. China and India are the largest of two developing

countries and emerging powers. China is interested in developing cooperation with India as a member, but both are members of the global talks vis-a-vis the developing countries usually have common interests, such as energy, climate change, and the so-called evolving international order.

However, such an alignment on a global level does not undermine the fact that China is increasingly worried about India due to 1) the border dispute; and 2) more importantly, a perceived Indian ambition to exclusive regional hegemony in South Asia. China sees India as the only regional power in South Asia with the potential capacity and ambition to compete with China for regional dominance.

The U.S. support of India tries to balance China's emerging regional leadership role and further makes China believe that there is a shared aversion and a shared plan between Washington and New Delhi to contain China in South Asia and in the Indian Ocean.

In this sense, Pakistan represents India as the cornerstone of China's South Asia policy. Regardless of internal fragility, Pakistan remains China's main channel of check and balance against India.

The belief in China is that as long as India is tied up to competition and confrontation with Pakistan, as its primary national security threat and views Pakistan as its primary national security priority India would not be freed up to attack China or to pursue its regional strategic ambitions.

In this sense, keeping a generally peaceful and stable relation between India and Pakistan is desirable, but improbable. China essentially sees the peace and stability in South Asia lies in a balance of power between India and Pakistan. The more unbalance the equilibrium is against Pakistan, the more unstable South Asia will become in Beijing's perception. And this perception is not only because in China's view India might exploit a weak position for Pakistan in the region to India's own advantage. But also because that a weakened Pakistan is more likely to provoke India out of a sense of vulnerability and in order to divert attention from its domestic problems.

In this biased disposition, fundamentally defines China's approach to work crisis management between India and Pakistan. Although China claims to be neutral in the crisis between the two countries, its strategic conflict with, and long-term concern over, India, along with its traditional alignment with and support of Pakistan, invariably undermines China's credibility as a neutral and honest broker in South Asia.

Nevertheless, China has an innate interest in preventing a major conflict in South Asia that has the potential to turn into a nuclear disaster. This interest promotes Beijing to resort to 1) multilateral coordination; 2) great-power coordination with the United States; and 3) bilateral engagement with both

India and Pakistan to manage the crisis between the two. And this pattern has been established the past several crises between India and Pakistan.

So, as many countries call for China to assume a more significant role in the present factions in South Asia, the real question for China is what role does China have both the capacity and the willingness to play? China's position in South Asia's security situation is not neutral. Although it could use a balanced approach and genuine desire for peace and stability, Beijing's long-term vision is inevitably colored by its concern over India's regional ambition. And that the so-called anti-China utility offers a strategic alignment with Pakistan

So, without a neutral position, any role as a mediator or arbitrator of China between India and Pakistan seems unlikely because India will naturally and rightfully reject such a biased mediation.

Nevertheless, given the high stakes at hand, the next question is whether an un-neutral China can be objective. The Chinese record seems to suggest that such a possibility does exist. China in the past has used its leverage to stop certain Pakistani behavior. In fact, as of today, many Chinese leaders are fully confident that without China's approval, Pakistan may push the envelope, but will not risk a major confrontation with India, especially one that involves nuclear weapons.

If such major over-stepping or nuclear disaster does seem imminent, China will see the need for overbearing intervention regarding Pakistan and assume more of a manager's role. It's just currently China seems to be set aside to play the role of a facilitator in the event of a conventional military security crisis and limit Beijing's roles to facilitate dialogue.

Last, but not least, regarding the Americans' role in the security crisis in South Asia, China's attitude is more or less fixed. So, on the one hand China sees the United States as a partner-manager of South Asia's security crisis, even with America's vested interests in both India and Pakistan. But, on the other hand, China essentially sees the U.S. position is also biased, but biased toward India. And the United States has consistently failed to accommodate Pakistan's concerns. So, this protection by Beijing is fully complicated by what China sees as the U.S. recalibration of policy in South Asia. As the United States moves closer to India with an Indo-specific strategy, for China, the idea of the Indo-specific strategy is naturally seen as another form of containment strategy of China. So, in this sense, any efforts by the United States to engage China in the South Asia security crisis will be affected by the Chinese skepticism of the purposes and consequences of such a policy coordination.

So that is presently the finding of our research with our chapter. Thank you very much for having me on this panel and I look forward to exchanging ideas with the experts and the audience via email. Thank you.

Hannah Haegeland: Thank you so much, Yun, we really appreciate it. So, next we have Ambassador Verma. Ambassador Verma was the U.S. ambassador to India from 2014 to 2017. And he is the vice chairman and partner at the Asia Group.

Richard Verma: Thank you, good morning, everybody. It's great to be with you. Let me congratulate the Stimson Center first of all, for taking this subject on in such a really forthright way. I will tell you these are hot topics. These are difficult subjects. As I was saying to my fellow panelists, I've probably talked more about these subjects after leaving government than while I was in government, which is too bad. But I really do appreciate your perseverance and the scholarship because it is exactly what's needed. Because in government we have so many constraints, especially talking about these subjects publicly. I'm not sure if this is a panel I would have spoken at a year ago, but I am really delighted to be here today. And I think your work really adds a lot. I also am really honored to be here with such a distinguished group of panelists, including the prior panel, the two former foreign secretaries and Ambassador Saran, who has really helped me understand the complexities in South Asia. He's been a good friend and mentor. I'll just say, during my tenure as ambassador we saw the full range of ups and downs in the relationship between India and Pakistan. There were the positives. The announcement of the resumption of the Comprehensive Dialogue, there was Prime Minister Modi's Christmas Day surprise visit to Lahore. And, of course, there were the negatives. The Pathankot and Uri attacks, the uptick in cross-border tensions, and the collapse of the never-begun talks.

Now, these certainly felt like crises at the time, though according to your report, which I have read from cover to cover and I congratulate you, they may not fully qualify as crises. Now, regardless of how one might classify the incidents, or the difficult state of India-Pakistan relations today, there remains a real risk. A risk of escalation, a risk of miscalculation, a risk of mistaking signals from the other side. Unfortunately, these are the risks that have been present for decades.

Your report rightfully captures also the changing geopolitical dynamics at play across the region today. Hannah mentioned them. India and China have faced renewed tensions, as evidenced by last summer's 71-day dangerous standoff at the Doklam Plateau. The United States and Pakistan have seen a steady downturn in relations, while the United States and India have been on an upward trajectory, and that continues with the Trump administration. These shifting dynamics, not to mention the fragility of the situation in Afghanistan, call into question whether the crisis-management playbook used in prior India-Pakistan crises still holds up. It also raises several key questions. What is the role of the United States, and for that matter China, as the previous speaker just covered? Are there greater chances of escalation today, or has the potential for escalation subsided due to increased deterrence, increased intelligence, and each party's reluctance to become embroiled in something intractable?

From a U.S. point of view, I think there is no question that South Asia is growing ever more consequential. There's no doubt this has in some measure been

driven by the rise of India, a country that in 12 years will be the most populous, will have the third largest economy, the third largest military, with the world's largest middle class and number of college graduates. A nation that has been growing into its global role following years of inward-facing foreign policies and a closed economic posture. Today, it is the world's fastest-growing economy, experiencing mass urbanization with tens of millions of people being lifted out of poverty each year.

I was honored to play my small part in the U.S.-India story. In the closing three years of the Obama administration, President Obama and Prime Minister Modi met an unprecedented nine times. They negotiated the Paris Climate Agreement together. India was designated a major defense partner. Defense sales topped \$15 billion. Some hundred new initiatives and 40 government-to-government dialogues were launched, and new agreements on intelligence, defense logistics, cybersecurity, and homeland defense were sealed.

But on the question of India-Pakistan, outside of actual crises, our range of activity and commentary, like prior administrations, was actually quite limited. We called for dialogue and de-escalation at times of heightened tension. We offered up the help of law enforcement, the FBI, and intelligence agencies following the major cross-border incidents, and we formally condemned cross-border terror when it occurred, reducing any perceived distance between D.C. and Delhi.

But on the broader questions of normalization between India and Pakistan, or how and when Kashmir could be settled, we stuck to the script. A tried and tested script that goes something like this. "We support de-escalation and dialogue between India and Pakistan, but the pace, scope, and character of those discussions are to be decided by the parties." Pace, scope, and character. That lexicon has become so embedded and reflexively used by U.S. officials for years. I said it so much that when I once said those three words out of order, I got an immediate call from an Indian reporter asking if there had been a change in U.S. policy. I was even worried that if questions came up about India and Pakistani cricket teams that I would have to resort to pace, scope, and character.

But what started to happen was that all questions related to India and Pakistan, not just Kashmir, got thrown into this pace, scope, and character construct. Should there be increased transit trade between the two countries? Should there be more humanitarian visas issued? What about detained fishermen? Why does Pakistan allow a different list of goods to be imported from India by sea than by land? All worthy questions for which we might have had something to say, only to punt to the pace, scope, and character frame. We can do better. As the world's remaining superpower, we have to do better.

Now, what I'm not suggesting is that the United States try to intervene in settling longstanding disputes between the two countries. There is no appetite for that on the Indian side. Internationalization is not in the parties' interest.

And frankly, so long as extremist groups can continue to use Pakistan as a base for conducting cross-border strikes, the space for dialogue has become even more constrained. As the Indian external affairs minister rightly said, "Terror and talks do not go together." But what I am suggesting is that we can be prepared, not only for the next crisis, but we should continuously be looking at those paths of escalation, identify what they are, and determine how we can best shut them down.

Strobe Talbott used to lament that South Asia was important, but few senior leaders in the administration focused on it until it was urgent. We don't have that luxury today. South Asia is too important to wait until there is a dire situation. Let me offer a few ideas on this front.

First, let me say that personal relationships matter. They matter in peacetime, and even more when a crisis confronts a nation and its people. Those relationships can be developed, and trust cannot be instilled, after the crisis hits. That's why it's critical for Washington to continue to build trusted relationship in Delhi and Islamabad. It's why we had the 40-plus dialogues, and regular conversations by the national security advisors, the foreign secretaries, and heads of state. It's why we set up a hotline between President Obama and Prime Minister Modi, so they could talk, confer, and strategize as needed. The patterns of working together, the friendships and the reservoir of trust, must be built over time.

Second, the United States should continue to use its influence, waning though it may be during this challenging time, to convince the Pakistani military and intelligence services to rein in those terror groups operating from within its borders. As my friend, Ashley Tellis, says in his compelling essay wondering whether India and Pakistan talks are, quote, "worth a damn," he says the following: "There is a role for the U.S. in encouraging a peace settlement between India and Pakistan, but the approach must be subtle and focused on pressing Rawalpindi to end state-sponsored terrorism targeted against India, an instrument that has acquired renewed vitality ever since Pakistan acquired nuclear weapons in the 1990s."

Michael Krepon writes in your report released today, which has been mentioned in the earlier panel, quote, "Because the spark for every crisis since Operation Brasstacks has come from within Pakistan, the burden of crisis avoidance falls primarily upon Rawalpindi. We should channel our energies there for impressing Pakistan to end its state support for these groups. At the same time, we should continue to ramp up our information and intelligence sharing to ensure the groups planning attacks cannot gain an advantage." As Michael further indicated in the report, "Deeper intelligence cooperation between the U.S. and India would be unsettling for Pakistan, but it could also have some useful deterrent effects in preventing crisis triggering explosions."

Third, and finally, we could and should be supporting more confidence-building measures and institutionalized and regularized patterns of communication. Two

nations can be highly estranged but still maintain an active dialog. The active dialog, whether it be through field commanders, NSAs, foreign secretaries, or trade officials, can help defuse the next crisis.

In this regard, and it was mentioned in the previous panel, compare the frequency and regularity of the dialog between India and China versus India and Pakistan, with the former being much more comprehensive than the latter. As Ambassador Saran mentioned, when the Doklam standoff hit last year, neither side wanted to become embroiled in a costly and dangerous conflict, and the avenues for communication were alive and active, and it made a difference.

The same cannot be said for the Pathankot or Uri attacks, where communications were difficult and irregular. Without the clear lines of communications, the signal link can be badly misinterpreted, leading to even greater risks.

Obviously, the United States can only do what the parties actually want, in this regard. But there may be track II or track 1.5 dialogues, conversations on trade, regional efforts to combat climate change, or solving pressing health challenges that bring the parties together in a more regularized way.

Let me say in closing that the overriding interest in South Asia is for people to live in peace, free from terror, with free and open systems of government that allow them to prosper, be educated, and to excel in this very complicated, but promising time. The individual relationships the United States has with both India and Pakistan are exceptionally important, and they stand on their own, with the hyphens gone, and counterbalancing a thing of the past.

The United States continues to have important influence, and we are entering a transformative period. I know our role is not limited to one of just managing crises. Indeed, the potential for our partnership together across South Asia is what gives me great hope for the future days ahead. Advanced research and discussions like these can help ensure that the potential for significant security disruptions are greatly minimized.

Again, I want to thank Stimson and all the panelists for the important contribution they've made to peace and security across the subcontinent.

Hannah Haegeland: Thank you. Moeed, you're up next. Let me briefly introduce you and your new book. Moeed Yusuf is the associate vice president of the Asia Center at the United States Institute of Peace, and he has a new book coming out from Stanford, *Brokered Bargain in Nuclear Environments: U.S. Crisis Management in South Asia*. It looks at third-party involvement in nuclear-tinged crises. That's coming out in April.

Moeed Yusuf: Thanks for the infomercial.

Good morning, everyone. So, thanks to Stimson, and Michael, Sameer, and Hannah, for giving me this opportunity. What I thought I'll do, as a non-contributor to the volume, but somebody who's sort of been eating, living, and breathing crises for the past three years, as I was doing my book, is to tie some of what I saw in your very, very impressive volume to some of my findings that are forthcoming in the book.

But let me just begin by saying that there is a real value addition in this volume. I'm focused on the third-party angle of that for obvious reasons, but it's surprising how little has been written about China's role, given how important China is. So, I want to congratulate you on your focus on that area. Then, of course, Michael's work in his chapter, or chapters, brings out his two-decade long experience with this work very clearly, and some original thoughts there, including the risks that we may face in future crises that may or may not be different than previous crises.

But in the spirit of being provocative, let me make four or five points, and see if I could spark an interesting discussion on this. One, I would argue, and I know that this is in your volume, South Asian crisis moments I find as particular instances in time when normal diplomacy is suspended. This is not only because there's a crisis, but I think we tend to make too much of conventional alliance structures, geostrategic implications of who sides with who at a particular moment.

What I found is during these crisis moments, and particularly because they are nuclear tinged, as you call it... I wish I could steal this term for my book, but it's too late... but the normal alliance considerations tend to get suspended for those two weeks, or six months, or ten months, and then all countries seem to revert to those as soon as the crisis is over.

So, the idea that India-U.S. versus China-Pakistan, I think that's the direction the world is headed in South Asia, but in crisis moments, I'd be careful in taking that too far, as if these countries would forget that they're dealing with a potential nuclear escalation.

I found, in my work, very interestingly, and this would surprise many, but those in government may sort of bail me out, the issue of Afghanistan was almost never discussed in meetings of principals about the India-Pakistan crisis going on at the time, which is very different than what we seem to think. At the working level, people were obsessed with Afghanistan, and U.S. equities in the process, but actually, at the principals' level, who were driving the crisis policy, there wasn't much mention.

In fact, in the Mumbai crisis, the Afghanistan-Iraq directorate that was looking at Afghanistan and Iraq at the NSC, was not even involved in the principals' conversations. As one of the U.S. crisis managers put it to me, the goal of the United States, at that particular moment in time, becomes de-escalation, de-

escalation, de-escalation, and then everything else follows from that. That's what.

Second, I think absolutely correctly, your volume points out that China's role is changing, it's becoming larger, especially in the last year. We are seeing a very different China, perforce, perhaps, given how the geostrategic environment is playing out. The only two points I would make there, one is in continuation of my last one, which is that I am not entirely sure alliances structures are as clear yet as many have made it out to be. I think global alliances are in flux, and much more likely than a clear-cut China-Pakistan, India-U.S., you will see an issue-based alliance structure.

I don't see India and the United States partnering on Iran, for instance, beyond a point, depending on how the crisis plays out, and if there's a larger role there. I, quite frankly, also do not see either the United States ganging up with India or China with Pakistan in a crisis where nuclear weapons are involved, and I think the past bears that out, and I don't think that trend is going to change that easily.

Which brings me to a crucial policy point, which is that the United States and China, while they spend time at figuring out how they are going to be competitors in the new world age, also need to spend a lot of time in figuring out how they made need to, or are forced to, or should collaborate in third-party crisis management in South Asia, but, quite frankly, North Korea is a great example right now.

Whichever way you come at it, ultimately, there's a Beijing-Washington conversation needed on it, and if the U.S.-China communication is broken during crises, I think that, to me, is more dangerous than worrying about irresponsible Indian and Pakistani leaders who, quite frankly, have not been irresponsible in crises, as far as I've found in my work.

A word about bilateral escalation control. That's the universal golden benchmark for India, Pakistan, and everybody else. Michael talks about it, the volume, everything that one has read talks about this. I would argue that this urge comes from lessons from the Cold War, where there was positive learning after the first 15 or 20 years, and the last one and a half decades of the Cold War, all sorts of confidence-building, risk-reduction measures came in.

Today's world is different in one way. Again, I'm thinking of the theme of the panel. India, and Pakistan, and other countries have the option of transferring some of the burden of crisis management to willing third parties. The important point to make here is that third parties in nuclear environments, so parties like the United States, have agency. It's not that somebody asks them to show up to deescalate. They are there on day one. In Kargil, it took them two weeks. In the Twin Peaks Crisis, it was before India mobilized, which was three days, four days after the attack on the Parliament. In Mumbai, they were there before the attacks were over, not because anybody called the United States in, but it's that

nuclear aspect that drives this behavior. Now, of course India and Pakistan can decide whether they want the United States and China and others involved or not. But I would argue that there is a serious disincentive for both countries to completely ignore the third party in such a scenario for two reasons. One, you almost force the hand of the third party to go closer to your opponent. Second, all assimilations and all fire drills that I've looked, and Ambassador Saran talked about going to the strategic level once escalation happens, there is not a clear sense on how to stop once you start.

That incentive is pretty serious to bring in, and I'm not talking of outside intervention for dispute resolution. This is very much a crisis phenomenon, as far as I can tell. To me, it's not a question of whether the United States and China and others will show up. The question is what will they do, and what they're able to do when they show up. Then I think the volume makes a very good point about the current environment being unprecedented in some ways, because the unpredictability of what the United States may do or the U.S. crisis managers may do makes everybody nervous, including perhaps the crisis actors themselves, who we'll have to wait and see where that goes.

One point of disagreement, perhaps, with what I read in the volume. I don't think credibility and trust of the third party is as important as influence and leverage. Yes, of course, credibility and trust would be great. But if you look at the past crises since Kargil, there was never a moment when both India and Pakistan trusted the United States. It was about an incentive to de-escalate, which was shared by India, Pakistan and the third party, and leverage that the United States could bring to the table for various reasons. If the United States cannot bring as much, can China bring more? These are questions that we'll have to debate going forward, and that's why the coordination between these three parties is crucial. There's a lot of conversation about the next crisis and escalation. Again, I would agree with the speakers in the first panel that upping the ante is a very dangerous game, because de-escalation becomes more and more difficult as you ride the escalation ladder.

I personally would argue that India and Pakistan have actually been fairly careful in how they have approached this escalation ladder. That said, there have been multiple risks involved in each crisis that could have inadvertently led to escalation that they did not want. That question, of course, remains open. Let me just make two more points, because I know Hannah's phone is working overtime, probably on stopwatch. One, I think this point about intelligence sharing is crucial, and intelligence capacity before intelligence sharing. The U.S. involvement in that, I think, the Chinese cannot come close. No other country can come close, even though you need to pull resources. Then I would argue that intelligence corporation is not about U.S.-India intelligence corporation. It is about U.S.-India-Pakistan intelligence corporation for three things, as far as crises are concerned.

One, real time information to prevent crises. Second, attribution of crisis triggers, if possible. And third, crisis management if we are in the middle of a

crisis. The attribution point is crucial because there is now a tendency on both sides to blame the other as soon as something happens. Where I would perhaps differ slightly with you, Rich, is terror and talk is a very difficult battle track to follow for India. Terror should disappear from the face of this earth. It's not going to. That's unfortunately, for the foreseeable future, terror and talks have to go together, because think about this from the non-state actors' perspective, or the terrorist perspective. We talk about the LeT's of the world, etc. Put a scenario in front of you, and by the way, Iskander's chapter in this volume was fairly imaginative in what could happen. But put a scenario in front of you where there is a genuine ISIS attack that brings India and Pakistan to the verge of a crisis. If the argument is there can be no conversation after a terrorist attack, then ISIS has got it made because that's exactly the situation they want.

I would argue, as difficult as it is, cutting off dialogue is simply no answer. One related thing that I would say here is that we need to be a bit careful about unknowingly creating perverse incentives for either India or Pakistan on various things. Any time a crisis occurs and the provoker essentially gets away unscathed, you've just created a moral hazard problem next time. The incentive to go back is higher. On the other hand, to argue that, which Michael does correctly, that all crises have had a trigger coming from Pakistan, it actually creates a very serious, perverse incentive for Pakistan, because if I were looking at it from the Pakistani perspective, I would make a simple argument that my mistake was that after the Samjhauta train attacks in which the Pakistanis, where dozens were killed in India, I should have actually escalated and created a crisis so that Michael couldn't say that.

I actually think it's more responsible that they didn't create a crisis at that time, otherwise one crisis would have been created because of India. I think we need to be careful about these incentive structures. The argument I would make is essentially, don't escalate. If you can get the attribution right, there are ways that we can blame and punish provokers after the crisis, rather than escalating after we have avoided crisis.

Final point, and the most important point, I think, in your volume, and it's the same in my book. There is no possible way realistically of preventing crises, unless larger, underlying issues remain. I'm not talking about only disputes. I'm talking about everything. What I have picked up from crisis management is that crisis management, because of the de-escalation fixation, thankfully, becomes so tactical that it's only about getting past the crisis moment. The third parties would make promises to both sides. They will try and convince the other that if you bank on me, I will get you what you want. Of course, if the United States is promising both India and Pakistan that, by definition, there's a contradiction, because they can't give both what they want. But as soon as the crisis is over, if you look at the post-crisis period, both sides walk away dissatisfied and promising never to rely on the United States again, which makes crisis management more difficult in the next iteration, in the next iteration.

Ultimately, there is no way around a serious dispute resolution, including everything that matters to both sides. I am not talking for a grand bargain. I completely agree with Ambassador Saran that it's not going to come overnight. But I would want to end on an optimistic note, and I'm probably naïve in this, and I acknowledge that. India and Pakistan is a very interesting rivalry, where solutions to virtually all their major problems are known and worked out by both sides themselves. We can tinker with where Siachen goes and where the ultimate line is drawn, and whether Kashmir is a four point or a six point or an eight point. But I think the contours are known. If we could go there when Ambassador Saran and Riaz Muhammad Khan were dealing with this, I see no reason these sides cannot go back to that again.

Yes, there are problems. There are all sorts of issues. But to say that we will manage crisis after crisis without figuring out a more sustainable path for India and Pakistan, I think is basically waiting for a disaster to happen. Let me stop. Was that optimistic? Sorry. Sorry. Sorry.

Hannah Haegeland: Think so. Thank you both. I'm going to take the opportunity to ask the first question here, and then I also want to encourage you to respond to one another if you'd like to, and then we'll open up the floor for questions. My question is how do you anticipate the Trump administration would approach a new India-Pakistan crisis? In that, do you see U.S. incentives having shifted for being the main third-party crisis manager?

Richard Verma: It's a really good question. I think this skillset of being able to predict what the Trump administration might do on any given day is an evolving skillset for many of us. Look, there are some differences. I think one of the issues raised in the book is in this era of America first, more inward looking, more nationalistic views, some degree of retrenchment, does this administration still view itself as a crisis manager? Or do they view that as something someone else should do? Someone asked me to explain Trump foreign policy today, and I said, "Look, I think it's better for you to draw a line from Pittsburgh through northwestern Ohio into Michigan and Wisconsin, and see how these issues play on that spectrum as opposed to whether we're going to resort to our long-standing kind of view as a global leader." So, I think that's an open question.

Are we still viewed as the super power that can intervene and play a definitive role? I have a strongly held view that we have to, we should, we are kind of that player. Taking into account Ambassador Saran's very important qualification that it really will be up to the parties at the time, but I think what we're referring to is an actual crisis that had been escalated.

But I think the Trump administration is still trying to figure out its worldview on that question. I also think the way in which the down turn in U.S.-Pakistan relations has occurred. The very public way the tweets, the kind of naming and shaming approach. I think there's some real question now about the influence that the United States might have in trying to reign in Pakistan. I remember, and ambassador, this may have been when you were foreign secretary, when Prime

Minister Singh came to the United States in the mid 2000s and I was working in the Senate then in the Senate leader's office and he came in and gave a briefing to assembled members to the Senate.

The first thing he said was, "You need to get your relationship with Pakistan in order." It really surprised everyone sitting around the table, because he said what we didn't want was a complete falling out between the United States and Pakistan. So, I think we have to be careful here because of this potential for the administration's influence in this part of the world to decline.

Moeed Yusuf: Unfortunately, I left my crystal ball back at USIP, but I tend to come at this more from a structural perspective. Everything I've looked at tells me that in the inter-crisis period if you will, there are all these concerns. Whether the United States for sure, whether Pakistan-India will want to have a conversation or not. The idea of India will first act now and then see where we want to go.

All of that I think we have to take into account. I think there is no guarantee that the United States plays the role that it played in the past. But I think the structural drivers of the nuclear environment, the fact that escalation is a real danger, the fact that India-Pakistan do not want escalation, and do not have good bilateral escalation-control mechanisms, and the fact that quite frankly every single interview I conducted for my book in the United States, this is from the working level right to the very top, dozens. I didn't get a single person telling me that they would have a second thought in terms of going and doing whatever they could. So, I think the question of the United States showing up is definitely to me a predetermined one. How it will play out is going to be a very interesting question to ask, because when a U.S. crisis manager gets on the phone, it's crucial in terms of what messages they deliver. There I think you really do need a crystal ball right now.

Hannah Haegeland: Right, thank you. So, with that, we'll open up the floor. I think Sameer has already established ground rules. Please introduce yourself, pose your question in the form of a question, and limit it to 30 seconds. We'll do three at a time. So, sir, please.

Donald Camp: Hi, I'm Donald Camp currently with the CSIS. I'm intrigued by the discussion of China as a contributor to the coordination process, the crisis management. When I was more involved with policy planning in the United States, we knew we could depend on our allies and what Polly calls the U.S. game plan. The American secretary of state would land in Delhi, we knew that the British foreign secretary would follow when he left, and then the French foreign minister. But dealing with China was much more difficult. We wanted their participation, but they were kind of opaque and our coordination with China involved usually going to Beijing and telling them what we were doing. They were playing a role, but we never were quite sure what it was.

I'm wondering from the perspective of current policymakers and others, whether China as it's embraced a more active role in global governance has

become more transparent with us. I'll ask Rich, did you have the kind of relationship with your counterpart in Delhi that would allow that kind of coordination and, Moeed, did you see that in your book research?

Richard Verma: Sure.

Donald Camp: Thank you.

Hannah Haegeland: Thank you. Yes.

Amit Khan: This is Amit Khan, a visiting fellow at the Atlantic Council. If we go through the literature of Cold War, we see that United States played supplied arms to its periphery states to fuel the belligerence and hostility in these periphery states, and we see a supply of arms to Pakistan and other states to fight against communism. So, in this session I learned that China can play a similar kind of role, but I unable to see what is the rule of engagement of Chinese management in South Asia. Will it be a supply of arms to Pakistan? And how can China be able to manage, or what would be the rules of engagement between China, India and Pakistan, in a crisis situation? Thank you.

Hannah Haegeland: Thank you. All right. Yes, sorry.

Jim Schwemlein: Hi, I'm Jim Schwemlein. I want to ask about surgical strikes. So, last year, a slightly different question than what we've just heard. After Uri there was a period of waiting, a cooling-off period after the crisis, and then the Indians went across the line of control. Having been in Beijing recently, in light of the Doklam crisis, they were thinking anew about how to interpret Indian cross-border activity, east and west over the past two years. But what do you make of a changing Indian capability and will, and what that means for future crisis management?

Hannah Haegeland: Thank you.

Moeed Yusuf: On China, I think Don the point is well taken. As it was explained to me, was that we coordinate with allies and we keep China informed, and I think it's pretty much there still. I don't think it's a function of China becoming a more important player as much as it is that at the strategic level, the United States and China are doing the same things. Right from Kargil through... And you know I think Michael uses this term in some of... I think it's Polly's work, "shoulder to shoulder" with the United States. That doesn't mean tactically there were doing the same thing. So, in Mumbai for instance, China and Pakistan were having conversations about Chinese supplying Pakistan, urgently supplying military spares, which were needed, and the Chinese would go along with that. But on the strategic level they wanted this de-escalation to happen immediately. So, I think it's pretty much, I see more of the same. I don't see it going beyond that in terms of U.S.-China.

China-India-Pakistan, the modality, I think essentially is counseling restraint. That's the fundamental message that goes. It's through shuttle diplomacy that's happened in the past, it's through other third parties. For instance, in Kargil the Saudis were involved to some extent, trying to do certain things. Similarly, in Mumbai as well. So, you're using different parties, not only China, but the question really is, if the U.S. role diminishes, who fills the vacuum? That's sort of what's worrying everybody right now. I would argue one, the U.S. role may diminish, but it won't be a vacuum in the crisis moment, overall it may well be, and the Chinese impulse has always been to find a way to push Pakistan and India to de-escalate. That will remain. Whether they have still the backing, standing behind the United States, or looking in different ways, I think depends on how the primary third party, which is the United States, acts.

James, a surgical strike. I looked at this quite closely, for obvious reasons. One, I actually do not think it's much different than what had happened in the past, many, many times. The difference was a political decision to own up to it, and argue that we're doing this to signal to Pakistan. You know, you can see what's happening here. If India basically sits back after a provocation, a sub-conventional provocation, the credibility of the deterrent is non-existent. That's been the case since 1998, that's been India's problem. On the flip side though, I think I would argue India was very, very careful in making sure that there was no path to escalation after the surgical strikes. The danger here of course is that the other side may react in ways that you don't expect them to react, right? So, I don't see this as a paradigm change in the way that India wants a limited conflict, and then it will see how to de-escalate. I actually think this was as much a domestic as it was an international action by India. But what is really happening here is that the impulse to prevent escalation is still as strong. Both sides are just trying to find out if the line can move slightly, so that they can be more comfortable in signaling internationally and domestically. So, the chances of a miscalculation are higher. But I actually do not see this as a paradigm shift, because you've got to keep in mind, as an Indian and Pakistani decisionmaker, you escalate, something happens for whatever reason, Pakistan responds, tit-for-tat starts, where do you go from there? You still have to look around to find a way to de-escalate. And that is a much tougher proposition for both sides than to do it at the lower level.

Richard Verma:

Yeah, I don't know if I have much to add to the really excellent responses there. I would say, from what I've seen in the region and my own experiences, that China does not necessarily have the kind of muscle memory of coming in and playing this role as crisis manager. I think what's also true though, is that they don't want a simmering or a kind of conflict to erupt in the subcontinent. I think that's true as well. I actually think they would look to U.S. leadership in this regard. And their kind of influence with Pakistan will be critical, as the book lays out.

On the surgical strikes, I would say, we talk about India as a global power, rising power, however you want to define it. But I think this is, I guess I viewed it slightly differently. I think it is an indicator of a country that is asserting its right

to self-defense more prominently and more pronounced. It may be signaling not only to Pakistan, but to the international community. And we, frankly, from a United States perspective we would do the same thing. I can't imagine a situation where we would sit back and accept that kind of cross-border attack. All the same concerns about escalation are exactly right. But I think it sent a pretty powerful signal. Whether they've done this sort of thing in the past, the fact that they were more pronounced about it I think was actually an important change in how we view India's posture.

Moeed Yusuf: Not to become too academic about it, but I think the slight distinction in my mind is India did not exercise the right to self-defense. It signaled its intent to exercise its right to self-defense. So, it did not think that just by doing this the problem will disappear. But it signaled that it won't just sit back and keep letting this happen over and over again without something.

Hannah Haegeland: All right, we are out of time, so we can do a couple final questions. Yes, ma'am.

Speaker: So, over the past few years India has grown closer to the United States. Do you think the U.S. administration's present attitude towards Pakistan, do you think India has any influence on that?

Hannah Haegeland: Thank you, thank you. Any other kind of questions? Yes, sir.

Joe Goldberg: Thank you. Joe Goldberg, formerly of the National Defense University. I wanted to ask whether or not the Chinese initiatives, which are involved with their Belt and Road programs, are part and parcel of an attempt of China not only to assert new influence, not only in South Asia but throughout the area, is also coupled with an attempt to displace what would we describe as the structure of international security that was established after the second world war, which we played a great role in. And if so, if this attack upon the traditional avenues that we know, even international organizations as such, takes place, to what extent will that play a significant role in altering our perception of strategic concerns?

Hannah Haegeland: Thank you. Can I bring one more in? Just because we have another distinguished guest here.

Marvin Weinbaum: Marvin Weinbaum, Middle East Institute. You know, in 2002 when Richard Armitage went out, at that point in time we had reasonable trust in both Delhi and Islamabad. And then there was the personality factor here, he was a consummate diplomat when it came to understanding what it was going to take for both sides. How important does this personal element, but let me also add to that the obvious question, whether today, leaving whether the playbook could work that he used, have we gone too far now at this point where any American diplomat can win the trust from both sides?

Hannah Haegeland: Thank you. All right.

Richard Verma:

Okay, so look, I think we said this many times and I believe it and I'll say it again, that I think the relationships with India and Pakistan have evolved separately, stand on their own merit, have their own kind of complexities to them. And I don't believe that because we've had this upturn with our relationship with India that somehow we have to have a corresponding downturn in our relations with Pakistan. Or that somehow India has influenced Washington to take a downturn with Pakistan, I just don't believe that's the way it works. And there's too many people with good faith in all three capitals that are really trying to make the relationships work. There's no question the India relationship has evolved in kind of leaps and bounds, probably in a way that people did not predict. And I think we're trying to understand the ramifications of that, no question about it.

On One Belt, One Road, and there's a lot of experts in here on One Belt, One Road. Look, I think, I don't view it as a Chinese attempt to replace traditional architecture. In a way, I view it as Chinese attempts to exert influence clear and simple across the region and broader than that. And I think it has some interesting elements of investment, but it has some really challenging elements to it going through disputed territory, coming up with their method of financing being particularly difficult, and not playing by the international rules in the post-war system. So, I think the fact that we haven't had a counter to One Belt, One Road is something serious and something that I hope we have another session to talk about one day. Because I think it's really important.

The reason I mentioned my remarks about the trusted relationships is I do think the personal element of diplomacy really, really matters a lot. This is not a region where you can just show up and say, "We're from the United States, therefore listen to us." Especially now. I think it takes time, it takes repeated conversations. And Prime Minister Modi said something interesting when he came to Washington in the summer of 2016 and addressed the joint session of Congress. He said, "We have overcome the hesitations of history between our two countries." Now, I think he's right, but I don't think everyone in India, for example, believes we've overcome those hesitations. And, therefore, you have to work even harder at building those trusted relationships. Because our history of not being a reliable partner, of taking contrary positions to India's ascendancy, still hang out there in the ether. And we've gotta overcome that. And the only way to overcome that is through the hard work of personal diplomacy.

Moeed Yusuf:

Thanks again for your questions. On the India influence, I have no evidence to suggest that somebody from India or the Indian government went and told the United States to do this. In fact, some within the U.S. government probably would have been surprised. That said, I think the larger piece of the India-Pakistan puzzle of course affects everything that the United States does with both countries. And the real problem here, I think in terms of your question, is not that India went and said something about Pakistan. The issue is that the United States has a very immediate concern or tension or divergence with Pakistan over Afghanistan. And the whole U.S.-Pakistan narrative is consumed

by that one issue. So, the larger piece of the U.S.-Pakistan relationship is held in abeyance until we figure that out. And, unfortunately, that piece, to my mind, we cannot figure out because the divergence is real. So, because that focus remains on that one very issue, I think you're bound to have the spillover on other issues that Pakistan is involved in. And I've been a big critic of focusing on Pakistan with that one particular lens, but that's the reality and it's not going to go away, so I think we need to just keep that in mind.

On CPEC, you know, I wonder who is doing more to challenge about the institutions that were created after the Second World War right now. I think things are in such flux that in some cases U.S. policy may be opening that space. In other cases, the Chinese are pushing, the Russians are of course resurging. But at the end of the day I do not actually see, still, any signs of a balancing coalition which is standing up against the United States to challenge the international liberal order. I mean, the Chinese gain more from it than any other country in the world. So, yes, I think they will exert more influence, they are becoming more strategic. But I do not see this system disappearing in a way that South Asian crises would completely change character, anytime soon at least.

On the question of personal, this is a very important one. And you know, we can go back and this is not the forum to do the international relations political science debate on the levels of analysis. Do leaders matter? Is it states operating in a certain way or structure? I think relationships matter. There's absolutely no question about that. If I don't like you, I'm going to take two meetings before I get to talk to you, and in a crisis situation that may be two too many, no question about that. That said, I do not see evidence in these kind of moments that interlocutors cannot overcome this problem or that countries can't find interlocutors who have that channel open. I mean, if you think of one or two, you mentioned the 2001 and Armitage. I talked to Armitage and interviewed him for my work, and one of the things he told me interestingly was, "I didn't get along with Musharraf at all. It took me a while to start trusting him." So, when the crisis started, 9/11, I mean, you were in government at the time, you know how this played out. So, I think it's very important, but not the ultimate deciding factor in terms of how it plays out.

I will say one thing though. So, one of my findings at least is, if you get into a situation where there are crises in nuclear environments, and one of the countries is completely cut off from the third-party interlocutor, we're in trouble. So, in North Korea there is no connection with the United States or China, is a much more dangerous crisis than whatever relationship one may have in which you can go back. So, if the U.S.-Pakistan relationship gets to a point where they're literally broken off and there is no conversation, then I think there is a serious problem. Because the Chinese do not, neither have the muscle memory nor the clout, quite frankly. And if the United States cannot go to Islamabad in that situation, then I think we're in trouble. And for the crisis reason, I would say that those channels are crucial.

Hannah Haegeland: Great. Thank you both so much, we really appreciate it. I'm going to ask Sameer to come up and close us.

Sameer Lalwani: Before you all run away I just wanted to say a few quick things. So, thank you all to the panelists for joining us today and lending your insights and your wisdom and your time. To Shyam, Riaz, Polly, Rich, and Moeed, this is fantastic. And thanks to you all for attending and bearing with us during some sort of technical challenges. I hope you all were able to hear some of Yun Sun's comments during the discussion. But we will be also producing a transcript so you'll be able to review that later. I thought a lot of her insights about the increasing role of China's stakes and likelihood to get involved to at least preempt some escalation, it is quite important. And I also will ask her to maybe pen some responses to the questions that were posed about China and that we can include with the transcripts so that you can access to some of those thoughts.

Lastly, to thank our team, our staff who sort of made this event and the book and the last two years of efforts on this possible. Travis Wheeler, Akriti Vasudeva, Hamza Shad, Emily, Balint, Ayla, thank you for supporting this entire venture. And then the last thank you goes to our fearless leader, Michael Krepon, who co-founded the Stimson Center and set the course for this program for the last 25 years, seeded the idea of this book. And then has been a constant source of guidance and wisdom to me, and I think to all of us here at the Stimson. So, for all those, thank you very much, and a round of applause again to our fantastic panel.