

**STRATEGIC COMPETITION IN SOUTHERN ASIA
Arms Racing or Modernization?**

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10:10 *Welcome* – Brian Finlay, CEO, Stimson Center

10:15 Panel 1: Cold Start and Frozen Conflict: Competitive Dynamics on Air and Land

Brigadier (Retd.) Gurmeet Kanwal, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses and the Center for Strategic and International Studies

Sannia Abdullah, Quaid-i-Azam University and Sandia National Labs

Oriana Skylar Mastro, Georgetown University and the Council on Foreign Relations

Moderator: Michael Krepon, Stimson Center

Brian Finlay:

Well ladies and gentlemen a very warm welcome to all of you. My name is Brian Finlay. I'm the president and CEO here at the Stimson Center. We're really grateful to all of you for joining us this morning for what will I believe be a great set of panels. Our over achieving South Asian team has even imported some Mumbai-like weather for you to enjoy just to add to the atmosphere. Here this morning as we discuss strategic modernization issues in Southern Asia.

You know, I think for strategic analysts, that part of the world is a regrettable candy store in many ways and that we're seeing an emerging and indeed a growing competition in terms of arms procurement and currently in terms of platform and weapons development on both the nuclear and on the conventional side, as well as the emergence of an array of new operational concepts. And so, I think in aggregate we would be quite hard-pressed to find any other corner of the world that is both more interesting for strategic analysts, more pertinent for a discussion like this and certainly one that is indeed rapidly changing.

As I mentioned, we have two panels this morning that is going to consider all of these on very broad trends as well as their drivers, their consequences ... not just for the region but indeed for all of us around the world. Before we move to that though, I'd just like to thank a quick shout-out to our South Asia team led by of course, Michael Krepon and the great Sameer Lalwani. If you do not know Sameer, you need to get to know Sameer. He is a true rising star, not just here at Stimson but I think Michael, you will agree across the South Asia policy portfolio here in Washington and around the world.

And with that, my only final task is to introduce you to my predecessor, our former President and the co-founder of the Stimson Center, Michael Krepon. And I would actually ... while you maybe come up Michael, I would ask the other panelists to maybe make their way up here to the dais. But again, a very warm welcome and thank you for joining us this morning. Michael.

Michael Krepon:

We are so fortunate at Stimson to have Brian in charge. He's an amazing leader, and thank you Brian for everything you're doing for Stimson. I also want to thank our funders because we couldn't do this without them.

Stimson in my biased view is the best South Asia security program, certainly in the city and perhaps everywhere. And it's not just because of Sameer, it's because Akriti where are you? Akriti has got our *South Asian Voices* magazine online which is just a communal spot for rising talent in the region ... Travis and Gillian, they're here somewhere. There's Travis. Gillian is there ... who just put out this amazing course. I mean, astounding course on "Nuclear South Asia" they're going to talk to you about. And Hannah ... where's Hannah? She's here and she's working with Sameer on a new book on crisis management which is one of our significant program areas. So, we're doing great guys.

And I want to thank Bob Schwartz who's over there, who is trying to hide. He's at the NNSA and a huge help for us. We get help from the Carnegie Corporation in New York and we get help from MacArthur. And we're getting a little help from Stanton as well to get this course out and about. So, for all of our funders, we are grateful.

We've got awesome folks here to talk about "Cold Start and the Frozen Conflict." Their bios are on the back, I'm not going to repeat them. I'm going to ask Gurmeet to come on up here because he's got PowerPoint. And Gurmeet will be followed by Sannia. And Oriana's going to be our number three hitter, our power hitter. Our extra-base hitter. So Gurmeet, come up. Get us started.

Gurmeet Kanwal:

Morning, ladies and gentlemen. I have all of eight minutes. So I shall dispense with the preliminaries except to thank Michael and Sameer for inviting me once again to Stimson. It's always a privilege to speak here. And it's always been a learning experience for me so I'm looking forward to it.

I'll speak about two things: military modernization very quickly and then strategic competition—primarily limit myself to the trends that are emerging.

Military modernization. Modernization is essentially of two types. It has two facets. One is that you replace obsolete or obsolescent equipment with new ones. Naturally, the new ones you purchase and introduce into service will be more modern. So, that's one facet of modernization. The second facet is that modernization leads to qualitative upgradation into combat capabilities. The second part is not happening in India as yet, because we are still busy with the first part and all the funds are going into that.

That brings me to funds for modernization. India's defense budget this year, 2017-18 is less than 1.6% of India's projected GDP. That's the lowest it's been since the 1962 conflict with China. And therefore, the capital and the revenue expenditure ... the revenue part share has gone up. The capital share has come down. And the funds available for modernization are precious little. So that's another dampener.

Modernization has been kick-started by this government. It was stagnating under the previous Congress UPA government. But it's going ahead at a very slow pace. Army ... the artillery which is listed on top has seen some modernization. The last gun that was introduced into service was the Bofors 155 in 1986. After that, contracts have been signed this year for a few guns, 100 or 145 M777 from America and another couple of hundred guns. The bulk of the 50-155 which are required for ... forward guns, 1500 pieces. Nothing has happened as yet. 1,500 pieces obsolete guns obsolescent guns are in service.

MBTs are still night blind, main battle tanks. Air defense, light helicopters, and command and control ... reconnaissance, surveillance, target acquisition front, nothing is happening. Even rifles need replacement, bulletproof jackets are in

short supply. Air force 36 Rafales is all the Indian Air Force has to show for modernization so far in the last decade or so. And those 36 Rafales are on their way, but not yet in. The MiG-21 and the MiG-27 fleet that is hopelessly outdated is yet to be replaced, and the contenders are besides the Indian light combat aircraft LCA, F1-6, F-18, and Gripen. They are in contention.

Some helicopters have come in, American helicopters, Globemasters, Apaches, Chinooks, and some Kamov Russian helicopters are expected to be contracted for, not yet done. Some movement on the surface to air missile front and air to air missile front. The future as a fifth-generation fighter aircraft and some AWACs which are yet to come in, but modernization is taking place.

With that, I'll go on to strategic forces modernization. The Agni-IV has been canisterized. It will be introduced into service in a year or two. It's likely to have MIRVs, at least that's the projection. The three SRBMs, short range, are likely to be phased out as soon as there are sufficient Agni-Is in production and in service. The first SSBN Arihant is likely to be declared fully operational shortly, and the second one is under construction. K-4 3,500 km SLBM is in trial state, advanced stage of trials. Ballistic missile defense system, both exo-atmospheric and endo-atmospheric, still technology demonstrators. No orders have been placed, no approval has been accorded for deployment.

Under construction national command force, somewhere in Central India and a ground control station for military satellite somewhere in Central India. We now have a strategic planning staff in place for nuclear forces planning. And the future is Agni-V, 5,000 km.

Doctrine, I've written no change. We can discuss this, but to the best of my knowledge and belief, there is no change in India's doctrines or posture. Credible minimum deterrent with a no first-use posture.

Strategic competition. Trends. First and foremost, trend is that India's response to Pakistan's war for Kashmir has changed. I put down question marks on proxy war, I don't think it's a proxy war. It's a state-on-state war, being waged through asymmetric means. And what is the change? Strategic restraint remains the same, no change in restraint, but, tactical assertiveness under the umbrella of strategic restraint.

Last September, surgical strikes were carried out in response to an attack on the military camp in Uri in Kashmir. The government has decided that negotiations under the composite dialogue, now called Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue, with Pakistan will only be resumed after terrorism from across the border comes to a conclusive end. Most of us support that decision. Cold Start doctrine for war on the plains if war is thrust on us. Large number of thrust lines, shallow objectives. No change in the no first-use nuclear posture, as I said. India's increasingly more willing to contribute positively to security in the region. We were inward looking for too long. That's changing.

CPEC, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. This is bringing China and Pakistan closer together, deeper collusion, and I've listed out the reasons. You can have a quick look. May I go on? The Indo-US Strategic Partnership. It's a major trend line. Paradigm shifts in India's outlook. It's a hedging strategy against the negative fallout of China's not-so-peaceful rise. It'll form the nucleus of a cooperative security framework in the Indo-Pacific region.

There is a security vacuum, China is rushing headlong to fill it. There is a need for a cooperative security framework to emerge, and this partnership will form the nucleus along with Japan, South Korea, Australia, Singapore, maybe some others. Defense cooperation is poised to be taken to the next higher trajectory. By that, I mean joint threat assessment, intelligence sharing, joint contingency planning, and joint operations where the vital the national interest of both our threatens. Finally, US support toward the Pakistan army is a spoiler in the relationship. We can discuss this further.

Lastly, stalemate in Afghanistan could lead to a civil war. ISIS has begun to make in-roads tentative, but certainly it has begun to make inroads. Finally, Pakistan is in a state of slow motion implosion. This term was used by a senior US policy analyst, I will not name him. I told him that implosions don't happen in slow motion. He says, "You get the idea that the aim is that it can be arrested at some point in time." Not good for regional security. We would like Pakistan to flourish and prosper as a nation-state, not break up. I think I've stuck to my time.

Michael Krepon: Well done, Gurmeet.

Gurmeet Kanwal: Thank you.

Michael Krepon: So, as you can tell from the bios, Gurmeet is currently with IDSA, which is New Delhi's premier think tank. Of all the things on his resume, what draws my attention most is that he co-created two Deli-based think tanks. The creativity and the expansion of the NGO community in India is something to be admired.

Sannia is currently at Sandia. She will be at Stanford as a Stanton post doc and she's going to have the luxury of working with Scott Sagan. So, congratulations on that appointment.

Sannia Abdullah: Thank you.

Michael Krepon: Please.

Sannia Abdullah: Thank you Stimson Center for giving me this opportunity to speak up here on a topic which is of great interest to all of us, and particularly the academia, which is actually looking at the trends of strategic modernization issues developing in the region. First things first, views that I'm expressing here are just my personal and do not represent any institution or any government. I would like to just

briefly touch upon a couple of the things that are there in my mind, because it's just the brevity of time. And then we can just rule the discussion as reacting to question and answer sessions.

My first thing that I tried to conceptualize the term strategic competition and modernization. I think it is important to determine the relationship between the sophisticated weapons that states are actually acquiring and its impact on the outbreak of the conventional conflicts in the region. My interpretation is, the more the states are actually acquiring the sophisticated weapon systems, there's a greater chance of provocation or temptation to use them, because if you're acquiring fifth-generation aircraft, if you're having stealth technology, it is likely the Indian Air Force is greater tempted to actually go for some kind of provocation that they feel this is the area where Pakistan is actually going to do something, and they may be tempted to actually go and conduct some kind of aerial strikes.

The outbreak of a conventional conflict has a close relation with how the modernization trends are actually going on in the region. The war that we are living in right now, the South Asia is a trend of a hybrid war. So, we have non-linear war which is going on. We have conventional kind of ... It's a blend of conventional, it's a blend of irregular and cyber, and everything is actually mixing up. We are moving in a region where there's a greater chance of deception and greater chance of denial, and it is becoming more obscure in defining how the things are actually shaping up in the part of the world that we are living in.

Strategic competition and modernization, it's a game of perception. So, as Gurmeet just pointed out, India is actually trying to modernize its fleet or whatever, but how Pakistan is actually taking it, it is totally different. Even if it is modernizing its existing arsenal, or systems, for Pakistan it is entering into a security dilemma, which is spurring arms race in the region. It is, the thing that we actually talk about, India is looking towards not only Pakistan, but also China, and Pakistan is looking towards India and there is a catalytic effect of force postures that are actually emerging.

We are actually in a situation where we have doctrinal asymmetry, and the force postures that are coming out are actually asymmetric, but also catalytic. What I see is the trend going is definitely the modernization trend which is going on, but arms race is the effective outcome of this modernization. The driver which I think is important is economic stability versus security imperative. The states that are actually thriving economically, or they are having stable economies, they tend to move in a direction of modernizing their forces. This happened in the case of the United States, this happened in the case of China, and India is also more or less on the same model.

But on the other hand for the other states like Pakistan, which are actually struggling with their strangulated economies, they tend to have, being into a

security dilemma, they look into different directions to get the economic uplift. That actually opens up a whole new world of complications that we are actually going to deal with. Pakistan in order to develop a new economic uplift is looking for extra regional players in the world around, and we are entering into different alliances because Pakistan felt that the United States is no more the country that Pakistan actually can look into for any kind of support.

Pakistan is emerging into other alliances, like developing some kind of a Muslim NATO, looking for Saudi Arabia's support with other countries like ... China's always there, but I think Pakistan is also trying to mend its broken pots, including developing cooperation with Russia. I think there is a whole new world of alliances which is actually shaping up. But, that is going to have some kind of backfire, so how Pakistan is going to balance this out? A country which is so, so diverse, cannot actually afford any kind of a sectarian backfire into its own home ground.

These are the things that are actually emerging at the moment. What would be ... what is actually Pakistan's strategic outcome? I think something that Pakistan is trying to make is a cost-effective strategic equivalence that it wants to achieve with India. Since Pakistan cannot actually compete, it was never Pakistan's aim to enter into an arms race like an aircraft versus aircraft, a missile versus missile. Pakistan's intention is to develop some kind of weapon system or acquire some kind of capability, which is a quick fix, but it is cost-effective, so that it can have strategic equivalence in fact on its overall stability. That explains that why Pakistan is actually consolidating its force posture in terms of cruise missile systems, where Pakistan is not thinking about India's BMD system and trying to offset that effect with the more subsonic and supersonic systems that Pakistan is thinking to work on.

Very briefly, I think the force posture that is emerging, plugging the gaps. This explains then how Pakistan actually went on developing tactical nuclear weapons. So, for Pakistan it's the combination of conventional and nuclear deterrence that it is working on. They want to maximize the spectrum, and develop all kinds of weapon systems where they can actually plug the gap and bring India not to actually be tempted to break the outbreak of the conventional conflict.

What are the challenges and implications? In my sense, the objective and challenge for India right now is to determine the pre-nuclear phase of deterrence. And how long this phase is going to last? So, having Gurmeet here, he always talks about it, and also we saw in a couple of the war games that India always believes that having a Cold Start kind of a military adventure, it would be easy to go for a such kind of a maneuver, keeping the war low under the nuclear threshold. That is theoretically very attractive to say that, but in reality it is a challenge, and I don't think India can maintain that for some time.

Also, I believe there is a lot of confusion and there is lack of clarity on both sides, not only on India but also on the Pakistani side in determining their red lines. We are asserting too much, I think, both countries in declaring our deterrence. But in doing so, we actually don't realize how delicate this can be. So, if greater assertiveness, somewhere I think hints us in a direction that there is a kind of unclarity deep down there that both countries are actually not taking...Or, if there is a clarity, at least they are not actually putting it in a way that gives the impression that deterrence is very much stable.

What is the objective and challenge for Pakistan? I think is that Pakistan should not fall into its own commitment trap. The first-use policy that Pakistan is actually adhering to, the more Pakistan is actually thinking about it that they can actually do that, I think this is a commitment that Pakistan is saying again and again. If that situation comes up, what is there that Pakistan is going to do? Can Pakistan strike a balance between nuclear use and deterrence? I think that's another challenge. And I'll just conclude it here.

Michael Krepon: Thanks Sannia. One of the best parts of this job for me is to be refreshed by rising talent. Sameer keeps introducing me to people who I should have known about, but somehow didn't. One of them is Oriana, and she's a powerhouse, and has a book that she's working on, Talking to Your Adversaries. Really interesting topic. She too is a Stanton Fellow, and she's not only an assistant professor at Georgetown, but she's an officer in the US Air Force Reserve. The floor is yours.

Oriana Mastro: If you don't mind, I think I'm going to go speak at the podium if that's okay.

Michael Krepon: Please.

Oriana Mastro: I feel like I can't see this half of the room.

Michael Krepon: Sure.

Oriana Mastro: Well first, I'd like to echo the gratitude to Michael and Sameer for inviting me here today, and for that wonderful introduction. I am going to be speaking about China. Before I do, I also want to echo the other comment made that obviously any views that I'm presenting today are my own and do not represent those of any of the organizations with which I am affiliated.

I'm a China specialist, I work primarily in China military and security issues. What I want to present today are some views of how China is seeing the development of the Indian military. I think Gurmeet set it up very nicely to show you what India is actually up to. I think it's uncontroversial to say to a degree that India is clearly balancing against China. But, scholars that work on China primarily also agree that China is not responding militarily to India's rise to the degree that we would expect it to as political scientists, but also as policy makers.

If you look at what the Chinese are doing and what they say, they actually are responding with surprising mildness to some of the developments, specifically along the border. The People's Liberation Army, their ground posture is relatively restrained compared to the forces assembled in other regions. Their air force is improving to a degree, but for the most part they don't have any bases that are close, permanently hosted bases that are close to the border. Lastly, I would say that in the reorganization, given the fact that the Western Theater Command, which is in charge of dealing with India primarily, the border issues ... the fact that this Theater command is landlocked and therefore doesn't have an associated navy, suggests that China is optimizing its force structure primarily with India in mind.

But, most telling I think is the way that China responds to other countries that are not India. It shows how special really, India is in the Chinese mindset, China responds to other countries that are smaller and that present a less dynamic threat to China in very severe fashions. However, when India engages in military modernization or exercises or activities, the Chinese respond very mildly. If you look at, comparing the Indian defense budget with ... potentially, the budget is not as high as some people in India would wish it is, but the budget is 10 times more than that of Vietnam and the Philippines, and 17% greater than that of Japan.

The India navy has 120 more active ships than Japan, 139 more than the Philippines, 146 more than Vietnam. India's air force has almost 10 times as many active aircraft as those of Vietnam and the Philippines, and almost twice as many of those in the Japanese self-defense forces. Now, this is only quantitative. It obviously doesn't address some of the qualitative issues, but this is just to make the point that in comparison to Vietnam and the Philippines in particular, India presents a greater military challenge to China.

However, when those two countries, Vietnam or the Philippines engage in any types of activities, however minor, or engage in procurement or development of any systems however minor, the Chinese official response is extremely harsh. They take that as a threat to their sovereignty, and they will come out in public statements as well as having these nationalistic editorials in their newspapers about the nefarious intentions and how Vietnam and the Philippines plan on taking over Asia.

However, when India engages in similar types of activities, and in some ways in a way that is even more advanced than that of these countries, the response is actually quite mild. If you look at for example, specifically how the Indian military is portrayed in the Chinese media, articles that have been published in *The People's Daily* and the *Global Times* show that China is paying attention to the Indian military modernization. So, their lack of response isn't because of lack of attention. However, even though they cover all of the procurement and the modernization efforts that are occurring, they rarely mention China as a reason for the arms buildup.

Instead, even when it's obvious to even the most amateur military analysts that certain things are being done particularly to deal with the Chinese threat along the border. The Chinese military papers will instead cite rapid economic growth, persistent tension with Pakistan, domestic terrorist threats, and other reasons for why India is engaging in these activities. The Chinese media will also cover the Indian military in a way that underplays India's progress, usually making an unfavorable comparison to Chinese military modernization.

I think we have a picture ... many of us in the room that study this issue know that India does present some real challenges to China. Even maybe some of the most advanced systems, for example when India revealed its first indigenous carrier or some of the advancements that they've made with nuclear submarine technology. When China talked about these advancements, instead of highlighting the impressiveness of them or potentially even the threat they posed to China, they downplay how powerful those would be. They talk about how easily detectable the Indian submarines are, how the carrier is a joke compared to other carriers in the region. And, they tend not to include any coverage of how certain systems, especially modernization in strategically sensitive areas, like missile development, how any of these developments might potentially impact China.

For example, on the BrahMos missile, which has clear implications for China, the way it was covered in China was to say that the reason India developed this was because of their weak fighter force, and that the missile was relatively ineffective, given that India doesn't have an expanded C4ISR network. Where recently, when India tested for the fourth time the Agni-V ICBM capable of hitting every major target in China, the Chinese media noted that much testing is needed before it could be operational, and that because of its speeds it doesn't constitute a credible threat.

When they talk about some of these developments, they also like to point out that a lot of the equipment or modernization efforts that are being undertaken in India are driven by procurement from other countries. It's very important in the Chinese narrative that it downplays India's own achievements. The main reason that China presents any ... criticizes and says that India modernization is not continuing the pace it should, is that they criticize the domestic political system, and they emphasize the inherent inefficiency in the political system. It's a mantra in a lot of Chinese talking points about the Indian military to say: 1) The Indian military relies very heavily on outside countries for weapons; 2) The different weapons from different countries that the Indian military procures leaves it with a less effective fighting force; and 3) The weapons they end up procuring are such a low quality and their own defense industry is so backwards that India will never catch up to China.

These types of viewpoints also extend not only to the procurement, but also exercises that are being done on the border. It's very surprising again, when China is so sensitive, especially to cooperation between the United States and

other partners in the region, that when India engages in exercises with the United States, the Chinese response actually doesn't present any sort of nationalistic ire or even commentary. For a large part, they will blame the United States and other countries for tricking India into participating in these balancing types of measures. But, that India itself has no desire to actually do so.

If you look at the White Papers that China puts out, they mention India just as often as other countries, but they mention India in a context of cooperation with China and they don't actually mention the arms buildup. This is, I think, a very interesting pattern, and I would say that it's not because ... some of the maybe conventional wisdom is the Chinese, they don't ... they're not concerned about the Indian military, they're not concerned about the Indian threat.

But, parallel to all this discussion about how ineffective the Indian military is and how slow their modernization is, is another discussion about how nefarious Indian intentions are. Most of the discussion within China will make broad claims that India basically plans and hopes to take over the whole Asian region, including the Indian Ocean, where there is a budding rivalry. These two narratives in my mind kind of contradict each other, in which they will present the idea that India has these goals of greatness, but then on the other hand they will say India will fail to reach these lofty goals because of their inefficiencies in governance.

My main argument that I make about these patterns, and to conclude about what it means for US policy for Indian military modernization, is that I think there's something very special about China and how it feels it has to respond to India. Most recently, just this April when the Chinese navy and the Indian navy cooperated to rescue a ship from Somali pirates, everyone was surprised by the fact that the Chinese reporting left out the Indian role. But, this is actually very common, given the patterns that I've laid out to you. I would argue that China finds it necessary to downgrade any progress that India has made, primarily because of regime legitimacy.

Domestically, they have an argument that the only way that they can modernize and rise the way they have is because they've maintained the domestic political system they currently have and such progress would not be possible with the domestic political system that India has. That's why they find it so important to highlight the fact that India is not doing well, even to ... you know, I would say underplay, underestimate there's a bias there, but also highlight the reasons for any of the problems India has is because of the domestic political system.

What this means for policy is that I think the threshold for what the Indian military would have to develop, and also the degree to which the United States and India is cooperating, the threshold at which China would actually respond is higher than most policy makers expect it to be, within the United States, at least. There is this counter balancing force, which prohibits the Chinese from

admitting that there's any developments of concern in India. I think this means there's actually more room to maneuver in India to modernize, to protect their own security interest, especially along the border. I also think this means that because China isn't responding tit for tat that arms races between China and India are actually unlikely.

I would argue that while the current administration's policy towards Asia is still unfolding, it's still unclear, a lot of my research suggests that the best way to encourage India and potentially cooperate with India in a hedging strategy against China, as Gurmeet mentioned in his presentation, would be to help India more from afar. Because the more the United States is a part of that narrative, the more that China can blame the United States and maybe respond to India, than if it's just India.

With that, I will conclude. I look forward to further discussion and questions.

Michael Krepon: Thanks Oriana. I'm going to ask a couple quick questions and then we open it up. So, Gurmeet and Sannia both emphasized rightly the shifting patterns of alliances for something less than alliances. My question for each and every member of the panel is, with these shifts, the US moving more toward India, China moving closely toward Pakistan. Which of these four countries gains the most? Oriana, why don't you start?

Oriana Mastro: When you started the question you said that these relationships are moving closer, and I'm not sure that that is exactly the case. I would see a lot of these developments as relatively stagnant, actually. For example, the United States' relationship with India I think for a long time, there's been this narrative in Washington that India can be the silver bullet to our China problem. But, I haven't really seen any real developments in that area, and I think the Chinese haven't seen any real developments in that area.

If it is the case that the United States does put more eggs in that basket, I would say that I think who wins is China. Because in the end I don't think that the ... In my understanding of the time I've spent in India, and I'm not an India specialist, but that the will to cooperate closely with the United States to balance against China is relatively weak in Delhi. If the United States is focusing its resources and efforts in pursuing that line of effort, then perhaps this means that we're dropping the ball on other, more critical areas. For example, the South China Sea, where we do see intense competition.

Michael Krepon: Sannia, with all this repositioning, would you agree that China's the net gainer?

Sannia Abdullah: If we think about Pakistan-China relationship, I think it's China which is more in a greater advantage than what Pakistan is getting in return. Even from the CPEC which was getting most of the attention right now in the world around it is yes, China which is actually investing right now in the countries from where they can actually have a lot of investment in the years to come. It's quite a win-win

situation for those countries who are actually cooperating with them, but it depends what they are getting in return. This is something which is very much debatable inside Pakistan, but what are the terms and conditions that Pakistan is actually giving entire of this corridor to China? So far, my assessment is that it is definitely the China which is getting the maximum benefit out of it.

But for Pakistan, apart from economic, I think the most important factor that Pakistan just wants to play right now is the strategic equation that Pakistan is enjoying by being with China, and to just counter value the influence of US-India cooperation. It has more kind of a political I think stature than just being having a kind of an economic interdependence between the two countries. I agree with Oriana on it's, right now the US-India relationship's having some kind of stagnancy. But in Pakistan, it is more, and in a sense of political atmosphere that is sounding, making this relationship more important than what is going on in reality or in the tactical terms.

Michael Krepon: Thanks. Gurmeet, who's the big winner?

Gurmeet Kanwal: I think it's a balanced approach from both sides. Nobody is really a winner or a loser. China-Pakistan collusion is a given. It presents India with a two-front scenario. If there's a future war with either country, the other country could open another front or come to the other country's aid. So, we are presented with a two-front scenario.

Our strategic partnership with the United States is a hedging strategy like I said for both. The US and India together on one side, China and Pakistan together on the other, I think both sides balance out each other. Nobody is really a net gainer or a loser.

Michael Krepon: Okay. Gurmeet, you talk about a new Indian posture of tactical assertiveness under the umbrella of strategic restraint. Everybody in this room knows your thinking about surgical strikes. My question to you is, where is this going? There is an existing choreography of violence if you will, across the Line of Control, and now it's changing. Publicized strikes -- that's a new element. The post-hopping isn't new, but once you start advertising it, it's a different ball game. Where are we going?

Gurmeet Kanwal: Let me take you back to November 2008, to Mumbai terror strike. The mood in the country, in India has changed after that and people are not willing to take nonsense from across the border. I mean, there we have a country, our western neighbor, with all respects for Sannia, pointing a gun to our head and telling us, "Let's negotiate, let's talk about Kashmir." Would you negotiate with a gun pointed to your head? It had gone on for too long, and something had to give sometime. The present government cares as much for national security as the previous government did, but the present government is more proactive. They are right wing, and they want to be seen to be caring for national security.

As much as that, they have publicized the surgical strike. As a brigade commander, I had a special forces team under me, and we carried out a surgical strike. But that was limited, this was across the board, 400 km, 6 to 8 places, a single night, large number of casualties of Pakistani soldiers. Not terrorists, but soldiers, which has not been advertised but there are four or five gallantry awards which have been given on Republic day. The Indian Army doesn't dish out gallantry awards for nothing. Pakistani soldiers were hit and killed in surgical strike, and it was revealed to the nation and to the international community that strikes were carried out.

So, the shift in India is going to be assertive on the tactical level, very carefully calibrated response to any provocation from across the border. We have had great provocations, but we have not responded because the policy of the government was strategic restraint. That policy has not changed. We don't want a war with nuclear undertones and overtones. But, we will definitely hit back across the line of control for every provocation that happens from here onwards, that is the change.

Michael Krepon: Do you see a new choreography involving publicized cross-border strikes on both sides? Does it stop there? When does air power get introduced?

Gurmeet Kanwal: It's not necessary that every time it'll be publicized; some will happen on the quiet. Recently two Indian soldiers were beheaded, bodies mutilated by the Pakistan army and terrorists, or a combination of the two. There hasn't been a public reaction, a reaction known in the public domain so far, but there will be a reaction to that. It may or may not be publicized.

Michael Krepon: Sannia, when these surgical strikes happened, the Pakistan army denied that they happened. One senses that if this happens again, the Pakistan army will retaliate, correct? And if so, how do you see this new choreography evolving?

Sannia Abdullah: Just first thing about whether it is a surgical strike or not, because from Pakistani side it is denied that there is any kind of surgical strike that's taken place. I think this is something which is very different for India-Pakistan conflict, and particularly this crisis that had meant once it was mounting up to a crisis, or a tension we could call it. I just saw, and I went exactly on the Google Earth how exactly the location is where India was saying that they have, on the Uri sector, they conducted some surgical strike in the nearby area. It's a mountainous terrain, so getting into four, five, or six, seven, eight kilometers inside does not make any much difference, even if the surgical strikes have been conducted.

Even if you're talking about the safe havens of the terrorist organizations, they are living in the valley area. They need to be in the cities, they want to be discreet. They need household kind of, all kinds of things they want to feed on. They don't want to live on the top of the mountains. I think if you are saying some kind of a gesture if any state is saying that they have conducted surgical

strikes, it needs to be very clear, even if it is for deterring effect that they have done it and they're sure they did it.

The other side that they are saying it was not a surgical strike at all, I don't think so. It has served the purpose that India was trying to achieve. So, even if India is saying that they want to satisfy their public emotions or they want to be politically effective in their country saying that we are not going to tolerate any kind of nonsense coming from the other side. But, how is it that the other side is saying that it is actually not working? I think this clarity needs to be sorted out, how effective you are in your gestures. So, this can be something that Indian public opinion can question later on, their own governments, that whether it was done or not.

On Pakistani side, I think they are very much looking at the postures and how much they have the flexibility to actually react. I think right now it is in Pakistan's sense that it is not the right time to react. But, there can't be any kind of any provocation that comes, we cannot say from our side what would be Pakistan's military response. It was something that might have happened, and Pakistan thought that it's there, it is not something that Pakistan should react if the surgical strikes were done. It was something out there in the LOC area. If anything happens on the international borders, maybe Pakistan would react it like anything, so that would be a jittery response. And that jittery response can erupt into a crisis situation.

Michael Krepon: If it does erupt into a crisis situation, Oriana ... Beijing has been very content to give the US the lead crisis management role. It's been helpful, but it's clearly been the supporting cast of crisis management. With China's new investments in Pakistan and closeness to Pakistan, do you see China's role in crisis management changing? Or will they continue to be content to let the US do it?

Oriana Mastro: I think in the short term their role is probably not going to change, and that's largely because of how China views tactics, what are the most effective tactics to accomplishing your foreign policy goals outside of the country. A lot of US specialists might say that China does what its capabilities allows it to, or maybe China's not interested in a leadership role. I think that viewpoint is incorrect. Why China does not get so actively involved is because they believe that the United States' way of getting involved is what has actually sapped US power and has been a suck on US power.

It's not that China doesn't have the capabilities to get more involved. Militarily, they are developing some of those capabilities, largely to protect their own commercial assets or citizens in countries if things blow up. But, the government has no desire to do that, and it's actually interesting that on social media in China, when something happens that calls for a Chinese military response, those types of posts are actually censored because the government feels like getting more involved is actually not to their benefit. I don't mean to say that China's ... you say a supporting cast. That's not how China sees it. I think that China wants

to have that leadership role, but just like when the United States was rising after World War II it didn't try to gain colonies to mirror what Great Britain did as a great power, China is not desirous of mirroring what the United States did as a great power.

So, they're staying out of a lot of these issues because they feel like it's not to their net benefit. A big caveat though is that, in China, one of the things about studying the Chinese military is things change very quickly. Right now there's a lot off rhetoric coming out of China about striving for achievement as the new strategy, versus sort of biding your time and hiding your capabilities, in which the Chinese are debating how to use their economic leverage for strategic purposes, whether or not they should have their military play a greater role to help with their political power.

As a China specialist, I'm also very aware that for decades, China specialists said you know, China's against peace keeping operations and they'll always be against peace keeping operations. They're never involved in peace keeping operations. And then, the Chinese changed their mind and saw peace keeping as a benefit to themselves, and now they're the greatest contributor to PKO. While I think in the near future this type of behavior is not going to change, we also have to be very vigilant to look out for indicators in case there is a rapid change for some reason.

Gurmeet Kanwal: China has no leverage with India vis-a-vis Pakistan. But, where China will play a role I think, is in sobering down Pakistan activities. Because once the CPEC gathers momentum and Chinese investment comes in in a big way-- there will be Chinese personnel also in Pakistan--they would be shy of Pakistan getting into a conflict with India.

Michael Krepon: Folks, the floor is yours. Identify yourselves and allow a microphone to be placed in front of you. This gentleman in front. Microphone is coming.

Irfan Nooruddin: Thank you. My name's Irfan Nooruddin from Georgetown University. So, Oriana, your comments really give a domestic regime legitimacy argument for why this isn't an arms race, and why China doesn't want to engage in an arms race. But, when I think historically of the last time we had aspiring super powers, right, that had a real contrasting regime legitimacy argument --basically the US and the Soviets-- in that case, arguably the regime legitimacy concerns led to that arms race, right?

So, why doesn't this in fact lead to sort of a missile gap? Or concerns for a missile gap? On both sides. Why doesn't China bolster its legitimacy by basically not just downplaying India, by really trying to put India way in the distance, right? Let them eat our dust, using it to justify an even greater expansion. And why on the flip side doesn't India see a challenge for regime legitimacy vis a vis China, to sort of make an argument for a missile gap or that kind of an argument?

So, in fact, what you argued is that regime legitimacy downplays that; historically with the US and Soviets I would argue that, we are told that it went in the other direction. So, what's different to them?

Oriana Mastro: So I think the main difference is the relative power of the countries involved and where they are vis-a-vis the international system. So, for the United States and the Soviet Union, these were already two countries that had risen to great power status and then they were in a great power competition with one another about who could outbalance the other. In the case with China and India, the dynamics are different because they are both still rising powers. The narrative is less about who is ... the narrative is about who is more successful in the rise.

There's sort of two things that really stick out when I talk in China about this issue, when I ask the Chinese about the Indian rise, they act like they're confused about my question. You know, I'm asking them in Chinese, and they say, "Well, we don't know what you're talking about because India's not rising." Because of those dynamics, that's where the competition lies, not so much in a debate directly just because of the ideologies, but which domestic political system allows a country to rise more.

So, maybe once those two countries have successfully risen to the great power, major power club, we will see a change in dynamics. When it comes to why India doesn't have the same regime and legitimacy arguments, I think it's largely because of the unattractiveness of an autocratic system, largely. I think the idea that you could be more efficient or effective is not necessarily a rallying point for the peoples of the world. Even though a lot of countries like to economically cooperate with China for example, China has largely failed in its soft power attempts to convince other countries of the attractiveness of their model because of the domestic political components that come along with it.

So, the narrative for the Chinese people is they have to believe that the downsides of what they're dealing with are necessary for the success they're having. I don't think that that type of dynamic exists in a democracy. Not to say that there aren't downsides, but maybe the people kind of feel like you get the leadership that you deserve in a democracy versus if you didn't have a choice to begin with.

Michael Krepon: Thank you. Gurmeet, we're into missile gaps here. Does the missile gap have any resonance whatsoever in India?

Gurmeet Kanwal: I think we're quite satisfied with the missiles that we have, as far as deterrence against China is concerned. The Agni-IV will become operational shortly, and the Agni-V is on the way 5,000 km. That's about all that India needs, as far as against deterrence against China is concerned.

Michael Krepon: Who's next? The gentleman in the back.

Alex Sanchez: Hi, good morning. Alex Sanchez. I write for *Jane's Defense Weekly* and a couple of other places. I cover Latin America, so I apologize if my question is a little bit ignorant. You've talked a lot about the major powers in the region. But, what about the other countries? Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives? What's their role in this geopolitical chess game that's going on? I read a couple of days ago the government of Sri Lanka rejected the request of a Chinese ... by China to dock a submarine in Colombo because it was concerned about how this would affect Indian-Sri Lankan relations. So, how are these smaller countries -- smaller militarily speaking-- reacting to this arms race in between India and Pakistan and China and the US? Thank you.

Gurmeet Kanwal: They don't particularly like it. There was somebody from the Maldives yesterday at the National Defense University who said, "Why do you two keep fighting? It has a bad influence on the region." I said, I don't disagree with you at all. But, we have an organization called SAARC, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. It isn't quite working to its optimum capacity, because of the India-Pakistan conflict, because of tension between the two countries. While, bilateral issues are not discussed there at all, and only regional issues are discussed, multi lateral issues are discussed, it isn't living up to its potential. Conflict between two neighbors, India and Pakistan, does have an impact on these smaller neighbors in the region, no doubt about it.

Sannia Abdullah: Can I just add ... yeah. I think, so it is also the domestic politics interest that it involves the current government in Sri Lanka, how they are having relationships with other countries. I think domestic politics play an important role, and right now India is having greater leverage than Pakistan on other SAARC countries. That includes even Afghanistan. Right now even this time when Pakistan was trying to host SAARC conference, it was not done because of the current Indian political leadership, which was just adamant to say that they wanted Pakistan to be diplomatically isolated and they did not want SAARC countries to participate in it. And it did not happen.

So, there is an influence, I must say, that India is actually exercising politically on other countries in the region, particularly the smaller countries. That is a factor of turbulence not only for Pakistan but also for China, who is now looking towards the region from its own perspective and interests.

Michael Krepon: Well, we have some students back there who want to add to this too.

Wayne Glass: Quickly, bless you thank you, Michael. I'm professor Wayne Glass of the University of Southern California. I'll wait for the microphone, that's the protocol, sorry. Professor Wayne Glass from the University of Southern California, School of International Relations. Thank you Michael, very much. A quick ... please, I hope we'll have a great-

Michael Krepon: Why don't you let one of your students ask a question?

Wayne Glass: And an opportunity to meet our students. So, I will. Let me pass this on to one of my students. Jump in.

Madeleine: Hello, my name is Madeleine. I was curious, Miss Abdullah, you mentioned that there were a series of blurry, hazy red lines regarding India's relationship With Pakistan. From my understanding, the supportive relationship between India and the US and likewise between Pakistan and China is also not clear. It's kind of malleable, motile. Do those two nations have any kind of red lines in regards to the other nation's involvement with the others? And does Pakistan have any red lines concerning India's involvement and support between India and the US? And does India have any red lines in regards to Pakistan's relationship with China?

Sannia Abdullah: Again, you just mixed two points. Red lines were just about ... the thing that I was saying was nuclear red lines, that was about the doctrinal thing. But yes, your second part is very relevant. Once you are saying that is there clarity about the relationships that these countries are actually having? The problem is, Pakistan wants to have good relations with the United States, but not at the cost of any other country. This is something which is going on not only on the Indian side also, but also China, but also United States. It's a complex, I think, world which is emerging right now.

India is actually having some kind of ambivalent attitude, where it does not want to leave its non-alliance status, but at the same time wants to have good relations with the United States. It is India's call how they're going to manage this, and that is acting one of the factors that in the bilateral strategic cooperation they are having some kind of hesitation how far they can actually get into it.

In terms of Pakistan's relationship with other countries is that whenever we wanted to call cooperate, it is how India is actually dealing with those countries. Like in our neighbors, like Afghanistan and Iran, Pakistan's initial concern comes, how these countries are actually having relationship with India. That is going to have I think a bad effect on Pakistan's diplomacy and its foreign policy. This is where Pakistan needs to work on, to reach out to those countries and develop its own relations irrespective of what they are actually dealing with India.

Coming to Pakistan-China relationships, it is something which is full-spectrum in its scope. It's a years long friendship and it is like, in every sector. And again, this is one thing that I as a Pakistani want to know that how Pakistan is actually getting the tradeoff out of this relationship. What is the best deal for Pakistan in this kind of a relationship? While China is actually investing in Pakistan and Pakistan needs someone to invest in different areas. It's a country which has a huge population which has huge demands, and China is out there to help us. So, we have no choice right now in the world out there. United States is getting reluctant, and its interest is fading away from the region, which always happens in history. For Pakistan it is a good choice now to look for other countries, and

that includes now Russia also and also to Saudi Arabia and countries in the Gulf region.

Oriana Mastro: If I can just quickly add from the Chinese perspective, there's a great deal of self-restraint also that's occurring. It's not so much that there's some sort of threat made by another country that do not do this, that, and the other with the relationship, but I don't want you to leave with this impression that there is these like to forces, two camps against each other. China very much values the relationship it has with India, and one of the reasons they talk so much about cooperation and partnerships is they're hoping to have a better relationship with India, and they prioritize their relationship with the United States over any other country. I think to a large part, maybe what constrains China from doing things that would be particularly provocative to any of these players is the desire to continue to maintain positive relationships for economic gain and also for political gain.

Michael Krepon: Yeah? Gurmeet?

Gurmeet Kanwal: Let me try and put the ... China-India relationship has come up pretty often. Let me try and put it in perspective, Indian perspective. The Chinese have a saying, 'one mountain cannot accommodate two tigers'. They look at themselves as the tiger on the Asian mountain and there's no room for somebody else. China would like to confine India to the black waters of the Indian Ocean as a subaltern state. But we look at ourselves differently. We look at ourselves as the second tiger on the Asian mountain, and the Chinese say there's no room for us.

So, there is strategic competition between the two countries. That will not change. In physics also, two large bodies in contact repel each other. That is not going to change, that is what the relationship is. China is engaged in a strategic encirclement of India, making in-roads into every land neighbor around India, Pakistan to start with. Pakistan-China friendship is said to be, in the Chinese leader's words, not my words, "higher than the mountain, deeper than the ocean, stronger than steel, and sweeter than honey". I hope both of them don't get diabetes.

India, if we were to pay obeisance, if Prime Minister Modi was to carry a thali-- a thali is a platter--of gold coins annually to King Emperor Xi Jinping, everything would be all right. But India is not that kind of a country. We look at ourselves as a co-equal Asian power. China is much bigger ... you know all that so I don't need to repeat that. We appreciate that, but we look at ourselves as a co-equal rising Asian power. So, that is the competition at the strategic level between China and India. It will not change.

Michael Krepon: Thanks Gurmeet. Gentleman over here.

Marshall Butan: Thanks Michael. My name is Marshall Bouton, I'm affiliated with this, that, and the other Chicago Council, Asian Society, so forth. I want to question the

proposition that I think Skyler really first put out and Sannia seemed to endorse, that the India-US relationship is stagnant. I think that was the word that you said, stagnation yeah its stagnant. If you look over the last 15 to 20 years in US international relations, I would contend that no single bilateral relationship in the world with the United States has changed more than the India-US relationship.

Now, I'm speaking about the totality of that change, the kind of net assessment of what's happened in the last 15 to 20 years. Primarily for security reasons, primarily in the security arena, and as evidence of that we have the Civil Nuclear Accord, finally passed in 2008, a major Bush administration initiative. Many in this room were involved in that debate, one way of the other. It was, at the time, considered a revolutionary proposition, from both the US side and on the Indian side. We moved on from that to defense sales, technology cooperation, military cooperation. In 2015, the United States military had more exercises, joint exercises with India than with any other country in the world, including our NATO allies.

We have now, President Obama agreed that we would extend our cooperation to carrier development with the Indians, on the development of their domestic produced carrier. And most recently, and it didn't get much notice here, and not as much as you would expect in Delhi, the United States and India agreed to a logistics exchange memorandum, which puts us, poises the United States and India to actually move on as the Brigadier has said to joint contingency planning, threat assessment, and perhaps even joint operations, though, that particularly in the Indian Ocean, between the two navies.

Now, this is a long-term play. You can, if you took any one-year, two-year period over the last 15, 20, and you looked at it you'd say 'not much is changing'. But I would argue the United States has made a strategic bet on India's rise as a counterweight to China, not only for that reason but as a counterweight to China in the region. Or let me put it a little differently, as a key factor in maintaining a stable balance of power in Asia, and to add Condoleezza Rice's phrase, "favorable to freedom." So, let me leave it at that and ask you for your reactions.

Michael Krepon: What do you think, Oriana?

Oriana Mastro: I think that characterization ... So the first thing is, there are obviously going to be developments in any bilateral relationship. I wouldn't necessarily point to foreign military sales, something the United States does with many nations, and people who are in that field instead of talking about the triumphs of FMS with India would probably talk more about the frustrations and the failures involved in that area. I'm curious about the military exercises. I mean, I would think that like Arihant and Malabar, there are a few of those. But, I, just looking at some of the big ones that I can think of to say that we exercise more with India than with any other country, I'd be very curious about some of those statistics.

But, in general, I get the point that there is movement here, and I think a lot of that motivation and drive did occur during the Bush administration. There was a lot of hope, especially with the Civil Nuclear Deal that the United States and India would move closer together. I think as well, there was this view that they had the strategic bet that India would be a counterweight to China.

I guess my point is, if that is the United States' strategy, I think the United States is going to be sorely disappointed. And I don't think it's the smart way to move forward, to deal with the challenge that is China's rise. Now, if it's relatively costless and there are no opportunity costs and no trade-offs, obviously improving the relationship with India is to the US benefit. We do have a lot of shared norms and values.

But on the other hand, we actually have a lot of norms and values internationally that are not shared, and that India actually has a lot of positions on international governance that are much more similar to that of China than the United States. I would say that I guess my point was that I don't think that we should consider this to be our way forward. The US-India relationship still has a lot of room to grow, and my understanding just anecdotally is a lot of this is bureaucratic. It's very difficult for US officials to meet with Indian officials. I mean, I have a harder time going into the Indian archives than I do in the Chinese archives, so I think a lot of these memorandums of understanding are important to help us move forward. But, those are low-hanging fruit, helping the United States move forward on some of the most basic things, to do the most basic types of cooperation with the Indian military.

Michael Krepon: I want to ask the same question to Sannia and Gurmeet. What is your projection of the US-India partnership? Where is it going, from your perspective?

Sannia Abdullah: As I said, for me it is looking like United States is actually expecting or was expecting a lot from this cooperation, and it is not actually getting what it wanted. On the same side, I believe there is a kind of ambivalent attitude in the Indian administration or congress, or their political parties, where they are actually still unable to decide how far they want to cooperate with the United States. They're still not happy with kind of their strategic terms and conditions on it.

For Pakistan, it is not about how far they're going in their strategic terms. For Pakistan, it is that India has been given a great leverage by being into a strategic cooperation with the United States, the country that Pakistan had been with for a long, long time as the most allied ally. That is frustrating for Islamabad that how quickly all of a sudden starting from 1990s and soon after 9/11, how this relationship changed altogether and how Pakistan could be out of this equation.

I think Pakistan has its own frustrations about it, but in reality this cooperation will take a lot of time for both countries like United States and India to determine how far they want to go with one another. I agree on this that China,

if it is a bet against China, that how you can contain China by being into a strategic cooperation, I think it is something not going to work out in my calculations. I think China is far, far from all of this kind ... They know how to outreach the world and they are very good at it. They're doing it from the economic perspective, they're reaching out to the world in a different way. I think by doing this, United States is actually ... despite having economic interdependence with China, it's actually moving itself away from all this scenario.

Michael Krepon: Gurmeet, is the US-India relationship fated to be less than hoped?

Gurmeet Kanwal: I agree with every word the gentleman said. I called it a paradigm shift. And I was taught in high school not to use the term "paradigm shift" more than once a year. So, the relationship is headed northward, it's headed forward to next higher trajectory. There's nothing stopping it. There'll be bumps on the highway, no doubt about that. The bureaucracies on both sides have their agendas, they are difficult to mold, to change from their mold, so there'll be bumps on the highway. But, we are headed northward. I think president Obama called it the defining partnership of the 21st century, and that is exactly what this relationship is.

Michael Krepon: I'm going to ask all three of you the same question. What is the single most concerning military development in the region that's out there? What should we be focusing on in your view? Oriana, can you go first?

Oriana Mastro: I think my answer's going to be somewhat dissatisfying because you didn't specify region, particularly. And honestly, when it comes to the Chinese military, any developments in particular that are directed towards South Asia, even in the Indian Ocean are not of the greatest concern compared to what the Chinese are doing on their East Coast. So, the Chinese ... we have this idea that China for a long time has developed capabilities designed to deter, degrade, destroy US capabilities to operate in the region, but now that China's moved to the next step of their strategy in which they're not as interested about impacting other people's operations, but they actually want the ability to operate themselves.

Michael Krepon: So, there's nothing that Pakistan or India or the United States could do in Southern Asia that would be particularly concerning to Beijing?

Oriana Mastro: There have been scholars who have argued that by engaging in better cooperation with India and having developments in South Asia, in particular in the Indian Ocean, that we could potentially distract China away from these coastal issues that we actually are more concerned about. But, given that those are such a priority to China and that they think that's really the area where US hegemony is the strongest and that if they desire to push the United States out of Asia, that's where the competition lies, they're unlikely to be distracted.

I can't think of any realistic developments in which the Chinese would stop and say, look at what's happening in South Asia, let's not focus so much on the island buildup in the South China Sea. Let's reduce our patrols in the East China Sea, and let's not harass the United States about its presence on the Korean peninsula. Those are just strategically, are more important issues for Beijing.

Michael Krepon: Got it. Sannia, is there one thing in particular that would raise the hair on collective Rawalpindi's back of the neck?

Sannia Abdullah: I must say ... okay, so now you have said Pindi so I should think it out in real terms. I think the generals always fight the last war. And having said that, in terms of India-Pakistan conflict, it is Indian Navy which has always played an important role in shaping the conflicts. We saw that in 1971, and we also saw that in Kargil that even if a conflict which is taken up there in the mountains. Indian navy is something that actually, the moment it starts approaching the harbor area, Karachi Harbor, it just gives a psychological push to Pakistan that the conflict is getting into Pakistan's neck, and it is choking Pakistan's neck.

That is the point I think where Pakistan can get frustrated and take any kind of desperate measure. So, that is something I believe it's getting more and more threatening and alarming in the region, the way Indian navy is actually improving and Pakistan's navy is not improving at that pace. That asymmetry, not only in the air and land battle concept. We are having missile systems which are effective deterrents against India, but I think the navy side is somewhere which can be very frustrating. And the developments, the way India is actually improving its navy I think in the years to come, if any kind of maneuver takes place and India mobilizes its naval fleet, Pakistan is likely to create some kind of adventure which may not be good for the region.

Michael Krepon: That's a great advertisement for the second panel.

Gurmeet Kanwal: I think there's one development that is highly destabilizing, that is the development of the short-range ballistic missile-- Hatf-IX,60 kilometers-- by Pakistan. It's a strategic blunder, it lowers the nuclear threshold, it leads to delegation of authority to fire, "use them or lose them" kind of a scenario. It'll stick out like a sore thumb in the forward age of the battle area. It'll be targeted by the Indian Air Force and the Indian artillery. Though, that could result in a nuclear detonation if a warhead is mounted on the missile, and it is extremely destabilizing as a development, and Pakistan must take it out of the nuclear arsenal.

Michael Krepon: One last question and then we're going to break for lunch. Plug to the Stimson Center, we have put out a collection of essays on the second coming of MIRVs. Reports that China's already begun to deploy multiple warheads on the single missiles. Pakistan has advertised the capability, and Gurmeet, you're flatly predicting, or almost predicting that India will go in this direction.

We elders remember the first coming of MIRVs and it was overkill became excessive overkill with MIRVs. Do you see the MIRVing of missiles as being contained? Is it open-ended? Are we talking about a doubling of the warhead totals in the region, over the next decade or so? Where are MIRVs taking these countries?

Oriana Mastro: For China this is a big open question. If you ask the Chinese specifically about where they plan on taking their modernization efforts for their strategic rocket forces more generally, they will tell you that they plan on improving them. And when you ask that that means, qualitative improvements, quantitative improvements what that means, they just repeat the note of they're improving them. On one hand I think a lot of it depends on the ... how dangerous this is depends on the perceptions of the countries involved.

For a long time, the biggest danger to nuclear stability between the United States and China is China's lack of confidence in its second-strike capability. That is really even now, the thing that is most concerning, is if China doesn't ... and rightfully so was not confident for a very long time. They didn't have a second strike capability. Now a lot of people believe they have developed that capability, and so if the Chinese believe that for whatever reason, certain developments undermine that, then they might be more likely this no first-use doctrine that they've had all these years.

So, on one hand I can see how these developments can be seen as threatening in a vacuum. But if in the end China has an enhanced confidence in its nuclear deterrent, then we'll see them be less sensitive about things like THADD and other missile defense systems, and potentially be more cautious about nuclear use in certain contingencies. I think there's also, there's dangers to it, but there's potentially an upside for strategic stability between the United States and China.

Michael Krepon: Sannia, reports of a very significant voice in India suggesting preemption might be an option, questioning no first-use ... has Rawalpindi already doubled the size of its projected nuclear force? Do MIRVs play a big role?

Sannia Abdullah: About the India's Doctrine, I think something that happened in the Carnegie conference and that just got viral, I think one of the things that Vipin wanted to point out was one of the possible scenarios which might be in India's consideration. It's something that Pakistani policy makers in Islamabad was believing in it long ago. I think it was just hitting on the nail. They always believed that India's no first-use is just not no first-use, and that coming out this kind of a vibe was like, we believed in it and yes, it is right there. MIRVs, I think any kind of these developments as I said earlier, Pakistan is just trying to achieve strategic equivalence over India.

The impact they want to have it, is just equating in some way, and that is in fact increasing Pakistan's appetite for having more and more arsenals. I believe

MIRVs are something one in the overall picture. But the question for me is having these kinds of technologies, both India and Pakistan, are they willing to go for, you know, be very precise about their testing? Like MIRVs were tested several times at the time of Cold War era by both United States and Soviet Union at that time. I want to know like, how are these two countries going to manage that? Having multiple warheads is not enough. Are they sure that those ... each one of them, which is just the top of the missile is targetable independently and how accurate they are?

I think just going for one kind of a test and saying that you have acquired the capability is an overestimation of your own potential, which can be destabilizing once you're actually going to use sometime and, God forbid, sometime if that situation comes that you are going to use your systems.

Michael Krepon: How deep into the big money of MIRVs will India go?

Gurmeet Kanwal: Firstly, we realize the disadvantages of MIRVing. Despite that, we have a no first-use posture, and we could lose half our missiles or more than half our missiles in a first-strike by the adversary. Therefore, the need to have multiple warheads on a single missile. The second issue is that China could go in for a BMD. If they do go in for a ballistic missile defense, then MIRVing is the answer ... part answer to the ballistic missile defense. So, for these two reasons, despite the disadvantages ... and the technology's proven. I think only a couple of months ago India launched 100 satellite satellites with a single rocket, so the technology is there.

Michael Krepon: Will all of you kindly at the end of this panel head back, get some food, and then come back into your seats at noon for a wonderful presentation. And, please do join me in thanking our panel.