



US Crisis Management in South Asia's Twin Peaks Crisis

REPORT 57

Polly Nayak and Michael Krepon

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Preface

Ellen Laipson

Dear Colleague,

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ellen Laipson".

Ellen Laipson
President and CEO

List of Abbreviations

ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
LoC	Line of Control
MAD	Mutually Assured Destruction
NSC	National Security Council
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
PCC	Policy Coordinating Committee
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle

Introduction

Michael Krepon

The stability-instability paradox, which was conceptualized during the Cold War in universities and think tanks, has proven to have quite significant real-world applications. The stability-instability paradox postulates that, when nuclear-armed competitors acquire the Bomb, they will seek to avoid a crossing of the nuclear threshold, and hence maintain a safe distance from catastrophe. But at the same time, one or both competitors might view this fearsome threshold as an opportunity as well as an insurance policy, since an adversary's reluctance to cross this threshold could provide license for mischief making below it.

The stability-instability paradox was seemingly confirmed in the Twin Peaks crisis that is the subject of this Stimson Center Report. This crisis was sparked by an attack by Islamic extremists on the Indian parliament building, which prompted a ten-month-long standoff in which the Indian and Pakistani armed forces were maintained at a high state of readiness to fight. During this standoff, another significant terrorist act was directed at the families of Indian soldiers stationed at the front. Nonetheless, the Government of India declined to wage war. Instead, it engaged the crisis management skills of Secretary of State Colin Powell and Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage to seek an end to the standoff.

Deterrence and war-fighting theories conceived in academia and think tanks are typically very neat and tidy. Crises, as well as warfare, on the other hand, can produce unpredictable and unexpected results. In the real world, no one can be certain that violence at the level of subconventional, limited, or proxy warfare will not spill across the nuclear threshold, whether by design, accident, miscalculation, inadvertence, or a breakdown of command and control. The stability-instability paradox is by no means a sure thing. Like other corollaries of deterrence theory, the stability-instability paradox “works” only until it fails. And one failure could be catastrophic.

The Stimson Center has focused a great deal on the applicability of the stability-instability paradox to the nuclear-tinged competition between India and Pakistan.¹ In the early phases of this competition, full-scale conventional and nuclear wars have been avoided, while the incidence of serious crises has increased and one limited war has been fought. The evidence accumulated to date strongly suggests a regional confirmation of the stability-instability paradox.

To be sure, there are many differences between the US-Soviet and India-Pakistan cases. During the Cold War, Moscow enjoyed clear conventional military superiority along the most likely line of engagement, while Washington enjoyed nuclear superiority, at least in the earliest decades of the contest. Tactical nuclear

¹ See Michael Krepon and Ziad Haider, eds., *Reducing Nuclear Dangers in South Asia*, Stimson Report #50 (Washington D.C.: The Henry L. Stimson Center, February 2004), Michael Krepon, Rodney W. Jones, and Ziad Haider, eds., *Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South Asia* (Washington D.C.: The Henry L. Stimson Center, November 2004), and Michael Krepon, ed., *Nuclear Risk Reduction in South Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

weapons played an important role in the US-Soviet rivalry. Moreover, during the Cold War, the instability half of the paradox took the form of proxy wars far distant from the most sensitive equities of the two superpowers.

In contrast, the geographical propinquity of India and Pakistan rules out the safety of a long-distance competition. In addition, religion, not ideology, helps fuel the nuclear competition on the subcontinent. Nuclear risk reduction efforts in South Asia must take into account religious extremism, a factor entirely absent in the US-Soviet competition.

The conventional/nuclear balance on which the stability-instability paradox rests in South Asia is also quite different from that of the United States and the Soviet Union. While India's conventional military advantages over Pakistan are indisputable, the nuclear balance at this formative stage of the competition is still very opaque. Another difference is that India and Pakistan both claim that they are disinterested in tactical nuclear weapons.

Because every competition and military balance between two nuclear-armed rivals is different, it stands to reason that the particular conditions under which the stability-instability paradox plays out will also be different.² But for all of the differences in the US-Soviet and India-Pakistan cases, both appear to reinforce the same bottom line: a serious competition between states that possess nuclear weapons reinforces the caution of national leaders to avoid a full-scale conventional or a nuclear war, while increasing the instances of risk-taking below these thresholds.³

This was not the expectation of leading strategists, commentators, and government officials in India and then Pakistan after both countries decided to test nuclear devices in 1998. Back then, many expressed the confident expectation that, with their bombs now out of the basement, New Delhi and Islamabad could get on with the essential business of normalizing their ties and moving beyond old grievances. Instead, a series of hair-raising crises ensued, the most recent of which is dissected in this report. When two states add an existential threat to existing layers of mistrust and enmity, it should come as no surprise that, at a minimum, crises will follow.

The relevance of the stability-instability paradox in South Asia is no longer disputed by Indian and Pakistani strategic analysts. The question at hand is whether both countries have had their fill of intense crises and limited wars. India's answer to this question is not hard to divine. As the *status quo* power with respect to the Kashmir dispute, New Delhi would surely welcome the normalization of its ties with Pakistan, even though India's leaders have so far found it difficult to move beyond small steps toward a final settlement.

² See, for example, S. Paul Kapur, "India and Pakistan's Unstable Peace," *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Fall 2005), pp. 127-152.

³ The Sino-Soviet competition also resulted in border friction soon after Beijing joined Moscow in the nuclear club. Among nuclear competitors, only the post 1974 Sino-Indian competition has not—or not yet—resulted in similar friction or a proxy war. This exception merits closer scrutiny.

Pakistan's leaders face a far more difficult set of choices. The proxy war supported by Pakistan's military and intelligence services has not loosened New Delhi's grip from Kashmir, but it has tied down significant numbers of Indian security forces. As the disparity in conventional military capabilities grows in favor of New Delhi, some in Pakistan might well seek to extend India's long and painful security presence in Kashmir. This choice would surely impose costs on India, but it would likely result in even greater injury to Pakistan's standing and domestic well-being. The longer Pakistan's military and intelligence services support unconventional warfare in Kashmir, the more they accentuate the negative trend lines imperiling Pakistan's future.

President Pervez Musharraf's new thinking—or at least his new initiatives—regarding Kashmir suggest that he understands the damage done to Pakistan by providing safe haven for Islamic extremists. But key steps required for Pakistan to become a moderate, enlightened, Islamic state remain untaken. It is hard to see how Pakistan becomes the country envisioned by Musharraf and the Quaid-e-Azam, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, without jettisoning Pakistan's proactive Kashmir policy and without normalizing relations with India.

The impulse toward normalization wanes with bomb blasts at sensitive sites and symbolic targets in India. As in other Islamic countries, religious parties that have militant wings in Pakistan appear to be gaining more of a voice in domestic affairs. It is sobering to consider that Musharraf seems unable or unwilling to make enough of the hard decisions needed to significantly brighten Pakistan's future. If this is not possible by Musharraf—a general who enjoys the backing of the Army, the nation's most powerful and coherent institution, and who presides over a country that practices multi-party politics, whose two biggest parties do not define themselves in religious terms—then Pakistan's relations with India could be troubled for a long while.

Judging by the US-Soviet and India-Pakistan cases, the most dangerous phase of the stability-instability paradox is at the early stages of the nuclear competition. The Berlin and Cuban missile crises provided glimpses into the abyss. After this dangerous passage, Washington and Moscow began to take steps to reduce nuclear dangers by means of technical measures as well as political accommodation in particularly sensitive regions. Both superpowers continued to compete and continued to experience crises, but with more insulation against a crossing of the nuclear threshold.

Have India and Pakistan reached a similar understanding? Is the Twin Peaks crisis of 2001-2002 analyzed in the pages that follow the functional equivalent of South Asia's Cuban missile crisis?

To be sure, Pakistan and India have taken modest, but important steps to relax constraints on travel, trade, and other exchanges. Elementary nuclear risk-reduction measures have been adopted, such as improved communication links and a ballistic missile flight test pre-notification agreement. These steps have increased insulation against shocks, but small, positive steps toward normal relations between New Delhi and Islamabad can be trumped by big explosions at sensitive sites.

The Twin Peaks crisis was defined by two big explosions—one at the Indian parliament building in December 2001, the other in May 2002, directed at family members of Indian troops in Jammu mobilized to fight. The reasons why a war was avoided during this extended crisis, and the lessons learned by US crisis managers, are discussed in the pages that follow.

Regrettably, these lessons learned still have considerable relevance. There is no steady-state equilibrium during this transitional phase of India-Pakistan relations. If bilateral ties do not improve, they will backslide. And if serious efforts are made to improve ties, or to seek a resolution of Kashmir's agony, significant efforts will also be made to disrupt progress. Only sustained, top-down impulses toward normalizing ties can provide sufficient insulation against extreme shocks. But each act of terrorism makes new diplomatic initiatives by Pakistani leaders less credible, and those by Indian leaders less likely.

If backsliding occurs and significant acts of terrorism directed against targets in India continue, another nuclear-tinged crisis could well confront leaders in New Delhi, Islamabad and Washington. The case study that follows serves as a warning against complacency. The stability-instability paradox is still operative in South Asia.

US Crisis Management in South Asia's Twin Peaks Crisis

Polly Nayak and Michael Krepon*

Overview

For ten months between late December 2001 and October 2002, India and Pakistan kept approximately one million soldiers in a high state of readiness along their international border and the Line of Control (LoC) dividing Kashmir, raising the specter of conflict. The immediate trigger for the deployment was a brazen attack by militants on the Indian Parliament building in New Delhi on December 13, 2001. The attack set in motion an extended crisis with two distinct peaks when tensions were extremely high and when war appeared imminent to many observers. The first peak, immediately after the attack on Parliament, occurred in the December 2001-January 2002 timeframe. The second peak, in May-June 2002, followed another high-profile attack by militants, this time near the town of Kaluchak in Jammu. During both peaks of the crisis, high-level US officials were deeply involved in crisis management, seeking to avoid war and to secure the return of Indian and Pakistani forces to their cantonments. This is the story of the Bush administration's crisis management effort, as told by over two dozen individuals who helped shape or who led the US diplomatic response during the extended crisis.¹

Kashmir: The Unending Quarrel

The Twin Peaks crisis grew in part out of tensions between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. Since their partition at the time of independence in 1947, Pakistan has contended that Muslim-majority Kashmir should have been joined to Pakistan, which its leaders created to be a homeland for Muslims on the Subcontinent. Pakistan maintains that the old princely state of Jammu and Kashmir is illegally occupied by Indian troops. The Government of India asserts that the entirety of the old princely state is rightfully part of its territory because the leader of that state signed an accession agreement with India following partition.²

* The authors wish to acknowledge the assistance, insights, and recollections of many current or former US officials who helped shape policy during the 2001-2002 crisis, including Walter Andersen, Richard Armitage, Robert Blackwill, Robert Boggs, Jonah Blank, Lincoln Bloomfield, Donald Camp, Lisa Curtis, Richard Falkenrath, Peter Flory, Steven Ghitelman, John Gill, Claudio Lilienfeld, Torkel Patterson, Colin Powell, Nancy Powell, Lawrence Robinson, Christina Rocca, Leonard Scensny, David Smith, Harry Thomas, Ashley Tellis, Marvin Weinbaum, and others who asked not to be named. The authors have quoted individuals by name only in those instances where permission to do so has been granted. The authors also wish to thank Nico Beck, Martine Cicconi, Ziad Haider, Nabanjan Maitra, Michael Katz-Hyman, and Amy Buenning Sturm for their research and editing assistance.

¹ For another account of the 2001-2002 crisis, see Steve Coll, "The Stand-Off: How Jihadi Groups Helped Provoke the Twenty-First Century's First Nuclear Crisis," *The New Yorker*, February 13&20, 2002, 126-139. For an early look at the unintended consequences of US crisis management policy during the 2001-2002 crisis see Polly Nayak, "Reducing Collateral Damage to Indo-Pakistani Relations from the War on Terrorism," *Brookings Policy Brief #107* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, September 2002).

² Studies of the Kashmir issue as a source of tension between India and Pakistan include Sumit Ganguly, *Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions Since 1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, paperback edition, 2001); Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace* (Cambridge and Washington, DC: Cambridge University Press and the Woodrow Wilson Center, 1999); Robert G. Wirsing, *Kashmir in the Shadow of War: Regional Rivalries in a Nuclear Age* (New York: Armonk, M.E. Sharpe, 2003); Wirsing, *India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Dispute: On Regional Conflict and Its Resolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press,

Prior to the Twin Peaks crisis, India and Pakistan had fought in 1947, 1965, and 1999 over this territory.³ The first of these wars led to a division of the old princely state, which has remained to this day. Beginning in 1989, the Muslim majority areas of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir became inflamed, primarily as a result of longstanding local grievances. The resultant insurgency attracted support from Pakistan's military and intelligence services, which contributed Pakistan-based militants and Afghan Arab veterans of the "jihad" against the Soviet occupation in Afghanistan. The Line of Control (LoC) dividing Kashmir became the locus of friction between India and Pakistan—marked by routine exchanges of artillery, mortar and small arms fire and the infiltration of militants across the divide with Pakistani support.

The testing of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan in 1998 had the contradictory effects of exacerbating tensions over Kashmir and generating initiatives to normalize relations. As the Twin Peaks crisis unfolded, the Indian government, led by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and the Pakistani government, led by President and Army Chief Pervez Musharraf, were still pondering the lessons of a short, limited, and high-altitude war in 1999 near Kargil in Kashmir. Some observers saw the Kargil conflict as alarming evidence that India's and Pakistan's nuclear weapons status would complicate but not necessarily deter future conflicts, with the risk of escalation to nuclear use.⁴ In late 2000, under pressure from Washington and its allies, India and Pakistan entered into a shaky *de facto* cease fire in Kashmir that was to last about ten months.

Precipitating Events

Even after twelve years of anti-Indian violence linked to the Kashmir cause, the two attacks that precipitated the Twin Peaks crisis—in December 2001 and in May 2002—evoked special outrage from the Indian public. On December 13, 2001, five terrorists—armed with assault rifles, plastic explosives, and grenades—used a fake pass to drive a nondescript, stolen white Ambassador sedan onto the grounds of India's Parliament, where they attempted to enter the circular building. Their apparent plan was to attack the legislators during a morning session that was to be attended by senior government leaders, including the Prime Minister. The plan failed by sheer luck, according to one account.⁵ The attackers' vehicle crashed into an official car, forcing them to proceed on foot. In addition, a power outage in the capital knocked out television broadcasts of the parliamentary session; the militant who was to alert the attackers by cell phone when key ministers arrived was therefore unaware that the 400-plus legislators had instead adjourned and that many senior ministers therefore would not be present. One of the militants blew himself up outside the Parliament door that was to

1998); *The Kashmir Powder Keg*, ed. Charlotte P. Nicholson, Library of Congress Congressional Research Service (Huntington, New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2002); Michael Brecher, *The Struggle for Kashmir* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953); Prem Shankar Jha, *Kashmir 1947: Rival Versions of History*. (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1996); Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in the Crossfire* (New York: I.B. Taurus, 1996); Alastair Lamb, *Incomplete Partition: Genesis of the Kashmir Dispute 1947-48*, Hertingfordbury: Roxford Books, 1997); Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy, 1846-1990* (Hertingfordbury: Roxford Books, 1991); and Lamb, *Birth of a Tragedy: Kashmir 1947* (Hertingfordbury: Roxford Books, 1994).

³ India and Pakistan also fought a war in 1971, but its focus was on eastern Pakistan, which became the country of Bangladesh.

⁴ Early reflections on the meaning of the Kargil conflict include Ashley Tellis, C. Christine Fair, and Jamison Jo Medby, *Limited Conflicts Under the Nuclear Umbrella: Indian and Pakistani Lessons from the Kargil Crisis* (Santa Monica: Rand, 2001). A new study, *War Under the Nuclear Shadow: the Kargil and 2002 Crises* by Stephen P. Cohen, Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, and P.R. Chari, is slated to be published in 2006.

⁵ Celia Dugger, "India Weighs Using Troops to Hunt 2 Groups in Pakistan," *New York Times*, December 23, 2001, A-4.

Home Minister L.K. Advani described the December 13 attack as the most audacious and most alarming act of terrorism in the history of two decades of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in India.

be used by the ministers.⁶ The four others died during the ensuing gun battle with the small but determined Indian security detail, which took several casualties. Indian officials immediately linked the attackers to the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad militant organizations⁷ and blamed Pakistani intelligence for sponsoring terrorism to pressure India to relinquish Kashmir.

Some Indian analysts suggested that Indian security personnel should have been better prepared for the December 13 assault on Parliament in light of a suicide bombing attack on the Kashmir state assembly just over two months before. On October 1, 2001, a militant rammed an explosives-filled, hijacked official vehicle into the assembly's main gate while his accomplices tried to storm the complex using bullets and grenades.⁸ Forty bystanders were killed. The militants were dressed in police uniforms. Jaish-e-Muhammad, a militant group based in Pakistan initially claimed—and then disclaimed—responsibility for the October 1 attack.

Blaming Pakistan for the October attack, President Atal Bihari Vajpayee hinted in a letter to President George W. Bush that India would be forced to take matters into its own hands if Washington could not convince Islamabad to rein in terrorist groups based there.⁹ Indian officials demanded that Washington designate Jaish-e-Muhammad a terrorist organization, and they publicly weighed punitive attacks on militant camps on the Pakistani side of the LoC in Kashmir.¹⁰ India has long cited Pakistan's failure to keep militants from crossing the Line of Control as evidence of Islamabad's continuing support for their activities.

Although the casualties from the October attack were higher, the events of December 13—a dramatic and direct assault on India's leaders in their seat of democracy—galvanized New Delhi's response to terrorism, much as the attacks on September 11, 2001 mobilized Washington. Home Minister L.K. Advani described the December 13 attack as “the most audacious and most alarming act of terrorism in the history of two decades of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in India.”¹¹ “Nothing will harm India more than inaction at this

⁶ Rama Lakshmi, “Gunmen With Explosives Attack Indian Parliament,” *Washington Post*, December 14, 2001, A-1.

⁷ Some Indian officials implicated Jaish-e-Muhammad. See Rajiv Chandrasekaran and Rama Lakshmi, “New Delhi Lays Blame; India Implicates Militants in Attack But Struggles to Prove a Pakistani Role,” *Washington Post*, December 29, 2001, A-1. Others charged Lashkar-e-Taiba with the attack. See Rama Lakshmi, “Indians Blame Attacks on Pakistan-Based Group,” *Washington Post*, December 15, 2001, A-23.

⁸ Laurie Goering, “5 Gunmen Storm India's Parliament, Killing 7,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 14, 2001, N-1.

⁹ Lt. Gen. V.K.Sood (retired) and Pravin Sawhney, *Operation Parakram—The War Unfinished* (New Delhi, India: Sage Publications, 2003), 9.

¹⁰ Qaiser Mirza; “Indian leader appeals to Bush after deadly attack in Kashmir that kills 40,” Associated Press Worldstream (online), October 2, 2001; Celia Dugger, “Week in Review: Lethal Car Bomb in Kashmir,” *New York Times*, October 7, 2001, 4-2.

¹¹ Rama Lakshmi, “India Wages a War of Words; Pakistan Again Assailed for Attack, US for Its Response,” *Washington Post*,

Prime Minister Vajpayee visited the front lines in Jammu, near where the attacks occurred, delivering a chilling message to the troops that the time has come for a decisive battle, and we will have a sure victory in this battle.

moment,” defense analyst Brahma Chellaney declared.¹² Five days after the attack, India launched Operation Parakram with a general mobilization of troops.

After the October assault on the Kashmir assembly, Home Minister L.K. Advani had expressed a “measure of understanding” of US equities in cooperating with Pakistan on counterterrorism.¹³ In contrast, after the December 13 attack on Parliament, Indian officials criticized what they called Washington’s “double standard” on terrorism—urging restraint on New Delhi and discouraging Indian retaliation against Pakistan, when the United States responded to the 9/11 attacks by invading Afghanistan.¹⁴ Some Indian observers attributed this “double standard” to Washington’s desire to retain Pakistan’s reluctantly proffered but vital cooperation with US-led operations against al-Qaeda and the Taliban in neighboring Afghanistan.¹⁵ The Bush administration was counting on two Pakistani Army corps deployed along its border with Afghanistan to intercept al-Qaeda leaders fleeing US air strikes on their mountain redoubts at Tora Bora for tribal areas within Pakistan. With India placing its Army on a war footing, US officials feared that Pakistan would feel compelled to redeploy these units to help block an Indian advance.

Islamabad’s initial reactions to the December 13 attack on the Indian Parliament did little to mollify New Delhi or to stem rising tensions. Indian officials brushed off President Musharraf’s condemnation of the assault and his message of sympathy. Pakistani officials, in turn, rejected New Delhi’s accusations that the attacking militants were Pakistani nationals or aided by Pakistan’s military and intelligence services. Islamabad charged New Delhi with trumping up an incident to impugn Pakistan and pressed for a joint investigation to establish the identity of the terrorists. This suggestion was dismissed out of hand by India.

As India mobilized forces, Pakistan responded in kind. Despite US pleas and protests, Pakistan in late December began redeploying to its borders with India most of the 11th and 12th Army Corps sent to the border with Afghanistan only a month earlier, at Washington’s urging.¹⁶ Pakistan left in place two brigades, or about 6,000 of these regular troops, plus the 40,000 Frontier Corps troops who also had been sent to help

December 19, 2001, A-32.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Celia Dugger, “A Nation Challenged; Repercussions: India Wants to End Group in Kashmir Attack,” *New York Times*, October 3, 2001, B-5.

¹⁴ Martin Sieff, “Powell Fails to Defuse South Asia,” United Press International (online), December 23, 2001.

¹⁵ Celia Dugger, “India Recalling Pakistan Envoy Over Delhi Raid,” *New York Times*, December 22, 2001, A-1.

¹⁶ Interview with Colonel David Smith (retired), May 26, 2005; Celia Dugger, “India Takes Steps to Ease Tensions,” *New York Times*, June 11, 2002, A-1.

seal the Afghan border. Most US policymakers believe that the redeployment of the better equipped, more capable Pakistan Army regulars undercut whatever possibility existed of halting the passage of fleeing al-Qaeda and Taliban operatives.

Tensions between India and Pakistan were extremely high in early January 2002 as President Musharraf prepared to make a major public address. On January 11—a day before Musharraf’s scheduled speech—India’s Army Chief, General S. Padmanabhan, announced that the Indian armed forces were totally mobilized and awaiting a green light from the political leadership to attack.¹⁷ In his January 12 speech, Musharraf directly addressed the hot-button issue of militants operating from Pakistani soil. He promised to crack down on the militants and stated that he would tolerate no terrorist activity, even in support of Pakistan’s stand on Kashmir. “No organization will be allowed to perpetuate terrorism behind the garb of the Kashmiri cause,” he declared.¹⁸

While Washington welcomed Musharraf’s pledge, New Delhi remained deeply skeptical. Indian officials demanded that Pakistan hand over twenty named militants as proof of good will, and they rebuffed Musharraf’s proposal to resume talks on the future of Kashmir. New Delhi insisted that Pakistan first stop abetting acts of terrorism and dismantle training camps for militants. Moreover, Indian government officials announced that they would wait and see what happened after the snows melted in April-May, when there is typically an upsurge in infiltration and acts of violence. In the meantime, troops on both sides remained deployed and ready.

As winter wore on, India officials seemed to grow even more pessimistic about Pakistan’s intentions. In late January and February 2002, Pakistani officials detained members of the two main militant groups implicated in attacks on Indian interests, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad, only to release many of them weeks later.¹⁹ Campaigning for state elections held in March 2002, leaders of India’s governing coalition focused on the terrorism issue and Pakistan’s complicity.²⁰ In mid-May 2002, on what turned out to be the eve of the militant attack at Kaluchak, Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh told the press that General Musharraf had broken his promise to clamp down on the groups that India believed to be responsible for attacking Parliament the previous December. “Their leadership is now freed, it lives in houses and gets paid an allowance by the government of Pakistan,” he stated. Defense Minister George Fernandes charged that Pakistani-backed militants were massed along the Line of Control, ready to cross to the Indian side.²¹

With emotions already running high in India, the provocative May 14 militant attack at Kaluchak on the families of Indian soldiers who were deployed at the front instantly brought the India-Pakistan crisis to its second peak. Military leaves were cancelled. On May 20, Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani announced

¹⁷ Lt. Gen. V.K.Sood (retired) and Pravin Sawhney, *Operation Parakram—The War Unfinished*, 59.

¹⁸ Seth Mydans, “Musharraf Treading Gently Against Pakistani Militants,” *New York Times*, April 28, 2002, 1-8.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Rama Lakshmi, “India’s Governing Party Is Set Back in Elections,” *Washington Post*, Feb. 25, 2002.

²¹ Celia Dugger, “Minister Says India Won’t Attack Pakistan,” *New York Times*, May 14, 2002, A-6.

that India “would go ahead and win the proxy war like we did in 1971.”²² Two days later, Prime Minister Vajpayee visited the front lines in Jammu, near where the attacks occurred, delivering a chilling message to the troops that “the time has come for a decisive battle, and we will have a sure victory in this battle.”²³ Then, oddly, Vajpayee left on May 24 for a five-day rest in the mountain resort of Manali, from which he declared that the world community supported India’s position that “cross-border terrorism has to stop.”²⁴ Vajpayee also reportedly mused that “we should have given a fitting reply” the day after the Parliament attack.²⁵ The Indian press reported that the Indian military would launch attacks in the Kashmir area in mid-June; the United States and Pakistan, however, had already detected the movement of one of India’s strike corps on the pivotal western front along the international border, according to one Indian account. The Indian military’s actual plans reportedly were “so audacious they had never been war-gamed before.”²⁶

In response to the Kaluchak attacks, the Bush administration crisis management team, led by Secretary of State Colin Powell and Deputy Secretary Richard Armitage, once again went into high gear. The key event during the second peak was a pledge secured by Deputy Secretary Armitage from President Musharraf to do his utmost to cease infiltration “permanently” across the Line of Control. This pledge was relayed to senior Indian officials in New Delhi on June 8. At the behest of senior Indian officials, Armitage went public with the pledge while in India. Armitage’s message from Islamabad to New Delhi began the process of backing the two sides away from confrontation, although Indian forces would remain deployed in strength until after the Jammu and Kashmir state election in the fall of 2002.

Crisis Management: Where You Stand Depends on Where You Sit

During both peaks of this extended crisis, officials in Washington believed war was possible, either by design or by inadvertence. The second peak was more worrisome to most US participants. The actual beginning and end of the crisis were less clear-cut to American crisis managers. Some US officials belatedly saw the October 1 attack in Srinagar as the start of the crisis. In New Delhi, a few discerned a worrisome pattern of events in the summer and fall of 2001 that could lead to another crisis, but most American officials in Washington and Islamabad were consumed instead with the imperatives of defeating al- Qaeda, routing the Taliban, and capturing or killing their leadership. The end-date of the crisis—and whether the crisis really ended at all, or merely went into remission—is also a subject of some debate among participants.

The views of US officials on the crisis varied with their vantage point. Our interviews suggest that it mattered whether participants were located in Washington, New Delhi, or Islamabad. Each venue had its own

²² Atul Aneja and Sandeep Dikshit, “Military preparations at a brisk pace,” *The Hindu*, May 21, 2002.

²³ Luv Puri, “Be Ready for Decisive Battle, PM Tells Jawans,” *The Hindu*, May 23, 2002. For an analysis of the messages sent during the crisis, see Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, “Nuclear Doctrine, Declaratory Policy, and Escalation Control,” in Michael Krepon, et. al, editors, *Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South Asia* (Washington: Henry L. Stimson Center, 2004), 101-119.

²⁴ Beth Duff-Brown, “India says Pakistan Notified It of Missile Tests as International Community Tries to Defuse Tensions,” Associated Press (online), May 24, 2002; Kathy Gannon, “Pakistan Tests Second Missile as International Community Works to Ease Tensions,” Associated Press (online), May 26, 2002.

²⁵ Inder Malhotra, “Of Diplomacy, Rhetoric and Terror: Ground Realities Matter Most,” *The Tribune*, May 27, 2002.

²⁶ Lt. Gen. V.K.Sood (retired) and Pravin Sawhney, *Operation Parakram—The War Unfinished*, 82.

Policymakers do one problem at a time.

political and bureaucratic environment, day-to-day preoccupations, information networks, and perceptions of risk and opportunity. Organizational affiliations also mattered. Because the White House and Pentagon were absorbed in the military campaign in Afghanistan, crisis management on the Subcontinent fell quite naturally and almost exclusively on the leadership of the State Department. Secretary of State Powell and Deputy Secretary Armitage were assisted by the US ambassadors to India and Pakistan and their country teams, senior State Department officials, and National Security Council staffers.

This essay will first examine the perspectives of US officials in Washington, in New Delhi, and in Islamabad between September 11, 2001 and December 12, 2001—just prior to the attack on India’s Parliament. Next, we will review these officials’ perceptions after the first and then the second peak of the crisis. The final sections of this essay will analyze the diverse insights and lessons drawn by American policymakers from the crisis, along with implications for future US policy toward South Asia.

The October 1 Bombing in Srinagar: The View from Washington

Kashmir was not even on the radar screens of most Washington policymakers on October 1, 2001, when the attack on the assembly building in Srinagar occurred. Instead, Washington’s attention was riveted on fast-moving events in the military campaign in Afghanistan. Thus, the events of October 1 rang “no bells or whistles” with Deputy Secretary of State Armitage. “Policymakers,” as Armitage recounted, “do one problem at a time.”²⁷ Richard Falkenrath, Senior Director for Policy and Special Assistant to the President in the White House’s Office of Homeland Security from 2001 to 2003, stresses how focused senior US officials were on prosecuting the Global War on Terrorism:

You can’t even imagine the bandwidth problems, especially for the President, the National Security Adviser, and most cabinet and sub-cabinet-level officials. They paid little attention to anti-Indian militants mounting cross-border attacks. There was so much going on...9/11 was a gravitational black hole for the principals and deputies, who rushed into the Situation Room.²⁸

²⁷ Interview with Richard Armitage, June 2, 2005.

²⁸ Interview with Richard Falkenrath, May 26, 2005.

From September 11 through the run-up to December 13, there were two or three Deputies or Principals Committee meetings daily on terrorism-related issues. Preparing seniors for these cabinet and sub-cabinet-level meetings blotted up endless staff time at all the national security departments and agencies. At the State Department, for example, the Secretary typically received a briefing at 5:00 AM daily; the first in-house meeting was at 6:00 AM; and the first deputies or principals meeting of the day took place at 7:00 AM, with the State Department supplying background or decision papers for each.²⁹ “We lived Afghanistan,” recalled one former State Department official. He and his colleagues focused on military developments in Afghanistan for eighteen hours a day from September 11 until late December, when the coalition military campaign finally started to wind down.³⁰

The bombing of the Kashmir assembly building thus initially drew only a *pro forma* condemnation and message of sympathy from the State Department.³¹ One veteran Washington South Asia hand recalls wondering if al-Qaeda had inspired the car bombing, which was an unusual event in Kashmir.³² Assistant Secretary Christina Rocca, who was closely monitoring events in India and Pakistan as she prepared to accompany Secretary Powell there ten days later, remembers seeing pictures of the bomb scene on CNN. Like other US officials attuned to Indian and Pakistani sensitivities, she worried that this bombing, on top of the steady stream of militant violence preceding it, would jeopardize the ten-month-old ceasefire between Indian and Pakistani forces on the LoC dividing Kashmir.³³

Rocca’s foreboding proved well founded. While Secretary of State Powell and she were in Islamabad en route to New Delhi to “lower the temperature” between India and Pakistan,³⁴ Indian forces began firing artillery across the LoC in Kashmir in an apparent effort to signal to Washington as well as to Islamabad that India viewed the attack in Srinagar as a serious provocation. Defense Minister Fernandes told journalists that the firing was a punitive response to militant infiltrations from the Pakistani side; Indian analyst Bharat Karnad described it as “an Indian display of force to show Pakistan” what could happen.³⁵

As one US official recounted, India-Pakistan relations were “poisonous” in the fall of 2001. Indian leaders were bitter that Pakistan had become a primary beneficiary of the Bush administration’s “Global War on Terror,” despite having been the Taliban’s strongest backer before the September 11 attacks on US soil, and despite Pakistani support for cross-LoC infiltration resulting in terrorist attacks directed against India. One senior Washington observer remembers that “every meeting with Indians had one topic: Pakistan. Pakistan was getting some of the advantages India had just won—including the lifting of sanctions.”³⁶ An important

²⁹ Interview with a former senior State Department official, June 27, 2005.

³⁰ Interview with a former State Department South Asia specialist, May 19, 2005.

³¹ “US Condemns Attack on J and K Assembly,” Press Trust of India (online), New Delhi, October 2, 2001.

³² Interview with a former official, July 1, 2005, and with Richard Armitage, June 2, 2005.

³³ Interview with Christina Rocca, June 27, 2005.

³⁴ Armitage’s explanation was reported in Aziz Haniffa, “Powell Hopes to Ease India-Pakistan Tension,” *India Abroad* (Ethnic NewsWatch), October 19, 2001, Vol. XXXII; No. 3, 1.

³⁵ “India In No Mood To Heed Powell, Seen As Too Close To Pakistan; Secretary of State Asks for Kashmir Cease-fire as US Constructs Anti-terror Alliance,” *Investor’s Business Daily*, Reuters (online), October 17, 2001, A-4.

³⁶ Interview with a former senior government official, June 27, 2005.

objective of Secretary Powell's visit was to assuage Indian resentment. As the *Baltimore Sun* reported, "His [Powell's] official mission is to thank leaders of both countries for their support for the war against terrorism. He will also urge calm in their dealings with each other."³⁷

The anger of senior Indian officials at US policy was evident in their dealings with the Powell delegation. They leapt on the Secretary's statement at a joint press conference with Musharraf in Islamabad on October 15, immediately before he flew to New Delhi, that Kashmir was "a central issue" between India and Pakistan. Powell's formulation was recast in the Indian media as "*the* central issue," a description very much at odds with India's position. He arrived in New Delhi to a flurry of press claims that "Powell has taken the Pakistani line." An Indian official later reportedly admitted to a visiting American that, anticipating US criticism of India for breaching the ceasefire in Kashmir, he had knowingly mischaracterized the Secretary's statement in Islamabad, as a diversion.³⁸

The View from New Delhi and Islamabad

Whereas the Kashmir state assembly car bombing had little impact in Washington, it loomed large for some US embassy officials in New Delhi. "Warning lights flashed at US Embassy New Delhi...though not on the 6th and 7th floors of State Department [where the Assistant Secretary for South Asia and the leadership of the State Department, respectively, reside]," one former official recalls.³⁹ The October 1 bombing appeared important to New Delhi as a litmus test of US attitudes toward India and the terrorist threats it faced. Other US officials based in New Delhi did not view the October 1 attack as a harbinger of a major crisis. The months immediately prior to the attack on the Indian Parliament building were marked by increased infiltration and acts of violence in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. The elevated "noise" created by these events made it harder to pick up signals of an impending crisis. Moreover, the pace of work and the immediacy of daily tasks weighed heavily on many at US Embassy New Delhi.

Secretary Powell assured Indian officials during his mid-October 2001 visit to New Delhi that America's campaign against terrorism was not confined to Afghanistan and al-Qaeda. "The United States and India are united against terrorism, and that includes the terrorism that has been directed against India as well," he told a joint press conference with Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh.⁴⁰ Secretary Powell's hosts avoided public rejoinders, but anger was rising in New Delhi. To some observers, the American assurances seemed intended mainly at keeping India from retaliating against Pakistan for escalating violence in Kashmir.⁴¹

³⁷ Frank Langfitt, "US Will Try to Heal Pakistan-India Rift; Threat to Coalition Prompts Powell Plan to Visit Both Next Week," *Baltimore Sun*, October 11, 2001, A-12.

³⁸ Interview with a former senior government official, June 27, 2005.

³⁹ Interview with an official formerly posted to US Embassy New Delhi, May 24, 2005.

⁴⁰ "Powell Tells India Anti-Terrorism Campaign Will Cast a Wide Net," Knight Ridder/Tribune Business News (online), KR-ACC-NO: WA-ATTACK-POWELL, October 18, 2001.

⁴¹ Alan Sipress and Edward Cody, US Campaign to Extend to Kashmir; Powell Attempts to Reassure India After Strengthening Ties With Rival Pakistan, *Washington Post*, October 18, 2001, A-24.

Some US officials at US Embassy New Delhi believed that more concerted action from Washington might have headed off India's subsequent brinksmanship.⁴² It would have been helpful, they subsequently speculated, if President Bush's September 20 speech to the US Congress had underscored the importance of combating terrorism by regional "jihadi" groups favored by Pakistan, as well as by groups with "global reach."⁴³ The suspected perpetrators of the Kashmir Assembly building attack, Jaish-e-Muhammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba, had not yet been added to the State Department's foreign terrorist organization list. Other US officials in New Delhi believed the Indian leaders were merely maneuvering for diplomatic leverage designed to prompt Washington to lean on Pakistan.⁴⁴

American officials in Islamabad were so immersed in the US military campaign in Afghanistan and in efforts to secure Pakistan's help against the remnants of al-Qaeda and the Taliban that they did not focus on the October 1 attack on the Kashmir Assembly building or see it as a precursor of a major crisis. From their perspective, the assembly car bombing attack was but one of many acts of terrorism in Kashmir during a particularly violent period.⁴⁵

The First Peak: Washington's Initial Response

For senior White House officials and the State Department's "7th floor," the December 13 terrorist attack on India's Parliament marked the start of the crisis. Under ordinary circumstances, the attack likely would have been the dominant concern of the administration. Afghanistan, however, was still the "main fight," a Defense Department official recalls. Moreover, the United States had "unusually salient equities" in Pakistan—the need for help in blocking the retreat from Tora Bora—when the attack on Parliament occurred.⁴⁶ Thus, for many Washington policymakers, the December 13 attack and the subsequent Indian and Pakistani military deployments were serious and unwelcome diversions from the war on terror. One regional specialist recalled: "For the first time, I viewed [the management of] tensions between India and Pakistan as a means, not an end. The end was to keep our Afghanistan policy on track."⁴⁷

The first US official to meet with Indian leaders after the attack on Parliament was the Senior National Security Director for Asia, Torkel Patterson, who was on a swing through Asia to brief governments about the US withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. Indian National Security Adviser Brajesh Mishra was seething in their meeting—red-faced, grasping a pencil, charging that Washington did not take seriously

⁴² Interview with an official formerly posted to US Embassy New Delhi, May 24, 2005.

⁴³ "President Bush's Address on Terrorism Before a Joint Meeting of Congress (Transcript)," *New York Times*, September 21, 2001, B-4. Bush's precise words to Congress reportedly were: "Our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated." See also Judy Keen, Susan Page, Barbara Slavin and Jonathan Weisman, "No Easy Decisions in War," *USA Today*, October 8, 2001, A-4.

⁴⁴ Interview with a diplomat who served in India, April 28, 2005

⁴⁵ Interview with Colonel David Smith (retired), May 26, 2005.

⁴⁶ Interview with a Defense Department official, July 13, 2005.

⁴⁷ Interview with a former official, July 1, 2005.

We know how mad you are, but this is not the time to let MAD [Mutually Assured Destruction] take over.

the problem of Pakistani support for terrorism. Patterson felt that Mishra's aim was to clarify that India had red lines that could not be crossed, including terrorism against India's leadership.⁴⁸

The potential for escalation was obvious to US officials in Washington, New Delhi, and Islamabad. "Once the violence moved to New Delhi, India-Pakistan tensions became a whole new ball game," Armitage recalled.⁴⁹ As another former senior Bush administration official remembers:

It was extremely serious. The emotional part of it was the attack on Parliament. Almost everything else you could discuss calmly....They would point out in every conversation how close they [the militants] came to killing "my colleagues" and decapitating the Indian Government. The attack occurred at a time when almost the entire executive branch as well as the legislature was there. It shook them to their boots. They made clear that they could no longer live under this level of threat. You had to (1) listen and (2) allow them to vent their anger. [The] US message: "We know how mad you are, but this is not the time to let MAD [Mutually Assured Destruction] take over."⁵⁰

After December 13, "what really jumped out," according to a veteran government South Asia watcher, "was the high level of US attention...higher even than to [the limited war in] Kargil" in 1999.⁵¹ On December 14, 2001 President Bush called President Musharraf, then made a "very difficult call" to India's Prime Minister Vajpayee, counseling "patience and calm," a senior official recalled. The President reported back to his aides that Vajpayee was "very unhappy." The Deputies Committee met immediately and asked that a paper with recommendations be prepared by the National Security Council staff and Assistant Secretary Rocca.⁵² Accordingly, Patterson spent part of Christmas Day pulling together a paper for a Principals Committee the following day. The principals signed off on a strategy of engagement with India and Pakistan, to be coordinated closely with the United Kingdom. Among other elements, the strategy called for back-to-back visits to the region by senior officials, with an eye to defusing tensions and postponing decisions to launch

⁴⁸ Interview with a former National Security Council official, May 4, 2005.

⁴⁹ Interview with Richard Armitage, June 2, 2005.

⁵⁰ Interview with a former senior US official, June 28, 2005.

⁵¹ Interview with a former State Department South Asia specialist, May 19, 2005.

⁵² Interview with a former National Security Council staffer, April 28, 2005.

The level of the desk officer escalates in direct proportion to the crisis. This crisis was important enough for Powell and Armitage to become desk officers.

hostilities.⁵³ President Bush called Vajpayee and Musharraf again on December 29, amid rising US concern about a possible Indian strike.⁵⁴

Reflecting this heightened concern, the South Asia Bureau's public affairs officers prepared contingency press guidance on the India and Pakistan crisis virtually daily from December 13 through January 2002. In the preceding three months, they had done so only three times: after the October 1 state assembly bombing; on October 16, when shelling resumed across the Line of Control; and on November 2.⁵⁵

While the Indian leadership blamed Musharraf for the December 13 attack, senior US officials doubted that he would have had ordered an assault that obviously would risk war with India, tarnish his reputation, and severely complicate his relations with Washington.⁵⁶ New Delhi's response got Washington's attention, as intended, and caught the Pakistani Army off guard, with two key Army corps deployed along the Afghan border. As one senior US official commented, the Indian mobilization clearly was "for real." Secretary of State Powell watched the Indians "moving the trains up" with the understanding of a general who had seen this movie before, and indeed, had played a leading role in similar dramas. The diplomatic challenge facing Washington was to play for time and eventually to "tell the generals that their best service was to go home, to pull back." The longer the Indian Army was deployed in the field, the more unwise the deployment would seem, harming morale and training. In fact, as one senior US official recalled, "after a while, the generals were ready to go home" if they were not going to be given orders to fight.⁵⁷

As reports rolled in on the decision by India's Cabinet Committee on Security to mobilize for war and on preparations by senior Indian officers to move against the bases used by militant groups implicated in the attack, President Musharraf put his Army on high alert. US policymakers worried that these moves and counter-moves could trigger unintended escalation to a general war or even nuclear use. According to one State Department official, "The question was would things get out of hand and prompt one side or another to slide toward [nuclear weapon] use....Once started, Pakistani issues would lead to pressure to use

⁵³ Interview with a former National Security Council official, May 4, 2005.

⁵⁴ Interview with a former State Department South Asia specialist, May 19, 2005; see also Uli Schmetzer and Jeff Zeleny, "Bush Appeals to Asia Foes; He Urges Calm in India, Pakistan," *Chicago Tribune*, December 30, 2001, p. 1.

⁵⁵ Interview with a US government press officer, August 12, 2005.

⁵⁶ Interviews with a former senior State Department official, June 27, 2005; and with a former senior US official, June 28, 2005.

⁵⁷ Interview with a former senior US official, June 28, 2005.

From a crisis management perspective, it didn't matter whether New Delhi's intentions were to coerce or to fight Pakistan: US diplomacy had to assume that the possibility of war was real and to act accordingly.

[nuclear weapons]...Escalation could come quickly.”⁵⁸ A particular concern was that India and Pakistan could misperceive or not recognize each other's “red lines.”⁵⁹

Officials in Washington were divided on whether the Indian mobilization was intended to coerce Pakistan and spur US pressure on Islamabad to rein in the militants, or to fight Pakistan. One State Department official recalls that, “When India ramped up Operation Parakram on December 18, 2001, US intelligence thought the chances [of war] were high in the December-January time frame, but policymakers in the State Department's South Asia Bureau and the senior leadership on the ‘7th floor’ remained unconvinced.” These differences in threat perception mirrored the “usual divide” between intelligence agencies and regional bureaus, with the latter tending to “put the best face on prospects for diplomacy,” he observed.⁶⁰ Another official—a seasoned diplomat—insisted that India had “no intention of going to war” during the December-January time frame, since Vajpayee and Musharraf were careful “not to be more belligerent than they had to be.”⁶¹ Instead, the main danger, as perceived by this official, was unintended escalation. The crisis could have turned out differently with different leaders, he added. From a crisis management perspective, it didn't matter whether New Delhi's intentions were to coerce or to fight Pakistan: US diplomacy had to assume that the possibility of war was real and to act accordingly.

The first order of business for US government officials after the December 13 attack was to convince President Musharraf to blacklist certain terrorist groups operating with impunity on Pakistani soil, and to do so by Christmas, when concerns over a possible Indian strike were running high. Musharraf followed through on this agenda item, but only “cosmetically,” several officials agree. In the view of one official, Washington at this stage was “grasping at straws” to prevent a major conflict that would interfere with the Afghan campaign and might well escalate.

Senior US officials seized on Musharraf's intention to deliver a speech in January 2002—reported back to Washington by Ambassador Wendy Chamberlin—as a major opportunity to reduce tensions between India and Pakistan. Washington provided detailed advice to Musharraf on the content of the speech. The Bush administration also offered sensors to India to help stop the infiltration of militants across the Kashmir

⁵⁸ Interview with a former State Department South Asia specialist, May 19, 2005.

⁵⁹ Interview with a former senior State Department official, June 27, 2005.

⁶⁰ Interview with a former State Department South Asia specialist, May 19, 2005.

⁶¹ Interview with a South Asia Bureau official, May 17, 2005.

divide, but New Delhi—suspicious that Washington’s real agenda was to obtain information about its military plans—rejected the offer.⁶²

Even though senior US officials were unsure what the Pakistani President would actually say on January 12, they concluded that, in order buy time for peace making, “no matter what Musharraf said, it would be the right thing.”⁶³ The South Asia Bureau therefore worked on a response designed to “pat Musharraf on the back.”⁶⁴ In fact, US officials did not need to feign satisfaction because Musharraf articulated many of the objectives they had suggested for the speech. As one former National Security Council staffer described it, the address was a success for the US effort to “help Pakistan reposition itself to oppose terrorism.”⁶⁵ The implementation of Musharraf’s promises would take time, during which it would be politically difficult for New Delhi to initiate a military campaign.

Policymaking During the Crisis

Secretary Powell, Deputy Secretary Armitage, and Assistant Secretary Rocca quickly took the lead in shaping Washington’s diplomatic response to the burgeoning regional crisis. The State Department’s lead role was uncontested, particularly with the Defense Department preoccupied with Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan. President Bush supported the Powell-Armitage effort throughout with phone calls and letters to Vajpayee and Musharraf. Rocca’s consistent inclusion in high-level decision-making reflected Secretary Powell’s management style and operating procedures in dealing with regional issues. Given the severity and potential explosiveness of this crisis, Powell and Armitage assumed most of the heavy lifting. As one Foreign Service Officer observed, “The level of the ‘desk officer’ escalates in direct proportion to the crisis. This crisis was important enough for Powell and Armitage to become ‘desk officers.’” Once crisis management was at Powell’s and Armitage’s level, the official noted, “you don’t hand it back to an assistant secretary of State,” even though both seniors relied heavily on Rocca.⁶⁶

In the view of several former State Department officials, Secretary Powell excelled at “working the phones,” while Deputy Secretary Armitage was the “go-to” guy and a “gifted trouble shooter.”⁶⁷ Both men could relate to General Musharraf naturally and forcefully, drawing on their common experience as military officers. Secretary Rumsfeld’s role in the Twin Peaks crisis was intermittent and not well coordinated. In the view of policymakers across agencies, this reflected Rumsfeld’s independent style and preoccupation with OEF in Afghanistan.⁶⁸ His first visit to India and Pakistan came late in the crisis. Rumsfeld “arranged his own travel,” as one official delicately noted.⁶⁹

⁶² Interview with a former National Security Council staffer, April 28, 2005.

⁶³ Interview with a former National Security Council staffer, April 28, 2005.

⁶⁴ Interview with a former State Department South Asia specialist, May 19, 2005.

⁶⁵ Interview with a former National Security Council official, May 4, 2005.

⁶⁶ Interview with a State Department official, May 11, 2005.

⁶⁷ Interview with a State Department official, May 11, 2005.

⁶⁸ Interview with a senior State Department official, June 8, 2005.

⁶⁹ Interview with a State Department official, May 11, 2005.

An initiative to demand that Musharraf demobilize jihadi camps never got up to Armitage.

Our interviews indicated that the US Congress was not significantly involved in the Twin Peaks crisis. The Bush administration did not encourage a Congressional role in crisis management. Moreover, with a nuclear-tinged crisis looming during a critical phase in the Afghan war, members of Congress—including those belonging to the pro-India and pro-Pakistan caucuses—gave the executive branch wide latitude. This posture stood in stark contrast to Congressional activism immediately after 9/11 in favor of lifting sanctions imposed on India and Pakistan for testing nuclear weapons.⁷⁰

The National Security Council (NSC) staff hosted meetings of principals and deputies, but did not play a substantive role in most executive branch deliberations, several officials recall.⁷¹ One reason, according to Richard Falkenrath, was that National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, unlike some of her predecessors, perceived her role almost exclusively as coordinating policy for the President, not engineering outcomes.⁷² The NSC under Rice did, however, mediate some interagency disagreements relating to South Asia, such as the timing of F-16 sales to Pakistan. One senior State Department official recalls that the Pentagon was inclined to sell the aircraft in 2002, while the State Department argued that this would torpedo US-India relations as Washington was trying to improve ties with New Delhi. The NSC decided to defer the sale slightly.

From December 13 through most of 2002, Deputies and Principals Committee meetings on the crisis in South Asia were held at least three times a week, sometimes daily.⁷³ The ramp-down of OEF in December 2001 freed up policymakers to re-focus on India-Pakistan. On South Asia issues, unlike many others, policy making approximated the textbook sequence, with a mid-level policy coordinating committee (PCC) generating and reviewing options for consideration by the “seniors.” The combined demands of the India-Pakistan crisis and the US campaign in Afghanistan smoothed many relationships in Washington and made for more collegial relations within the administration. “When you are at war, there is no question what your priorities are,” one former senior official declared, adding that the interagency process has worked especially well on South Asia in part because “US interests have been clearer on South Asia than on, say, North Korea.”⁷⁴

The options considered in the PCC sessions on India-Pakistan tended to be fairly narrow, one former policymaker recalls. A proposal for joint monitoring with the United Kingdom of militant camps linked to

⁷⁰ Interview with a senior Congressional aide, June 16, 2005.

⁷¹ Interviews with a former senior State Department official, June 27, 2005; and with a former South Asia Bureau official, May 9, 2005.

⁷² Interview with Richard Falkenrath, May 26, 2005.

⁷³ Interview with a former South Asia Bureau official, May 9, 2005.

⁷⁴ Interview with former senior State Department official, June 27, 2005.

Pakistan failed to catch on since US officials worried that disbanded camps would simply be reconstituted elsewhere.⁷⁵ Similarly, a suggestion made at the working level that militant groups active in Kashmir might be disarmed and demobilized did not make the “options list” sent up the line by the PCC, presumably because it seemed too difficult to achieve and politically risky, given Washington’s delicate balancing act between India and Pakistan.⁷⁶ An initiative to demand that Musharraf demobilize jihadis “[n]ever got up to me,” Richard Armitage affirmed, when asked if he had been presented with such a proposal.⁷⁷

As planned, US officials worked with other concerned governments to “choreograph” a stream of senior official visits to the region from Washington, London, the European Union, Tokyo and Beijing, in order to keep the two sides “talking and thinking” about peace. For the duration of the crisis, Assistant Secretary Rocca traveled to the region almost once a month.⁷⁸ Senior US officials assumed—or hoped—that neither India nor Pakistan would attack while foreign dignitaries were awaited or physically present in the region. China and Russia cooperated fully in this effort. A former senior Bush administration official recalls:

The “dog that did not bark” in all this was China—all we had to do was keep the Chinese informed...we had good relations with the Chinese and, for that matter, the Russians....They did not stick their noses into it except to counsel moderation....This was a good example of the US working with Russia, after its unique relationship with India for so many years, and China. They let the US and EU lead [on this].⁷⁹

New Delhi and Islamabad

As the crisis unfolded, the US Ambassadors in New Delhi and Islamabad were sending in messages “as might be expected...to set Washington’s compass,” one policymaker remembers. “Each embassy was not shy about pointing out what the other country needed to do to make the crisis go away.”⁸⁰ Both Ambassadors sent lines in to Washington but were largely disconnected from interagency deliberations.⁸¹

The two Ambassadors had little in common, apart from their shared distance from the interagency process and limited prior familiarity with or experience in South Asia. In Islamabad, Ambassador Wendy Chamberlin, a career Foreign Service Officer, tended to operate through the traditional Department “chain” from the South Asia Bureau to Powell and Armitage. In New Delhi, Ambassador Robert Blackwill—a Harvard professor who had served as senior adviser on Europe in President George H.W. Bush’s NSC staff—routinely circumvented standard operating procedures, a pattern that dismayed some Washington officials. He maintained his own contacts with Vice President Cheney and then National Security Adviser Rice, a former protégé, and tried

⁷⁵ Interview with a South Asia Bureau official, May 17, 2005.

⁷⁶ Interview with former South Asia Bureau official, May 9, 2005.

⁷⁷ Interview with Richard Armitage, June 2, 2005.

⁷⁸ Interview with a former senior State Department official, June 27, 2005.

⁷⁹ Interview with a former senior US official, June 28, 2005.

⁸⁰ Interview with a State Department official, May 11, 2005.

⁸¹ Interviews with a former senior diplomat posted to New Delhi, July 12, 2005; with a former US diplomat who served in India, April 28, 2005; and with a senior State Department official, June 8, 2005.

This was not playacting.... It was really risky.

to communicate directly with the State Department 7th floor, several former officials recall.⁸² Having left for New Delhi determined to cultivate India's friendship for the United States as a counterweight to China, Blackwill quickly developed an affinity for India's perspective that pleased some in Washington but worried many veteran diplomats at the Department.⁸³

Both Chamberlin and Blackwill were contending with morale problems in their embassies in late 2001. Security problems in Islamabad had disrupted embassy staffing and the lives of embassy families. Embassy dependents and nonessential personnel had been ordered to leave after 9/11. This order was lifted in January 2002, after which most evacuees returned. US Embassy New Delhi was roiled by Blackwill's distaste for consultations with staff there and by his management style, which triggered State Department investigations into his personnel practices.⁸⁴

US Embassy New Delhi first learned of the attack on Parliament from the spouse of a political officer who was driving past the site and called in by cell phone. The Embassy watched the drama unfold on television.⁸⁵ Several days later, a diplomat posted there recalls, a journalist told him that India was going to "full mobilization." He immediately sent a nighttime cable back to Washington. As the crisis unfolded, Ambassador Blackwill and his British counterpart, High Commissioner Robert Young, met often to discuss events, particularly their shared foreboding about possible war between India and Pakistan.⁸⁶

Some at US Embassy New Delhi worried that the Bush Administration's proactive and preemptive approach to countering terrorism could make it easier for New Delhi to disregard US cautions against attacking Pakistan. One official notes that Washington's decision to launch a military attack on the Taliban for harboring and cooperating with al-Qaeda provided a precedent and "opened up the political space....We laid down new rules in Afghanistan....But there was no guarantee that the results [between India and Pakistan] would be clean..."⁸⁷

⁸² Interviews with a former senior diplomat posted to New Delhi, July 12, 2005; with a former US diplomat who served in India, April 28, 2005; and with an official formerly posted to US Embassy New Delhi, May 24, 2005.

⁸³ Interviews with a former senior US official, June 28, 2005; with a former State Department South Asia specialist, May 19, 2005; with a former senior State Department official, June 27, 2005; and with a former US diplomat, April 28, 2005.

⁸⁴ Interview with a former US diplomat, April 28, 2005; Anwar Iqbal and Harbaksh Singh Nanda, "Blackwill Quits as US Envoy to India," United Press International (online), April 21, 2003.

⁸⁵ Interview with a former US diplomat who served in India, April 28, 2005.

⁸⁶ Interview with a former US diplomat who served in India, April 28, 2005.

⁸⁷ Interview with an official formerly posted to US Embassy New Delhi, May 24, 2005.

Washington's regional specialists were nearly unanimous in predicting that war was imminent. They saw no obvious pathway for the two governments to walk back from the brink.

As Indian forces deployed to the borders with Pakistan, senior Indian officials warned US Embassy officers that Pakistani support for terrorism must end once and for all. Embassy officers recognized that these messages were a goad to Washington to lean hard on Pakistan, but also realized that “this was not play acting....It was really risky,” recalled one official posted to New Delhi in 2001-2002. Coercive diplomacy could be a prelude to punitive action. Those with access to the fullest range of information on the crisis saw the threat of attack by India as real; some believe that India and Pakistan came close to conflict between December 2001 and January 2002. “India kept us guessing masterfully,” one official recalls. The challenge for Washington was to avoid either leaning on Pakistan too hard, which could hurt OEF, or not leaning on Pakistan hard enough, which would alienate New Delhi.⁸⁸ Other Embassy officers, while worried about the risk of unintended escalation, suspected that the US government was “being played” by Indian officials.⁸⁹ Their perceptions accorded with those of Indian security expert P.R. Chari, who told the *Financial Times* in September 2002 that, “India’s movement of troops towards the border was designed to put pressure on the US to put pressure on Musharraf.”⁹⁰

US Embassy Islamabad, preoccupied with the tasks associated with supporting OEF, was more surprised than US Embassy New Delhi by the December 13 attack on India’s Parliament. Colonel David Smith, the Army attaché, and Ambassador Chamberlin were in the office of the Inspector General of Pakistan’s Frontier Corps on December 13 when they learned of the attack. Their host had CNN on mute during the meeting. As images of India’s Parliament flashed onto the screen, he turned up the sound. Smith and Chamberlin asked for his reaction. “Oops,” the General replied.⁹¹

As Colonel Smith recalls, a senior Pakistani official told him on December 22 that his government had indications that India was going to attack before dawn the following day. Smith notified the Ambassador, the National Military Command Center at the Pentagon, and the Defense Intelligence Agency. Familiar in general terms with Pakistan’s war plans, he took at face value the warnings he had received earlier from Pakistani officials to the effect that, if the Indian military buildup continued, Islamabad would have to pull forces from the Afghan border, where they were positioned to help US forces conducting counterterrorism operations against the fleeing remnants of al-Qaeda and the Taliban. General Michael “Rifle” DeLong,

⁸⁸ Interview with an official formerly posted to US Embassy New Delhi, May 24, 2005.

⁸⁹ Interview with a former US diplomat, April 28, 2005.

⁹⁰ John Thornhill, “Moving Closer to the US: Strategy Capitalises on Post-September 11 Fall-Out,” *Financial Times* (online), September 23, 2003, p. 3.

⁹¹ Interview with Colonel David Smith (retired), May 26, 2005.

The challenge for Washington was to avoid either leaning on Pakistan too hard, which could hurt OEF, or not leaning on Pakistan hard enough, which would alienate New Delhi.

then Deputy Commander of the Central Command, conveyed to his Pakistani joint staff counterpart the importance of keeping Pakistani forces in place. In the last week of December, big roundups of al-Qaeda operatives took place along the border with Afghanistan. To the consternation of US officials in Islamabad and Washington, these were to be the last such comprehensive dragnets for two years after the redeployment of Pakistani troops to counter the Indian military threat.⁹²

Some US officials in Islamabad were concerned that their messages would receive less of a hearing in Washington than those of their counterparts in New Delhi, given Ambassador Blackwill's presumed lines of communication into the White House. They worried also that Washington would tilt toward New Delhi at the expense of OEF. US Embassy New Delhi had the opposite concern—that OEF was overshadowing Washington's commitment to open a new strategic partnership with India.⁹³ Both embassies hoped that the senior State Department team would find the “forcing function” necessary, as one senior official characterized it, to help the two countries “climb down from the tree.”⁹⁴

Between the Peaks

With the ball in General Musharraf's court to fulfill the commitments made in his January 2002 speech, senior policymakers in Washington relaxed a bit and turned their attention elsewhere. Although well aware that the crisis could heat up again, Secretary Powell and Deputy Secretary Armitage believed developments were heading in the right direction. According to one Indian account, US pressure had helped avert conflict in early January when the Indian Government withdrew offensive forces preparing to launch a limited war with Pakistan in Kashmir, after demarches by US officials based on overhead imagery.⁹⁵ With the redeployment of Pakistani troops from the Afghan frontier to the international borders in the same time period, the brief window of opportunity for a low-cost Indian military punitive action across the LoC had clearly passed.

Prime Minister Vajpayee's continuing reluctance to initiate hostilities seemed reassuring, although retrospective Indian accounts indicate that the Indian military began planning and training in late January to fight a wider conflict with Pakistan across the international border, should it be authorized.⁹⁶ Meanwhile,

⁹² Interview with Colonel David Smith (retired), May 26, 2005; follow-up telephone conversation on April 23, 2006.

⁹³ Interviews with a senior State Department official, June 8, 2005; and with an official formerly posted to US Embassy New Delhi, May 24, 2005.

⁹⁴ Interview with a former State Department official, June 2, 2005.

⁹⁵ Lt. Gen. V.K.Sood (retired) and Pravin Sawhney, *Operation Parakram—The War Unfinished*, 80.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

Crisis management during the second peak again fell almost entirely to Secretary Powell and Deputy Secretary Armitage. Once again, their guidance from the White House was short, but far from simple: to prevent war on the Subcontinent.

statements emanating from New Delhi in the first four months of 2002 reflected growing outrage at Musharraf's failure to crack down on militant groups based in Pakistan. Hearing the Indian warnings at close hand, US officials in New Delhi worried that another major attack by militants would trigger an immediate Indian military response.⁹⁷

The Second Peak: Washington's Initial Reactions

The significance of the May 14 attack at Kaluchak was immediately apparent to Washington officials. Crisis management during the second peak again fell almost entirely to Secretary Powell and Deputy Secretary Armitage. Once again, their guidance from the White House was short, but far from simple: to prevent war on the Subcontinent. As the two again geared up their tandem diplomacy, officials monitoring the situation picked up evidence that Indian forces had taken the last remaining steps necessary to initiate hostilities, if they were authorized to do so.⁹⁸

While belligerent statements by Indian officials were intermittently softened by messages that war was not imminent, Washington's regional specialists were nearly unanimous in predicting that war was, indeed, imminent. They saw no obvious pathway for the two governments to walk back from the brink. The State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, which had played down the prospect of conflict in January, now joined the consensus US government view.

Powell and Armitage, however, doubted that war between India and Pakistan was either imminent or inevitable. Secretary Powell thought war was still preventable because India's military options remained problematic and risky; if this were true, then Vajpayee's calculations in May would differ little from the preceding January. Powell continued to see the military mobilizations on both sides of the border as "political" and believed both leaderships expected the US government to continue to act as a "separator." If Vajpayee could see no way to gain advantage by going to war, then a war could be avoided by adroit US facilitation, he reasoned.⁹⁹

Powell and Armitage worried, however, about the nuclear dimension of the crisis, which was prominent during the second peak. The first peak had coincided with an Indian flight test of a new version of the Agni

⁹⁷ Interview with an official formerly posted to US Embassy New Delhi, May 24, 2005.

⁹⁸ Interview with a former senior US official, June 28, 2005.

⁹⁹ Interview with a former senior US official, June 28, 2005.

The situation from late May onward appeared sufficiently bleak for the Pentagon to reexamine the effects of nuclear weapons' use on the Subcontinent.

missile, with a range well suited to reach targets in Pakistan.¹⁰⁰ In contrast, during the second peak of the crisis, Pakistan flight tested three ballistic missiles in quick succession.¹⁰¹ Moreover, between April and June 2002, several senior Pakistani officials reaffirmed earlier warnings by President Musharraf that Pakistan might use nuclear weapons if it deemed its existence to be threatened.¹⁰²

On May 26 or 27, when Pakistani public statements were emphasizing the nuclear dimension of the crisis, Secretary Powell—who was accompanying President Bush on a swing through Europe—phoned Musharraf from the US Ambassador's office in Paris and said, in effect, "All this chatter about nuclear weapons is very interesting, but let's talk general-to-general. You know and I know that you can't possibly use nuclear weapons....It's really an existential weapon that not been used since 1945. So stop scaring everyone."¹⁰³ Shortly after this conversation, Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Nations made one more public reference to nuclear use, after which Pakistani statements on nuclear dangers ceased. Secretary Powell's public message to Pakistan was to halt infiltration across the LoC. Asked in a BBC interview on May 31 how long Musharraf had to deliver, Powell demurred, replying: "Well, I can't answer that question. I mean, what we are concerned about is that the Indians might find that they have to attack. I don't know what their timeline is. There are weather considerations. There are lots of other considerations."¹⁰⁴

Deputy Secretary Armitage shared Powell's view that adroit US diplomacy could provide the exit strategy that both India and Pakistan needed. As he prepared to travel to the region in early June to urge restraint in New Delhi and to elicit new assurances from General Musharraf, he consulted repeatedly with South Asia hands at the State Department.¹⁰⁵ At one such meeting, he asked for a show of hands around the room of

¹⁰⁰ "Future-Fire, The Shorter, Smarter Agni Heralds a New Genre of Missiles Directed Towards Pakistan," *India Today*, January 29, 2002.

¹⁰¹ For an analysis of missile signaling during this crisis, see Feroz Hassan Khan, "Nuclear Signaling, Missiles, and Escalation Control in South Asia," in Michael Krepon, et. al, editors, *Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South Asia* (Washington: Henry L. Stimson Center, 2004), pp. 75-101.

¹⁰² Including Musharraf's Minister for Railways, a former Chief of Pakistan Inter-Services Intelligence service. Musharraf's original statement appeared in an interview in the 6 April issue of *Der Spiegel*. See "Pakistan May Use Nukes, Musharraf Says," *Dawn*, April 7, 2002; "Pakistan Hints at Use of Nukes if its Survival is at Stake," The Pakistan Newswire (online), May 22, 2002; and "Pakistan may consider nuclear deterrent option: Minister," Press Trust of India (online), May 22, 2002. Soon thereafter, Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Nations publicly reaffirmed his nation's doctrine of first use, asking, "How can Pakistan, a weaker power, be expected to rule out all means of deterrence?" See Massood Haider, "Islamabad Refuses to Accept 'No First Strike Doctrine,'" *Dawn*, May 31, 2002; and "If India Attacks, Pakistan Doesn't Rule Out Nukes," *Dawn*, May 31, 2002.

¹⁰³ Interview with a former senior US official, June 28, 2005.

¹⁰⁴ "Powell Warns Against Military Action by India, Pakistan; Says Use of Nuclear Weapons in South Asia Not Tolerable," Federal Information and News Dispatch, Inc., State Department, May 31, 2002.

¹⁰⁵ Interviews with a former State Department South Asia specialist, May 19, 2005; and with a former South Asia Bureau official, May 9, 2005.

The Deputy Secretary's game plan was ad hoc and not the product of an interagency process.

who thought there would be a war between India and Pakistan. Almost every hand went up. One participant asked Armitage for his definition of “war.” Armitage’s recollection was that he and Powell alone doubted that there would be war.¹⁰⁶

The situation from late May onward appeared sufficiently bleak for the Pentagon to reexamine the effects of nuclear weapons’ use on the Subcontinent. One official vividly remembers interagency discussions at the Pentagon on evacuating the embassies and US nationals in the event of a nuclear exchange. The Subcontinent’s seasonal “plumology” was studied, and evacuation planning discussed in an “oddly bloodless” and analytical way.¹⁰⁷ One Pentagon official recalls how daunting evacuation planning was for India, where a large contingent of American citizens resided. With grim irony, he noted that the “safe haven” for US nationals residing in Pakistan was to relocate to war-torn Afghanistan.¹⁰⁸

The View from New Delhi and Islamabad

The difficulty of evacuating US nationals if warfare occurred was a pressing concern for Ambassador Blackwill. On May 30, at a meeting of embassy staff and families, he urged dependents and nonessential embassy personnel to leave as soon as possible.¹⁰⁹ Blackwill’s message to a divided embassy community was clear: “I know things you don’t, and my wife is leaving.”¹¹⁰ On May 31, the State Department issued a “voluntary evacuation order” for nonessential embassy and consulate personnel and dependents in India, citing the growing risk of conflict between India and Pakistan and of terrorist attacks against Americans.¹¹¹ Blackwill’s decision a few days later to order the departure of nonessential staff and all dependents caught the State Department by surprise, in part because much of the country team at US Embassy New Delhi had seemed to be leaning the other way.¹¹² The order issued by the State Department on June 5 also urged that non-official Americans leave India and that US citizens avoid travel to the region.¹¹³ Other western governments immediately followed suit.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Richard Armitage, June 2, 2005.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with a South Asia Bureau official, May 17, 2005.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with a Defense Department official, July 13, 2005.

¹⁰⁹ Celia W. Dugger, “Little Feeling of Emergency In American Exit From Delhi,” *New York Times*, June 2, 2002, 1-10

¹¹⁰ Interview with a former senior diplomat posted to New Delhi, July 12, 2005.

¹¹¹ “Voluntary Departures Authorized for US Personnel in India; Boucher Warns Against Use of Nuclear Weapons in South Asia,” State Department, News From the Washington File (online), May 31, 2002.

¹¹² Interviews with a former US diplomat, April 28, 2005; and with a South Asia Bureau official, May 17, 2005.

¹¹³ Anwar Iqbal, “US Urges Citizens to Leave India,” United Press International (online), June 6, 2002.

Most viewed Ambassador Blackwill's decision as prudent, given the high state of readiness for war in the region and a recent terrorist attack in Islamabad.¹¹⁴ After September 11, 2001, US Embassy Islamabad had ordered the departure of nonessential staff and all dependents. In January 2002, the order was lifted, and most embassy staff and families returned. Then, on March 22, a Christian church in Islamabad was bombed, and five people died, including an embassy officer and her daughter. Dependents and nonessential personnel were again ordered to leave Pakistan. Among them were the two daughters of Ambassador Chamberlin, who later requested reassignment to another position in order to rejoin her children in the United States.¹¹⁵ "When an embassy cannot vouch for the safety of US citizens, that's a very big deal," observed one official who was in South Asia Bureau at the time.¹¹⁶

Blackwill's departure order and the State Department's travel advisories seem to have had unanticipated benefits for US crisis management. Many American officials we interviewed believe that these moves helped convince New Delhi to seek a face-saving exit from the crisis. Some Indian officials may have viewed the evacuation and advisories as a form of coercive diplomacy by Washington. These messages would surely affect business calculations, compounding the harm to India's economy caused by the extended mobilization of Indian forces. The warnings, however, were not a gambit by US Embassy New Delhi or by the State Department. Blackwill and many others sincerely thought that a war was possible, and that if war were to begin, its course would be unpredictable, including a possible breach of the nuclear threshold.¹¹⁷ Simple prudence dictated that as many Americans as possible be removed from harm's way.

In Islamabad as in New Delhi, those who believed that war could be averted during the second peak of the crisis were in the minority. Colonel David Smith was in that minority. He did not see "drivers" that would make the benefits of warfare worth their risk. He, too, worried, however, about inadvertent escalation.¹¹⁸ The attacks at Kaluchak had caught US Embassy Islamabad in a difficult transition. For most, the "overwhelming preoccupations" remained the war on terrorism and operations in Afghanistan.¹¹⁹ Officials stationed there operated under severe handicaps. Most embassy families had again been evacuated from Pakistan, and two Americans had died in the March 17 church attack, after nonessential personnel and dependents were permitted to return to Pakistan from the first precautionary evacuation. As one US official recounted, "The officers remaining were distracted and eager to leave and rejoin their families. Embassy people were basically barricaded inside for security reasons." With the departure of Ambassador Chamberlin, the Embassy was leaderless at a crucial time.

¹¹⁴ Interviews with a former State Department South Asia specialist, May 19, 2005; with a former senior State Department official, June 27, 2005; and with a former US diplomat, April 28, 2005.

¹¹⁵ Barry Bearak and Seth Mydans, "Many Americans, Unfazed, Go On Doing Business in India," *New York Times*, June 7, 2002, A-3.

¹¹⁶ Interview with a South Asia Bureau official, May 17, 2005.

¹¹⁷ Interview with a former senior diplomat posted to New Delhi, July 12, 2005.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Colonel David Smith (retired), May 26, 2005.

¹¹⁹ Interview with a senior State Department official, June 8, 2005.

New Delhi's positive reaction to the news of Musharraf's pledge reaffirmed Armitage's view that its cost-benefit assessment of a war with Pakistan remained fundamentally unchanged.

Ambassador Nancy Powell was hurriedly recruited and sent to Islamabad from her post in Ghana in an “acting” capacity, as Armitage was preparing to return to South Asia in early June. The first question she confronted was whether the Embassy should be drawn down still further for security reasons.¹²⁰ Her deputy, Bill Monroe, was also new to his post. Scrambling to assess the situation, Ambassador Powell pulsed the few Islamabad embassy staffers still on the ground, her local contacts from an earlier tour of duty in Pakistan, and the British High Commissioner, with whom she had worked in the mid-1990s when both were assigned to New Delhi. Her initial concern was that a misjudgment or act of sabotage could trigger war. The two sides were talking even less than they had historically, and US Embassy officials were detecting only “old think” in conversations with Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Armitage Mission: Washington Perspectives

The most critical period of crisis management during the second peak came with Deputy Secretary Armitage's June 6-8 trip to Pakistan and India. President Bush called Musharraf to support Armitage's mission before he arrived in the region, but without “scooping” Armitage's message. The Deputy Secretary's game plan was *ad hoc* and not the product of an interagency process. His intent was to angle for a commitment by Musharraf to permanently end infiltration across the Kashmir divide.¹²¹ Accompanied by Ambassador Powell to the June 6 meeting with Musharraf, Armitage artfully eased into the need for new assurances sufficient to help Indian leaders step back from the brink.

Musharraf, a “literal truth teller,” at first told Armitage that “nothing is happening” across the Line of Control—a formulation he also used on other occasions. Armitage, however, needed more than a present-tense commitment from Musharraf. General Musharraf also claimed that training camps for militants did not exist on Pakistani soil. Armitage shared with Musharraf evidence to the contrary. The conversation kept returning to the need for assurances about infiltration, and Armitage believes that he elicited, confirmed, and reconfirmed Musharraf's pledge to make cessation permanent.¹²² Musharraf underscored the importance of resuming a substantive dialogue with India on Kashmir. He sought and received confirmation of Washington's interest in helping to place Pakistan-India relations on a better footing.

¹²⁰ Interview with a senior State Department official, June 8, 2005.

¹²¹ Interviews with a senior State Department official, June 8, 2005, and with Richard Armitage, June 2, 2005.

¹²² Interview with Richard Armitage, June 2, 2005.

The desire of India's and Pakistan's leaders not to fight another war does not belittle Washington's efforts, since wars can occur even when leaders wish to avoid them.

Another US official privy to the Armitage-Musharraf discussion recalls that the commitment elicited from Musharraf was “very nuanced and came a bit at a time—starting with ‘okay, you’ve got that right’ and moving to a broader undertaking.” Armitage then discussed with Musharraf communicating the latter’s pledge to India and making it public.¹²³

Armitage did not decide how to publicize Musharraf’s pledge until he met in New Delhi with Prime Minister Vajpayee and his inner circle of advisors on June 7. Their positive reaction to the news of Musharraf’s pledge reaffirmed Armitage’s view that New Delhi’s cost-benefit assessment of a war with Pakistan remained fundamentally unchanged. Armitage recalls that Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh particularly welcomed Musharraf’s formulation and asked Armitage to make it public.¹²⁴

One US official who had been present at the Armitage-Musharraf meeting was “very surprised” when Armitage went public in New Delhi with Musharraf’s commitment, but “not nearly as surprised as the Pakistanis,” who complained strenuously to US Embassy Islamabad. In this view, Musharraf “probably [had] a narrower definition” of going public than the Deputy Secretary of State. Pakistani officials were naturally more interested in the “other half” of the undertakings discussed by Musharraf and Armitage—what Islamabad saw as a US promise to press India to resume talks with Pakistan. This undertaking, however, was viewed by at least one American official as “a standard one” and “not anything special.”¹²⁵

The nature of the pledges made by Musharraf in his talks with Armitage quickly became a subject of dispute. The disparity between Musharraf’s perceptions and Vajpayee’s expectations was evident in separate interviews given to Lally Weymouth in June 2002:

WEYMOUTH to VAJPAYEE: US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told you that Pakistan’s President Musharraf had promised to stop the flow of militants into India-controlled Kashmir....Did Musharraf also promise to get rid of the training camps in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir and in Pakistan?

VAJPAYEE: That was the promise. There are 50 to 70 terrorist-training camps in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and in Pakistan...

¹²³ Interview with a senior State Department official, June 8, 2005.

¹²⁴ Interview with Richard Armitage, June 2, 2005.

¹²⁵ Interview with a senior State Department official, June 8, 2005.

Powell and Armitage knew that the Government of India knew that it could not bank on Musharraf's promises.

WEYMOUTH to MUSHARRAF: Did you tell Deputy Secretary of State Armitage that you would stop cross-border terrorism and shut down the training camps?

MUSHARRAF: First of all, I don't call it cross-border terrorism. There is a freedom struggle going on in Kashmir. What I said is that there is no movement across the Line of Control....I've told President Bush nothing is happening across the Line of Control. This is the assurance I've given. I'm not going to give you an assurance that for years nothing will happen. We have to have a response from India, a discussion about Kashmir...¹²⁶

Was Musharraf's pledge substantive or just expedient? Most US policymakers believe it was mainly the latter. As one senior former official put it, "No one involved in this episode—Indian, Pakistani, or American—was a boy scout."¹²⁷ In this view, Powell and Armitage knew that the Government of India knew that it could not bank on Musharraf's promises. But the pledge was nonetheless useful in defusing the crisis. A former State Department officer describes Armitage's snap decision to publicize Musharraf's pledge in New Delhi as "very creative [and] tactically brilliant" in that it gave the Indian Government an exit strategy from a war it didn't want to fight.¹²⁸ Although skeptical of Musharraf's statements, Prime Minister Vajpayee and his inner circle apparently welcomed Armitage's intervention. Having a senior US official as the intermediary and articulator of Musharraf's pledge might also be helpful downstream, if infiltration and acts of terrorism resumed.¹²⁹

Determined to keep the pressure on both sides to disengage, the Bush administration scheduled a follow-up trip to India and Pakistan by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, who had just visited three Persian Gulf nations.¹³⁰ Armitage met with Rumsfeld in Estonia to brief him on his meetings in Islamabad and New Delhi.¹³¹ In the wake of Armitage's diplomatic breakthrough, Rumsfeld's visit proved somewhat anticlimactic. Shortly before Rumsfeld was to reach New Delhi, India announced that it was ending patrols by its warships off

¹²⁶ Excerpted from Lally Weymouth, "Voices From a Hot Zone," *Newsweek* (US Edition), July 1, 2002, 30.

¹²⁷ Interview with a former senior US official, June 28, 2005.

¹²⁸ Interview with a former State Department South Asia specialist, May 19, 2005.

¹²⁹ Interview with Richard Armitage, June 2, 2005.

¹³⁰ Thom Shanker, "Rumsfeld, in India, Offers Linked Ideas but No Peace," *New York Times*, June 12, 2002, A-3.

¹³¹ Interview with Richard Armitage, June 2, 2005.

Musharraf's pledge gave the Indian Government an exit strategy from a war it didn't want to fight.

Pakistani waters in the Arabian Sea and appointing a new high commissioner to Pakistan to lower tensions in response to the first moves by India to ramp down the confrontation with Pakistan.¹³² Arriving in India, Rumsfeld discovered that “the savior role had already been played,” one official recalled.¹³³ The Secretary of Defense reinforced Armitage’s message, characterized by one Pentagon official as: “We know you are pissed. And you have a right to be pissed. But you won’t make the situation any better by going to war.” The same official paraphrased Rumsfeld’s “Big Thought” for Pakistan as “A war will end badly for you in many ways, some very dire.”¹³⁴

Colonel Smith and his colleagues at US Embassy Islamabad immediately understood that Armitage had scored a diplomatic coup with General Musharraf’s pledge to stop infiltration permanently. They also knew that Pakistani officials would be banking on what they saw as a US commitment to secure India’s return to talks aimed at resolving the Kashmir conflict.

In New Delhi, meanwhile, some at the US Embassy found the choreography surrounding Musharraf’s pledge unsettling. They fully expected Musharraf to break the pledge, which could trigger another India-Pakistan crisis. Such a crisis might be harder for senior US officials to defuse because New Delhi might scornfully dismiss any future promises extracted from Islamabad. US Embassy New Delhi officers nevertheless were relieved when the Armitage mission drew a favorable reaction from senior Indian officials. While keeping forces in place, the Indian government announced that elections in Kashmir would proceed in the fall.¹³⁵ A successful election process would give New Delhi a natural opening to pull its troops back. Operation Parakram was officially called off on October 16, 2002 following the elections, bringing the crisis a close.

Post-Crisis Perspectives

The Twin Peaks crisis management effort was a lonely and *ad hoc* enterprise for the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of State. Powell and Armitage received presidential back-up with occasional telephone calls, but our interviews strongly suggest that they were largely on their own to succeed or fail.¹³⁶ Their goal was clear:

¹³² John Lancaster, “India to Recall Warships, Name Pakistan Envoy; Gestures Are First Response to Musharraf’s Pledge to Curb Militants in Kashmir,” *Washington Post*, June 11, 2002, A-17.

¹³³ Interview with a senior State Department official, June 8, 2005.

¹³⁴ Interview with a Defense Department official, July 13, 2005.

¹³⁵ Interview with an official formerly posted to US Embassy New Delhi, May 24, 2005.

¹³⁶ The authors did not interview the President, the Vice President, the National Security Adviser, or the Secretary of Defense. Their memoirs and recollections of the Twin Peaks crisis doubtless will add other dimensions to this account.

to avoid an India-Pakistan war that could hamper OEF in Afghanistan and could escalate, possibly across the nuclear threshold. US crisis managers helped avert another war between India and Pakistan, but they were unable to prevent the redeployment of Pakistani troops from the Afghan border—a top priority for OEF.

In this account, an indispensable factor in the success of Powell's and Armitage's crisis management was the desire of India's and Pakistan's leaders not to fight another war. This does not belittle Washington's efforts, since wars can occur even when leaders wish to avoid them. The crux of the problem on the Subcontinent was to help "rewind" the mobilizations, while avoiding a war by accident, sabotage, or inadvertence. It was up to the 7th floor of the State Department to devise creative formulas to facilitate disengagement, which Armitage did "on the fly" during his mission to Pakistan and India in June 2002. As one official concluded, "We got them down out of the tree." Armitage concluded that the outcome was "reasonable" and effective for its time and place.¹³⁷ India and Pakistan are now in a very different and better place, in part because they were able to avoid war during this ten-month-long crisis. In the words of one former American official, Armitage's role was to get the Indians "off the hook"...[He] defuse[d] the crisis by giving Vajpayee a face-saver. Vajpayee needed something public; Armitage gave it to him."¹³⁸

Lingering Concerns

While most American officials argue that US crisis management achieved the best possible outcome at a time of great danger and helped provide space for subsequent negotiations between India and Pakistan,¹³⁹ some now believe Washington could have played its cards even better in the Twin Peaks crisis. Several believe that the State Department was too slow to take account of growing Indian unhappiness about militant attacks before the December 13 attack on the Parliament. One official argues that the Department "fumbled" the task of keeping the pressure on Pakistan to stop terrorist activity against India. As a consequence, New Delhi joined Islamabad as a potential spoiler after the December 13 attack. One factor was the bifurcation of the US dialogue with India and Pakistan prior to the crisis, with the State Department trying to ameliorate New Delhi's concerns on terrorism, while the Pentagon was coordinating OEF with Islamabad. This bifurcation may have been unavoidable, but it complicated the Bush administration's response to the attack on the Indian Parliament.¹⁴⁰

Some officials believe that earlier and more sympathetic US attention to New Delhi's concerns over terrorism would have reduced the influence of hawks within the Indian government who wanted to respond militarily during both peaks of the crisis, and might even have averted India's troop mobilization after December 13. President Bush's failure to include regional terrorism in his September 20 speech before a joint session of Congress meant that "the Indians saw the speech as signaling that we would go after 'our terrorists,' not

¹³⁷ Interview with Richard Armitage, June 2, 2005.

¹³⁸ Interview with a former State Department South Asia specialist, May 19, 2005.

¹³⁹ Interviews with a former senior State Department official, June 27, 2005; and with a former senior diplomat posted to New Delhi, July 12, 2005.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with an official formerly posted to US Embassy New Delhi, May 24, 2005.

No one we interviewed took Musharraf's pledge literally—yet it suited the purposes of all three capitals to accept it as a means to end the deployments of troops ready for battle.

theirs,” one official suggests.¹⁴¹ Other US crisis managers believe the United States did not accord India respect commensurate with its stated importance. One American official suggests, “We did not consult with them as a serious ally... We should have put real pressure on Musharraf earlier to stop terrorism. Musharraf needed us more than we needed him.”¹⁴²

A few senior officials worry that Secretary Powell and Deputy Secretary Armitage accepted “premature closure” after the first peak of the crisis. In this view they mistakenly viewed Musharraf's January 12, 2002 speech and the closing of some camps near the LoC as satisfying Indian demands. The Bush Administration therefore was not poised for the second peak of the crisis, these officials say. Said one former policymaker: India's troops remained “spring-loaded for attack” because New Delhi “would need more assurances than a few camps closed.”¹⁴³

A more sweeping concern for some US officials is that the Powell-Armitage diplomacy might have achieved tactical success at the expense of US leverage in future crises. In this view, US diplomacy after December 13 inadvertently helped create the conditions for the second peak. By persuading New Delhi of the importance of the commitments made by President Musharraf in his January 12, 2002 speech, Washington raised Indian expectations; by failing to hold Pakistan to its promises, US officials perpetuated India's perception that Washington was pursuing the war on terrorism selectively, thus raising the likelihood of war after the May attacks at Kaluchak.

Especially problematic, in this view, was President Musharraf's pledge to end infiltration “permanently,” which was then used as a lever to end the extended crisis. No one we interviewed took this pledge literally—yet it suited the purposes of all three capitals to accept it as a means to end the deployments of troops ready for battle. Some of the policymakers we interviewed suggest nevertheless that, because this pledge was not fully honored, future US policymakers will have less to work with in the event of another crisis sparked by individuals or groups based in Pakistan.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Interview with an official formerly posted to US Embassy New Delhi, May 24, 2005.

¹⁴² Interview with a former State Department South Asia specialist, May 19, 2005.

¹⁴³ Interviews with an official formerly posted to US Embassy New Delhi, May 24, 2005; and a former State Department South Asia specialist, May 19, 2005.

¹⁴⁴ Interviews with an official formerly posted to US Embassy New Delhi, May 24, 2005; and with a former Washington official July 5, 2005.

The authors heard several counters to these criticisms. First, the negotiating tactics chosen by US crisis managers did not make war more likely on the Subcontinent; rather, by bolstering cautious players in New Delhi, these tactics interrupted and slowed the rush to conflict. While the Twin Peaks crisis may not have persuaded Pakistan to abandon unconventional warfare as a means to leverage India on Kashmir, the “rewards” of this misguided policy have become increasingly meager, and the risks of imperiling Pakistan’s foreign standing have become greater.

Second, worries about the sacrifice of US credibility hinge on assumptions about the nature of future crises—“counterfactuals,” as one former senior official dismissively describes them.¹⁴⁵ Armitage believes that US crisis management bought time and space for subsequent moves away from confrontation by New Delhi and Islamabad. If another severe crisis were to occur, its shape as well as its resolution would likely be different as a result of what transpired during the ten months of military confrontation and the diplomacy employed to end it. Thus, the tools and techniques needed to defuse any future confrontation will be different from those during the Twin Peaks crisis. Indeed, Armitage adds, there may never be another India-Pakistan crisis of this magnitude to defuse.

US Lessons Drawn from the Crisis

Some of the “old hands” we interviewed note that neither permanent nor appointed US government officials have access to usable lessons from past crises.¹⁴⁶ In this view, every crisis is different, and every crisis has different crisis managers. Political appointees leave office, and—in the case of the State Department—Foreign Service Officers move from one assignment and one region to the next.¹⁴⁷ If key players are new to their jobs and to the region, they are likely to start from scratch.

These officials point to the lack of mechanisms within the Executive Branch for systematically analyzing foreign policy crises and recording policy lessons. While the US military critiques its performance on the battlefield regularly, US diplomats and policymakers do not usually offer searching appraisals of the work of their superiors, on whom the burden of crisis management usually falls. State Department bureaus, for example, typically do not have the time and are usually not tasked to perform post-crisis assessments. “State has a reputation as a ‘fudge factory,’” according to one Department skeptic.¹⁴⁸ Some government officials keep their own contemporaneous notes and “memos for the file,” but these usually remain in the file cabinet. Consequently, one former official argues that “there is no corporate knowledge” in the State Department.¹⁴⁹

There are institutional barriers to doing crisis management assessments. At State, for instance, producing candid in-house critiques of diplomatic activity would be unpopular and not career enhancing. The bureaus most directly involved may not be the most dispassionate evaluators of their performance, observes one

¹⁴⁵ Interview with a former senior diplomat posted to New Delhi, July 12, 2005.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with a former Washington official, July 5, 2005.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with a former Washington official, July 5, 2005.

¹⁴⁸ Interview with a former State Department South Asia specialist, May 19, 2005.

¹⁴⁹ Interview with a former Washington official, July 5, 2005.

Department veteran. A more “disinterested” part of the State Department, such as the Policy Planning Staff or the Bureau of Research and Intelligence, might be better positioned to assess crisis management for lessons learned, but this could cause internal friction.¹⁵⁰ Thus, future American policymakers are unlikely to find internal reviews of the Twin Peaks crisis, as they try to “read in” on long-running issues and policies.¹⁵¹

These arguments have weight, and they help explain why the Executive Branch in general, including the State Department, may not be the best place for new policy players to look for the lessons drawn by their predecessors after a crisis has passed. And yet, as we hope our interviews have demonstrated, US government officials have a wealth of information and experience that could be helpful to their successors. We readily acknowledge that bits of information and insights we have gathered on the Twin Peaks crises reflect individual perceptions and biases and are colored by the particular location of the participant during the crisis – as is also true of memoirs written well after government service. Our account is also limited by our lack of access to some senior Bush administration officials, who may subsequently add to this record with interviews and books. Nonetheless, we believe we have interviewed a sufficient number of key players in the Twin Peaks crisis to capture a candid and representative picture of US diplomacy to avoid a war between India and Pakistan in 2001 and 2002. We also believe that documenting the lessons learned by key participants is essential, in part because the Executive Branch faces so many constraints in doing so. In addition, South Asia has been prone to serious crises over the past 15 years, and no real student of the region can confidently predict that we have seen the last of such crises.

So what lessons did US crisis managers learn from the Twin Peaks crisis? First, most American officials we interviewed believe that the Twin Peaks crisis underscored the need for continuous high-level US attention toward South Asia. One policymaker concludes that, “After 9/11, South Asia is...part of the tiny inbox of the President...9/11 changed the dynamic between India and Pakistan and the US role in South Asia, probably forever.”¹⁵² The attention South Asia commanded after the Twin Peaks crisis was evident by President Bush’s meetings on the sidelines of the 2004 United Nations General Assembly. Three of the four leaders the President met with were from the region—Manmohan Singh from India, Pervez Musharraf from Pakistan, and Hamid Karzai from Afghanistan.¹⁵³

Richard Armitage acknowledges that, as an outgrowth of the Twin Peaks crisis, senior US officials have stayed “more engaged” with the Subcontinent. Before the crisis, Washington had begun to “reenergize” relations with India and Pakistan, but the United States was “long on rhetoric, short on delivery.” Armitage believes that a critical reason for staying engaged is to ensure that both Pakistan and Afghanistan become success stories. “Neither can be successful unless both succeed,” he says.¹⁵⁴ A distinct minority of policymakers hold that, while Washington must stay engaged in the region, high-level US attention is not warranted

¹⁵⁰ Interview with a former State Department South Asia specialist, May 19, 2005.

¹⁵¹ Interview with a former State Department South Asia specialist, May 19, 2005.

¹⁵² Interview with a former senior State Department official, June 27, 2005.

¹⁵³ Steven R. Weisman, “Bush, at The U.N., Calls For Action to Widen Liberty,” *New York Times*, September 22, 2004, A-1. The fourth leader with whom Bush met at the United Nations—Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi—represented another Asian power, Japan.

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Richard Armitage, June 2, 2005.

because leaders in both countries are capable of improving relations when they so desire and because neither government wants a war. Richard Falkenrath suggests that the lesson we should draw from the crisis is that the most senior US officials need attend to Indo-Pakistani tensions *only* when a crisis surges.¹⁵⁵

A second lesson learned by US crisis managers was, as one official observes, that “India and Pakistan don’t know each other well despite claims to the contrary. Specifically, they have no military-military relations at the top level. Such ties were vital in US-USSR relations....US perceptions of the military tactics of the two armies differed significantly from their intelligence on each other, which was further distorted by hyperbole on both sides.”¹⁵⁶ In this view, the absence of military-to-military exchanges has fostered unhelpful stereotyping. Ambassador Nancy Powell and General John Abizaid both tried unsuccessfully to persuade Pakistan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs to add to the dialogue with India a “basket” for military contacts. Indian civilian leaders are also reluctant to encourage military-to-military contacts, which they see as potentially weakening civilian control of the Indian military. In addition, India finds it difficult for reasons of protocol to engage in a senior-level bilateral military dialogue because of Musharraf’s dual roles as Chief of Army Staff and President.¹⁵⁷

In the immediate aftermath of the Twin Peaks crisis, India-Pakistan relations were frozen across the board, not just in the realm of military contacts. Given Musharraf’s clear interest in resuming discussions on Kashmir and the potential for a rise in cross-LoC infiltration as a Pakistani pressure tactic, Washington players saw continued high-level US intercession as essential. As a senior American policymaker observed:

What was striking was India’s refusal to deal with Pakistan at any level....This increased our need to be involved. Even during the Cold War, there was contact at all levels between the US and the Soviet Union. There was no point at which we said, “Oh, these guys [India and Pakistan] can take care of this,” although there was some Track II activity during this period, for example by the Kashmir Study Group. There was a real need for the US role and intervention, to galvanize and lead the international community.¹⁵⁸

A third lesson drawn by many US policymakers was the value of strengthening high-level contacts and improving bilateral ties with both India and Pakistan. The upswing in relations with India that began toward the end of the Clinton administration opened this door.¹⁵⁹ One US official remarked that India “gave us the time of day” during the crisis because US-Indian ties had improved *before* the crisis. The Twin Peaks crisis also underlined the value of having experienced “South Asia-wallahs” at the US embassies in New Delhi and Islamabad who could turn to longtime contacts for insights on domestic and official thinking.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Richard Falkenrath, May 26, 2005.

¹⁵⁶ Interview with a former senior State Department official, June 27, 2005.

¹⁵⁷ Interview with a senior State Department official, June 8, 2005.

¹⁵⁸ Interview with a former senior State Department official, June 27, 2005.

¹⁵⁹ Interviews with Richard Armitage and with an official formerly posted to US Embassy New Delhi, May 24, 2005; a former US senior US official, June 28, 2005; and a former South Asia Bureau official, May 9, 2005.

¹⁶⁰ Interviews with a senior State Department official, June 8, 2005; with Colonel David Smith (retired), May 26, 2005; with a

A fourth lesson learned was the value of partnering with other governments to prevent war and manage crises in South Asia. Washington's stability goals for the region are widely shared by other capitals, including the other four permanent members of the UN Security Council. Both the long distances involved in visiting the region and the unique contributions of other governments increase the value of diplomatic burden sharing during crises in the region.

A fifth lesson drawn by US policymakers was the need to stay attuned both to the activities of religious extremists as potential spoilers and to the ups and downs of India-Pakistan relations. While a process of normalization between the two governments can add shock absorbers to the equation, these can be eroded by many small-scale acts of terrorism or neutralized by a single catastrophic event blamed on the other side. In the words of a senior US official, "the situation is still not 'proofed' against another crisis."¹⁶¹

A sixth lesson learned by some was that personal relationships clearly matter greatly in crisis diplomacy. While important matters of state will be decided based on perceived national interests, personal chemistry also plays a part. Secretary Powell and Deputy Secretary Armitage brought the easy camaraderie of former military officers to conversations with President Musharraf, several US crisis managers note. Similarly, Ambassador Blackwill's extraordinary access to senior Indian officials reportedly resulted in more information sharing with US officials. The closer ties to New Delhi achieved as a result of the crisis, in turn, have added impetus to the transformation of US-India relations since then.¹⁶²

Some policymakers drew a seventh lesson: that the positive denouement of the Twin Peaks crisis affirmed longstanding US policy not to get involved directly in brokering peace between India and Pakistan. In this view, the "backbencher" role adopted by Washington encouraged both governments to step forward and to take responsibility for initiatives to seek more normal ties. One senior US crisis manager points out that the India-Pakistan dynamic changed only when then-Prime Minister Vajpayee decided to seek normalization and offered fresh talks with Pakistan in his April 2003 speech.¹⁶³ Further support for this view might be found in the decisions by New Delhi and Islamabad to restart a broad "composite dialogue" in 2004, a process that has produced measured, concrete successes. Others think that any effort to broker peace between India and Pakistan would have made it hard for Washington to preserve good relations with both. One senior official suggests that, if the United States tried to mediate between the two sides, "we would screw it up...our role needs to be more subtle." Track II involvement by US think tanks may be preferable to US mediation, in this official's opinion.¹⁶⁴

The cumulative effect of successive, harrowing crises between India and Pakistan and subsequent bilateral efforts to reduce tensions merits further inquiry. Have Islamabad and New Delhi turned the corner after

former South Asia Bureau official, May 9, 2005; and with an official formerly posted to US Embassy New Delhi, May 24, 2005.

¹⁶¹ Interview with a former senior US official, June 28, 2005.

¹⁶² Interviews with a US official formerly posted to US Embassy New Delhi, May 24, 2005; and with Colonel David Smith (retired), May 26, 2005.

¹⁶³ Interview with a former South Asia Bureau official May 9, 2005.

¹⁶⁴ Interview with a senior State Department official, June 8, 2005.

experiencing their equivalent of the Berlin and Cuban missile crises? Are they now entering a prolonged period that will be marked by a relaxation of tensions? Whatever the next few years may bring, it is worth recalling that, even while pursuing *détente*, the United States and the Soviet Union continued to experience crises and setbacks. India and Pakistan must reckon with the added difficulty of religious extremists intent on punishing one or both governments for trying to normalize ties. In some respects, New Delhi and Islamabad face more complex challenges than did the two nuclear superpowers.

According to one American official, the US role during the Twin Peaks crisis was “to stop terrorism in order to open up space for a peace initiative,” while quietly encouraging Indian, Pakistani, and Kashmiri leaders to restore normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir. He adds: “The Indian government has its own reasons to do this” in Kashmir. The real challenge would be to “get a serious commitment to a political process” from Pakistan, to normalize the situation in Kashmir.¹⁶⁵ US diplomacy during the Twin Peaks crisis helped to provide additional space for peace making, and helped to prevent a war whose course could not be confidently predicted. On both fronts—war avoidance and normalizing ties—the primary credit goes to the leaders of India and Pakistan. But they received a significant assist from the Bush administration during the Twin Peaks crisis. With the durability of the process still unclear and spoilers still very much on the scene, the lessons learned by US crisis managers may have considerable value in the future.

Conclusion

This essay has focused on the Bush Administration’s crisis management effort and on lessons drawn from it by US policymakers. Far more important to the future of South Asia are the lessons learned by leaders in Pakistan and India. Some former senior officials—including those intimately involved in day-to-day discussions with leaders of the two countries—see the peace moves by New Delhi and Islamabad in 2004-2006 as proof that the two countries drew constructive lessons from the Twin Peaks crisis.¹⁶⁶

Others worry that Indian and Pakistani leaders may have drawn some less constructive lessons, as well. In this view, New Delhi might go on the military offensive more quickly in a future crisis to preclude US diplomatic intervention and to avoid being held in check by untrustworthy Pakistani promises. Likewise, some US officials expressed concern that Pakistani leaders might have learned the wrong lessons from the Twin Peaks crisis. Many in Pakistan still do not understand the depth of India’s anger during the Twin Peaks crisis, and may assume that India will forever be a “soft” state in the face of provocation. As Colonel Smith notes, it could be a mistake to believe that each country has a good feel for the other’s moves based on “a thousand years of living together. . . . Islamabad is relying on Indian patience to keep the peace.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Interview with an official formerly posted to US Embassy New Delhi, May 24, 2005.

¹⁶⁶ Interviews with Richard Armitage, June 2, 2005; with a former senior diplomat posted to New Delhi, July 12, 2005; with a former senior US official, June 28, 2005; with a former senior State Department official, June 27, 2005; and with a former South Asia Bureau official May 9, 2005.

¹⁶⁷ Interview with Colonel David Smith (retired), May 26, 2005.

Other US policymakers suggest that US crisis management may have buttressed Pakistan's reliance on Western diplomats to restrain India from retaliating in the future. If true, this would decrease Pakistan's incentives to keep militants in check and to avoid provocative actions. For Washington, these possibilities will place an added premium on early intelligence warning of changes in India's and Pakistan's perceptions, intentions, and military activities, as well as on discerning militant plans and capabilities.¹⁶⁸

Ad hoc US crisis management worked satisfactorily in the Twin Peaks crisis, but pride in US diplomacy should not translate into overconfidence in Washington's ability to manage a future India-Pakistan crisis, some US policymakers say. More systematic learning from past crises on the Subcontinent would be very helpful, but every crisis is different. What worked in the Twin Peaks crisis might have unintended, negative effects in a future crisis, if one occurs. *Ad hoc* solutions are inevitable and may sometimes be desirable—but they are no substitute for an extended period of improved relations between Pakistan and India.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Interviews with a former senior diplomat, US Embassy New Delhi, July 12, 2005; with an official formerly posted to US Embassy New Delhi, May 24, 2005; with Colonel David Smith (retired), May 26, 2005; and with a former Washington official July 5, 2005.

¹⁶⁹ For a detailed analysis of the dynamics of India's and Pakistan's security ties to the United States, see Polly Nayak, *US Security Policy on South Asia Since 9/11—Challenges and Implications for the Future*, an Asia-Pacific Center Occasional Paper (Honolulu: Asia Pacific Center for Strategic Studies, February 2005).

Chronology of Twin Peaks Crisis

Compiled by Nico Beck and Martine Cicconi

October 1, 2001: Militants attack the Jammu and Kashmir state assembly building. India's Ministry for External Affairs issues a statement demanding that Pakistan curb the activities of the Jaish-e-Muhammad and other terrorist groups.

October 2, 2001: India claims that credible links between the group that attacked the Kashmir assembly building and al-Qaeda have been established. It asks for extremist groups operating in Kashmir to be identified by the US-led coalition as part of the global campaign against terror and banned. Prime Minister Vajpayee writes a letter to President Bush describing the need to restrain Pakistan.

October 3, 2001: India asks Pakistan to hand over Maulana Masood Azhar, the leader of the Jaish-e-Muhammad.

October 5, 2001: The Indian army reports killing twelve militants in Poonch.

October 6, 2001: Explosions and shootouts kill sixteen militants and six civilians in Jammu and Kashmir.

October 7, 2001: The US begins airstrikes against Afghanistan.

October 8, 2001: Musharraf calls Vajpayee promising to investigate the attack on the Kashmir assembly. He expresses a desire to resume dialogue and invites Vajpayee to Pakistan. Vajpayee offers aid to Afghan refugees in Pakistan, which Musharraf accepts.

October 10, 2001: A spokesman for the Indian Ministry of External Affairs states that India is prepared to resume dialogue with Pakistan provided that Islamabad open talks to issues other than Kashmir. India's ground rules also require Pakistan to take steps to curb terrorism and respond positively to confidence building measures.

October 12, 2001: The US freezes the assets of the Jaish-e-Muhammad.

October 14, 2001: India claims to have killed six Pakistani intruders along with five other militants attempting to cross the border from Pakistani to Indian-controlled Kashmir.

October 15, 2001: The Indian army shells Pakistani posts in the Mendhar and Akhnoor sectors of Jammu and Kashmir. US Secretary of State Colin Powell arrives in Islamabad.

October 16, 2001: Musharraf issues a statement at a news conference with Powell expressing a desire for normal relations with India. He states that Kashmir is the core issue in the dispute.

October 17, 2001: Vajpayee announces that a resolution to the Kashmir issue cannot be a precondition to improving Indo-Pakistani ties. Pakistan accuses India of moving more troops to the LoC. India denies the claim.

October 18, 2001: India and Pakistan exchange fire across the line of control. India downplays the incident, noting that only small arms were used.

October 22, 2001: Indian security forces kill four militants attempting to attack an Air Force base in Kashmir. Prime Minister Vajpayee claims that there is “no point in talking to Pakistan” at that point but does not rule out future dialogue. President Musharraf states that Pakistan will retaliate against India if it engages in “adventurism” along the LoC.

October 23, 2001: Pakistan démarches India, citing “anti-Pakistan rhetoric” and troop movements along the LoC.

October 28, 2001: Indian television reports one of the bloodiest days in Kashmir, citing the deaths of approximately 30 civilians, militants and Indian soldiers.

October 29, 2001: Vajpayee rules out a meeting with Musharraf on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

November 1, 2001: India reports one soldier killed and three injured in Pakistani shelling across the LoC. Vajpayee states that, although Indian troops are prepared to respond to aggression, India has no plans to attack Pakistan.

November 2, 2001: India claims to have killed twenty militants in the Poonch district of Kashmir amid Pakistani shelling.

November 3, 2001: Three Pakistani troops are reportedly killed in an exchange of gunfire along the LoC.

November 4, 2001: US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld arrives in Islamabad.

November 5, 2001: Rumsfeld meets with Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes in New Delhi. Rumsfeld indicates that the global campaign against terrorism will not exclude Kashmir.

November 12, 2001: India and Pakistan exchange fire on the Siachen glacier.

November 16, 2001: In a speech, Musharraf accuses India of planning aggression against Pakistan.

November 22, 2001: Pakistan claims that Indian forces fired on civilians in Azad, Kashmir leading to one death and several injuries.

November 24, 2001: Vajpayee states that a meeting with Musharraf at the SAARC summit in January 2002 is possible. Musharraf states that Pakistan is ready to discuss all issues with India, including but not limited to Kashmir.

November 27, 2001: India reports that militants killed twelve Indian security personnel in an ambush in the mountains of Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district.

November 28, 2001: India reports killing sixteen Pakistani soldiers and destroying seventeen bunkers in an exchange of fire across the LoC. Pakistan denies the report.

December 4, 2001: India and Pakistan exchange fire across the LoC.

December 6, 2001: Pakistan's High Commissioner in India, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, writes in the Times of India that Musharraf seeks normalized relations with India built on a fair resolution to the Kashmir issue, and urges Vajpayee to ignore those in his government who agitate for war.

December 8, 2001: Ten Civilians, two militants and two Indian soldiers are reported killed in Srinagar in a shootout following an attack on an army convoy.

December 10, 2001: Indian forces claim to have killed ten Jaish-e-Muhammad militants in Kashmir.

December 13, 2001: Militants attack the Indian Parliament in New Delhi. Vajpayee comments, "This was not just an attack on the building, it was a warning to the entire nation... We accept the challenge."

December 14, 2001: US State Department updates travel warnings for Pakistan, authorizing the departure of all non-essential US Embassy and Consulate staff.

December 15, 2001: The Indian police report that Pakistan's main intelligence service, the ISI, is linked to the suicide attack on the Parliament.

December 17, 2001: Charges are brought against accused mastermind of December 13th attack, Mohammed Afzal, a suspected member of the Jaish-e-Mohammed.

December 18, 2001: India launches a massive mobilization known as Operation Parakram. It places its armed forces on high alert, and begins to redeploy troops westward. Pakistan increases the alert status of its armed forces.

December 19, 2001: Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee addresses the Indian Parliament stating, “We’ll think through everything before making any decision. . . Decisions on war or peace are not taken in haste.”

December 20, 2001: Pakistan reportedly moves its Hatf-I and Hatf-II missiles to the Punjab.

December 24, 2001: India reportedly moves its Prithvi missiles to the northern Punjab within range of Islamabad.

December 25, 2001: Two Indian soldiers and one civilian are reported killed in gunfire across the LoC. Pakistan cancels all military leaves and orders its troops to report for duty.

December 26, 2001: Sixteen Pakistani soldiers are reported killed in heavy firing across the LoC in Poonch. The US places the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Muhammad on the State Department’s list of designated foreign terrorist organizations. Making the announcement, Secretary of State Powell says that the two groups are responsible for “numerous terrorist attacks in India and Pakistan.”

December 27, 2001: Pakistan reportedly places its airports on high alert and installs anti-aircraft guns. Pakistan’s navy is reported to begin aerial monitoring of the coastline. Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes describes the situation as “grave” and notes that his country’s force deployments will be completed in two days.

December 28, 2001: India bans overflight facilities to Pakistan and reduces the strength of its High Commission by half. Pakistan responds in kind. Pakistani intelligence reports that 95% of the Indian air force is in offensive position. Eighteen Indian soldiers are killed when anti-tank mines they are positioning along the border in Rajasthan accidentally explode.

December 29, 2001: *The Hindu* reports that the Indian army is preparing to launch a massive military exercise known as Operation Chivalry to test its readiness to defend against a nuclear attack. Pakistani officials are notified before the exercise begins. President Bush telephones Vajpayee and Musharraf urging them to exercise restraint. Bush asks Pakistan to “take additional strong and decisive measures to eliminate the extremists who seek to harm India, undermine Pakistan, and provoke war.”

December 31, 2001: US Intelligence is reported to predict that war between India and Pakistan will start within days. India asks Pakistan to hand over twenty wanted terrorists based in Pakistan.

January 1, 2002: India and Pakistan exchange lists of nuclear facilities in accordance with the agreement on the Prohibition of Attack Against Nuclear Installations and Facilities.

January 3, 2002: One policeman is killed and more than twenty others are injured in a grenade attack near the Kashmir state assembly building. Six Pakistani soldiers are reportedly killed by Indian fire along the LoC. Press reports suggest that Musharraf has shifted ISI personnel assigned Kashmir.

January 6, 2002: India shoots down a Pakistani Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) over Poonch.

January 7, 2002: Vajpayee suggests he would be amenable to reopening dialogue with Pakistan at a SAARC meeting in Kathmandu, Nepal.

January 9, 2002: Musharraf constitutes a National Kashmir Committee.

January 12, 2002: Musharraf makes a televised public address in which states, “We are weary and sick of this Kalashnikov culture” and vows, “No organizations will be able to carry out terrorism under the pretext of Kashmir... Whoever is involved with such acts in the future will be dealt with strongly whether they come from inside or outside of the country.”

January 13, 2002: More than 800 militants are arrested in a 24 hour period. The Indian government states that it will suspend judgment of its neighbor before embarking on a military de-escalation or initiating the resumption of dialogue.

January 14, 2002: Press reports indicate that US intelligence has detected new missile launch sites in Pakistan.

January 16, 2002: Secretary of State Powell visits Islamabad on the first stage of a South Asian tour intended to temper hostilities and restart dialogue between India and Pakistan.

January 23, 2002: Musharraf states in an interview that he would be amenable to denuclearizing South Asia and would sign a no-war pact with India, but adds that Pakistan will not reciprocate India’s pledge for a no-first use of nuclear weapons.

January 24, 2002: India rejects Musharraf’s no-war proposition and demands that infiltration into Kashmir and proxy war be ended outright.

January 25, 2002: India successfully tests an Agni II intermediate-range missile after notifying Pakistan of the flight test. Pakistan refers to the test as a “direct threat.”

January 29, 2002: Pakistan offers talks on a phased plan to withdraw troops to their peacetime locations. India rejects the offer, stating that tensions can only be diffused after Pakistan takes steps to reduce infiltrations in Kashmir.

February 6, 2002: India allows Pakistani citizens stranded in Jammu and Kashmir because of travel restriction to return home.

February 11, 2002: India démarches Pakistan, reiterating its demand that Pakistan hand over twenty terrorists.

February 16, 2002: Musharraf rules out handing over individuals whom India claims are terrorists.

February 19, 2002: Pakistani fire hits an Indian aircraft it reports strayed into Pakistani airspace. The plane lands successfully in India.

February 25, 2002: India's parliament resumes for the first time since the suicide attack of December 13, 2001.

March 5, 2002: India successfully test-fires a surface to air missile, the Akash.

March 17, 2002: A Christian Church is bombed in Islamabad, killing five people including a US Embassy officer and her daughter.

March 20, 2002: Pakistan reports that it is conducting military exercises near the Kashmiri border.

March 23, 2002: Musharraf speaks at Pakistan's National Day festivities, promising an "unforgettable lesson" if India challenges Pakistan.

March 30, 2002: Two militants open fire at the Raghunath temple in Jammu, killing seven people and leaving eighteen injured.

April 6, 2002: The German newspaper *Der Spiegel* publishes an interview with Musharraf in which he claims that "as a last resort the atom bomb is also possible."

May 14, 2002: Three militants attack a bus and an Indian army camp in Kaluchak in Indian-controlled Kashmir. More than 30 people are killed and 47 injured, many of them the wives and children of Indian soldiers.

May 16, 2002: Pakistan reportedly puts its armed forces on highest alert.

May 18, 2002: India expels the Pakistani High Commissioner. The Indian Parliament adopts a unanimous resolution condemning the Jammu attack and pledging the nation's commitment to ending "senseless acts of terrorism."

May 19, 2002: Indian Army is reported to have centralized command of its paramilitary forces, including the border security and central reserve police forces. The coast guard is reportedly placed under control of the Indian navy.

May 21, 2002: Senior leader of the All Party Hurriyat Conference and president-founder of the Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference Abdul Gani Lone is assassinated by militants. India reportedly clears its grounded squadron of MIG-21s for operational flying and prepares to fly an Army brigade from Gujarat

to its operational sector in Rajasthan. India's Eastern fleet ships are reportedly redeployed west toward the Pakistani border. Pakistan reportedly deploys its medium range Shaheen missiles.

May 16-26, 2002: India and Pakistan exchange intense fire across the LoC in Kashmir.

May 22, 2002: While addressing Indian troops in Jammu, Vajpayee calls the army to prepare for a "decisive fight" and states that "a new chapter of victory and triumph will be written in the history books soon." Pakistani Railways Minister and former ISI chief Javed Ashraf Qazi states that "if it ever comes to the annihilation of Pakistan, then we will use the [nuclear option] against the enemy."

May 25, 2002: India issues a two week deadline for Pakistan to stop infiltrations into Kashmir and begin to dismantle terrorist training camps.

May 25- 28, 2002: Pakistan conducts a series of missile test firings, testing the Gauri (Hatf v), the Ghaznavi (Hatf III), and the Abdali (Hatf-II).

May 26, 2002: Vajpayee states in a nationally televised speech, "The international community should understand that there is a limit to India's tolerance. . . How can, and how long can, we tolerate terrorist activities in our country?"

May 27, 2002: Musharraf makes a national address in which he states that Pakistan will not initiate a war over Kashmir, but will respond if attacked by India.

May 28, 2002: Pakistan is reported to deploy all of its Mirage ground-attack fighters and Chinese-made A5Cs to its border with India.

May 29, 2002: Pakistan's ambassador to the UN defends his country's refusal to adopt a no first use posture, asking "How can Pakistan, a weaker power, be expected to rule out all means of deterrence?"

May 30, 2002: Pakistan reportedly confirms the movement of troops from its Afghan to its Indian border.

June 2, 2002: The highest ranking civil servant in India's Defense Ministry states that his country's nuclear weapons are in place for prompt use.

June 5, 2002: The US and UK upgrade travel warnings for the region, urging their nationals to leave India and Pakistan. President Bush phones Musharraf and Vajpayee, urging them to reduce tensions.

June 6, 2002: US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage arrives in Pakistan.

June 7, 2002: In New Delhi, Armitage reports that Musharraf has pledged to permanently stop cross-border terrorism.

June 8, 2002: Pakistan reportedly claims to have shot down an Indian UAV near the border.

June 10, 2002: The Indian Ministry of External Affairs lifts the ban on the use of Indian airspace by Pakistani aircraft.

June 11, 2002: Indian warships reportedly begin redeployment toward Mumbai. US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld arrives in New Delhi.

June 14, 2002: Pakistan is reported to begin redeploying its warships.

Mid-June, 2002: Indian intelligence agencies report in the press that Musharraf has instructed his Tenth Corps to stop infiltration across the LoC.

June 19, 2002: India reports that shelling by Pakistani troops in Kashmir has dropped by 90%. Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes notes a considerable decline in cross-border infiltration.

July 13, 2002: Twenty-five people are killed by militants near Jammu.

July 22, 2002: The US lifts travel restrictions on India.

July 27, 2002: Secretary of State Powell visits New Delhi and calls for de-escalation in Kashmir.

August 7, 2002: Pakistan signs the International Convention on the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, and the OIC Convention on Combating International Terrorism.

September 16, 2002: Despite an increase in infiltrations across the LoC in August and September, the first phase of the Kashmir assembly elections are held.

October 10, 2002: Kashmir assembly elections conclude. Kashmiris vote the long-dominant National Conference Party out of office.

About the Authors

Polly Nayak is an independent consultant. She retired from government in 2002. From 1995-2001, she was the US intelligence community's senior expert and manager on South Asia, shaping information and crisis support for the White House and Congress during a period when India and Pakistan tested nuclear weapons, the two nuclear powers fought in Kashmir, the Taliban took over most of Afghanistan, and al-Qaeda established its presence there. Since 2002, Ms. Nayak has consulted for government and private sector clients on issues ranging from terrorism and insurgency to nuclear proliferation, political stability, foreign relations, and business climate, with special emphasis on South Asia. Earlier in her career, she worked on Africa and Latin America, as well. Ms. Nayak is a member of Sandia National Laboratories' Distinguished Advisory Panel. She held a Federal Executive Fellowship at the Brookings Institution in 2001-2002.

Ms. Nayak's recent publications include *US Security Policy on South Asia Since 9/11—Challenges and Implications for the Future* (Asia-Pacific Center, 2005). She is working on a book on foreign policy learning by senior US officials. Ms. Nayak lectures often on US foreign policy, South Asia, terrorism, and non-proliferation issues, most recently at Stanford University, Georgetown, the Woodrow Wilson Center, Indiana University, the Asia-Pacific Center (Honolulu), American University, Wesleyan University (Connecticut), Washington College, and the Brookings Institution. She teaches several expert-level courses in the intelligence community, as well as for the Foreign Service Institute's South Asia seminar. She is a speaker for the nonprofit, nonpartisan American Committees on Foreign Relations. In earlier years, Ms. Nayak served on an Indian corporate team, negotiating international "turn-key" projects. Her education includes an A.B. degree from Harvard University (in the honors Social Studies Program), an M.A. from the Fletcher School, and graduate work at MIT.

Michael Krepon is the co-founder of the Henry L. Stimson Center, where he served as President and CEO from 1989-2000. Mr. Krepon previously served under President Jimmy Carter at the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. He also worked for four years on Capitol Hill, handling armed services and defense appropriations matters. Immediately prior to co-founding the Stimson Center, Mr. Krepon was a Senior Associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Mr. Krepon is the author of *Cooperative Threat Reduction, Missile Defense, and the Nuclear Future* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) and *Space Assurance or Space Dominance, The Case Against Weaponizing Space* (The Henry L. Stimson Center, 2003). He is the contributing editor of *Nuclear Risk Reduction in South Asia* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), and *Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South Asia* (The Henry L. Stimson Center, 2004). Mr. Krepon is the author or co-editor of eight other books, including *Crisis Prevention, Confidence Building, and Reconciliation in South Asia* (St. Martin's Press, 1995) and *Global Confidence Building: New Tools for Troubled Regions* (St. Martin's Press, 1999).

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