

**Pakistan and India:  
Can NRRCs Help Strengthen Peace?**

**Colonel Rafi uz Zaman Khan**

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## Executive Summary

Following the nuclearization of South Asia, renewed escalation between these two traditional rivals could end with horrific consequences. Numerous bilateral efforts, including numerous confidence-building measures (CBMs) and nuclear risk reduction measures (NRRMs), have not made any headway. Seeing the pathetic history of past CBMs in South Asia, a greater need is felt for some concrete arrangement to build mutual trust and reassurance and prevent misperceptions. Therefore, it is imperative for the two nations to develop a renewed mechanism to consolidate and expand the current CBMs and NRRMs for their uninterrupted and lasting implementation. The establishment of Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers (NRRCs) between India and Pakistan at this stage may help to realize these objectives. A political track is also necessary, however. An “India-Pakistan Joint Commission on Kashmir” is proposed, as is further cooperation in socioeconomic and scientific fields.

India and Pakistan could borrow relevant experience from the United States and Russia. The U.S. NRRC and its then-Soviet counterpart were formally established on September 15, 1987. The two centers provided the first direct communications link established between the two capitals since the presidential “hotline” was instituted in 1963. Although used primarily for the exchange of notifications under existing bilateral and multilateral treaties, the NRRC has periodically proved its use in other areas as well. In January 1991, “goodwill” notifications were used to exchange information on the re-entry of the Salyut 7 space station. Later that same year the NRRCs served as a means of emergency communications during a major fire in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

Proposed to function as a central message center for all CBMs and NRRMs notifications, the establishment of NRRCs in India and Pakistan would serve as an effective, exclusive and a dedicated technical means of official communication for exchanging rapid, accurate and factual information. This could help prevent misperception or unintended reactions that could lead to accidental or inadvertent escalation. It would be an additional but separate, dedicated and redundant means of official communications between the two governments. The NRRCs are expected to facilitate identification, negotiation and implementation of additional institutional and procedural arrangements along with technical measures to reduce and prevent misperceptions. The conflict resolution measures if addressed concurrently at political levels would provide reassurance to the people to assuage their concerns and would help boost confidence building to ensure the success of the NRRCs.

The second element of the NRRCs may be a verification mechanism, which could prove essential to building trust. It may include observers or inspectors to physically verify the authenticity of intelligence when there is doubt. Considering security concerns, especially with regards to strategic assets, such a regime may initially be limited in scope to only cover large-scale military maneuvers or exercises. Later, it could be further expanded to confirm the training moves of strategic forces or any other agreed upon activities. It could set a positive precedent by incorporating transparency and verification measures into military procedures. Consequently, it could serve to build trust and confidence between the two sides.

The hotlines and other electronic communications systems placed in the NRRCs would be used for advanced notifications of various activities involving moves of certain military or strategic assets in order to prevent misinterpretation or miscalculation. Though exchanging information on the exact locations of nuclear missiles or their storage sites would not be in the security interests of the two countries, this institution could be of great help in implementing various arms control and force reduction measures by developing successful verification and implementation mechanisms.

The NRRCs, by no means, would be designed as a substitute to political and diplomatic channels of communications. The existing hotline between the directors general of military operations, the heads of state, and other diplomatic channels of communications would continue to function as these have their own specific military, political, and diplomatic roles. The technical nature of the NRRCs makes them different from existing hotlines between the DGMOs and the heads of state. The NRRCs, under a senior diplomat or a political figure with sufficient international security experience would coordinate with all relevant military, strategic, intelligence and diplomatic agencies to perform its functions for timely exchange of accurate information and notifications required by various agreements.

The NRRCs, utilizing all available government resources, may thus become the highest-level central coordinating institution for the implementation of confidence-building measures. Its director general, besides his own reporting channel, would have direct communication access to the senior military and strategic force commanders, senior bureaucrats and the heads of intelligence agencies.

The Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers may be established in Islamabad and New Delhi and would function continuously during times of crisis. The U.S. NRRC functions under the Department of State. For Pakistan, the authority concerned may decide either to keep it under the secretary to the prime minister or under the foreign minister. Since this channel of communication will be created as an additional link between the two governments, ideally the NRRC would function under the direct support and direction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The military and the intelligence agencies, however, would be required to render all necessary assistance to the NRRC.

With greater transparency and information sharing, there is some risk that the other side will misuse the process for its own benefit. However, the procedures developed by and actions of the Center's staff should be adequate to manage these risks. In deep crisis, the NRRCs would undoubtedly encounter great difficulties in executing their duties. Though the prevention of catalytic, triggering events may not always be possible, the consequent escalation might still be prevented by the NRRCs. The institutionalization of the NRRCs, which will give them an opportunity to assist in such crises, may gradually improve security on the subcontinent.

NRRCs are not the panacea for crisis management and should not become involved in substantive negotiations during the crises. The purpose of the center is to prevent misperceptions or miscalculations leading to accidental or unintended escalation. Crises management is the job of trained diplomats and the burden will continue to fall on political leaders. Therefore it should be conducted through normal diplomatic channels or between heads of state. The NRRCs could compliment diplomatic channels during crises only when political authorities believe that technical exchanges about military activities could be useful supplements to the main diplomatic discourse.

The agreement for an undertaking to refrain from use of force and the peaceful settlement of disputes already exists between India and Pakistan. They have also reached an understanding for taking NRRMs and creating an appropriate consultative mechanism, along with periodically reviewing existing CBMs. The structure for this process was agreed upon by Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Musharraf in Agra. Only a sustained and meaningful dialogue between the two countries could lead us towards conflict resolution and to start the process.

The proposal for the creation of NRRCs may appear to be optimistic at this stage. If agreed upon, it is likely to serve as a stepping-stone towards bringing about a radical shift in the current security environment of South Asia. The concept of NRRCs may thus form part of the agenda in any dialogue between the two countries. An agreement establishing nuclear risk reduction centers may be promptly negotiated and implemented without waiting for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute, which might take considerable time due to its own dynamics and complexity. However, the positive measures simultaneously taken to resolve all outstanding disputes through a sustained dialogue would serve as the fuel to operate the NRRCs effectively and would form the basis of trust and reassurance for the people of the two countries including Kashmiris. In the absence of these measures peace and cooperation will remain distant from South Asia.

# Pakistan and India: Can NRRCs Help to Strengthen the Peace?

*Rafi uz Zaman Khan*<sup>1</sup>

Pakistan and India are currently experiencing the worst phase of their relations since 1971. While their armed forces have recently demobilized, none of the underlying disputes have been resolved. A risk of adventurism remains. Any conflict could potentially escalate into a full-scale war. Following the nuclearization of South Asia, the potential for renewed escalation between these two traditional belligerents assumed horrific significance. Conflict remains unpredictable and may not necessarily remain conventional. The concepts of “limited war” and “preemption” are fraught with danger and may no longer be applicable in South Asia. General Musharraf has expressed, “Let there be no doubt that the doctrine of preemptive strike does not apply in the context of India and Pakistan—at least not in the foreseeable future.”<sup>2</sup> Admiral L. Ramdas, former Indian Chief of Naval Staff, and Dr. Arjun Makhijani, a U.S.-based nuclear scientist, have argued that “by going nuclear India has lost its conventional superiority over Pakistan.” Consequently, both Ramdas and Makhijani have “advocated a conventional and nuclear ceasefire plan for the two countries.”<sup>3</sup> A number of military analysts have thus ruled out the option of a conventional war between India and Pakistan as a method of conflict resolution.<sup>4</sup>

Ever since the partition of the subcontinent, the Kashmir dispute has become the *raison d’être* for hostility between India and Pakistan. Both countries have fought three conventional wars and one limited war in the past, but the level of animosity remains high. Numerous bilateral efforts, in the form of various confidence-building measures (CBMs) and nuclear risk reduction measures (NRRMs), have failed to bring a lasting peace to South Asia. These measures, in addition to lacking certain key elements, neglected to address future conflict resolution or avoidance, and kept delaying or postponing the primary concerns. Kashmir is considered to be the “nuclear flash point” in the region. Following the nuclearization of South Asia, President Bill Clinton described Kashmir as “the most dangerous place in the world.”<sup>5</sup> Consequently, India and Pakistan remain teetering at the precipice of war.

In the subcontinent, CBMs and NRRMs have failed due to a lack of trust, a lack of strong political will, and the marked absence of both a dispute resolution mechanism and the means to enforce it. The presence of a nuclear deterrent makes a resolution by force of the Kashmir dispute unlikely. As long

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<sup>1</sup> The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the policy viewpoints or opinion of the Government of Pakistan, the Pakistan Army or the Strategic Plans Division, the organization where the author is currently working.

<sup>2</sup> “Musharraf says India-Pakistan conflict unlike U.S.-Iraq,” *Deutsche Presse-Agentur* (September 19, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> “India Loses Conventional Superiority,” *Dawn* (September 18, 2002), Internet: <http://www.dawn.com/2002/09/18/top13.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> Indian plans to attack Pakistan’s nuclear facilities were thrice deterred/dropped in the 1980s and in the early 1990s due to recessed deterrence. Indira Gandhi’s last plan was dropped after her assassination and Rajiv Gandhi eventually signed an agreement not to attack on nuclear facilities. Since Brasstacks, and Pakistani implicit threats for first use, there were no attempts for a conventional war. The Kargil Conflict was also deliberately confined to that sector only due to the “Nuclear Deterrent”. Please see *From Surprise to Reckoning: The Kargil Review Committee Report* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2000), pp. 178-212.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Krepon and Chris Gagné (eds), *The Stability-Instability Paradox: Nuclear Weapons and Brinkmanship in South Asia* (Washington, DC: The Henry L. Stimson Center, June 2001), p. 41.

as Pakistan could “flatten” India five times, does it matter that India can “flatten” Pakistan twenty times?<sup>6</sup> The longer India and Pakistan remain estranged, the more distrust builds and the more both sides expect the worst from each other. Conditions for stable deterrence are absent, and an accident or miscalculation during a crisis has become increasingly possible. As both nations struggle to adapt to the “stability-instability paradox,”<sup>7</sup> should they be left alone at the nuclear brink to deliberately or inadvertently let out the nuclear genie, causing both nations to suffer the consequences?

CBMs and NRRMs attain great significance in such situations, but in the aftermath of South Asian nuclearization and given the pathetic history of past CBMs in South Asia, a greater need exists for a concrete arrangement to build trust and reassurance and to prevent misperceptions. Therefore, besides introducing measures to politically resolve the Kashmir issue—without which none of the confidence-building or nuclear risk reduction measures are likely to succeed—it is imperative for the two nations to develop a renewed mechanism to consolidate and expand the current CBMs and NRRMs for uninterrupted and lasting implementation. The establishment of Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers (NRRCs) between India and Pakistan may help to realize these objectives.

Serving as a central message center for all CBM/NRRM notifications, NRRCs may serve as an effective, exclusive, and dedicated technical means of official communication for the rapid exchange of accurate and factual information. This could, in turn, prevent unintended signals from leading to a crisis or inadvertent nuclear escalation. The centers may also facilitate the identification, negotiation and implementation of additional institutional and procedural arrangements, as well as technical measures intended to reduce nuclear risks. The NRRCs may thus provide the means of instantaneous communication among technical experts in the event of a tragic incident or unusual event. While taking concurrent measures for conflict resolution at the political level to reassure the people, both countries could immediately negotiate measures to establish NRRCs, which would symbolize a change of heart within the two governments. The verification and implementation mechanisms built into the NRRCs may not only help consolidate measures for the implementation of existing CBMs and NRRMs, it may also help build the trust and confidence that is essential to strengthening the peace. Functioning under an already negotiated, preformatted system to exchange notifications, the NRRCs would not involve any kind of voice communication for crisis resolution, as it might transmit misleading or unintended signals. The NRRCs would never function as a substitute for the political and diplomatic means of communication between the two countries.

The U.S. has played a key role in introducing CBMs between the two countries since the administrations of Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush.<sup>8</sup> Given its active role in crisis prevention in South Asia, the U.S. is still in a position to persuade the two leaderships to establish trust and stabilize their relations, and abandon nuclear brinkmanship for the interest of their citizens and all of humanity.

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<sup>6</sup> This line of analysis was presented in a *Times of India* opinion reprinted in, “India can no longer beat Pakistan in War”, *The Nation* (Islamabad) (June 4, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> See Krepon and Gagné (eds.), *The Stability-Instability Paradox*.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Krepon and Mishi Faruqee (eds.), *Conflict Prevention and Confidence Building Measures in South Asia: The 1990 Crisis*, Occasional Paper No.17 (Washington, DC: The Henry L. Stimson Center, April 1994), pp. 11-12.

In addressing the question of establishing NRRCs between Pakistan and India, one first needs to describe the existing CBMs and NRRMs. Then one needs to ask why these centers are needed? And why would NRRCs work when other CBMs have failed? Would NRRCs have any relation to the Kashmir issue? If yes, how much progress on a settlement is required before NRRCs could be established? Or could they occur simultaneously? Would the establishment of NRRCs help prevent dangerous military activities? Finally, are the NRRCs useful in preventing unintended escalation?

Another important issue relates to the U.S.-Soviet Cold War experience with and arguments for NRRMs and NRRCs. Is that narrative still valid and relevant to the subcontinent's security paradigms? Further, what would be the goals of Indian and Pakistani NRRCs and how would they differ from their Cold War counterparts? Successful functioning of the NRRCs requires trust in the given communications. How can trust and confidence be established in this instance?

What are the merits and demerits of establishing NRRCs for South Asia and what could be the likely apprehensions of the citizenry? Would NRRCs have a role in crisis management despite the existing political and diplomatic channels of communications? And what purposes and missions should the NRRCs not serve? Would the NRRCs be able to improve the poor record of CBM implementation?

Given the dissolution of previous Indo-Pak security agreements, how could NRRCs be successfully operationalized? Would the NRRC become the central message center for all the CBMs and NRRMs notifications to ensure their implementation? How would Pakistan's NRRC function and be organized? Where would it be located? This paper is an attempt to examine and address these questions.

## **WHAT ARE CBMS?**

CBMs can be broadly divided into three categories: political, military, and socio-economic. In the military realm they have been subdivided into conventional and nuclear CBMs. The latter are commonly known as NRRMs. Following the nuclearization of South Asia, NRRMs have attained greater significance. It is necessary here to define CBMs before making any further deliberations on their evolution and effectiveness in South Asia. According to Johan Jørgen Holst:

Confidence-building measures (CBMs) may be defined as arrangements designed to enhance assurance of mind and belief in the trust-worthiness of states—confidence is the product of much broader patterns of relations than those which relate to military security. In fact, the latter have to be woven into a complex texture of economic, cultural, technical and social relationships.<sup>9</sup>

The concept of CBMs is generally believed to have originated in the 1970s in the backdrop of East-West confrontation. There is, however, sufficient evidence that the concept and process had already existed in various parts of the world, albeit undefined. The most comprehensive, elaborate, and successful model of CBMs to date is found in the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 that was essentially designed for conventional armed forces in Europe.<sup>10</sup> The introduction of transparency and verification elements increased the efficiency of CBMs. CBM terminology was first applied to India-Pakistan

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<sup>9</sup> Holst quoted in Naeem Ahmad Salik, "CBMs – Past, Present and Future," *Pakistan Defense Review* (Winter 1998), p. 70.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Krepon, Michael Newbill, Khurshid Khoja, and Jenny S. Drezin (eds), *Global Confidence Building, New Tools for Troubled Regions* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999), pp. 277–284.

relations after the 1987 Brasstacks crisis. The process of CBMs, however, had already existed between India and Pakistan. The 1949 Karachi Agreement, the Liaquat-Nehru Pact of 1950, the India-Pakistan Border Ground Rules Agreement of 1960, the Indus Water Treaty of 1962, the Tashkent Agreement of 1966, and the Simla Agreement of 1972 are cases in point.<sup>11</sup>

The principal CBMs of the last 40 years are:

- Hotline between Military Operation Directorates (1965);
- Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities (1988, ratified and implemented in 1992);
- Hotline between Prime Ministers Benazir Bhutto and Rajiv Gandhi (1989);
- Agreement on Advance Notice of Military Exercises, Maneuvers and Troops Movements (1991);
- Measures to Prevent Air Space Violations and to Permit Over Flights and Landing by Military Aircrafts (1992).<sup>12</sup>

In the Lahore Declaration, the two prime ministers recognized that the nuclear reality of the subcontinent gives each nation the responsibility to avoid conflict. The document indicates that they were convinced of the need for mutually agreed CBMs to improve the security environment.<sup>13</sup> Seven of the eight points in the MOU signed by the foreign secretaries of India and Pakistan on that occasion concerned nuclear risk reduction, an issue that was being addressed for the first time.<sup>14</sup> An item alluding to the prevention of incidents at sea has added significance since India has announced intentions to nuclearize its navy<sup>15</sup> and Pakistan has established the Naval Strategic Force Command.<sup>16</sup>

## Why Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers Are Needed

Tension and animosity between India and Pakistan has been increased by lack of trust, perpetual suspicion of each other's actions, non-acceptance of co-existence from the day of Partition and, more importantly, a reluctance to solve and deliberate attempts to postpone a resolution of the Kashmir issue. The lack of compliance or implementation mechanisms, the lack of transparency and verification measures, and the lack of dispute resolution forums are the key reasons why the existing CBMs and NRRMs have failed to achieve the desired objectives. Michael Krepon has observed that India and Pakistan have used CBMs more as "competition building measures than as confidence building measures."<sup>17</sup> He continued, "Most of the CBM proposals have instead been designed to capture the

<sup>11</sup> Naeem Ahmad Salik, "CBMs – Past, Present, and Future," p.69.

<sup>12</sup> Swati Pandey and Teresita C. Schaffer, "Building Confidence in India and Pakistan," *South Asia Monitor*, No. 49 (Washington, D.C: Center for Strategic and International Studies), p. 1. See Annexes A and B for additional CBMs.

<sup>13</sup> Chris Gagné, "Nuclear Risk Reduction in South Asia; Building on Common Ground", in Krepon and Gagne, *The Stability-Instability Paradox*, p. 51.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52. The Lahore MOU was signed on February 21, 1999. For the text of the agreement see Annex B.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*; Naeem Ahmad Salik, "False Warnings and Accidents" in CISAC Workshop on *Preventing Nuclear War in South Asia* held at Bangkok (August 4–7, 2001), p.73.

<sup>17</sup> Krepon, et al., *Global Confidence Building*, p.178.

political high ground, not to solve problems.”<sup>18</sup> He points out another important reason “the juridical status of CBMs as ‘politically binding’—rather than legally binding—documents helps afford India and Pakistan the latitude to skirt proper implementation.”<sup>19</sup>

During the critical periods of heightened tensions between India and Pakistan, CBMs have been either ineffective or absent. In fact, Pakistan and India have not yet moved beyond the first stage of the CBM process. Michael Krepon describes the three stages of the CBM process as “conflict avoidance measures, confidence building measures and strengthening the peace.”<sup>20</sup> Dr. Maleeha Lodhi notes that:

... CBMs cannot stand-alone and can only work in a broader context. The presumption of priority for CBMs is that underlying problems are not resolvable, and therefore, by freezing the status quo, CBMs can somehow reduce tension and avert the danger of war... Meant to be a step towards conflict resolution, they can often be used as a substitute. They have frequently been pursued in South Asia under external prodding or pressure and at the expense of problem solving.<sup>21</sup>

The twin processes of confidence building and nuclear risk reduction between India and Pakistan stopped soon after the Lahore MOU, which did not explicitly address the core issue of Kashmir. In the drive to postpone the resolution of conflicts, we denied our people reassurance. Pakistanis perceive that Indian ideological chauvinism and jingoistic behavior in Kashmir, and its coercive strategy of compellance has furthered mistrust and misperceptions by weaker neighbors.<sup>22</sup> President Pervez Musharraf has very explicitly conveyed to India, “We [in Pakistan] can not [sic] be frightened into compromising on our principled position on Kashmir.”<sup>23</sup> Bilateral initiatives in the absence of conflict resolution are no longer workable in South Asia. CBMs and NRRMs have, thus far, failed to bridge the gap of mistrust and animosity between the two countries and therefore have a poor record in the subcontinent. The remedy for both India and Pakistan is to follow a principle of sovereign equality and mutual respect during their interstate relations, to abandon belligerency, and also to follow a civilized method to resolve differences through political means. Pakistan has already proffered a genuine, sustained, and purpose-oriented dialogue in this regard several times. Pakistan has offered India a “triad of peace”: “Resolution of disputes, a no-war pact, mutual reduction of forces and de-nuclearization and economic cooperation.”<sup>24</sup> Almost every world leader today, including Mr. Vajpayee himself, concedes, “there seems to be no rational alternative to dialogue.”<sup>25</sup>

In any prospective dialogue, the establishment of NRRCs could be considered. They are genuinely needed, especially to alleviate the environment of mistrust and misperception between the two

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Krepon, “Conflict Avoidance, Confidence Building and Peacemaking” in *A Handbook of Confidence Building Measures for Regional Security*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (Washington, DC: The Henry L. Stimson Center, 1998), p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Dr Maleeha Lodhi, “Nuclear Risk Reduction and Conflict Resolution in South Asia,” *The News* (Islamabad), November 28, 1998.

<sup>22</sup> For more on compellance, see Gaurav Kampani, “India’s Compellance Strategy: Calling Pakistan’s Nuclear Bluff over Kashmir” (Monterey, CA: Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, June 10, 2002).

<sup>23</sup> President Pervez Musharraf, “President of Pakistan’s Address to the United Nations General Assembly on 12-09-2002,” Internet: [http://www.infopak.gov.pk/President\\_Addresses/president-UNGA.htm](http://www.infopak.gov.pk/President_Addresses/president-UNGA.htm).

<sup>24</sup> “India Piling Up Arms,” *Dawn* (September 12, 2002).

<sup>25</sup> Major General Mahmud Ali Durrani, retired, “India and Pakistan: The Cost of Conflict and the Benefits of Peace” (Washington, DC: The Johns Hopkins University Foreign Policy Institute, School of Advanced International Studies, 2000), p. 52.

nations. Functioning as a central message center for all CBM and NRRM notifications, they would help to serve as an effective, exclusive and a dedicated technical means of official communications for rapid and accurate exchange of factual information. Besides serving as a measure to consolidate and implement the existing CBMs through renewed consultation, dispute resolution, and legally binding implementation mechanisms, the NRRCs are expected to facilitate identification, negotiation and implementation of additional institutional and procedural arrangements. They should also possess the technical means to reduce or prevent misperceptions or actions that could lead to an unintended or accidental nuclear escalation. The conflict resolution measures, if addressed concurrently at the political levels, would help reassure and assuage the frustrations of the citizenry, and would help build confidence to ensure the success of the NRRCs.

### **Kashmir and the Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers**

India and Pakistan are experiencing the most turbulent period of their relations since early 1999. Today, peace in South Asia has become hostage to one incident, one act of terrorism and one strategic miscalculation. Most analysts now opine that India and Pakistan have failed to resolve the Kashmir issue bilaterally. In fact the Kashmiris, on both sides, have experienced the worst kind of human suffering in their struggle for self-determination. However, many political figures, statesmen, and academics are still vibrantly optimistic about a political resolution of the issues and the viability of CBMs and NRRMs between India and Pakistan. Michael Krepon, Karl Inderfurth, Ambassador Teresita Schaffer, Bruce Blair, Robert Einhorn, Dr. Zafar Iqbal Cheema, Dr. Pervez Iqbal Cheema, Dr. Rifaat Hussain, General (retired) Jehangir Karamat, Major General (retired) William Burns and Rear Admiral (retired) John Sigler, all recognize the significance of these types of measures during the current situation between India and Pakistan.<sup>26</sup>

There is almost a general consensus on the importance of the resolving the Kashmir issue, without which peace may remain distant from South Asia. Stephen P. Cohen argues:

Kashmir is the most important single conflict in the subcontinent, not just because its territory and its population are contested, but because larger issues of national identity and regional power balances are imbedded in it. ‘Solving’ the Kashmir dispute means addressing these larger concerns and they cannot be addressed without new thinking on Kashmir and Kashmiris.<sup>27</sup>

Given the fact that neither India nor Pakistan is in a position to resolve the issue through the use of force, it is difficult to understand why they do not pursue a pragmatic, political approach. The need for serious and sustained dialogue along with concrete measures to reduce nuclear dangers has never been greater. Therefore, until positive measures for conflict resolution and new initiatives for the prevention of escalation and nuclear risk reduction are worked out and implemented, nuclear risk reduction in South Asia will remain rhetoric, just as the proposals for conflict avoidance have been for decades.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Interviews with the author, July and August 2002.

<sup>27</sup> Stephen P. Cohen, “Draft Case Study: The Compound Crisis of 2002,” mimeo, p. 31.

<sup>28</sup> Mr. Inam ul Haq, former foreign secretary of Pakistan, in a statement at the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva on January 25, 2001 has proffered a three-tiered comprehensive peace and security framework that includes simultaneous conflict resolution dialogue, a regional strategic restraint regime, and regional cooperation in economic, trade and social revival between the two

It is therefore proposed that besides establishing an “India-Pakistan Joint Commission on Kashmir” and other measures for socio-economic and scientific cooperation, we should seriously consider the proposal for establishing NRRCs between the two countries. The commission would be composed of special envoys determined by the respective heads of state and may later integrate representatives from Kashmir.<sup>29</sup> To ensure transparency in this process, it may be worthwhile to include a group of facilitators, which could be composed of widely respected world figures (Jimmy Carter or Nelson Mandela, for instance), along with regional representatives from Asia (from Japan, for instance) and the European Union. The people of India and Pakistan would be strongly reassured if their governments decided to commence a meaningful and sustained dialogue with an expressed determination to resolve the Kashmir issue, along with establishing NRRCs for a lasting peace. Any preconditions to commence this process may not produce a positive outcome.

Following the commencement of a dialogue between India and Pakistan, the proposal for establishing NRRCs may be promptly negotiated and immediately activated. As the Kashmir issue may take several years to resolve, the establishment of NRRCs should not be delayed until a settlement is reached. The successful functioning of the NRRCs depends on concurrent measures being taken towards a resolution of the Kashmir issue. NRRC success may also help build the trust and confidence that is essential for strengthening peace in the region. If the people of India, Pakistan, and Kashmir are convinced of the sincerity of the two governments and reassured by the progress of their dialogue on Kashmir, dangerous practices and the conviction for armed struggle are likely to wane. As violence decreased, Pakistan would expect India to reduce the number of security forces in Jammu and Kashmir. However, it should be expected that the Kashmiris will continue to struggle indigenously for their self-determination until an ultimate resolution can be reached. The purpose of the NRRCs would be to avert mistrust and misperceptions—and the consequences they could bring—while the conflict resolution process occurred.

## **The U.S. Cold War Experience and Nuclear Risk Reduction Measures**

Before discussing the objectives and merits or demerits of establishing NRRCs between India and Pakistan, it may be appropriate to analyze the U.S.-Soviet Cold War experience with nuclear risk reduction measures to determine their applicability and adaptability to South Asian security environments.

Michael Krepon and P.R. Chari have both argued that despite differences in the environments, the key elements of nuclear risk reduction during the Cold War are still applicable in southern Asia. To comment and enumerate them briefly:<sup>30</sup>

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neighbors. See Feroz Hassan Khan, “Navigating the Crossroads”, *The Monitor* [Center for International Trade and Security, University of Georgia] Vol. 7, No. 3 (Fall 2001), pp. 10–14.

<sup>29</sup> Major General Durrani, “India and Pakistan,” p. 59. General Durrani suggests appointing an emissary from the heads of state.

<sup>30</sup> Michael Krepon, “Nuclear Risk Reduction: Is Cold War Experience Applicable to South Asia?” in Krepon and Gagné, *The Stability-Instability Paradox*, pp. 1–14 and P.R. Chari, “Nuclear Restraint, Nuclear Risk Reduction, and the Security-Insecurity Paradox in South Asia,” in Krepon and Gagné, *The Stability-Instability Paradox*, pp. 32–33. The author has added certain comments and suggestions to assert the application of these elements in South Asia.

- “A formal agreement not to change the territorial status quo by military means”: We need to pursue the provisions embodied in the Simla agreement and other CBMs and NRRMs seriously.
- “A tacit agreement to avoid nuclear brinkmanship”: The rhetoric and threatening statements from the political and military leadership in both countries must be arrested. Jingoistic statements made by the leadership of both countries, particularly during crises, are fraught with danger. This trend must be avoided.
- “A formal agreement to minimize or avoid dangerous military practices/exercises”: It is widely believed that the people of India and Pakistan now understand the significance of this provision.
- “Special reassurance measures for ballistic missiles and nuclear weapon systems”: Exchange of information on storage or deployment sites of their respective limited nuclear arsenals may be currently considered a security hazard by India and Pakistan. However, prior notifications for missile tests (presently being followed) and a non-deployment posture of nuclear weapons systems or notification of their movement during training and exercises may be formally agreed upon and implemented with some verification mechanism to add transparency.
- “Trust in the faithful implementation of treaty obligations and CBMs”: This needs to be addressed deliberately through conflict resolution and legally binding implementation mechanisms.
- “Verification”: India has rudimentary capabilities while Pakistan currently does not possess national technical means for verification. However, military attachés and/or a few inspectors could subsequently be incorporated to verify the military exercises or to confirm non-deployment of nuclear weapons on suspected sites after transparency measures had been established. A means to lessen misperceptions could be achieved by establishing Indian and Pakistani NRRCs that already integrate an element of verification.
- “Establishing reliable lines of communication across borders for both political and military leaders”: The hotlines between the DGMOs are now functioning well and have remained intact even during the recent military standoff, which is a positive sign.<sup>31</sup> However, despite Pakistan’s best efforts during the hijacking of a plane from Nepal, the Indian DGMO did not respond on the hotline and the Indian foreign secretary broke the communication immediately after the plane took off from Amritsar despite repeated Pakistani requests for this not to happen. The Indian media fueled further misperceptions. According to Brigadier Feroz Khan, this demonstrates “Indian intentions to utilize the hotline/CBMs only when it suits their requirements.”<sup>32</sup> Pakistani use of the hotline leaves much to be desired as well. The significance of the hotline channel between the heads of states needs no more evidence.
- “Establishment of reliable and redundant command and control systems as well as intelligence capabilities”: Pakistan has already declared its command and control arrangement through the

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<sup>31</sup> The author’s personal experience during a visit to GHQ in early July 2002 as well as confirmation of the fact by Brigadier Naem Salik, Director of Arms Control and Disarmament Affairs, Strategic Plans Division, Pakistan on September 5, 2002.

<sup>32</sup> Author’s interview with Brigadier Feroz H. Khan, Washington, DC, September 1, 2002.

establishment of its National Command Authority in February 2000.<sup>33</sup> However, a senior Indian defense official reportedly stated on June 6, 2002 that “India is in no haste to establish a nuclear command and control structure,”<sup>34</sup> an issue that should be addressed immediately.

- “Upgrade and strengthen existing risk reduction measures”: This is a continuous process applicable both in crisis situations as well as in peacetime. This provides the context in which Indian and Pakistani NRRCs would operate.

The following measures are recommended for consideration by both countries as soon as government-to-government interaction and the process of dialogue are resumed. The U.S. may help to monitor, facilitate, and render necessary assistance as considered appropriate to make the CBMs and NRRMs workable:

- Revival of old CBMs and NRRMs with special reference to incorporating a “India-Pakistan Dispute Resolution Forum” and a “Legally Binding and Implementing Mechanism” as a policy instrument to support all CBMs and NRRMs. The forum may have annual or semiannual meetings.<sup>35</sup>
- Bilateral channels of communication and revival of hotlines to stipulate expanded levels including the Navy and Air Force, directions and frequency of communication, and face-to-face meetings if stipulations are violated.<sup>36</sup>
- Reducing the danger from false alarms through prior notifications of certain activities, possibly including major military exercises, large troop movements, changes in the deployment of air forces or other strategic elements, and cooperative aerial monitoring efforts.
- Establishment of an “India-Pakistan Joint Commission on Kashmir”.
- A comprehensive nuclear restraint regime, which may include the following:
  - Prior notification of missile tests including the direction of fire.
  - Agreement not to conduct missile tests, even those that were pre-planned, during a crisis or while major exercises are being conducted.
  - Notification of all exercises that involve troop movement out of garrisons at division or above levels.
  - Notification of strategic force and/or equipment movement for training.
  - Agreement not to deploy nuclear tipped weapon systems. A “zero alert policy” could also be explored and discussed.<sup>37</sup>
  - Agreement for non-mating and separate storage of nuclear warheads and delivery vehicles.

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<sup>33</sup> Naeem Salik, “False Warning and Accidents,” p. 73.

<sup>34</sup> “India in No Haste to form N-Command Structure,” *The News* (Islamabad), June 7, 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Pandey and Schaffer, “Building Confidence in India and Pakistan.”

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> See Bruce Blair, *Global Zero Alert of Nuclear Forces* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1995), pp. 78–108.

- Negotiation for the establishment of “Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers” (NRRCs) between India and Pakistan.<sup>38</sup> An agreement to this effect may include and emphasize the centrality of these institutions for the communication and implementation of the confidence building and risk reduction regimes.
- A mechanism for cooperation while confronting a nuclear accident or an incident of nuclear terrorism.

## The U.S. Nuclear Risk Reduction Center

The U.S. Nuclear Risk Reduction Center (NRRC) is a unique government entity located in and staffed by the State Department. The concept of the NRRC originated in a working group organized by Senators Sam Nunn and John Warner. The U.S.’s NRRC and its Russian (then-Soviet) counterpart were formally established at a signing ceremony in Washington, DC on September 15, 1987. The two centers provided the first direct communication link between the two capitals since the presidential “hotline” was instituted in 1963.

Although used primarily for the exchange of notifications under existing bilateral and multilateral treaties, the NRRC has periodically proved its use in other areas as well. In January 1991, “goodwill” notifications were used to exchange information on the re-entry of the Salyut 7 space station. Later that same year the NRRCs served as a means of emergency communications during a major fire in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. In the last twelve years, eleven such “goodwill” messages have been exchanged.

From the first message sent in April 1988 to the most recent stage of multilateral arms control notifications, the NRRC has served as a dependable means of exchanging information. It is an integral player in arms control implementation, and meets communications requirements for almost twenty arms control treaties and agreements with over fifty countries in six different languages. Presently, 153 different types of notifications are being exchanged annually in accordance with various treaties.<sup>39</sup>

## NUCLEAR RISK REDUCTION CENTERS FOR INDIA AND PAKISTAN

As stated earlier, the establishment of NRRCs between nuclear India and Pakistan would facilitate official communication for exchanging information to prevent misperception or unintended reactions leading to a crisis or escalation. It would be an additional but separate high-level technical means of official communication between the two governments. The hotline monitors and other electronic communication systems placed in the NRRCs would be used for advance notifications of various strategic and military training maneuvers to prevent misinterpretation or miscalculation. Though exchanging information on the exact location of their nuclear missiles or storage sites may not be in the

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<sup>38</sup> See Feroz Hassan Khan, “Navigating the Crossroads,” p. 14. He has made a fleeting reference for establishing a ‘Crisis Prevention Center’ in his recommendations at the end of his paper.

<sup>39</sup> Barry M. Blechman and Michael Krepon, *Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers* (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1986), pp. 1-26, *Brochure on The U.S. NRRC: 1988–2002* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 2002), and author’s interviews with NRRC Director Harold Kowalski, Jr. and NRRC staff (August 22, 2002). See Annex C for more information.

security interest of the two countries, the NRRC could greatly aid in the implementation of various arms control and force reduction measures through inspection and verification elements.

The existing hotline between the DGMOs, the heads of states, and other diplomatic channels of communication would continue to function as they have their own specific military, political, and diplomatic roles. The NRRCs, under a senior diplomat or a political figure directly appointed by the head of state and with sufficient experience in handling security issues would coordinate with all relevant military, intelligence and diplomatic circles to perform its functions for the timely exchange of accurate information and notifications under various agreements. The NRRCs may thus become the highest central coordinating institution in the country for the exchange of information and notifications and for the implementation of various agreements. The director general, besides having his own reporting channel, would have direct communication access to the senior armed and strategic force commanders, senior bureaucrats and the heads of intelligence agencies.

NRRCs could help clarify an intended message or information with greater accuracy by using already agreed upon formats or through a goodwill message extended in an emergency. The NRRCs would, therefore, become an appropriate official channel for the exchange of information during crises to prevent misperceptions, which in a local conflict could prevent accidental or inadvertent escalation. The second element of the NRRCs may be a verification mechanism, essentially to build trust. It may consist of observers and inspectors to verify the authenticity of intelligence in case either country expresses doubt. These details are covered in the operational aspects discussed below. Thus, the NRRCs would work hard to establish the trust and confidence necessary to strengthening peace. They should not, however, be a substitute for the political and diplomatic channels of communication.

## **Objectives of the NRRCs**

Much like the NRRCs established for the U.S. and Russia, Michael Krepon believes that an agreement between India and Pakistan to establish NRRCs would indicate that they recognize the need for a separate channel of high-level communication and autonomous institutional arrangements dedicated to reducing the risks of conflict escalation. It is believed that most of the Indian political leadership generally agrees and is interested in the creation of NRRCs in principle, though Pakistan's leadership, while also believing in the merits of the idea, currently considers it difficult to pursue at the official level.<sup>40</sup> The centers would operate under the policy guidelines of their respective leaderships and in collaboration with various civil and military instruments of their governments.

The same spirit is relevant to the objectives of NRRCs in South Asia as was present during the Cold War. The U.S.-Soviet objectives were:

- To facilitate negotiation and implementation of additional institutional and procedural arrangements, as well as technical measures intended to reduce nuclear risks;

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<sup>40</sup> Author's interview with Robert J. Einhorn at Washington, DC, August 2002.

- To create a buffer around nuclear risk prevention measures and to protect them from the vicissitudes of U.S.-Soviet relations;
- To provide more latitude to national leaders during crises;
- To provide a means of instantaneous communications among technical experts in the event of unusual contingencies;
- To provide a mechanism for training skilled interagency crisis teams;
- To reassure the publics in both nations, and in third countries, that the two great powers were acting to reduce the risk of nuclear war.<sup>41</sup>

These objectives are pertinent to India and Pakistan as well and are discussed in the following paragraphs. The additional objectives for NRRCs could include:

- *To institutionalize the implementation of unilateral, bilateral or multilateral measures for nuclear risk reduction, arms control, and/or force reduction in the region.* Various proposals for a comprehensive restraint regime are already in the offing. The NRRCs may subsequently help to effect arms control and mutual force reduction measures.
- *To provide a mechanism to build trust and confidence through an instrument of consultation to address disputes and a system of verifications to nullify misperceptions.* The elements of trust and confidence have been lacking in the security environments of South Asia. Mutual consultations, joint planning, and analysis to handle various contingencies, along with a verification mechanism would fill the existing vacuum to ensure the credibility of this institution. Incorporating technical experts into the NRRCs' staff to verify the information or notifications would help ensuring the same.
- *A mechanism to consolidate and ensure implementation of the existing agreements through legally binding arrangements instead of politically binding systems.* The NRRCs functioning as a central institution for the exchange of information and notifications in coordination with various segments of the government may automatically serve to consolidate and implement the existing CBMs and NRRMs. The verification and implementation mechanisms and the dispute resolution forum developed to make the NRRCs workable would renew the credibility of existing CBMs.

For effective functioning of the NRRCs, as established under the supervision of a senior government functionary selected by the heads of state, the two governments would be expected to spare adequate resources for its operation. Besides seeking guidance and technical assistance from the government and intelligence agencies, the center's director general would also have direct communication and access to the Foreign Minister and the President/PM.

The NRRCs, through their legal and institutional procedural arrangements and through a separate channel of communication between government officials would serve as a good buffer during crises. The staff of the respective NRRCs, having developed good working relations during peacetime, would be more likely to communicate positively during crises. By exchanging preliminary information and

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<sup>41</sup> Barry M. Blechman and Krepon, *Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers*, pp. 6–8.

assessments of mutual intentions and implementing procedural arrangements, NRRCs may prove more successful than existing hotlines between the DGMOs and the head of states.

Troop movement, military exercises, and intelligence-gathering systems are means of sending important signals. However, even at the diplomatic level it becomes difficult to convey an intended message with precision. The messages transmitted or conveyed may appear to be muted or overdrawn and could be entirely misinterpreted by the other side. The establishment of NRRCs would permit the rapid exchange of detailed and accurate messages between officials and experts well before communication between political leaders and bureaucrats occurred, which is essential during critical periods. The NRRCs, during periods of deep crisis, would be able to evaluate and analyze the facts before the governments/political leaders decided to take a specific course of action. The benefits of real-time communications through NRRCs would provide more intelligence and latitude to the national leadership to make better-informed analyses during crises well before they decide to take action.

Instantaneous means of communication among technical experts could be very useful during air and naval operations or in a crisis situation through cooperative monitoring. The shooting of Pakistan's naval aircraft "Atlantic" by India and similar incidents could have been more easily defused or perhaps prevented if an NRRC-like system was in place and the director and staff had established good working relations. The NRRCs would be a good method of exchanging information following an accident. Goodwill messages between the U.S. and Russian NRRCs are a testament to this observation.

The NRRCs would be staffed by a selective group of interagency experts and technically skilled personnel. The procedural functions would help train skilled interagency crisis prevention teams. The staff of both centers would have to discuss and coordinate measures to handle crisis situations during negotiations for the NRRCs, and also during their regular meetings and consultations. The need for cooperation is particularly important for defusing potential crises involving nuclear terrorism. The interactions between the multidisciplinary NRRC staff would have great potential to handle situations the moment crises arise. Given a well developed understanding of each other's concerns, prior planning, analysis, and training to handle such incidents, NRRCs would not only help to prevent potential crises, but may also be a step forward towards cooperation for a joint action to fight nuclear terrorism.

### ***Building Trust and Confidence***

The establishment of NRRCs would help clear the clouds of mistrust and reduce the chances of conflict and nuclear war in the region. Their goal would be to introduce measures of trust and confidence between the two nations by incorporating consultation and dispute resolution mechanisms along with verification and legally binding implementation mechanisms. Besides reactivating the existing CBMs/NRRMs with renewed resolve to address conflict resolution through political means, the introduction of NRRCs would establish a rainbow of peace and reassurance for the people of the two countries as well as for the region as a whole.

By institutionalizing an additional, official means for exchanging accurate and factual information under already agreed procedural arrangements, the previously poor record of CBMs and

NRRCs would see a radical improvement. The establishment of détente in South Asia is, however, essential and critical to commence the official process, while the establishment and successful functioning of the NRRCs depends upon concurrent measures taken for conflict resolution. Kashmir is now unanimously considered to be the core issue and a nuclear flash point. But the process to negotiate, establish, or activate the NRRCs should not be delayed until a resolution of the Kashmir issue, which could take considerable time given its own internal dynamics and complexity. However, positive measures taken to resolve the dispute through a sustained dialogue would serve as the fuel to operate the NRRCs effectively, and would form the basis of trust and reassurance for the people of the two countries including the Kashmiris. In the absence of these measures peace and cooperation would remain distant from South Asia. The economic dividends that could be achieved from consequent socioeconomic cooperation are self-explanatory and are expected to kick start the economy of the whole region. The U.S., therefore, has a definite role to play.

### **Risks, Likely Apprehensions, Merits and Demerits**

There may be significant doubts and concerns in the minds of the South Asian leadership for the establishment of Indian and Pakistani NRRCs. Some of these are similar to U.S. and Soviet concerns during the Cold War. It is appropriate to list their concerns first and then discuss their application to South Asia in this regard:

- Creation of centers may increase Soviet opportunities for spreading misleading information and deception leading up to and during crises;
- The centers could offer opportunities for the Soviets to gain important intelligence information, including sensitive information on sources and methods;
- By providing an additional channel of communications, creation of the centers could lead to confusion and mixed signals regarding U.S. policy as well as interpretations of Soviet actions;
- Creation of the centers could prompt concerns by allies, friends, or third parties that the great powers would discuss problems in which they had a stake without adequately considering their interests.<sup>42</sup>

The first three arguments listed above are equally applicable to current Indo-Pak relations. The arguments in support of or against establishing NRRCs for India and Pakistan are discussed below:

- *The opponent's abuse of the NRRC for misleading or false information for deception.* The NRRCs are designed to serve as a separate, additional channel of official communication among technical expert officials. They would have to follow a specific method of exchanging notifications and information according to an already negotiated mechanism. In the prevailing security environment, the interest of both countries to resolve the dispute may override their conflicting positions on several

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

issues. In some situations, however, instead of taking measures to defuse the crisis, the NRRCs might be used to convey misleading or false information, further exacerbating tension in an already strained political environment. The important thing to note here is that a decision to misuse this official channel for nuclear risk reduction would itself convey the myth of the opponent's dubious intentions. The opponent's ability to misuse the NRRC is directly proportional to the intelligence and capabilities of its own staff to identify the same. The staff may, therefore, be trained in such a manner to identify the disinformation techniques of the opponent and have additional training to practice their skills. These staff members would be expected to advise the senior government officials and the political leaders when the information received through the NRRC channel appear to be disingenuous or misleading. The ability and shrewdness of the NRRC officials and the real purpose and potentials of the NRRC would, therefore, help to prevent the potential misuse of the centers.

- *Threat to national security.* This is considered to be the principal concern for anyone who understands the importance of establishing NRRCs between India and Pakistan. Many might say that it would neutralize Pakistan's deterrent against India and is just another Indian strategy to counter our first use strategy. It must therefore be understood that the centers are being created to prevent misperceptions of intentions or of actions that could initiate conflict or lead to an unintended or an accidental nuclear exchange. It would be possible through a mechanism provided by these centers for an accurate and rapid exchange of factual information between the two countries. Secondly, there was no perceptible change in the nuclear strategies of the U.S. or Russia following the establishment of their NRRCs. Likewise the NRRCs would not affect our strategy at all. This aspect is related to the apprehensions for leakage of sensitive information or intelligence through the use of advanced technical systems or verification through inspections. This risk is strictly within the exclusive powers of the authorities to control as the government would decide which information the NRRC may communicate or verify in a particular event, just as it controls any other official communication system. The measures taken at the NRRCs in pursuit of national policy must also help prepare a highly trained coterie of multidisciplinary personnel with considerable technical experience to handle the security and strategic environments of South Asia. A trained group of special staff under the specific guidance of the respective government is expected to provide a further check in this regard, as they would exchange the required information under an already agreed upon mechanism and on a pre-formatted system. Intelligence agency officials may be asked to provide guidance on all related matters as deemed necessary. The functioning of the NRRC would therefore encompass an in-built mechanism to guard against unauthorized disclosure of potentially sensitive or damaging information.
- *The NRRCs may not prevent a crisis from potential or actual nuclear terrorism.* Some analysts might have doubts about the difficulties that may arise in cases of nuclear terrorism. While it is true that prevention of the incident itself may not always be possible, NRRCs could still avoid the escalation of an ensuing conflict. The quick exchange of information in such situations could lead to cooperation in nuclear safety measures to prevent and control nuclear radiation that could result from an accident or as a result of an attack on a nuclear installation. Both India and Pakistan may be willing to cooperate in such situations instead of creating a conflict, with the potential for inadvertent or accidental escalation to the nuclear level. Non-government experts are already in the process of

addressing this issue.<sup>43</sup> If deemed appropriate, the two governments may later consider an agreement for dealing with these situations. The institutionalization of the NRRCs, by offering it an opportunity to act in such situations, may gradually make the South Asian security environment amiable.

- *The establishment of NRRCs could generate countervailing forces harmful to regional security.* Actors within both governments may be ideologically opposed to an improvement in India-Pakistan relations. Further, there are many that financially benefit from the continuing hostile environment and conflict. It is not difficult to imagine that these actors would attempt to disrupt or impair the successful functioning of the NRRCs. Further, the Kashmir issue may also be exploited to pressurize the authorities. Given this countervailing pressure, it is still hoped that the leaders at both ends, in considering this proposal, would demonstrate pragmatism for the larger interest of their people and the region. They may have to simultaneously address outstanding conflicts with flexibility to make headway towards the eventual elimination of conflict and to bring a lasting peace and prosperity to India and Pakistan.

### **The Functioning of the NRRCs**

- The NRRCs would be legally bound to remain open continuously. The centers shall, therefore, be manned around the clock.
- No malfunctions or breakage in the technical equipment or hotline monitors will be tolerated at any time. The redundancy may either be ensured through duplications or other technically feasible measures.
- It must be understood that the NRRCs are not a substitute to the diplomatic and political channels of communication. The center's hotline is also no substitute to that of the military commander. Thus, the NRRC staff does not have to perform the functions directly concerned with these personnel. Key staff members from both centers will meet once or twice a year to resolve problems and to seek improvements in the efficiency of the centers.
- The staff will not exchange any voice or telephone communications, because of the potential this mode of communication has for misperception. The centers shall exchange only written and preformatted notifications, the text and details of which shall be mutually decided and agreed upon by both countries during their meetings.
- "Goodwill" messages may be used only in cases of an emergency to prevent a potential crisis. No deviations will be accepted in this regard. The U.S. and Russia have exchanged only eleven "goodwill" messages in the last 14 years.
- Any message other than the preformatted notifications could send a wrong signal and would be tantamount to a violation of the agreements. The multidisciplinary staff must use its skill to identify any institutional or procedural anomaly and prevent its recurrence.

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<sup>43</sup> Rajesh Basrur and Hasan Askari Rizvi, "The Nuclear Terrorism in South Asia" (Washington, DC: Presented at the Brookings Institution, September 13, 2002).

- The staff must always rapidly submit notification to their counterparts and effect prior coordination with various departments accordingly. In case of any delay or lapse, the notification should still be forwarded with regrets on the failure to retain trust and confidence in the institution.

It must be noted that the “NRRCs are not the panacea for crisis management” and should not become involved in substantive negotiations during crises. The purpose of the center is to prevent misperceptions or miscalculations leading to an unintended or accidental nuclear exchange. Crisis management is the job of trained diplomats and the burden will continue to fall on political leaders. Therefore, it should be conducted through normal diplomatic channels or between heads of state. The “NRRCs could compliment diplomatic channels during crises only when political authorities believe that technical exchanges about military activities could be useful supplements to the main diplomatic discourse.”<sup>44</sup>

### **Operationalization of the NRRCs**

The NRRCs could be operationalized after well-planned negotiations led to an agreement between the two governments in this regard. The agreement would only be possible when the two governments decide to sit down for a dialogue. Keeping in view the current stand off between the two governments and the absence of official interaction, this proposal cannot currently be considered at the official level.

The “Track Two” efforts, however, cannot be neglected as a means of discussing this proposal. The U.S., having already attempted to persuade the two leaderships to sit down together, could play a significant role in asking the parties to consider establishing the NRRCs. Meanwhile, a trilateral working group consisting of senior civil and retired military officials from Pakistan, India and the U.S. could be formed to study the feasibility of establishing NRRCs between India and Pakistan. The working group could meet anywhere outside of India and Pakistan to analyze the broad contours and policy directions in this regard. A short report with recommendations from the group may be presented to the political leadership for consideration upon the establishment of détente and the resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan.

The working group may start its work as soon as possible and may publish a report by the end of 2003 at latest. The two governments may then discuss the feasibility for establishing NRRCs and may negotiate an agreement accordingly. The U.S. would have a critical and challenging role to facilitate a dialogue, to render necessary assistance in the negotiations, and to establish the NRRCs.

Smooth operation would be ensured by clear organizational concepts and avoidance of “the don’ts.” The consultative and verification mechanisms along with joint planning and procedural arrangements to handle various contingencies under the supervision of a senior director general and a highly trained interagency staff would help to ensure their eventual success to prevent crises and inadvertent escalation in South Asia. It is important to stress again that the fuel to run these NRRCs will be provided by simultaneously addressing conflict resolution measures. This is a reassurance mechanism

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<sup>44</sup> Blechman and Krepon, *Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers*, pp. 12–13.

exclusively in the hands of the leadership of the two countries. Once the core issues are resolved, it would add impetus to the functioning of the NRRCs. Thereafter, the NRRCs may run automatically.

## **The Organization and Function of the NRRCs**

The nuclear risk reduction centers would be established in Islamabad and New Delhi and would run constantly for 24 hours during any event with the potential to cause a nuclear crisis. These centers could be equipped with the latest computers and hotlines with high-speed data facsimile transmission links as agreed by the two governments. Double or dual monitoring devices for both conventional, nuclear and hotline systems may be established to assure reliable and redundant technical means of communication. Both countries can acquire separate channels on the same or different satellites to further ensure the redundancy. Developing ciphers would enhance the communication security between the two countries. A group of diplomatic, military, and intelligence personnel along with a few civil and technical experts would be required to work in the NRRC on both a temporary and permanent basis.

The staff should operate under previously agreed upon instructions and may be taken from various government departments and agencies. The President/PM, as considered appropriate, may nominate the director general of the NRRC who would report to the President/PM's Advisor or to the Foreign Minister. He could be a civilian with prior experience in security negotiations. The proposed organization for Pakistan's NRRC and a suggested diagram for its technical equipment is attached as Annex D.

The second important element of the NRRCs would be the "Group of Inspectors or Observers" consisting of technical personnel only. This is essentially designed to compliment trust and confidence through a "verification element". The inspectors or observers would be used, under the provisions of the NRRCs, in case the other country desires verification of any information, e.g. large-scale military exercises or movement of strategic forces/assets for training etc. Considering security issues, especially on nuclear and strategic assets, it may initially be practiced at a limited level to oversee large scale military moves and exercises such as Brasstacks or Zarb-e Momin, or to aid civil authorities during emergencies, and may later be expanded to confirm the training moves of strategic forces or other activities. It would set a precedent by adding the element of verification to build trust and confidence, and to alleviate misperceptions. The officials may work out the details during negotiations. The list of the visiting inspectors of the other country may, however, be processed by the government and intelligence agencies to verify their credentials, including the pilots by the civil aviation authorities to accord the necessary clearances.

The NRRC staff may be required to perform a wide range of functions in peacetime as well as during periods of tension and crisis. Despite the development of standard operating procedures, the centers may not initially be able to perform all the functions of the U.S. and Russian NRRCs. However, these may be worked out on modest requirements or task-oriented functions acceptable to the two governments. Once inventories are in place, additional functions can be worked out and improved at a later date. Initially, the staff might face certain difficulties in view of some of the anomalies and

irregularities in the CBMs and NRRMs. Through political will and concerted efforts the hurdles are likely to be eliminated progressively. Annual or semiannual meetings between the staff are essential to enhance the scope and functioning of the NRRCs. The U.S. support in this regard could be critical. The U.S. NRRC officials and non-governmental experts were all optimistic about the merits of NRRCs for South Asia and were willing to render necessary assistance in the light of their experiences.<sup>45</sup>

An important aspect for the smooth and successful functioning of the NRRCs is the need for certain agreements that warrant compliance through exchange of information, notifications, and verifications. Without such agreed arrangements, the advanced technical means of communication may not produce the desired results. NRRCs in the Middle East failed due to the absence of such agreements.<sup>46</sup>

### ***Location of Pakistan's NRRC***

Both the staff and inspection elements of the Russian NRRC are functioning quite smoothly in the MoD. The U.S. debate on the issue in 1986 considered four locations: the NSC apparatus at the White House, the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and a new setting separate from existing bureaucratic institutions.<sup>47</sup> However, then-Secretary of State George Shultz's argument prevailed. He argued that since the new channel of communication was being created as an additional link between the two governments and that function of the government is overseen by the State Department, the NRRC should function under the direct support and direction of the U.S. Department of State.<sup>48</sup> The U.S. on-site inspection expertise, however, functions under the Pentagon. Certain bureaucratic hurdles and vested interests were reportedly cited as reasons for preventing their integration.

Pakistan may decide either to keep the NRRC under the Principal Secretary/Advisor to the President/PM or under the Foreign Minister. Keeping in view the channel of reporting, the NRRC may be housed accordingly. The GHQ has its own hotline channel and reports to the MoD, therefore, the NRRC could work as a separate channel exclusively under civilian control. Military-related information and notification may be sent to NRRCs by routing through their official channels and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or External Affairs as applicable to both countries. The final authority to exchange the notification would be the NRRCs under intimation to respective ministries or headquarters. The military and the intelligence agencies, however, may be needed to render necessary assistance and for interaction with the Operations Section as per the organization of the NRRC (See Annex D).

## **CONCLUSION**

An agreement to refrain from the use of force and for the peaceful settlement of disputes already exists between India and Pakistan. They have also reached an understanding for taking NRRMs and the

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with U.S. NRRC Director Harold Kowalski, Jr., August 22, 2002.

<sup>46</sup> Interviews with NRRC director and staff, August 22, 2002.

<sup>47</sup> Blechman and Krepon, *Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers*, pp. 22–25.

<sup>48</sup> Interviews with NRRC director and staff, August 22, 2002.

creation of an appropriate consultative mechanism as well as a periodical review of existing CBMs. Therefore, besides observance of a ceasefire along the LoC and immediate cessation of human rights violations against Kashmiris, a dialogue must be resumed between India and Pakistan. Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Musharraf already agreed to a structure for talks in Agra. Only a sustained and meaningful dialogue between the two countries could lead us towards conflict resolution. The incremental approaches suggested by General Mahmud Durrani and General Talat Masood to achieve this objective, point towards commencing a dialogue and subsequently improve it through sustained consultation and conflict resolution measures.<sup>49</sup>

The proposal for creating NRRCs, though quite optimistic at this stage, might serve as a cornerstone towards a radical shift in the current security environments of Southern Asia. The concept of the NRRCs may thus form part of an agenda for dialogue between the two countries. It should be negotiated and implemented promptly without waiting for the outcome of the Kashmir dispute. However, the positive measures simultaneously taken to resolve disputes through a sustained dialogue would serve as the fuel to operate the NRRCs effectively and would form the basis for a rainbow of hope, trust and reassurance for the people of the two countries, including Kashmiris. In the absence of these measures, peace and cooperation will remain distant from South Asia.

The NRRCs, due to an inbuilt mechanism, would not only help to consolidate and enhance the scope of current CBMs/NRRMs between the two countries, but would also accelerate the conflict resolution track. The NRRCs, through formation of consultation and dispute resolving forums and implementation mechanisms would also lay the foundation for generating transparency, reassurance, and trust in Indo-Pakistani relations besides building confidence, tolerance and reconciliation, and strengthening peace in the region.

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<sup>49</sup> Major General Durrani, "India and Pakistan," pp. 53-54, and Talat Masood, "Military CBMs in South Asia" in *CBMs in South Asia: Potential and Possibilities* (Colombo, Sri Lanka: Regional Center for Strategic Studies, 2000), p. 46.

# **Annex A: List of India-Pakistan Confidence-Building Measures**

## **Communication Measures**

- Hotline between DG MOs since December 1971.
- Direct Communication Lines between Sector Commanders across the LOC since 1991.
- Hotline between Prime Ministers since 1997.

## **Measures Notification**

- Agreement for prior Notification of Military Exercises involving ten thousand or more troops is in place since April 1991. It stipulates that at Corps level exercises must be held forty five kilometres from the border while at Division level exercises must be held twenty five kilometres away from the border. No military activity is permitted within five kilometres of the border.

## **Transparency Measures**

- Invitation to military observers to attend major exercises to confirm non-hostile intent. Indian and other military attaches were invited to attend Zarb-e-Momin in 1989.
- To defuse tensions resulting from its spring 1990 exercises India invited U.S. observers to monitor the exercises and to confirm their non-hostile intent.

## **Border Security Measures**

- Karachi Agreement of 1949 which established an 800 mile CFL which obligated the troops to keep a distance of 500 yards from the line and froze the force levels along the CFL.
- The 1960 Indo-Pak Agreement on Border Disputes established “Ground Rules” to regulate the activities along the West Pakistan-India border.
- The Rann of Kutch Tribunal Award of 1966. It, however, left the demarcation of boundary in Sir Creek area which is still disputed.
- Air Space Violations Agreement signed in April 1991 and ratified in August 1992, which stipulates that no combat aircraft shall fly within ten kilometres of each other’s airspace.

## **Consultation Measures**

- India-Pakistan Joint Commission established in 1982 to facilitate discussions at ministerial level.
- Since 1990 the Joint Commission has been superseded by a series of foreign secretary–level talks.

## **Water Rights**

- The 1962 Indus Waters Treaty brokered by the World Bank helped resolve problems regarding distribution of water resources.

## **Declaratory Measures**

- The Tashkent Declaration of 1966.
- The Simla Accord of 1972.
- Agreement on 'Non-Attack' on each others nuclear facilities signed in 1988 and ratified in 1991.
- Joint Declaration on the prohibition of Chemical Weapons concluded in 1992 in which both countries agreed not to develop, produce, acquire or use Chemical Weapons. India however, declared having stocks as well as production and storage facilities as a consequence of its ratification of the CWC in 1997.

Source: *A Handbook of Confidence Building Measures for Regional Security*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (Washington, DC: The Henry L. Stimson Center, 1998),

## **Annex B: Lahore Memorandum of Understanding**

The following is the text of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Indian Foreign Secretary, Mr. K. Raghunath, and the Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Mr. Shamshad Ahmad, in Lahore on February 21, 1999.

The Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan:

Reaffirming the continued commitment of their respective governments to the principles and purposes of the U.N. Charter;

Reiterating the determination of both countries to implementing the Shimla Agreement in letter and spirit;

Guided by the agreement between their Prime Ministers of 23rd September 1998 that an environment of peace and security is in the supreme national interest of both sides and that resolution of all outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, is essential for this purpose;

Pursuant to the directive given by their respective Prime Ministers in Lahore, to adopt measures for promoting a stable environment of peace, and security between the two countries;

Have on this day, agreed to the following:-

1. The two sides shall engage in bilateral consultations on security concepts, and nuclear doctrines, with a view to developing measures for confidence building in the nuclear and conventional fields, aimed at avoidance of conflict.
2. The two sides undertake to provide each other with advance notification in respect of ballistic missile flight tests, and shall conclude a bilateral agreement in this regard.
3. The two sides are fully committed to undertaking national measures to reducing the risks of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons under their respective control. The two sides further undertake to notify each other immediately in the event of any accidental, unauthorised or unexplained incident that could create the risk of a fallout with adverse consequences for both sides, or an outbreak of a nuclear war between the two countries, as well as to adopt measures aimed at diminishing the possibility of such actions, or such incidents being misinterpreted by the other. The two sides shall identify/establish the appropriate communication mechanism for this purpose.
4. The two sides shall continue to abide by their respective unilateral moratorium on conducting further nuclear test explosions unless either side, in exercise of its national sovereignty decides that extraordinary events have jeopardised its supreme interests.
5. The two sides shall conclude an agreement on prevention of incidents at sea in order to ensure safety of navigation by naval vessels, and aircraft belonging to the two sides.

*Annex B*

6. The two sides shall periodically review the implementation of existing Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and where necessary, set up appropriate consultative mechanisms to monitor and ensure effective implementation of these CBMs.
7. The two sides shall undertake a review of the existing communication links (e.g. between the respective Directors- General, Military Operations) with a view to upgrading and improving these links, and to provide for fail-safe and secure communications.
8. The two sides shall engage in bilateral consultations on security, disarmament and non-proliferation issues within the context of negotiations on these issues in multilateral fora.

Where required, the technical details of the above measures will be worked out by experts of the two sides in meetings to be held on mutually agreed dates, before mid 1999, with a view to reaching bilateral agreements.

Done at Lahore on 21st February 1999 in the presence of Prime Minister of India, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, and Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

(K. Raghunath)

Foreign Secretary of the Republic of India

(Shamshad Ahmad)

Foreign Secretary of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Source: [http://www.indianembassy.org/South\\_Asia/Pakistan/mou\(lahore01211999\).html](http://www.indianembassy.org/South_Asia/Pakistan/mou(lahore01211999).html)

## **Annex C: The U.S. Nuclear Risk Reduction Center**

The principal function of the Centers is to exchange information and notifications as required under various arms control treaties and other confidence-building agreements.

### ***Brief History***

As the result of a U.S. initiative, President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev agreed at the November 1985 Geneva Summit to have experts explore the possibility of establishing centers to reduce the risk of nuclear war. The impetus for this initiative grew out of consultations between the Executive Branch and Congress, particularly Senators Sam Nunn and John Warner. U.S. and Soviet experts held informal meetings in Geneva on May 5-6 and August 25, 1986. In October 1986, at their meeting in Reykjavik, President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev indicated satisfaction with the progress made at the experts meetings and agreed to begin formal negotiations to establish Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers. Those negotiations were held in Geneva on January 13 and May 3-4, 1987. The negotiations resulted in the Agreement that was signed in Washington September 15, 1987, by Secretary of State Shultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze.

Under the Agreement, which is of unlimited duration, each party agreed to establish a Nuclear Risk Reduction Center in its capital and to establish a special facsimile communications link between these Centers. These Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers became operational on April 1, 1988. The American National Center (known as the NRRC) is located in Washington, D.C. in the Department of State. The Soviet National Center became the Russian National Center with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and is located in Moscow in the Russian Federation Ministry of Defense. Consequent to the breakup of the former Soviet Union the four START Treaty successor states of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan have become involved in the notification process, and the NRRC has established direct communications links with each of those republics.

### ***Scope of NRRC***

The Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers do not replace normal diplomatic channels of communication or the "Hot Line," nor are they intended to have a crisis management role. The principal function of the Centers is to exchange information and notifications as required under various arms control treaties and other confidence-building agreements.

There are two protocols to the NRRC Agreement. Protocol I identifies the notifications the parties agreed to exchange. These include:

- Ballistic missile launches required under Article 4 of the 1971 Agreement on Measures to Reduce the Risk of Outbreak of Nuclear War.
- Ballistic missile launches required under paragraph 1 of Article VI of the 1972 Agreement on the Prevention of Incidents on and over the High Seas.

Since the Agreement was signed, the Parties have additionally agreed to exchange through the Centers inspection and compliance notifications, as well as other information, required under the INF Treaty, notifications called for under the Ballistic Missile Launch Notification Agreement, Vienna Document of 1999, the CFE Treaty, the Open-Skies Treaty and the CWC.

The Centers may also be used for the transmission by either side of additional communications as a display of "good-will" and with a view to building confidence. For example, in January 1991, goodwill notifications were used to exchange information on the re-entry of the Salyut 7 space station. Later that same year, the NRRC served as means of emergency communications during a major fire in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. There has been an exchange of 11 "goodwill" messages in the last 12 years.

### ***Organization***

There are two major components of the NRRC; the Notifications and the Verification. Russia holds integrated units of the two components under MoD while the U.S. hold them separately under the Department of State and the MoD respectively. Though an integrated unit may help in smooth functioning of the center, however, certain political and bureaucratic intricacies are stated to prevent its integration in the U.S..

An Assistant Secretary of State is appointed by the President to serve as the Director of the U.S. NRRC. The NRRC is divided into two units: a staff component and a watch operations component. Staff members represent the NRRC at interagency meetings, prepare and clear NRRC policy positions, and assist in planning for future activities. The watch officers staff the 24-hour operations center providing communications over six distinct international communications systems. Watch personnel are both Foreign Service and Civil Service officers, including those with proficiencies in Russian and other Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) languages.

### ***Miscellaneous***

Existence of an agreement that clearly stipulates the requirement of what to communicate through the NRRC is a pre-requisite for its successful functioning. The Middle East process was an example of failure as there was no agreement related to it.

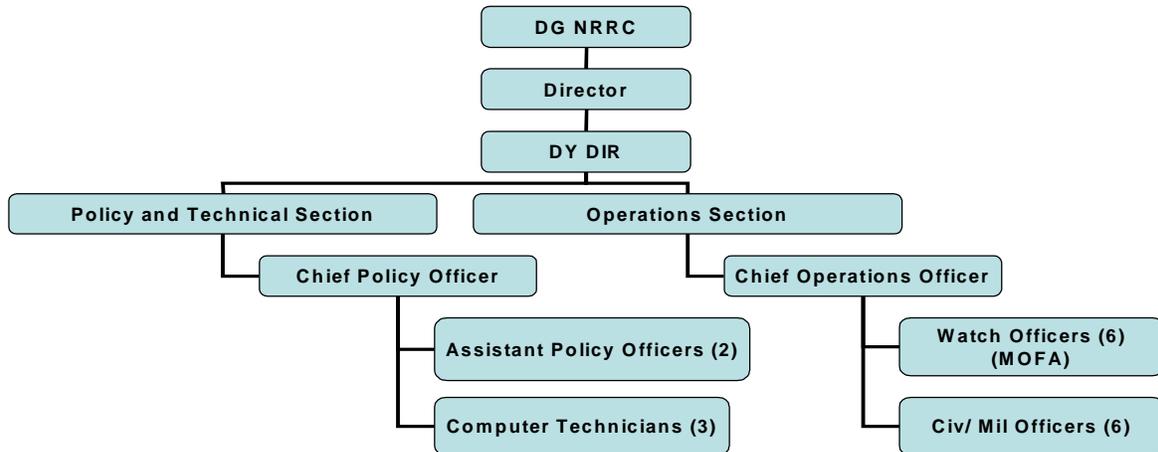
No voice communication circuit was embodied into the NRRC deliberately as voice communication could lead to misinterpretation by voice modulation. Crypto and ciphers are used for communication security to prevent interception of messages by any other state.

Annual consultative meetings are held to revise the standard formats for conveying notifications and to seek other improvements.

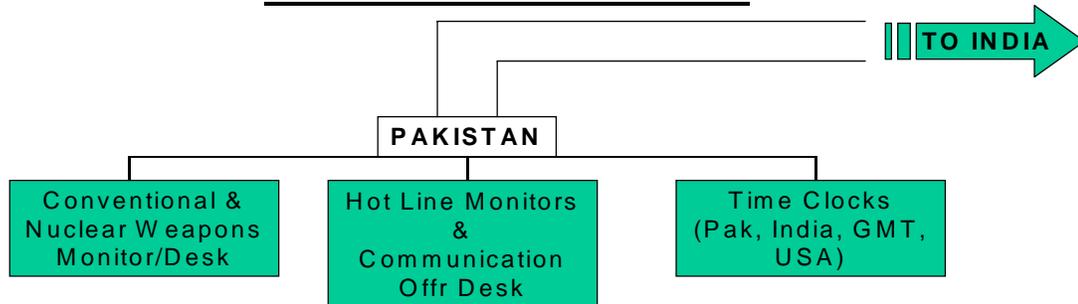
Source: Author's interviews with NRRC Director Harold Kowalski, Jr. and NRRC staff (August 22, 2002); Barry M. Blechman and Michael Krepon, *Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers* (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1986), pp. 1-26; and *Brochure on The U.S. NRRC: 1988-2002* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 2002).

## Annex D:

### PAKISTAN'S NRRC



### COMMUNICATION & EQUIPMENT SECURITY DIAGRAM



- Double monitor and receiver systems for redundancy.
- Initially a single separate channel could be used by either country through one or two different commercial satellites as appropriate. However, for communication security, cyphers may need to be exchanged mutually to prevent interception by any other country.
- DG NRRC may have direct priority links with the following: -
 

-Secretary MOFA	- Secretary NSC/Security Advisor to President	- DG Operations (Army, Navy, AF)
-Secretary MOD	- DG SPD	- DG ISI