

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

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### **12:15 Panel 2: Boomers, Baburs, and Bastions: Competitive Maritime Developments**

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Iskander Rehman, Salve Regina University

Moderator: Sameer Lalwani, Stimson Center

1:45 *Closing* – Michael Krepon and Sameer Lalwani, Stimson Center

Sameer Lalwani:

Thanks so much for sticking around with us for the second panel here. We're joined by another great group of scholars who think a lot about these areas of competition, particularly in the naval domain. I think it was really helpful that Sannia teed us up really nicely by saying that this is an area that, when we think about particularly the Indian-Pakistan conflict, or competition, but also the India-China competition, we tend to think about the land borders and the disputed land territory, but in some ways the naval domain is becoming increasingly more consequential and apparently always was even back to 1971. As in the last panel, I think the speakers will all be talking a little bit about some trend lines, some potentials with drivers for some of these changes that are occurring in the naval domain, or the maritime domain rather, some consequences of it, and different perceptions of this competition and of these developments. Initially I had suggested that the title of this panel should be "Bobbers, Babus, and Bastions." I was told that was a bad idea, but I just want to let you know what the alternative would have been.

The Boomers, Baburs, and Bastions: Competitive Maritime Developments, and our speakers today are Nilanthi Samaranayake, Chris Clary and Iskander Rehman, who actually is perfect for this, in order right here. We'll go in that order, you have their bios on your sheets in front of you. Let me just say a quick word about each of them, so Nilanthi is a strategic studies analyst, at CNA whose research focuses on South Asia and Indian Ocean security. She was the project director of a 2015 CNA study, water resource competition at the Brahmaputra River Basin: China, India, and Bangladesh. It's an excellent study; you should take a look at it. It's becoming increasingly relevant as sort of a tool for coercive leverage in the water domain.

Chris Clary is an assistant professor of Political Science at the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy at the University of Albany, that's a mouthful. Previously he was a postdoctoral fellow at the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University, a pre-doctoral fellow at Belfer Center at Harvard, a Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at RAND, a Council of Foreign Relations and International Affairs Fellow in India, and I'm sure the list goes on and on but that's what I have here in front of me.

Iskander Rehman is a senior fellow for international relations at the Pell Center for international relations and public policy at Salve Regina University, previously a postdoctoral fellow at Brookings, and before that a fellow at CSBA here in town, and also the Carnegie Endowment, so these folks have been all around town, out of the country and back, and they're here to offer some thoughts on competitive developments in maritime domains. Nilanthi why don't you start it off.

Nilanthi Samaranayake: All right.

Sameer Lalwani: I'll hold everyone to eight minutes, so no more than 10 minutes please.

Nilanthi Samaranayake: Can everyone hear me okay? Mic's working? All right. Thank you Sameer for the invitation, thank you to the Stimson Center for the invitation to be here today. It's an honor, and I'm happy to provide some of my personal views about the topic. Given the title of the panel, I think we have seen a set of maritime developments that are perceived as being competitive to varying degrees by observers in China, India, and Pakistan. So first I'll start by discussing some of these developments, then I'll turn to these countries' interests at sea, both diverging interests and converging interests, and then I'll finish by offering some future scenarios that we might want to consider and plan for.

First, I think it's useful to think about these maritime developments in terms of military developments and commercial developments, but to acknowledge that an uncomfortable blurring of the two categories occurs. So first in the military realm, there have been some concerning developments. In January, Pakistan announced the successful test firing of a submarine launched cruise missile, the Babur-III. In April, India announced a successful test firing of the land attack version of the BrahMos cruise missile from an Indian Navy ship. And last year China won a 10-year lease to build its first overseas military base in Djibouti.

And this is in the larger context of China's regularly sending naval task forces across the Indian Ocean for counter-piracy operations. And it's compounded by the fact that in recent years China has started sending submarines as part of this mix of assets that it sends into the Indian Ocean. So this clearly upsets India. Okay, then in the commercial realm I think there are some developments that appear to be competitive, like Gwadar Port, Chabahar Port, I think it's worth mentioning though that in the maritime domain it inherently involves a dimension of economic interests such as the free passage of goods and resources, and I think Sannia mentioned this economic dimension as being a driver to some of these developments. I think we should just take that economic driver into account when interpreting developments that are seen as competitive.

First with regard to Gwadar Port in Pakistan, this port has been in existence for over a decade, but ill-used, but it gained some momentum in recent years after a Chinese company gained operational control of the port after the Port of Singapore authority left, and the fact that it's been placed under this wider construct of One Belt, One Road by China. There has now been this push to actually make use of the port, make it profitable, develop a wider economic zone.

Gwadar I think is the most unsettling to Indian observers against the wider backdrop of China's One Belt, One Road. But, in one sense, one belt one road, it is a sweeping vision of connecting Asia with Europe, with Africa, in terms of connectivity projects, but I think in another sense though it represents the branding of a set of existing projects in the Indian Ocean region. A series of ports, airports, sea sports, road, railways, and even pipelines in multiple sites in

the Indian Ocean like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and even outside South Asia, like Kenya and Djibouti.

There are Chinese construction activity, or financing, or commercial operations. Now, Chabahar Port in Iran, some say this is competitive, perhaps India's response to Gwadar in Pakistan is less than 100 kilometers from Gwadar, and Narendra Modi's visit to Iran helped to re-inject life into this project which had kind of languished for some time due to sanctions on Iran.

The Port project essentially allows India to bypass Pakistan and connect to trade with Afghanistan, and also allows India to connect to the overall international north/south transport corridor and trade with central Asian countries, and at present, there are two Indian port trusts that have set up a joint venture with an Iranian company to develop berths at the port itself, but there's also a pursuit of land connectivity through a railway link from Chabahar to inland Iran. Those are some of the military commercial developments that are seen as competitive between the countries.

Now I'll turn to their interest at sea—some diverging interests, and converging. The major source of tension we've heard this morning between India and Pakistan, is sovereignty, Kashmir. There's a sea based dispute over Sir Creek, but it's minor compared to Kashmir of course, and unfortunately CPEC runs through this disputed territory so naturally India contests it, and unfortunately this long standing tension on land, it extends to the naval theater where countries are increasing their capabilities like India's submarine launched ballistic missile program and Pakistan's active pursuit of conventional submarines from China.

I think it's worth mentioning that they also have some common interests, mainly insuring the security of the sea lanes. The Indian Ocean is the life line of the world's economy. About half of all container traffic transits this body of water, including two thirds of global oil shipments, so for both India and Pakistan, roughly 90% of all of their trade comes from the sea, and similarly China is heavily dependent on energy imports that travel across the Indian Ocean. These countries have also shown their commitment to these interests by actually committing their navies to support the counter-piracy operations off the horn of Africa, and in the Gulf of Aden, and China and India as independent deployers, and Pakistan as part of the U.S. led combined maritime forces, and Pakistan, the navy has actually commanded the task forces on counter-piracy eight times and on counter-terrorism nine times by my count.

Operationally they work together at sea. China and India, they have coordinated their escort convoy schedules and Oriana mentioned the cooperation on a piracy hijacking incident. It's worth mentioning that even the EU naval force on their press release, they mentioned the work of China and India, but they also mentioned their support to the operation as well as combined maritime forces support to the operation and highlight of the ship that was assigned their task force. Some of that is also like getting credit for your work in the operation. But

in addition to that mission of counter-piracy, there's also another mission that they have common interests on and that's non-combatant evacuation operations, or NEOs. In India, they had to actually coordinate on that. The Pakistan Navy evacuated 11 Indian nationals when it conducted in NEO in Yemen in 2015. And of course rescues at sea, the Indian Coast Guard just last month rescued personnel from Pakistan's maritime security agency.

Finally, I think where India and Pakistan have territorial disputes, India and China have border disputes, I think it's worth noting that China does not have territorial claims in the Indian Ocean, and this stands in stark contrast to how it's behaved in the Pacific, aggressively with regard to those claims. I think it's worth acknowledging that, at least in the Indian Ocean, this is a mitigating factor to potential conflict, and certainly there are concerning developments, such as efforts to secure a sea based nuclear deterrent and militaries must plan for contingencies, but in the day to day operations at sea, I think it's important to know that a bleak future, it's not necessarily a given, and to recognize where the countries actually share a common interest or don't necessarily disagree with each other.

Then that's probably my eight minutes, but I'll just quickly wrap up with just some future scenarios to consider. Just PLA navy ships resupplying at Gwadar, I know Brigadier Gurmeet, you mentioned about how Gwadar might become a Chinese naval base, but even before that just navy ships resupplying there, just preparing for that. What would the media reaction be? What could the Indian policy makers do in terms of strategic communications? And then further down the line when the PLA navy carrier eventually, aircraft carrier, eventually enters the Indian Ocean, just whether it's naval diplomacy or for goodwill visits, or in like context of a HADR event, just what potential reactions might be and how the policy makers can plan for that.

I think for India obviously the threat perceptions will be high but India has of course a home field advantage, and a growing confidence in its naval capabilities, and increasing military access arrangements throughout the region. I think that will help likely mitigate some of India's threat perceptions, but in media management I think that will remain a priority, and then just there's just bad stuff that can happen of course, like accidents, terror attacks, that also could happen.

Sameer Lalwani: Great, thank you. I'll turn it over to you Chris.

Chris Clary: Thank you Sameer. Thank you Stimson. One of my affiliations, my most important affiliation was in the spring of 2000, Michael Krepon plucked a boy from Kansas out of obscurity. I'm still pretty obscure, but I was even more obscure then. To make me an intern at the Stimson Center and then was kind enough to hire me as a research assistant later on, and altered the trajectory. I would've been a Latin American studies major. Who knows what I would have been talking about now. From a division of labor perspective, I'm gonna focus

my remarks on Pakistan's naval nuclear developments. I'm an opinionated person, I have plenty to say about other topics in the Q&A, and also for any Pakistani partisans in the audience or watching at home, I'm happy to pick on India. Just I flipped a coin and today it's Pakistan's day. I'm happy again in the question and the answers that criticize India developments where that merits.

Many of the points I'm gonna make are going to be in a forthcoming article with Ankit Panda that we expect to appear in the Washington Quarterly in the fall. I think of this as a bit of a shakedown cruise. I welcome the feedback to make this a better argument and convince me where we're wrong. I want to convince you though of four primary points. The first is that Pakistan is serious about developing a sea based nuclear force, this isn't just some sort of technology demonstrator. Second, I'm gonna argue that there will be strong incentives to maintain sea based nuclear weapons at higher readiness in peace time and crisis, than land based weapons. That's not great. Third, I want to argue that sea based weapons may worsen crisis stability, despite some of the survivability advantages they may have over land based forces. Don't love that either. Fourth, I want to argue kind of contrarily that the danger of theft or sabotage of sea based nuclear weapons may in fact be larger than other portions of the Pakistani nuclear arsenal, so let me unpack each of those in turns.

First, Pakistan is serious in my assessment. It has had since 2000, at least, a maritime technologies complex under the National Engineering and Science Commission. It's talked about a Naval Strategic Forces Command. I went back at least until 2004 as the earliest briefing I had from Khalid Banuri that has a little box on his organizational chart with that. In 2008 a former head of the Maritime Technologies Complex, a Pakistani admiral, stated publicly that the navy is fully capable deploying strategic weapons on the sea, but out of that quote so far the government had not decided to deploy strategic weapons on the sea. In 2012 Pakistan announced the formal establishment of the Naval Strategic Forces Command, along with the inauguration of its headquarters facility and the naming of the specific three star admiral that would head that command. It owns French origin submarines capable of launching cruise missiles already, and is acquiring more submarines from the Chinese. It has set up a very low frequency, VLF communications facility near Karachi, which it publicly announced in November of 2016. It conducted, as was already mentioned the Babur-III, a submarine launched cruise missile test in January. This isn't some sort of science project at night. This is a seriousness of purpose for almost two decades.

Second, Pakistan as with other states will face incentives to keep sea based weapons at higher states of readiness. For a long time, South Asia watchers, myself included, argued that India and Pakistan both enhance the security and safety of their arsenals by keeping them de-mated, so warheads separate from missiles, and those warheads partially disassembled, perhaps the trigger is elsewhere, some sort of way of keeping that warhead apart during peace time, and maybe even relatively deep into crisis. It's not true, it may not be true

anymore, even on land that that is the case. There's a lot of signs such as canisterization of missiles as well as some statements made by both Pakistani and Indian military and civilian officials that seem to suggest that it may not be true, but it would be especially hard to have de-mating and certainly partial disassembly at sea. It's not quite impossible, I would note on the Pakistani side if it's going to launch its cruise missiles through the torpedo tubes. There's actually a decent amount of room and you can do some stuff inside the submarine, if you wanted to have some sort of technical inhibitor of being able to launch, in addition to any sort of permissive action links. I mean they require a code to be inputted, that was transmitted from central authorities.

If Pakistan intends to launch its cruise missiles out of torpedo tubes you have that sort of option. India by the way, much more difficult with ballistic missiles. You could maybe do something through the access port in a tube, but I'm aware of no one that's ever done that. And by the way on the cruise missiles, I'm aware of no navy with nuclear weapons that have ever done anything like that. It's just more theoretically doable than in a ballistic missile tube. And then of course we have the evidence from the United States and the United Kingdom military experience where we have the most evidence that those powers were unwilling to have permissive action links, or even their equivalent at sea, until relatively late.

The United States adopts an equivalent to permissive action links in the 1990s, and the United Kingdom even today does not have permissive action links. It only uses procedural controls, making sure that a series of officers on the boat have to be involved before a submarine can launch nuclear weapons, and the reason that is, is because if you have the survivable portion of your nuclear deterrent at sea, you are especially wary of decapitating strikes. So those pressures will be there. Pakistan may resist those pressures, but it's important to highlight that if the reason one goes to sea is for survivability, then the pressures are especially acute to make that force more ready in peace time, easier to launch without a code because if the code, you interrupt the communication chain, then the weapon would fail safe. It would fail impotently on the boat.

My third point, sea based weapons may worsen crisis stability. We normally in the academic literature define that as a measure of the incentives for countries in a crisis to attack, not to attack first. Crisis instability is an incentive *to* attack first. The more that a preemptive strike is advantageous, the less stable is any crisis characterized by a reciprocal fear of surprise attack. Sea based weapons, if they are invulnerable and there are continuous deterrent patrols and if that submarine is super quiet and nobody knows where it is, then that may discourage first strikes because that residual capacity is out of the way, cannot be disarmed, but in practice there are three reasons, so sorry for multiple accountings. I'll do A, B, C for these, that sea based weapons might be destabilizing. A, all plausible nuclear use scenarios involve conventional war, and in a serious conventional war, it will be hard for India not to engage in

antisubmarine warfare, which will mean the inevitable interaction of conventional and nuclear forces at sea with the potential for an erosion in Pakistan's nuclear deterrent at a particularly scary time.

Second, and in contrast to land based mobile missiles or the air breathing element, right, air delivered weapons, the peace time birthing locations of Pakistan submarines will not be and cannot be secret. There are three important naval ports in Pakistan, two of them have mission associated submarines full stop. Port Mara and Karachi, that's it. Those will be the peace time and crisis locations for Pakistani submarines, they will have an incentive to flush out during a deep crisis, and India will have an incentive to destroy them conventionally or in other ways before that can occur. That's not great.

Third and finally, even if India were to avoid striking submarines while out of port, it will have strong incentives to destroy communications facilities that could transmit to the submarines. The United States spent a lot of time creating aircraft and other ways to try to keep our transmission to submarines possible. There's no evidence that Pakistan has an aircraft VLF capability right now. There are other ways you could broadcast of course, but that's another area where there's a danger for first strike.

Fourth, final point since I'm already over my eight minutes, sea based weapons may be more dangerous ashore. Pakistan has been engaged in a civil war since at least 2001 when Pakistan's decision to permit U.S. basing and transit angered radical Islamists at home. Pakistan has lost more than 60,000 people to terrorist related violence, and the Pakistan security forces have lost almost 7,000 people during that time period. This is without a doubt the most dangerous place in the world that has nuclear weapons. They are incredibly professional about keeping those nuclear weapons safe, they have lost of people that are well trained to guard those nuclear weapons, but it is a dangerous task, and as I mentioned previously, there are very few naval facilities that can house nuclear weapons during peace time, and if there are regular deterrent patrols, then weapons will have to go on and off the boat all the time.

Predictably the most nuclear weapons in any place in Pakistan may be near Karachi or Mara ports, and this means that you have a place that's readily designed to attack. You cannot hide it. You cannot make this a secretive location. You can internally within the base keep it secret, and you can guard the heck out of it, but you cannot use secrecy to your advantage, and of course, I'm just gonna mention in passing, we had an attack in 2011 on the Mehran naval station, which exploited lots of vulnerabilities and appears to have insider help. That's gonna be a problem with any large naval base. You have an attempted mutiny it appears with a Pakistani ship, the Zulfiqar in 2014, which happened at Karachi naval dockyard, which is a conceivable place for this basing, so this is worrisome. Just because the weapons, when they are under deterred patrol or at sea, does not mean when they're in port, they're not

considerably more in danger than wherever Pakistan's mobile land based missiles are.

That leads me to conclude to the implication, which is I think that because of these concerns with crisis stability, with safety and security, with only relatively modest, in my assessment, gains in survivability, that Pakistan should continue down the path that it is, of using mobile land based missiles supplemented by an air breathing leg, air cruise missiles.

The ability for India with any sort of strategic warning for Pakistan, which again, in the context of conventional war, Pakistan can spread these things out to successfully engage in a counter force campaign, be it conventional or even with nuclear weapons, is infinitesimally small. And so going to sea does not buy you very much. That especially is the case, and I won't talk about it right now, given the range of the cruise missiles you have, where a bastion strategy of being just off the coast of Pakistan, doesn't actually allow you to target any Indian population centers. You have to sail much closer to India. Now cruise missile ranges can increase so this might be a temporary short term problem, but for me the benefit does not outweigh these very clear costs and risks. Thank you.

Sameer Lalwani: Thank you, that was fantastic. Iskander?

Iskander Rehman: Thanks Sameer, and thanks to the Stimson Center for giving me the opportunity to be here today. I realize I'm the last analyst on the second panel so I'll definitely try to stick to my eight minutes. I thought that what I'd do would be to give a short overview of various aspects of the Sino- Indian maritime competition, primarily as it is viewed from New Delhi, and that I would structure my remarks in three parts. First I'm gonna outline the various differences and disparities in between both nations naval mindsets, strategies, and fleet architectures. Second, and partly is an homage to the awesome title that Sameer chose for this panel. I'll briefly allude to the nuclear aspects of their naval competition, and I'll then conclude by laying out some more interesting and potentially destabilizing trends that I see emerging in the sino-Indian maritime competition within the next decade or so.

First of all, I think it's important to stress the power asymmetry in between both navies, so the PLAN is a much larger navy than the Indian navy, and this asymmetry is particularly notable for some key areas. I'm not going to engage in detailed bean counting of both nation's naval wars and battles, that would be incredibly boring. But just to give you an idea, Beijing currently has more conventional diesel electric submarines stationed in its South Sea fleet than India has in its entire navy, and this asymmetry also extends to both navy's budgetary shares. We don't have access to precise information on the Chinese Navy share of China's overall defense budget, but most observers of Chinese military have indicated that Chinese Navy appears to have been enjoying ever larger slices of the defense cake over the past decade. In India on the other hand, the navy remains very much the Cinderella service. It only captured

approximately 14% of the defense budget in 2017, where 57% went to the army and 22% to the air force.

When it comes to ship building, although the Indian ship building industry has constituted in some cases a rare success story for indigenous defense production, it's also been plagued by a series of delays and cost overruns. Beijing has experienced its own difficulties in certain core sectors, but overall it continues to surprise the international community with the speed and scale of its ship building initiative. Just to give another somewhat more telling example, China's recently launched second aircraft carrier was completed in about four years, according to most estimates, whereas India's INS Vikrant, its first indigenously build aircraft carrier has been delayed all in all by over seven years, and after its estimated costs were multiplied by eight. In February 2014, a report to the Indian parliament revealed that between 2005 and 2010, 74% of the Indian navy's refits have been completed after an accumulated delay of 8,621 days or 23.6 years, and these delays were attributed to the rapid aging of many of the Indian Navy ships, infrastructure constraints of Indian dockyards, and to the lack of timely availability of critical spare parts.

All this to say that while there is no doubt that the Indian Navy is modernizing, and it is adopting some more sophisticated platforms, this process is a lot more uneven and occurring a lot slower than what most analyses would suggest. There are also some key differences in between both navies strategic mindsets and traditional doctrinal orientations. So at the risk of overly simplifying a complex issue, India's navy has historically been focused on sea control, with a fleet architecture centered around the nucleus of light aircraft carriers which has been operating since 1961. In fact, even predating independence India's naval planners had set forth an ambitious blue water vision hoping to eventually acquire three carrier groups with the idea there will be one carrier group stationed on each sea board while the third was in maintenance.

The Chinese Navy on the other hand was for many decades focused primarily on its near seas, and on offensive sea denial. And now all that is changing. What I think is interesting is that both navies are simultaneously in the midst of their own programmatic reorientations and rebalancing of their portfolio capabilities. So for example while India's navy remains very much weapon to carrier operations and sea control, it's also placed a great emphasis on anti-submarine warfare and sea denial, with the acquisition for example of the P8I, and the indigenous development of a large number of shallow water ASW platforms. And in interviews, Indian naval officers repeatedly expressed their anxieties over the state of the submarine fleet, and the government recently approved an ambitious nuclear attack submarine development program with the hope of eventually fielding two nuclear attack submarines per carrier task force.

The Chinese Navy on the other hand is now fully embracing blue water operations. It's in the process of developing several carrier groups and amphibious capabilities which some analysts estimate will be second only to the

U.S. in 2020. Beijing's also recently housed a massive expansion of its marine corps, and it has the ambition of becoming a two ocean navy with the ability to project power in both the Pacific and Indian Oceans. So as an Nilanthi described until now China seemed to have opted for a strategy of places rather than bases in the Indian Ocean, multiplying port calls in countries as varied as Yemen, Iran, Djibouti and the Seychelles among others, and this was in the past, Chinese strategists argued that establishing foreign military bases or cementing formal alliance structures would be a departure from the PRC's tradition of anti-hegemonic foreign policy. But over the past few years it's become increasingly evident that China's strategic community is shedding those reservations with regard to overseas basing and expeditionary operations. We saw for example the opening of the new base in Djibouti, and Chinese military analysts and officials have heavily indicated that more bases might eventually follow.

This can partially be explained by the arguments that are laid out in China's more recent defense white papers, which regularly lay emphasis on protecting overseas energy resources and Chinese nationals abroad, which is now defined as one of the PLA's major military missions. Naturally all of this has had a big impact on the Indian navy's threat perceptions. In the past I'm sure you all came across alarmist segments of the Indian press that would report on a hypothetical Chinese string of pearls. Most times though this breathless commentary did not necessarily constitute an adequate representation of the Indian Navy's mindset, and when I chatted to Indian naval officers or officials they appeared relatively sanguine over the issue of China's presence in the Indian Ocean at least for the short to medium term. They weren't obsessively concerned with the prospect of Chinese sub faction groups regularly crisscrossing the Indian Ocean.

Because of India's peninsula geography and the presence of Indian land based air power, air defenses, and missile systems, New Delhi appeared relatively confident that the localized correlation of military strength would remain in its favor, and as we know from past academic studies of great power rivalries, great powers who suddenly extend their military and commercial interests have often had to contend with two major challenges, which are the following.

First of all, they offer many points for those threatening an attack, and second their capacity to project military strength to the edges of their zone of interest is diminished the further the contested area is from the core of their power.

In the minds of many Indian analysts, this loss of strength gradient would be the principle strategic quandary faced by China were it to attempt to establish a more robust naval presence in the Indian Ocean. But now of course when you combine the prospect of permanently forward stationed Chinese naval forces in the Indian Ocean, whether at Djibouti or elsewhere, along with the routinized deployment of its new plan in conventional submarines that Nilanthi was referring to, the tone in Delhi has changed.

Another evolution that I find noteworthy is how both navy's areas of focus are beginning to overlap, with all the increasing risks of naval friction that may flow from that growing proximity. For example while the Chinese Navy has been prioritizing its South Sea fleet in the South China Sea, India has been busy boosting its Eastern naval command of the Bay of Bengal where it now positions some of its most sophisticated naval platforms, and it's also begun rotating some of its more high end anti-submarine warfare assets such as the Poseidon aircraft through the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. And as I alluded to earlier, India's primary advantage vis a vis the PLN and the past was the tyranny of distance which put a brake on China's capabilities in the Indian Ocean, but now Indian military planners look at how Chinese reclamation activities have allowed it to cement its control over contested portions of the South China Sea and they look at the kind of assets and infrastructure that Beijing has stationed there, with the construction for example of a new aircraft carrier facility at Yulin Naval base in Hainan, and they get the sense that their maritime sanitary quadrant is beginning to fray at the edges.

Naturally there's also a nuclear component to this naval relationship, although in this case it's perhaps more of a one sided rivalry in the sense that China's SSBNs can already range all of Indian territory from their staging points in the South China Sea, whereas India's lone SSBN has yet to be fitted with missiles that can reach China's political and economic centers for gravity from its Eastern sea port. For the sake of brevity I won't delve into this too much now. We can always come back to it during the Q&A, but I will say that India does enjoy one sizable advantage over China when it comes to its sea based deterrent, and that is in terms of its location.

Both Beijing and New Delhi seem to have adopted for the time being at least a Bastion strategy with regard to their SSBNs, and growing in sensitivity to foreign naval presence in the vicinity of those SSBN bases. But unfortunately for China the South China Sea happens to be one of the world's most heavily trafficked body of water, and China's security managers are very aware of the vulnerability of their loud submarines to subsurface prosecution particularly by American nuclear attack submarines.

India on the other hand has been developing its future SSBN facilities around Rambili, which is about 50 kilometers Southwest of the Eastern Naval command, along India's Eastern sea ward, and with its deep waters and absence of serious naval competitors the Bay of Bengal is in many ways much more suitable for nuclear submarine operations and bastion development than the cluttered waters of the South China Sea. So before wrapping up, let me very briefly list some of the more interesting trends or troubling trends that I see potentially having an impact on the future of Sino-Indian maritime competition.

The first I think is tied to whatever maritime form CPEC may eventually take. The current Indian chief of naval staff, Admiral Sunil Lanba, has voiced his concerns over the possibility of Chinese naval assets being eventually positioned

in Pakistani ports, mentioning I quote, "That it have the potential to severely constrict India's freedom of navigation in the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf as well as India's sea lanes of communication."

It's also worth noting, as one panelist said earlier, in the past Indo-Pakistani crises the Indian navy has engaged in the coercive maneuvering in the Northwest Arabian Sea and outside Karachi, but with the potential future presence of Chinese naval forces in places such as Karachi or Mara or Gwadar, this may be a more challenging and escalatory option for the Indian navy.

Second there's the issue of the Chinese naval arms sales in the Indian Ocean particularly in the form of diesel electric submarines sales and transfers, which could exacerbate the competitive dynamics in Sino-Indian and Sino-Pakistani maritime relationship. For example as I alluded to earlier, Pakistan's planned acquisition of eight submarines could erode the Indian Navy's ability to exert sea control along the Makran coast line.

Bangladesh is also developing Chinese to acquiring Chinese designed Ming class submarines, which don't really present a threat but could still complicate Indian operational planning. Beijing's deepening involvement in South Asian submarine and ships sales will naturally to the semi-permanent deputation of Chinese naval personnel throughout the region, something which will inevitably make Delhi somewhat uncomfortable.

Then of course there are all the issues pertaining to Pakistan's naval nuclear ambitions, as Chris eloquently laid out for you, and what role China will play in those evolutions, and whether China will assist in some way in those ambitions, particularly if some of the Chinese designed submarines are gonna form part of that new naval nuclear deterrent. And then there's the growing normative divergence as well in between both Asian powers such as freedom of navigation. We've seen that India does share some of China's more controversial positions with regard to ONEPLUS, and the other side of foreign military activities and it's easy but it's also shown that it can gracefully accept the results of international arbitration with regard to its maritime territorial disputes, for example Bangladesh in 2014.

China on the other hand as we've seen over the past year or so has become much more openly hostile to the maritime order, and under Modi's premiership India seems to have placed an emphasis on highlighting these differences, frequently alluding to the importance of freedom of navigation while obliquely chastising China for its I quote, it's a quote from Modi, "For its eighteenth-century expansion behavior." Last but not least, there's the issue of India's own security partnerships and the developments of its naval ties with other democratic nations in the region, not only the U.S. but also Australia, France, and increasingly Japan, and although most Chinese commentators appear to agree that India poses little threat alone, many view it as a critical swing state

that could land considerable power to any anti-Chinese coalition. And with that, I'll stop there. I look forward to the discussion.

Sameer Lalwani: Great, thank you. It seems I had some fairly arbitrary red lines when it came to the eight to ten minute rule and lost all credibility from there, but nevertheless a very stimulating set of points from our speakers.

I do want to make sure that we get a lot of audience participation here but, let me just throw a few questions in response to each of your presentations, or pick up on some things that you discussed. So starting with you Nilanthi. You mentioned CPEC sort of being this somewhat of a branding exercise for China, or at least to some degree. What is your sense of the objectives and strategy of CPEC? How much of it is principally to develop some sort of capability for an alternative to the Malacca straight dilemma, and the naval base, and how much of it is a bunch of other things that are sort of cobbled together and branded as CPEC?

Nilanthi Samaranayake: Yeah, that's a good question. There are many different ways to take that, because you talk to Pakistanis and they will talk about the emphasis on all the energy projects in CPEC, but then you look at the history of the interest in connecting Gwadar to Xinjiang Province in China, and there that was discussed as one of the drivers of trying to circumvent the Malacca dilemma to actually be able to transfer some of the oil through pipelines.

To actually make progress on that through that very restive region of Balochistan, I think is very difficult, but that would be a new step forward, I think, if they actually succeed in connecting that. But I think still even without the Gwadar you still have the China-Pakistan relationship which has always been there, and India has seen as threatening. So there are some timeless aspects to it, but then there's also sort of this renewed push under Xi Jinping.

Sameer Lalwani: I'm sorry; I should have asked if any of the other panelist want to get in on the CPEC question. What was your best theory as to what the strategy is?

Chris Clary: Yeah I mean I just think we should also note this sort of Keynesian excess capacity. If you have a lot of Chinese labor, you're really good at building infrastructure, you have this desire to build up the West anyway, why not do it. You may ultimately, these loans may ultimately not be payable, but the old joke is if you owe the bank \$10,000 it's your problem if you owe the bank \$10 million or in CPEC's case, \$5 billion, it's their problem too.

So I don't think, you know, there's a lot of discussion right now because of India's position about the One Belt One Road, you know a lot of, "Oh my God that's how exploitative it is;" it might be exploitative but ultimately for Pakistan, what is the Chinese banker really gonna do if Pakistan is like, balance of payments crisis. At the end of the day they're gonna have to suck it up and re-negotiate the terms, which means that it does look more net beneficial, even

though the concerns about sovereignty erosion that were brought up earlier are understandable.

Nilanthi Samaranyake: I just want to follow up on one point. Chris mentioned the security concerns, the violence and one of my future scenarios that I think is worth considering is a potential attack on Gwadar. I mean, just, I've been struck by the attention to how much has actually been devoted to this.

The Pakistan Navy stood up Task Force 88 for the protection of the port. The Pakistan Maritime Security Agency has already received two ships that will be on patrol duty. It's expected to receive two more. I think partly due to the fact they don't want to see another Karachi like in 2011, or the P3 Orions are destroyed, or even like in 2014 with PNS Zulfiqar with the attempted hijacking. And I was looking at it, just even within the last week some Pakistani laborers in Gwadar were killed by gunmen, and just as recently as November, two Chinese engineers were killed in Baluchistan province closer to Pasini. But still there is this real threat about just the security of the area that I think the PN is really putting as a priority because there would be such embarrassment for some kind of high profile attack, just given the effort devoted to it with regard to the CPEC construct.

Iskander Rehman: A few days ago, *Dawn*, the Pakistani newspaper published a summary of some of the main points of a Chinese implementation report on CPEC and it was actually fascinating to read how much agriculture will play a role with China and CPEC, and also there's this whole cultural element to it as well.

There are these big meaty sections on how China wishes to diffuse the benefits of Chinese culture throughout Pakistan, and I do wonder whether, although there's a great emphasis on the report on respecting local customs, traditions, and religion within Pakistan, whether China will be able to completely insulate what is happening in Xinjiang at the moment with its operations in Pakistan.

Because over the past years we've seen increasing Chinese oppression in Xinjiang, and I feel as if Pakistani population is increasingly aware of this, and you've even seen statements by radical Islamist figures openly criticizing Chinese policies in Xinjiang. So how they reconcile is those two different policies in a region that they themselves depict as being something that they want to sort of establish as a continuum, as a wider connected region, I think is an interesting one.

Sameer Lalwani: Yeah it's interesting that in the previous panel, for those who may remember, Oriana was suggesting China's learned a lot of lessons from the U.S.'s approach to nation building and sort of intervening in lots of places and trying to rewire the circuits of society and economy. But this certainly sounds like a much grander scope than even anything the United States adapted in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Chris, you laid out a very strong case for the sort of consequences of Pakistani naval assets going to sea. What do you think the drivers are here? Is it really a concern about the vulnerability of their mobile missiles? Is there maybe sort of an inner state, I'm sorry, inner service rivalry issue driving this or maybe something just about emulation. India has a secure second strike at sea or is developing one, and so Pakistan needs to have it as well?

Chris Clary:

You know all of the above, I think is always an option for these things. I think there are survivability concerns, I do think the SPD has for a while had a mindset that just all contingencies have to be covered. This I think is most clear in Kidwai's weird statement about being able to range the Andaman Nicobar island command.

That's just an old artillery officer, I'll respect him, who's expanded beyond his service branch. Kidwai was like well, I don't have any range of that thing, so I have to be able to hit it. I think there is a lazy isomorphism that so many American scholars for so long talked about the importance of a triad.

It's hard to say that that's not the case, but the reality is the ranges in South Asia meant that land based missiles were so much easier than in the Cold War context, so they're learning, I think India frankly has learned wrong lessons.

I mean if India thinks that over any reasonable timeline, that a country the size of India with all the nooks and crannies you can hide nuclear weapons in, particularly if you MIRV them. That even China, if it continues to grow at 10% percent a year, even China could find all those things. I think that's madness, but the naval officers have convinced their service counterparts that they need these things at sea, and I think we're seeing those pathologies in Pakistan as well.

Sameer Lalwani:

Iskander, this is a question I just struggle with, I've been meaning to ask you and everybody else about this. What is the scenario that if we accept this idea that there's a loss of strength gradient but China can solve that if it has bases in the Indian Ocean, and maybe Gwadar becomes one of those, let's just project that in the future, what is the scenario and the mission set that we are most concerned with either the United States or India that China can do from there that is deeply challenging to security for ... and that can't be offset by Indian or the US counterbalance?

Iskander Rehman:

That's a very good question, I think from an Indian perspective, the concern should not be so much about Chinese service action groups or Chinese Aircraft carriers, and more the possibility of forward deployed Chinese submarines in the Indian Ocean. Perhaps also in terms of their mine laying capability. People often forget that China is one of the largest arsenal of naval mines in the world and the Indian Navy has been scrambling recently to develop a more robust demining capability which they realize that that's sort of an area lacking. I think they only have four mine sweepers of Soviet vintage I think.

Then, of course there is just the fact that if Chinese naval personnel is deployed in these places, even in small numbers within Pakistan, it severely reduces India's strategic options in the event of an Indo-Pakistani conflict. It's like during the Cold War and we just had a few troops stationed in Berlin, the fact that the Chinese are there means that-

Sameer Lalwani: Trip wire forces.

Iskander Rehman: Yes. Yes. That this is a Trip wire force potentially, which means that it's much more complicated for the Indian navy to envisage perhaps a coercive blockading action outside of the Karachi port in the event of another conflict.

Sameer Lalwani: This picks up on something that Nilanthi had mentioned earlier which is that China is incredibly dependent on whether it's oil traffic in the Indian ocean, so it may have these mine laying capabilities and more forward deploying submarines but what would be the objective in that scenario that wouldn't hurt China more?

Iskander Rehman: Well, if they for example do it for example outside Mumbai, then that doesn't necessarily affect Chinese sea lanes ... India is actually even more dependent on sea-based energy supplies than China is. I'm not sure what the percentage is, perhaps Nilanthi knows, but-

Nilanthi Samaranayake: Like 70s.

Iskander Rehman: Yeah, 73% or something.

Sameer Lalwani: Nilanthi, do you have anything you want to comment on this?

Nilanthi Samaranayake: Yeah, I mean it's a concern not only for India, China, even Japan, Korea. These countries are heavily dependent on flows of energy, so I think it's actually a common interest across these countries just to keep the sea-lanes open and clear.

Chris Clary: So I like Iskander 1.0 on this, what was the old name of that IDSA paper you did? Something weird like Assassin's Mace or whatever. Yeah. 1.0 Point five, I don't know what you were. I think it's difficult for me to think of things the Chinese Navy could do west of the Malacca that ... you know they can do lots of things that are a pain in the butt, right? That's not great. But can they do anything that would change the outcome of a Sino-Indian conflict?

I don't think so and in fact I think they even in this headless administration we have here in DC, we would find a way to help India with locating things and I don't think those naval assets would survive very long.

Nothing against the diesel electric submarines of the Chinese Navy, which I think are lovely, but they've got to refuel it sometimes and these surface vessel ships,

I think won't last very long at all and it's ... the Indian Navy should have capabilities to deal with those contingencies, but it's difficult for me to see why it should keep anybody up at night?

From a US perspective, I want as many things in the Indian ocean as possible, because that's much easier for me to destroy.

Sameer Lalwani: We're going to formally open up to Q and A it looks like Brigadier Gurmeet 's got the first question. Hold on let's get the mic and then you can pose your question.

Brigadier Gurmeet: Allow me to point out that every 400 kilometers in the Indian Ocean there's a Chinese oil tanker. That's a serious vulnerability during war.

Sameer Lalwani: Okay. That was the fastest question ever. All right, so we will open it up to the audience. Rules of the game, just remember wait for the mic to come to you. Introduce yourself and your affiliation and phrase your question in the form of a question, as best you can. We'll start with Umer right here.

Umer: I am Umer from NDO Islamabad, Chris my question is to you. I absolutely agree that everything that you said, except for the first point that Pakistan is serious about developing this new ... I don't foresee Pakistan going on nuclear deterrence patrols in diesel electric subs in the Indian Ocean because I think yes, absolutely they're working or require certain second strike capability to deter India, but there's a land and sea option and you yourself just said that Shaheen 3 in 2015 at Carnegie, the purpose of Shaheen 3 was Nicobar and Andaman Islands. I haven't seen the naval size figures increasing. I don't see any space in the budget for any sort of serious steps, so my question to you is how do you see them overcoming these challenges, especially budgetary constraints given when India's had issues in trying to get the money to complete their projects. Thank you.

Chris Clary: Well, I mean it's difficult to know how much these things cost, right? Does Pakistan have a dual use capability that without boats that are tasked for a nuclear delivery mission, Pakistan is on track to have what 13 submarines have cruise missile capabilities? Let's say it's some ... only the most recent Agostas and the eight new Chinese SSKs. So I think it has that capacity if, you know, there's a fundamental question. Does Pakistan have the ability to put a nuclear warhead on a cruise missile?

I don't know. I don't think anybody really knows. We don't know what whispers happened between Pakistan and China. It used to be, we used to suspect that maybe there was Pakistan and North Korea whispering at each other periodically. It's the most active nuclear weapons testing program on the planet right now, so who knows? That would be one thing if I were at the State Department, or out at Langley or the Pentagon I would want to, that's one issue, can you miniaturize the warhead?

If you can, then I think the marginal cost is not that much. You would have to implement personnel reliability programs on the ships, you would have to come up with all of these technical fixes, but those are not, that's not the same thing as developing the Arihant, to have a force that's able to go to sea.

I would like to be wrong in a way. I actually think the air breathing and land based component is perfectly and considerably more than I think Pakistan needs to deter India, but even if they read Shivshankar Menon's memoir, and are very worried about it, I think there is so many other options that don't require them to go to sea.

Iskander Rehman: I'm my opinion there is another driver for Pakistan's Naval nuclear program that isn't so much linked to nuclear deterrents per se as offsetting India's conventional naval advantage, sort of replicating the dysfunctional dynamics that are on land at sea. You have articles by Pakistani naval officers going back to the early 2000s saying that one way of mitigating this growing gap in between the Pakistani Navy and the Indian Navy is to require tactical nuclear weapons at sea.

Umer: How would that be legalized and what sort of...to break a blockade or something?

Iskander Rehman: Yes. Just to threaten by virtue of the sort of threatened being. Add an element of risk and ambiguity of Indian Naval operations.

Sameer Lalwani: We've got another question over here. With this gentleman.

Mukherjee: Tuli Mukherjee from American University thank you so much for organizing this panel. I have two question on my mind on the general dynamics of security in the Indian Ocean and as we can call it the Indo-Asia Pacific. First of all, is given as we discussed in the last panel the gap between India and China's non-conventional capabilities, naval domain seems in region where India can actually push china in a region to gain conventional weapons, just not nuclear. In that sense, how likely is India to conduct something like freedom of navigation operation in the South China Sea ifhe situation escalates with either the United States or if Japan or Australia comes on board, and the second question I had was given that the Indian ocean is under the realm of India in many ways than once, and the IRA, Indian Rim Association, does not have Pakistan and China, there are talks of code of conduct happening in the Indian Ocean to deter Chinese behavior being replicated from what it was in the South China Sea. What are the possibilities of the first foreign op with the US or any other navy and secondly the chance of code of conduct and would that actually sort of prevent a conflict to escalating beyond the South China Sea maritime borders? Thank you.

Sameer Lalwani: Great question, why don't we just start with Nilanthi and go down.

Nilanthi Samaranayake: Sure. With regard to, I was just thinking that IORA, China is actually a dialogue partner but you're right, Pakistan is not in it intentionally. I don't think the Indian naval wants to do an op in the South China Sea. I don't think that's an attractive possibility at all.

Chris Clary: When I was a baby research assistant under Michael, we had an Indian naval officer who went back and looked at US-Soviet incidents at sea agreement from 1972 and I guess with the US in general it's the military maritime cooperation agreement, so I'll just come at this obliquely, and say that I think there's in a world in which we don't do confidence building cause we're angry about provocations on the Line of Control. There remains, I believe some low hanging fruit in the maritime domain. I think Sir Creek is a low hanging fruit, it's not very politically toxic, certainly not compared to other things.

And I think these sorts of ... there's a history of maritime cooperation. There's a history of anything that can decrease the number of poor Indian and Pakistani fisherman in the jails of the other country is a good thing, certainly for those fisherman. It doesn't seem to cause much political cost in either Delhi or Islamabad, but I do think ... thinking about things like code of conduct, these other lateral moves that can be made are important during a period when tensions on land may be bad for a while because the ruling dispensation in Delhi has convinced itself, it's kind of been trapped by it's own rhetoric, that may make it hard for these CBMs, but I think there are still things that are easier to do away from shore that are less politically toxic.

Iskander Rehman: Yes. On the issue of freedom navigation I say that India's currently has a bit of a schizoid posture toward freedom of navigation. I have a report coming out soon that compares historically China and India's attitudes toward freedom of navigation and while India has accepted multilateral arbitration of its territorial dispute on Bangladesh, and while it is touting freedom of navigation much more as public statements or even more in the navy's maritime strategy, at the same time it has some very controversial claims over foreign military activities and also when it comes to the overlap of domestic penal jurisdiction into India's near waters, we saw that recently with the Enrica Lexie case where some Italian marines we accused of shooting, who did shoot Indian fisherman and then the Indian court claimed jurisdiction over that case even though it happened over international waters.

Actually the US Navy continues to conduct freedom of navigation patrols directed towards India, so in the latest report the US freedom of navigation patrols for the past year, you can see that there are freedom of navigation patrols that were conducted to contest India's claims on its EEZ, so I think India's not quite there yet. We're seeing a bit of a normative transition, but it's still not the staunch crusader of freedom of navigation people would like it to be.

Sameer Lalwani: Okay. We've got one question here and then we'll come to you.

Shane Mason: Shane mason from Avacent Analytics. I'd like to ask a couple questions about Pakistan and going to sea with nuclear weapons, so for Chris do you have an estimate or a sense of when you think this will occur as far as when this capability will be operationalized and also from a US policy or a Pentagon perspective one thing that hasn't seemed to come up is that I sense that if you're sitting in the Pentagon and it turns out that Pakistan has nuclear weapons on submarines going through the Indian Ocean or at least part of the Indian Ocean, that would be something to keep track of. Now, from a survivability perspective, Pakistan not only has to deal with India's anti-submarine warfare capabilities, but also to some extent the United States as well. To what extent do you think that's true? To what extent do you think Pakistan has baked in that thinking when it comes to sea-based nuclear weapons? In addition, from the Indian naval perspective, where does ASW fall as far as a priority.

The Indian Navy says a lot of things and wants to acquire a bunch of different capabilities, but if you cost this out for the next 10 years, they simply won't be able to afford all of them, so they are going to have to make choices where does ASW rank in their terms priorities?

Sameer Lalwani: I should preface this or follow Shane's question by mentioning that Shane recently published a report with the Stimson center back when he was here before he flew on to greener pastures that was specifically on military budgets in India and Pakistan and the constraints that they impose on actual strategic ambitions, so we talk a lot about rhetoric, but when you look at the numbers it focuses the attention a lot more. Why don't we take these questions again, why don't we go this way, so Indian ASW, Pakistani ASW, concerns, and a timeline.

Iskander Rehman: Sure there's definitely an awareness that India has some important gaps especially in deep water ASW that it needs to plug. So we see in the acquisition of some very effective airborne ASW platforms in the form of the Poseidon P8, but India's surface vessels for the time being still have hull mounted sonars and do not yet have tonorays on ours which would be more effective for deep water ASW and there have been some acquisitions that have been in limbo for years and years as it so often happens. That's definitely perceived as being something of a glaring weakness.

There have been some successes in terms of indigenous development of small ASW indigenous corvettes that are primarily being stationed along India's eastern sea board. These are very small crop that are optimized for shallow water ASW and not so much for deep, deep, deep water ASW. There's also a shortage of helicopters when it comes to screening India's carrier fleet that they've been trying to store. Still, we have a lot of way to go.

Chris Clary: I have no idea when Pakistan might have an operational sea-based capability. Sometimes these things take longer than you might expect. Again the big uncertainty analytically for those of us working in the open source community is

really ... does the warhead exist, was the cruise missile launched from a pontoon or was it actually launched from a submarine. It's not clear to me and the press releases what actually occurred.

Again, in the open source realm, there's no reason to think it'd be very long. There may be things that those with more sensitive information, the Russian ambassador for instance, he may have a better sense of the timeline. The broader question of whether Pakistan has to in the back of its mind consider US help to India in the event of some sort of deep crisis? The United States would help render safe the Pakistani arsenal, this is certainly a concern. I don't think the US has the capabilities to significantly change the outcome. It is certainly widely reported that the United States has done planning in the event of a collapse in the area of Pakistan to try to secure weapons.

There are certainly people who are not necessarily super close to the establishment, but you know Pervez Hoodboy has been arguing for years that the only way to make sense of the total number of Pakistani nuclear devices is a desire to have a coefficient to deal with US assistance to India, but you know we're not talking about dozens of weapons anymore so hundreds to a hundred weapons spread out, a security force 20,000 people. It's not Ahbtebad, right? This is much much harder, and so you have to be at land and sea at the same time. I have no doubt the US would be more interested in a Pakistani nuclear weapon that we believe ... a Pakistan submarine that we believe is nuclear armed than we would a Pakistani submarine that was not nuclear armed.

Whether that dramatically weakens the survivability of that vessel is not clear, though as an aside and related to Iskander's point, when I was in the Pentagon from '06 to '09, maritime awareness is an area that I think the United States and India have a natural reason to cooperate on.

There are some concerns that if you share a picture under the surface vessels of the Indian ocean that you're going to tell India where all of Pakistani's vessel are and vice versa. Pakistan's been involved with CTF 150, 151, I don't know the numbers anymore.

This is a legacy concern, but if I were back at my old desk in the Pentagon every day I would try to get up and think of how can I make it easier for India to locate Chinese vessels in a crisis or conflict. I think that's in the US interest and that will have some secondary ramifications probably for Pakistan.

Nilanthi Samaranayake: I think the ASW is definitely a priority for the Indian Navy. They've got the P8's. They're very concerned about undersea threats and to Chris's point about cooperation with the US, ASW cooperation actually made it into one of the joint statements and the PACOM commander when he was doing a media session with reporters at the Raisina Dialogue, he talked about the information sharing on the submarines with India.

Sameer Lalwani: It's interesting that if there's a serious challenge for the ISR challenge for the United States when it comes to dealing with Pakistani nuclear assets, how much harder it will be for the Indians. That's a scenario we haven't really brought up today, but maybe someone wants to throw that question out there. We had another question back here.

Ahsan Chaudhry: Ahsan Chaudhry, Wayne State University, being a Pakistani and before, being a Pakistani, I am a human being first. As we have seen that there is a pretty grim scenario with the triad and the naval development of nuclear weapons. What I see, it is possible that both states maybe they want to perfect the ... model of the deterrence rather than just conforming to it. Maybe there was a possibility that was driven by domestic politics of both states. But what are the scenarios that now both states can receive to the point of peaceful co-existence and how we can achieve that? India and Pakistan, so realistic assessments. Thank you.

Sameer Lalwani: Peaceful coexistence in Pakistan, who wants to take a bite of that?

Chris Clary: I still tell students that sadly when we're to ... I have a career on India, Pakistan conflict and I started this career in 2000, and periodically have been a little hopefully worried, I don't know what the right combination is. Maybe I would be studying like those four people who studied the Argentina-Brazil dispute for so long and then they're out of a job one day. That would be nice. I can go study other problems, but I don't work on my resume that much worrying that will happen. The trends are very concerning in an India Pakistan context because we are dealing with the slow loss of even a semblance of conventional parity between India and Pakistan while at the same time Pakistan is unable to transition from using a policy of proxy militancy in India and so there are going to be provocations.

Those provocations can be very difficult to calibrate, because all it takes is for soldiers to be camping too close to a fuel dump or an ammo dump in Uri and then the next thing you know you have 17 dead Indian soldiers and a big crisis, which is radically different than if just one or two died.

The ISI sometimes knows that it's doing something provocative, but obviously if it goes into Mumbai harbor, it knows it's doing something provocative, but sometimes these events are going to get out of control and at the root, the use of militant proxy violence, is going to create these catalytic events, these dangerous episodes. And India, like all states, is very unpleasant to be deterred. Look at the Trump administration dealing with North Korea. It is so unfair at some deep level. We are so much bigger than North Korea, why can they do this to us. They shouldn't be allowed, this behavior that's flagrant. A lot of flagrant in the last press release. India has suffered tremendously, I am very sympathetic to the loss of Indian civilians and they are changing against this deterrence and that deterrent will erode overtime.

We were transitioned into a different realm and the nuclear backstop is increasingly not so far in the back. That is dangerous, but it doesn't make me think that peaceful coexistence is around the corner. I feel pretty good about Bajwa some days.

Sameer Lalwani: Anybody else have some thoughts on this?

Iskander Rehman: I agree with that depressing analysis. Even more depressing I think is now the added element of a much more active and jingoistic media in both countries, the 24/7 cable news shows that sort of amplify this even more. Yeah. Just a little depressing.

Nilanthi Samaranayake: In my talk I tried to talk about some of the areas of cooperation that the two countries can do at least at sea. Of course there are lots of contingency plannings and perhaps escalations dynamics and all that. It could be really bad someday, but then in the day to day that stuff might never happen, but in the day to day the Indian coastguard having its confidence building measures with the Pakistani maritime security agency.

I think those kinds of dialogues they should be set in stone, they shouldn't just be canceled due to diplomatic difficulties at any one time. Like Chris said, in the maritime domain there are these low hanging fruit that need to be accessed whenever possible--whether it's cooperation on NEOs like I mentioned or other issues.

Sameer Lalwani: Sir? Let's wait for the mic.

Wayne Glass: If I may, again, Wayne Glass from the school of international relations at University of Southern California on the subject of career resumes. When the Soviet Union dissolved, there were a lot of careers that were on the rocks here in the United States, but guess what they're back, so keep the faith. Your career is secure and so forth. I'm kind of joking and I really am, but this is serious stuff and I appreciate this moment of crisis at your own personal destinies. I thought I'd throw that comment in there for levity.

Sameer Lalwani: Thank you for that. We had a question back there and I think you had, we'll go to you after.

Bimal Sareen: Hi, my name is Bimal Sareen. I worked for nearly a decade in the defense industry in India...an arm chair policy guy. More interesting about the strategic issues you mentioned around the maritime cooperation. I wonder if you at some point have spoken of the changing dynamics of India's traditional dependence both on the maritime side, because focusing that on Russia, and now towards the joint cooperation with the United States, and Pakistan's increasingly—I would say—deeper cooperation with China and how those dynamics are shifting, and the specific shift, which has not been spoken of much

after Russia's stated sale of attack helicopters to Pakistan? Quite the thread, but the dynamics are changing.

Sameer Lalwani: Yeah, so the internal but also external balancing through the measures that are in arms relationships as well. Who wants to, you want to take a crack at that Chris? It seems certainly with the maritime domain with the Akula class sub being sort of the platform for Russia.

Iskander Rehman: Well, I'm no expert on the India-Russia defense relationship, so I don't know if I'm the best equipped to respond to that, but there is definitely been some frustration on the Indian side with the pace of the quality of the delivery of certain weapons, from Russia. That being said, as we all know there is a long and sometimes sentimental history of defense cooperation in between India and Russia. And Russian continues to provide India with technological assistance in areas that most other countries would deem too sensitive. For example, cooperation on nuclear reactor design, SSBNs, the much-touted fifth generation stealth fighter that may never materialize but is still a sort of totemic symbol of Russia's design to provide India with the best kind of technology. I do think there is another aspect to your question that is starting to receive more attention in New Delhi, and that's the growth of Russia-China defense cooperation and the implications that could have for Indian security. That's perhaps a bigger concern than a few helicopters that Russia may sell to Pakistan.

Chris Clary: That's a tricky issue. When I was in the Pentagon, part of the reason I argued that we should be very forward leaning with selling high end systems to India is because we didn't want to subsidize China through the back door, right?

We didn't want Indian rupees to help the Russian defense industry stay at the cutting edge and then sell a few years later, Indians convincingly argued that the good stuff stays in the Russia/India dyad for a while, but eventually China ... they have a lot of hard currency they get a lot of access too.

Obviously the Sino-Russian relationship is complicated and that attenuates a little bit what Moscow is willing to sell there. My sense is the attack helicopter sale or discussion is primarily a desire to make sure India knows that it can't play too much hardball. India is very frustrated with lots of these programs. It's very happy with other programs. I've heard India, I can think of one joint secretary who knew before he retired, he loved Russian defense hardware. Loved it so much he would go on about how much better it was than the US stuff we were offering.

It's true, Russia has offered things that simply the United States hasn't. Now the reliability of that is variable, and so as India plays hardball in those negotiations, Russia dabbling with Pakistan is a sign that Russia's not totally locked in on the Delhi side. The last point I should not is South Korea came out from nowhere to make huge inroads and that's an interesting development, particularly on the

ship building side. There was some discussion back when I was in the Pentagon, but there was no forward progress. You know Malcolm Gladwell likes to quote his father about ketchup bottles. None will come out and then a lot will come out, right?

There's this discussion that the US-India defense relationship is stagnant, sometimes as the India-South Korea relationship which was the relationship of the future for a decade, when is it going to happen. Sometimes these things break through and a lot of things happened really quickly.

Nilanthi Samaranayake: I think the US-India naval relationship has just skyrocketed under the Modi administration to echo what Brigadier Gurmeet was talking about in his presentation and I think to echo some of the frustrations Iskander was talking about with the Russian's, certainly there are some legacy issues just in terms of technology and equipment, but there's also sort of that sentimental side, because you can maybe get a little bit more from Russia, but I do think just the fact that defense relations and particularly navy to navy relations have gone so far and that really speaks to perhaps an erosion of some of that affection toward the Russians that had existed for so long just due to the Cold War. Talking to Indians now, it's really striking to hear the naval officers speak about their greater affection in working with the Americans. It's striking, even when you think about five years ago, what they would say.

I think a lot of this has happened under the Modi administration.

Sameer Lalwani: We've got ... you just have a quick comment?

Gurmeet Kanwal: Thank you. With Russia, we had Soviet Union first and then Russia, we had a buyer-seller, patron-client relationship. No technology ever changed hands. India's technological threshold base remained exactly where it was. That is now changing. India is no longer interested in acquiring defense equipment from abroad, which doesn't come with technology transfer. Where the Russian's are willing to part with technology, we'll still buy from them but where they are not willing to give technology, not interested.

Sameer Lalwani: Actually you can just pass it to the young woman behind you. You have the honor of the last question here. Make it a good one.

Srividya Dasaraju: My name is Srividya Dasaraju and I'm from the University of Southern California, so my question relates to the One Belt, One Road initiative and my question is if India is struggling or looking to maintain regional control in the Indian Ocean, why is it so adamantly opposed to signing onto the One Belt, One Road initiative with China specifically at least in the maritime domain? Do you think that they've made the right choice in disavowing cooperation between China and Pakistan on that initiative?

Nilanthi Samaranayake: Yeah. As I mentioned CPEC goes through this disputed territory through Kashmir, so India on this principle of sovereignty it just cannot sign onto CPEC. I do think the larger issue though of One Belt, One Road, the fact that China has binned other projects that were already in existence under it has maybe made it less appealing to India than it could have been. For example BCIM, that was another initiative that was in existence, fine, but then China put it under this larger construct of One Belt, One Road, so I think it's ... China's not exactly helping itself when it comes to selling OBOR to the Indians as a concept because certainly India can improve from infrastructure development in some of its own ports in the country and even has benefited from some of the infrastructure development that China has done in neighbors such as Colombo for example where so much of trade is trans-shipped through Colombo that goes to Indian ports. There are definitely a potential gain, but with CPEC just going through Kashmir, India can't support that.

Chris Clary: I'm an academic I don't know anything about the real world, but I think it's crazy this stand that, Azad Kashmir is disputed so we can't have roads that go through it that have the word Pakistan in the title. The logical implication is that when China wants to block a loan to Arunachala Pradesh, because it's disputed that that should also be a, that China has some sort of locus standi, but that's madness.

Let the infrastructure be built in the course of a political settlement in the course of the former princely of state Jammu and Kashmir, and then the road can return to India in sovereignty one day. I think it's a very odd hook to hang India's rhetorical position on when the reality is it just doesn't feel happy to be encircled, doesn't believe that China's net role in Pakistan has been beneficial, because it believes that China in recent decades more so than the United States has subsidized bad Pakistani behavior and has allowed Pakistan to overproduce bad behavior in the way the in the absence of Beijing and combined with the absence of Washington, then India could sort out Pakistan, and again that's very unpleasant to be in, to have that sort of partial hegemony in one's neighborhood.

Sameer Lalwani: Gurmeet's still confident that it's going to have some sort of restraining effect as well.

Okay, well we're officially a wrap on this. We've hit the 1:45 mark. I just want to thank all of you for joining us today and for those in the audience or watching online. I also want to thank our panelists for participating. Expect to see more from the Stimson Center on this topic, not just looking at strategic dynamics between India and Pakistan, but also with the US and China and their roles in the mix. And then finally thanks to our team for hosting this event. To Prabhleen, to Gillian, Travis, Akriti, Hannah, Miles, Jim wherever you are lurking in the background. Thanks for being with us and we'll hope to see you at the next one.