THE HENRY L. STIMSON CENTER

Conflict Prevention and Confidence-Building Measures in South Asia: The 1990 Crisis

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Pragmatic steps toward ideal objectives

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Project on Confidence-Building Measures for Regional Security

Over the last three years of foundation-funded efforts to promote confidence-building measures (CBMs) within various regions of tension, the Stimson Center has found considerable interest among governments, militaries, and non-government organizations (NGOs) in the value of negotiating and implementing CBMs. The center stresses that some security problems—such as border tension, terrorism, and fear of surprise attack or unwanted escalation—are generic in nature, although the particulars vary in each case. If suitably adapted, CBMs designed to address problems in one region may have some utility in others. The project has focused primarily on South Asia, the Middle East, and the Southern Cone of Latin America.

Our programming has five main components:

- First, we hold a series of meetings on CBMs in Washington for diplomats and military attaches from South Asia. We also have participants from the executive and legislative branches, NGOs, and foreign journalists based in Washington. Initially, these meetings provided an opportunity for westerners to explain the theory and practice of CBMs in non-directive ways. Now, most of our speakers come from the region. We ask them to present their own ideas on CBMs, which then serve as the basis of discussion.
- Second, we commission papers to stimulate thinking and problem-solving CBM approaches within regions of interest. We prefer collaborations across borders to encourage networking. Our commissions have been carried out in South Asia and the Southern Cone.
- Third, with local co-sponsorship, we convene workshops on CBMs within regions of interest, reaching key target audiences: military officers, journalists, academics, and government officials. Workshops have been held in South Asia, the Middle East, and the Southern Cone.
- Fourth, we have initiated a Visiting Fellows program, whereby talented individuals from South Asia come to Washington to conduct research and to become immersed in the theory and practice of CBMs.
- Fifth, we publish materials on CBMs and distribute them to diplomats, government officials, military officers, journalists, and academics interested in these subjects.

Support for The Stimson Center's CBM Project has come from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the W. Alton Jones Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

Executive Summary

Was there a near-nuclear war between India and Pakistan in 1990? To help set the record straight, the Henry L. Stimson Center convened a meeting on February 16, 1994 with U.S. officials who could provide authoritative eye witness accounts of this important crisis. Our on-the-record discussion was led by former U.S. Ambassador to India William Clark and former U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Robert Oakley. Participating in this discussion were the U.S. defense attachés at both embassies, who travelled extensively during the crisis and watched the Indian and Pakistani militaries at very close quarters. We invited knowledgeable Indian and Pakistani officials to join us, as well as South Asian reporters who were based in Washington.

The transcript of this meeting follows. Among the key findings:

- The threat of a nuclear confrontation was not great, nor were India and Pakistan eager to have another conventional war. Nevertheless, there were very worrisome possibilities of a ratcheting up of tensions in the absence of a U.S. initiative.
- By all accounts, the Gates mission was extremely helpful in defusing the crisis.
- The participants knew of no credible evidence that Pakistan had deployed nuclear weapons during the crisis.
- The participants knew of no credible evidence that Pakistan evacuated the Kahuta complex during the crisis.
- The participants knew of no credible evidence that Pakistan stored nuclear weapons in Baluchistan or moved them by convoy to a nearby airfield.
- The participants knew of no credible evidence that Pakistan had F-16s armed with nuclear weapons on strip alert during the crisis. Indeed, Pakistani F-16s were off-runway, in protected revetments to shield them from attack and from public view.
- During the crisis, the Indian military leadership deliberately refrained from moving armor associated with its strike forces out of peacetime cantonments, and welcomed U.S. defense attachés to confirm this.
- During the crisis, the Pakistani military leadership deliberately refrained from moving its two strike corps to the front and refrained from using forward operating bases for its Air Force—critical indications of an impending attack.
- During the crisis, U.S. attachés played an essential role in monitoring and reporting on the disposition of Indian and Pakistani military forces. These reports were effectively used to dispel rumors and false intelligence assessments that could have exacerbated tensions.
- The presence of two veteran U.S. ambassadors in New Delhi and Islamabad who could convey credible messages to political and military leaders helped defuse the crisis. Their roles were simplified by prior U.S. diplomatic efforts which placed the United States in the position of a welcome intermediary in both countries.

- The sense of alarm over the crisis was far greater in Washington than in Islamabad, and it was greater in Islamabad than in Delhi.
- The shadow of the Brasstacks military exercises, which sparked a more severe crisis in 1986-7, fell heavily over the 1990 crisis.
- Some confidence-building measures (CBMs)—particularly increased transparency and restraints on military maneuvers—played an important role in keeping the crisis from boiling over. Other CBMs, such as the use of "hotlines," were not employed.
- CBMs can play an essential role in avoiding future crises, especially additional communication measures.

Preface

Reports of the near-nuclear collision between India and Pakistan in the spring of 1990 are becoming part of the region's folklore. The key elements of the story are as follows: Pakistan used the threat of a nuclear strike to prevent an Indian attack. During the crisis, there was a mass evacuation of a fissionable material production facility at Kahuta. A heavily guarded truck convoy moved nuclear weapons from a suspected storage facility in Baluchistan to a nearby air base, and the Pakistani Air Force armed F-16s with nuclear weapons and placed them on runway alert.

These assertions, which were initially reported in a story by investigative journalist Seymour M. Hersh, published in *The New Yorker* ("On the Nuclear Edge," March 29, 1993), make for a frightening tale—if true. Any use of Pakistani nuclear weapons would surely have prompted retaliation in-kind by India. This prospective nuclear holocaust, according to Hersh, was avoided by a mission to India and Pakistan by then-deputy national security adviser, Robert M. Gates. On-the-record interviews with Gates and with Richard J. Kerr, the deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency at the time, gave Hersh's account instant credibility. Kerr is quoted as saying, "It may be as close as we've come to a nuclear exchange. It was far more frightening than the Cuban missile crisis."

This nightmare scenario would confirm bleak Indian views about Pakistan's intentions while supporting those in Pakistan who believe in the utility of nuclear weapons and nuclear threats. These negative perceptions and the frightening assertions behind them continue to gain currency. They have been recycled in a newly published book, *Critical Mass*, by William E. Burrows and Robert Windrem, which has been excerpted and serialized by major publications in both India and Pakistan.[1]

Given the stakes involved in the 1990 crisis and the lessons that will be learned from these tension-filled events, the Stimson Center felt it would be worthwhile to gather individuals with authoritative, first-hand knowledge of what actually transpired. According to the eye witness accounts, presented in the pages that follow, all of the assertions mentioned above should be treated with considerable skepticism. Unless and until further supporting evidence is provided, it appears that Hersh has drawn unwarranted conclusions from ambiguous evidence, and has discounted convincing evidence contrary to his inflammatory conclusions.

The Stimson Center is releasing an edited transcript of our meeting on February 16, 1994 to provide a more accurate picture of the 1990 crisis, to encourage more first person accounts of these events, and to stimulate thinking in South Asia about the role of CBMs in avoiding or defusing future crises.

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1. William E. Burrows and Robert Windrem, *Critical Mass: The Dangerous Race for Superweapons in a Fragmenting World* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994).

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Michael Krepon
President
The Henry L. Stimson Center

Contents

Project on Confidence-Building Measures for Regional Security iii
Executive Summary v
Preface vii
Table of Contents ix
List of Participants x
Glossary of Acronyms and Terms xi
Geography of 1990 Indo-Pakistani Tensions xii
Conflict Prevention and Confidence-Building Measures in South Asia:
The 1990 Crisis 1

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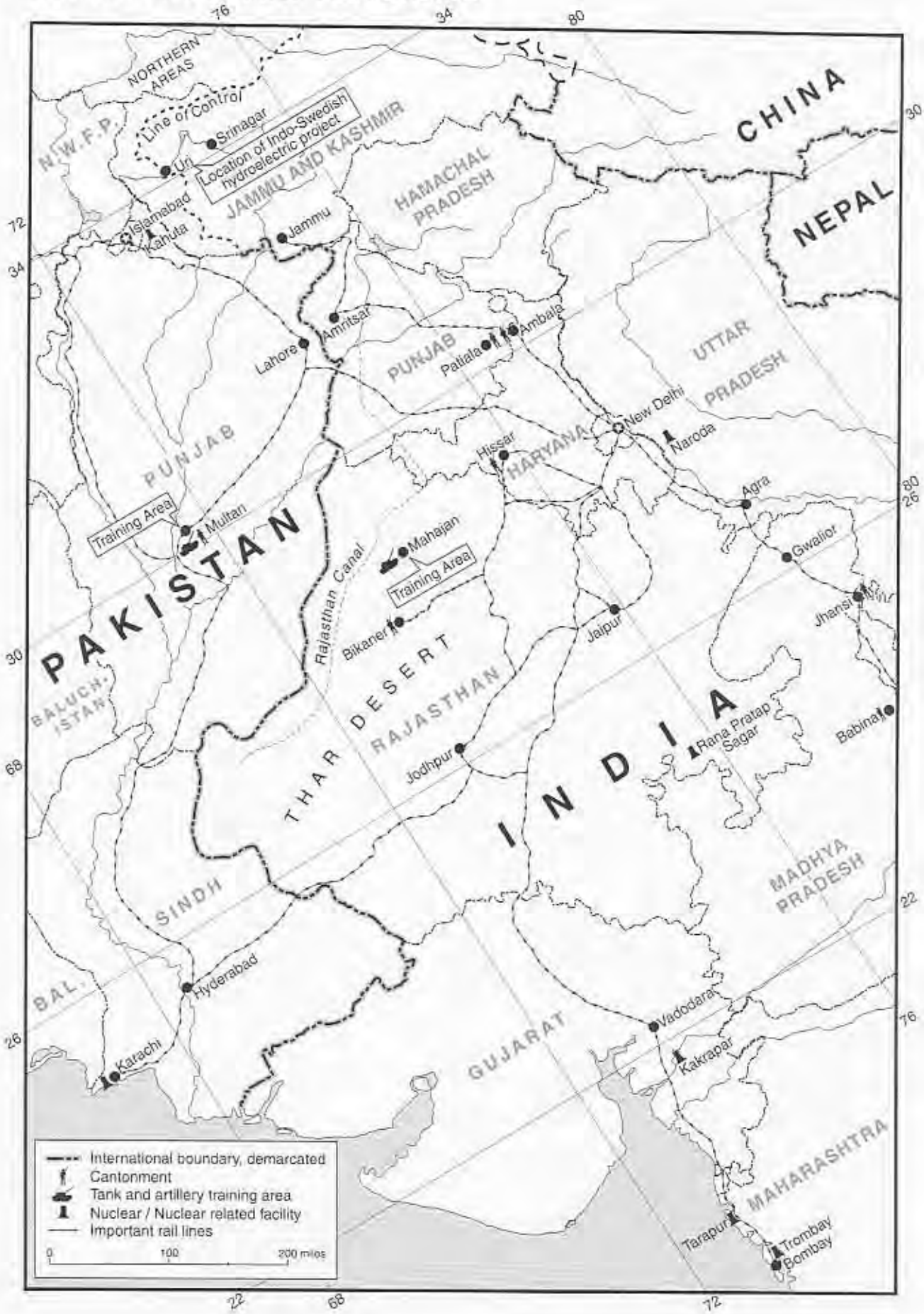
Glossary of Acronyms and Terms

BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party (India)
CBM	Confidence-Building Measures
EC	European Community
DAO	Defense Attaché Office
DCM	Deputy-Chief-of-Mission
DGMO	Director General of Military Operations
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence Agency (Pakistan)
LOC	Line of Control
NSC	National Security Council (USA)
OBC	Other Backward Castes (India)
RAW	Research and Analysis Wing (India)
UP	Uttar Pradesh (India)
Brasstacks	1986-1987; major Indian military exercise
Zarb-i-momin	1989; major Pakistani military exercise

GEOGRAPHY OF THE 1990 INDO-PAKISTANI TENSIONS



Conflict Prevention and Confidence-Building Measures in South Asia: The 1990 Crisis

Mr. Krepon: We're happy to have everyone here to participate in the Stimson Center's ongoing series of meetings on the utility of confidence-building measures in South Asia.

Truth and fiction mingle somewhat easily in South Asia. Rumor often is treated as fact. The truth can be dangerous. Sometimes, fiction can be even more dangerous. It seems to me we can perform a public service here by trying to create a factual and balanced account of what transpired in the region in the spring of 1990.

Obviously, we can only contribute partially to this account. We need more people from the region to go on the public record to help us understand their perceptions of what transpired, and to help us fill in the blanks of what transpired.

But since we cannot bring all of the people we need from the region to Washington to help fill in the factual record, I thought we could at least provide a start by bringing together some of the Americans who were centrally involved, and who can provide useful first person accounts of what transpired in the spring of 1990, when some accounts have India and Pakistan on the verge of a nuclear war.

We intend to transcribe this meeting. We will allow the speakers to edit their remarks. And then we intend to publish the transcript and to circulate it in South Asia. We hope that in doing so, we will help to encourage individuals in both India and Pakistan to add to this public record.

This session is of particular interest to the Stimson Center because we feel strongly about the utility of confidence-building measures for this and other regions. And our sense from the partial record that has emerged from these events is that confidence-building measures helped to diffuse the crisis.

So we have with us today to start the discussion two very distinguished diplomats—Ambassador William Clark and Ambassador Robert Oakley. When both gentlemen started their careers in the Foreign Service—Ambassador Clark in Freetown, Sierra Leone, and Ambassador Oakley in Khartoum, Sudan—I wonder if they had any idea that they would have such distinguished careers.

Ambassador Clark has come a long way from Sierra Leone. He now holds the Japan Chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and he's a senior advisor for CSIS on Asia. You know him as the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and as the US Ambassador to India. He's also had some very, very important assignments in Cairo and in Tokyo. And indeed, he has spent the bulk of his time in the Foreign Service working on problems related to Japan.

Ambassador Oakley has come a long way from Khartoum. He seems to enjoy public service in trouble spots. His years in the Foreign Service have taken him to Vietnam and Lebanon. And then he was US Ambassador to Zaire and to Somalia. He does seem to spend a fair amount of his time in Somalia, for which we are grateful. But he was also Ambassador to Pakistan during the period in question, and Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for the Middle East and South Asian Affairs, on the staff of the National Security Council.

We are very, very grateful that they have decided to help us learn more about what transpired in the region in 1990. I have asked Ambassador Clark and Ambassador Oakley to address, if they could, their perceptions of Indian and Pakistani intentions in the region, the prospects for inadvertent war or preemption during the period in question, and what steps were taken to alleviate tensions. Finally, I would like them to provide their evaluation of lessons learned from the crisis.

So we'll start with Ambassador Clark.

Ambassador Clark: Thank you, Michael. Let me start with a footnote or a caveat, if I can. A friend of mine, Seymour Hersh, wrote an article that a number of people have read, about the 1990 crisis and the Gates mission.

Another friend of mine, General Sharma, who in 1990 was the general officer commanding the Indian Army, was asked about that article in New Delhi. And he responded, "I don't know why Hersh didn't call up Bill Clark, because he and I worked that out very nicely."

In fact, Sy did talk to me. My views were not as apocalyptic as his. My comments really didn't fit his thesis, and so you will not find me in the article anywhere. But it is not fair to say that Sy didn't check with me. He did. He just chose not to use what I said. With that as background, when I arrived in Delhi in December of 1989, my Indian friends told me that the Punjab was serious; Kashmir was manageable. That changed rather quickly. One has to look at the struggle in Kashmir to find the roots of the crisis of 1990.

And as we moved forward into this, I think it's fair to say that the Indian Government and the American Embassy were somewhat taken by surprise by the intensity and the rapidity with which the disaffection and violence escalated in Kashmir.

I'm comforted today, because if I make any mistakes, most of my embassy staff is here to tell me I'm wrong. Grant Smith, who was DCM, George Sherman was Political Counselor, Walter Anderson was Political Advisor, John Sandrock was Air Attaché and Joe Daves was on the Army side. I mean, we've got the team, so if you have any questions about Delhi, I think I'm covered.

Having said that, the friction between India and Pakistan, particularly as it applied to Kashmir, went up rather quickly. My colleague, Abdul Sattar, who was not in Delhi at that time, but arrived later, will pardon me if I say that in part, as with so many things today, it was aided by the advent of television and of tapes made for television.

There were rallies in Pakistan, and there were comments by the then and present Prime Minister [Benazir Bhutto] about the need to aid their fellows in Kashmir, and to help with the protest that was going on, and some of this was rather strong language.

About late February or March, the Indian Army deployed to the Mahajan training range for maneuvers, which is about the best time to do that. And memories of something General Sundarji will remember—Brasstacks—were still fresh.

And in addition to Kashmir, you got from the Pakistani side concerns that, indeed, India was ginning up another large exercise of that nature, or, indeed, preparing to launch an attack from the training range.

The concern was serious enough, and by that time our contacts were strong enough, that we were able to go to the defense ministry in Delhi, and talk to the general officer commanding. And for the first time, I think at least since 1987, we had the site maps brought out to show us where the deployments were and what they had with them and what they didn't, and to allow the first of about three reconnaissance missions up along the border to see what was going on. So I felt at that time, that we had a good handle on where the Indian Army was coming from.

The political side of the equation was somewhat different. While the Army was relatively calm, the politicians, as is their wont in most countries, were not. And there was a great deal of chest-

thumping and drum-beating in Delhi and other parts of India, as well.

But the Army itself, with [General] Sharma in Delhi—I think Roddy Rodriques was the Western Army commander at that time—was concerned that the inadvertent escalation could go forward, but was determined to at least show to the Americans that it wasn't coming from their side. They would react, and that was the problem. It started to ratchet up a little bit.

All of us in Delhi were watching it. Par Kettis, the Swedish Ambassador, had an interest there. There were a couple of projects that might have been in harm's way if things had gone the wrong way. But we were reporting to Washington that it was critical; it just wasn't serious yet. That didn't necessarily square with certain reporting that was coming in from other sources from both sides of the border.

And I think it's fair to say, Bob, the concern in Washington went up quicker than concern in Delhi did. And yet Bob Oakley in Islamabad and me in Delhi were trying to keep it in perspective for the forces in Washington.

It is a fact, however, that both Delhi and Islamabad, while each maintaining that it was doing nothing to egg this on, were concerned because each one was taking incremental steps. In response to the other, always; but it's a chicken-and-egg question of who is responding to whom and when did you do it.

We felt that there was a need, at least in Delhi, for some overtures on the part of the United States. Exactly what that overture would be, perhaps a visit by someone of significant stature—and we did not pick a particular person—to come out and see if there wasn't something that the United States could do, was one of the options.

I'll let Bob talk about the activities on the Pakistan side. But Gates was received after visiting Islamabad first—was received in Delhi by the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and the Defense Minister, and had very good and substantive discussions with each, and brought some news about training camps that was comforting to Delhi and later denied by Islamabad, but nevertheless, helped to diffuse the situation a bit more.

And at the end of the day, I think you could say that both Delhi and Islamabad used Bob Gates and his mission as an excuse, if you will, to back off of positions they had been taking. We were rather pleased to have been the excuse, and for the first time in a long time, the United States was seen as not favoring one or the other.

So the Gates mission was very important in those terms. Because, while I didn't feel at that particular point in time that war was imminent, if nothing had been done to stop this incremental ratcheting, there's no guarantee that there wouldn't have been some border activity somewhere further down the line. Bob, why don't you do Islamabad?

Ambassador Oakley: Well, let me start by saying that my perspective was somewhat shaped by my experiences in Brasstacks—and when Shirin Tahir-Kheli and I were at the NSC. And seeing this ratcheting up, which very nearly produced a war that neither side wanted. At that point in 1987, you had two strong governments, and all it took was a telephone call between Zia and Rajiv and this was put to bed. I think Shirin may want to comment on the background of Brasstacks. But there was this ratcheting up, and inadvertently, they came very, very close to conflict.

Up until late 1989, as best we could see from Islamabad, Indian and Pakistani tensions were normal. A lot of screaming and shouting, but nothing really serious. But several events then took place, and in retrospect, one can see how they sort of fit together, indirectly if not directly. One of them was the departure of the Russians from Afghanistan, and a feeling of understandable pride on the part of the Pakistani military for having contributed to this. Zarb-i-Momin maneuvers were showing a more muscular Pakistan, if you will. One that was prepared to carry the offensive into Indian territory, rather than sit back supinely and allow the Indians always to take the offensive. This made a few people nervous or angry on the other side of the line, I think, Bill.

But interestingly, as you said, Kashmir was so calm it was not discussed. We tried to check the records on our side and asked you all to check them on your side. And there was a series of meetings during 1989 between the two prime ministers and the defense ministers and the foreign ministers and the foreign secretaries — no one raised Kashmir. Punjab, always; but Kashmir, no.

And it wasn't very long, of course, before the Indians put out a white paper saying that all of what happened later in Kashmir had been planned meticulously by the Pakistanis during 1989. But RAW, I guess, was asleep at the switch, because during 1989, no one saw this. It was not raised.

An important element of the background was the Russian departure. One need not rely as much upon the United States in weighing policy decisions made in Islamabad or worry as much about the Soviet threat. At the same time, there was a sense

among some key Pakistanis that, we know how to get things done by using a combination of indirect warfare, supporting surrogates, materially and politically, and adding a certain amount of Islamic zealotry. That might not seem to be a winning formula, if you think about that in perspective of previous Pakistani/Indian confrontations in Kashmir. However, it had been successful against the Soviets in Afghanistan.

But Kashmir had been basically peaceful for years. And then all of a sudden in late 1989 and early 1990, the Kashmiris, I think, began their own version of the Intifadah, because they felt neglected by all sides. And because they saw no let-up in the pressure coming from Delhi, the Kashmiris sort of exploded, saying, you have to pay attention to us.

And this was really, I believe — the collective wisdom around this room may have a better view than mine — this was primarily spontaneous. The result, in a way, was similar to the Intifadah. People did begin to pay attention to the uprising. It attracted external attention and external support.

Pakistan, willy-nilly, began to play a much more active role. Unofficially, groups such as Jamaat-i-Islami as well as ISI and the Pakistani Army, began to take a more active role in support of the Kashmiri protests. Training camps of various kinds multiplied. Of course, a training camp can be a hotel room, for that matter, for teaching someone how to put an explosive device together. But the idea of training camps conjures up all sorts of massive things.

There was much more activity. There were more people and more material going across the border from Pakistan into Kashmir. It did begin to look like perhaps the early stages of what had happened in Afghanistan.

At the same time, the Islamic factor began to play a more important role within the Pakistani body politic, including certain people in the Army and on the civilian side. There is also the point that Bill made about the media contributing a great deal to this. And so, given the TV broadcasts of the horrors being inflicted upon Kashmiri Moslems, you had a lot of response coming from Pakistan, with Prime Minister Bhutto going up country and giving incendiary speeches, and politicians on both sides adding fuel to the flames of the insurgency, encouraged by Islam.

So understandably, as Bill said, there was a strong political reaction on the Indian side. We in Islamabad suggested cooling things. However, at that time of year, the Pakistanis joined the Indians as they frequently did in deploying their forces for maneuvers on opposite sides of the border; again, like Brasstacks.

And you began to get a ratcheting up. Every time a battalion moved somewhere along the border, it's picked up by the media and the politicians on the other side, and cited as a developing plan for attack.

The military on the Pakistani side were surprisingly, I thought, calm in a sense; but unrealistically confident. The Iranians had assured Pakistan at the military level of their strong support in the event that hostilities broke out between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. And this was interpreted by General Beg and certain other senior officers within the Pakistani Army as something very, very meaningful.

We, from our point of view, felt that Iran had almost nothing they could actually deploy which would be of any value in the event there was a conflict between Pakistan and India. The idea of strategic depth was again being discussed but it made no sense. I recall saying to General Beg, "This wonderful strategic depth—this means you're going to actually withdraw your army into Afghanistan or into Iran? That's a wonderful way to proceed. What is strategic depth worth if it's on the wrong side of the country?" In any event, there was a lot of confidence there.

But there also was a feeling, which is, I think, unfortunately all too common, that as the United States began to urge that Pakistan stop its support, certainly stop any official support, and do their best to stop any unofficial support for the insurgency in Kashmir, that once again, the United States was beginning to tilt toward India. And if there were a crunch, the United States would let Pakistan down once again.

Therefore, Pakistan needed to make the proper preparations and take the proper precautions. In addition to contacts with Iran, at about that time the freeze on the Pakistan nuclear program was also removed. And the program began to move forward again. This is what led eventually to the application of the Pressler Amendment.

It was in those early months of 1990 that the tensions began to build as there was more support, material and political, flowing into Kashmir from the Pakistani side, as General Sharma was threatening to take out the training camps and saying that it was time to teach Pakistan a lesson, we'll put these upstarts in their place once and for all.

Ambassador Clark: "A boot up their backside," I think is the way he phrased it.

Ambassador Oakley: General Beg, feeling that he was sufficiently strong with all the things he had been able to mobilize, thought that he would be able to carry the day. And thinking about Brasstacks and recog-

nizing that Benazir Bhutto was not in a position to stop the Pakistani Army if it got beyond a certain point, and wondering what the situation was in Delhi, since they also had just lost Rajiv Gandhi.

I began to worry about the Brasstacks syndrome. We suggested, as Bill did, that it was high time the United States stepped in, because no one else seemed like they'd do it. And this did produce the Gates visit.

Let me make this point very clear. I tried to make it clear to Mr. Hersh, and he diddled with it. But at least from Islamabad, we never believed, in part because of what we did see and in part because of the very good information which Bill was getting from the Indian Army, that there was going to be an explosion in the spring of 1990.

But we feared that if the momentum of this ratcheting up were not stopped by the fall, the prime fighting season, the two armies might be face-to-face again, as they had been at the time of Brasstacks, and the momentum would be so strong that it couldn't be stopped. So we wanted intervention in the spring in order to preempt something we feared might happen in the fall.

And Gates came down straight from Moscow. He made it clear that the Russians shared this concern. It wasn't one-sided; both sides should back down. In Islamabad, Gates and I alone met with the President and the Chief of the Army Staff, and he [Gates] presented a very sober assessment of what would happen in the event of war. He said, we are certain that it will not be guerilla warfare in Kashmir. It will be conventional warfare the length of the border. And you may find the Indian Navy in Karachi. You may find the Indian Air Force deep into Pakistan territory. And here are several scenarios ranging from the most optimistic to the most pessimistic of what you can expect in the war.

And this was a real eye-opener for Pakistan's President because I don't think that it had been put to him in quite those terms by the Chief of the Army Staff.

Gates said "Yes, we will have to stop providing military support or any kind of support to whichever side might initiate things. And this, of course, will impact upon you more than it will upon the Indians."

But you'll find that others share our view, that there's no reason for this ratcheting up and there's certainly no reason to get yourselves in a situation where you might have spontaneous combustion. Pakistan, in our judgment, was certainly not trying

to initiate conventional warfare with India, but felt that somehow, perhaps by supporting the Kashmiris in a way analogous to Afghanistan, it could make a basic change in the equation between Pakistan and India.

And in parallel with the Gates visit came messages from Moscow and Beijing to both New Delhi and Islamabad, couched somewhat differently, but the essence was the same as the message from the United States—both of you back off, because you're not going to get any of us to take sides in this operation. This is not the past; this is a wholly different era. The messages didn't say that this is the beginning of the end of the cold war for South Asia, but clearly it was.

Now, Gates left behind in Delhi and Islamabad and Rawalpindi, a series of ideas for confidence-building measures. These were later translated into the South Asian context and discussed between the two governments. Several of them were agreed upon, and a couple of them were even implemented.

Primarily—and Michael and I have talked about this before—because at that stage, the military establishments—and this is in the fall of 1990—were looking back at what might have happened had there not been external intervention urging restraint.

They realized—and very senior people in both the Indian Army and the Pakistan Army have told me personally that looking back at it—there could very easily have been a war in the fall, which no one wanted, and that they were determined that this would not happen again.

Therefore, they set up hotlines and other things and said the military can't solve the political problem over Kashmir, but if we work hard at these confidence-building measures, and particularly if we use the hotlines, we can keep any incident or incidents from ratcheting up to the point where spontaneous combustion would be possible. And that's about the best we can do as military.

And they have been good about that, I think. There have been occasions when the military on one side or the other of the Line of Control have pushed harder than the top military leadership or the political leadership in Delhi or Islamabad would have approved of. And at that point, there is a communication of some kind, and tension goes back down. This has not solved the problem, but it has certainly reduced the problem. And I think that it certainly reduced the chances of some sort of accidental warfare. So that's the story from our side.

Mr. Krepon: How did it look from Washington, Shirin?

Amb. Tahir-Kheli: I was at the National Security Council during Brasstacks but not in 1990. By the time that the Gates mission was underway—and things were heating up in South Asia—my U.N. Ambassadorship had already been announced. I was awaiting Senate confirmation, so I was out of the NSC and the State Department at the point.

Ambassador Clark: But you can't tell us you weren't snooping around.

Amb. Tahir-kheli: Not me!

But I do think that there are certain things that one ought to keep in mind. This discussion about the Gates mission, which is becoming the new, sexy subject of South Asia, in some ways is very useful. I think it's a very good thing and I'm very grateful to the Stimson Center for generating this debate.

One of the unfortunate aspects of the whole issue has been the lack of public debate on issues that are legitimate and not secretive. And I think that the whole concern about what went on, and what could have gone wrong is very important in order to try and prevent these kinds of things in the future. So I think we all owe you a debt Michael, for the Center's work.

I do think, however, that we ought not to think of the Gates mission resulting from India and Pakistan both being asleep at the switch or reactive. And that all of a sudden things began to go haywire, and American involvement became inevitable.

I think the Gates mission in 1990 and its acceptance by India and Pakistan was very much an outcome of earlier policies. Thus, the Bush Administration's involvement through the Gates mission could not have happened had you not had those long years in the Reagan Administration with—in fact, as Vice President, Bush himself was very active—not only improved American relations, simultaneously with India and with Pakistan, but also the decision to use that relationship between us and them to try and make better relations between them.

I think that has to be kept in mind, as one looks at this, during the 1990 crisis, or the impending crisis, or the almost crisis, Gates is portrayed as one who puts on his Superman cloak and zooms over there. Without the underlying improvement of the 1980s in US relations with South Asia, it is hard to conceive of any American involvement in these issues, particularly since they involved nuclear policy.

Thus, by the time 1990 came around, you already had a good track record. For example, in '84, Mrs. Gandhi and President

Reagan met at Cancun. In '84, George Bush went to India and Pakistan. I went on that visit to both India and Pakistan, and I remember that was the first time that the United States had proposed CBMs directly to India and Pakistan. Some of these followed.

For example, the hotlines, et cetera, had preceded the 1990 crisis. India and Pakistan were themselves thinking about some of these issues. But I think the menu of CBMs, which was raised in a private dinner that George Bush had with Mrs. Gandhi, was a rich one. Similarly, as Bush left meetings in Pakistan, he pointed out that it makes sense to think about CBMs in South Asia, as was being done elsewhere. CBMs were not exceptional to the European context.

But in the India and Pakistan case, it was quite exceptional, because they had not really been thought about; not because the governments weren't smart enough but because people thought these were quite inconceivable.

And throughout the Reagan Administration, CBMs between India and Pakistan were discussed during very, very good visits to the area, including the visit that [Caspar] Weinberger made, which, in my view, was probably the most spectacular visit that an American official made to India.

But all through them, there was always one component, whether it was geared to the defense side, or whether it was geared to science and technology. American interlocutors kept pushing and chipping away, saying, "Doesn't it make sense to work toward Indo-Pak CBMs." It also was important, I think, because it signaled an American commitment to do something, I think, more worthwhile in South Asia. Trying to sort of see if the picture could change.

And it was, in fact, in my view, because of that acceptance and because there was by then a long track record of US actions, that when Brasstacks took place, the US was able to be helpful without forcing itself on either India or on Pakistan in helping to reduce that crisis.

The US was essentially welcomed. It was looked for, and it was offered and it was accepted. Obviously, it was up to the two countries to lower the tensions, because they were the two prime reactors. There were misunderstandings. But the two sides were, I think, helped by the fact that the United States was not only interested, but also was perceived as impartial. And I think that's very important.

A key note can be played only when US relations are good not just with Pakistan, but also with India. I think the tendency to make today's headlines distracts.

So in other words, sustained US interest in both India and Pakistan is needed. For the US, history is invented every four years. But in the field, countries look for consistent policy. Thus, the Gates mission was an important event in a long-term policy. It was not a case of one day Gates waking up and saying, "Gee, wouldn't it be nice to go to South Asia." That wasn't the case. The fact is that there was a record on which the mission was built.

Additionally, I think George Bush's personal involvement in the years '84 to '88 with India and with Pakistan, and his feeling that there was something that could be done here was very important in that.

There are then, of course, the domestic repercussions and one's own feelings as to why or why not some things may have been done. The political leadership sort of played into the hands of those in Pakistan who really wanted to disrupt the US-Pakistan relationship, and that the ratcheting-up of the nuclear program that Bob Oakley referred to, was done very deliberately, knowing that American law precluded any relationship with Pakistan once the latter raised the ante.

Mr. Krepon: I would like to turn the discussion to the role of confidence-building measures prior to the Gates mission, because not very much is on the public record here, particularly regarding the activities of the defense attachés who were in the region at the time.

General Sharma, in his interview in the *Economic Times* of May 18, 1993, says that there was no movement of Indian armor formations to the north and the west in the months preceding the Gates mission. "Not a single tank moved from any of our reserve formations," is the quote that General Sharma has put onto the public record. John Sandrock, you were in India at the time as our air attaché. Would you like to say anything about that?

Colonel Sandrock: Sure, and I'd like to invite Joe Daves, who was the Assistant Army Attaché in New Delhi to pitch in anytime, as well.

As this crisis developed, Ambassador [Clark] became quite concerned about the increasing tensions. Military attachés, as part of the country team and military advisors to the ambassador are supposed to have some idea as to what the country's military is doing. So, as the reports regarding the military buildup on the

Indian side of the border increased, it was entirely appropriate for us to go out and have a look.

I think that Ambassador Clark already stated that the winter season is the traditional time for both the Indian and Pakistani armies to conduct normal winter exercises. In the case of the Indian Army, they go to the Mahajan training area which is located in the western Indian desert just north of Bikaner. The Pakistani army generally trains about the same time and does its training around Multan which is, if you look at the map, roughly opposite the Mahajan training area in Pakistan. The two training areas are about on the same latitude about 100 to 120 miles apart.

So, the training activity that was going on in early 1990 was initially considered entirely normal. What was unusual from our perspective was the deployment of additional troops in Kashmir as a result of the reported cross-border infiltration from Pakistan into Kashmir and then along the border, south through the rest of Jammu and Kashmir and into the [Indian state of] Punjab. This deployment included not only regular army troops but also significant increases in the Border Security Force, which had the primary responsibility for border security on the Indian side. The role of the Indian Army is to act as a back-up in the event real hostilities break out.

So, over the winter of 1989-90, there was considerable build-up of the Border Security Forces and some buildup of regular army troops. As far as the army buildup was concerned, there was no evidence that we could see that it was accompanied by the movement of heavy equipment such as tanks and artillery. This appeared to corroborate the Indian claim that the buildup of forces on the border was to prevent cross-border infiltration and did not constitute a buildup of forces preparing for any hostile action against Pakistan.

To try and confirm both the Indian claims and our own observations, we were asked by the Ambassador to go to the border region for a first-hand look. In discussions that the Ambassador had with the Indian Army Chief, General Sharma, and others, General Sharma said that he had no objections to our going out and having a look.

So, Joe Daves and I traveled together on the first trip.

Mr. Krepon: When was that?

Colonel Sandrock: That was in February 1990, obviously well before the Gates mission. We left New Delhi and drove through Hissar.

Hissar is the location of an Indian Army division. We took a look around there, and although we couldn't enter the army cantonment, we could see that there were some armored vehicles, tanks and armored personnel carriers, and, if I remember correctly, some artillery pieces. There was no evidence whatsoever that these were being readied for deployment or that there were any troops or equipment getting ready to move out.

We drove on to Bikaner where we spent the night. Enroute, we saw no military traffic on the highway nor did we see any military rail traffic. The road between Hissar and Bikaner travels along one of the major rail lines. There was no unusual rail traffic that we could see, nor anything else that would lead us to believe that there was a problem. In Bikaner, again without having access to the cantonment, since these are not open to the general public and since we had made no pre-arrangements with the Indian Army for a visit, we couldn't actually verify that all the armor and artillery pieces were there, but we saw no evidence that anything was being prepared to move.

From Bikaner, we drove through the Mahajan training area. I think Joe would agree that what we saw were normal wintertime training activities; the kind of thing that you would expect. We saw some tanks, but in reasonable numbers. As we drove through the area, we passed some empty tank transporters near a rail point where we also observed some rail cars loaded with military equipment. We couldn't tell whether this equipment had just arrived or was being readied for departure, but, in any case, the amount was limited and there appeared to be no unusual activity.

We traveled on through the Mahajan area and saw what appeared to be some small unit field exercises and a small river crossing exercise across one of the canals in the northern portion of the training area. As we continued to the north, we deviated a bit from the main route to have a look at some of the areas a little closer to the border. Again, we observed nothing unusual.

We next came through a city whose name I can't remember and there had a chance to chat with a couple of officers who said they were aware of the heightened tension between India and Pakistan but that they were not on alert, nor had any leaves been canceled in their unit. These officers were assigned to a unit permanently assigned in the region and were not part of the forces that had been forward deployed to check cross-border infiltration.

After a brief stop we continued to Patiala where we spent the night. Patiala has a large cantonment and a good portion of the cantonment is accessible. We drove through the entire compound, saw heavy equipment, tanks, and artillery pieces in what appeared to be their normal parking and storage areas. We observed nothing unusual nor any preparations to deploy. The next day, enroute back to New Delhi we drove through the large cantonment at Ambala where there again was nothing that could be considered out of the ordinary.

I think the point to be made is that we were not hindered in our effort to look at the Indian Army's activities in any way during this trip. While we weren't asked by General Sharma to go out and verify the Indian Army's activities, we also were not hindered in any way. There were no road blocks put in our way and there were no attempts to stop us nor, as far as we could tell, were we observed or followed to any unusual extent. I think when we went through cities and towns there were probably people who took note of our progress. I don't know that for sure, but I suspect that was the case.

Ambassador Oakley: Now, this was in February?

Colonel Sandrock: Yes, that was in February. We eventually made our way back to New Delhi. We had been on the road for three or four days and had a very good trip. I'd like to invite Joe to add his recollections. He also made at least one more road trip later.

Lt. Col. Daves: Yes, I was out a few times during that whole period. And what I recall is that there were substantial rotations of armored and mechanized units into the training area. Now, that's different from deployment — the units are in the training areas for the purposes of training. The biggest area is the Mahajan area in northern Rajasthan.

But there were also some additional deployments further north of Punjab, in January in particular, if I remember right, of quite a bit of infantry and artillery. Now, General Sharma said armor. And I'm not aware of any major armor deployments, other than in the training area.

Ambassador Clark: I think, Joe, it's fair enough to say that he was being very careful with his wording. I mean, that he hadn't deployed from his reserve force, which would be the two strike forces, I think. But the normal training equipment was out on the training range, so you did have tanks and you did have artillery. You just didn't have the strike forces out of the cantonments.

Ambassador Oakley: As John pointed out, the distance is not that great.

Ambassador Clark: It is from the cantonments. The distance isn't that great from the training area, I believe. But it is if you go back — why don't we [ask] the two generals here.

General Sundarji: The training area is closer to [not clear] than to Mahajan. But the reserve forces that General Sharma were referring to were in central India. The closest reserve was in Hissar—all the other reserves were further away—in Jhansi, Babina, parts in UP, and so on. And those are the main strike forces. They hadn't been deployed from what I presume General Sharma meant.

Ambassador Clark: And given the road network such as it is, and the railnet, it's very hard to move those forces without being seen by everybody.

General Sundarji: Oh, yes. Right.

Colonel Sandrock: And the main rail line comes right through New Delhi. I don't know that there is an alternative to coming through—if you're coming from Jhansi or from other locations in central and eastern India, you're going to come through Delhi.

General Sundarji: Any major move would have gummed up rail connections throughout the entire country—it's not a thing you can hide under a hat.

Lt. Col. Daves: Another impression that I had was that both sides had a lot of misconceptions about what the other one was doing in terms of military deployment. And there were a lot of rumors flying and there were reports in the newspapers, even, that such and such division was deployed here or there and on the other side of the border.

And I think we played a role—when these issues came up, we would basically come back and say, "Well, we think you're wrong."

Ambassador Clark: We had a hotline between Islamabad and Delhi. And when Bob and his troops picked up some of these rumors, they would call down and we would check, and when we had rumors in Delhi—

Ambassador Oakley: Without providing details to either side, we would periodically go in and say "No—"

Ambassador Clark: "That's wrong."

Ambassador Oakley: "You're wrong about that."

Mr. Krepon: Is the hotline to Islamabad or to Rawalpindi?

Colonel Sandrock: No, between the embassies. The US Embassy.

Ambassador Clark: I'm talking about the embassies.

Ambassador Oakley: The military hotline which was there even before as Shirin said, which wasn't used, and for a while, they got in the stage where it was a question of pride and protocol as to who would call first, therefore, they wouldn't use it. They did away with all that stuff later on.

Ambassador Clark: A subsequent agreement specified that it would be used once a week, alternately.

Colonel Sandrock: There was an interesting point on the hotlines. Before 1990, there had been two hotlines between India and Pakistan. One hotline was between the DGMOs, the Directors General of Military Operations, and the other one was between the air forces—between the Air Operations Centers.

Interestingly enough, it was during the crisis that the air-to-air hotline was turned off. It went inactive. In answer to a question as to why the link was terminated, the response was that there was no utility in maintaining the link. "We never use it, so why have it." The DGMOs are the guys that need to talk to each other anyway. So the air operations room hotline was terminated. I can't tell you exactly when, but it was early in 1990 during this crisis.

Ambassador Clark: But you have to look at these things in levels. I mean, you had the DGMO hotline, but you also had the flag meetings right on the line whenever anything came up. This was an established tradition that had been going on for years.

Ambassador Oakley: But they weren't using them very much in the early 1990 period. That was the problem.

Ambassador Clark: Well, they didn't know, Bob—they were using them on the border, but they couldn't back—they didn't apply back beyond.

Ambassador Oakley: That's right.

Ambassador Clark: If you had a dust-up or a fire fight, you had a flag meeting, but it didn't tell you where the various units were.

Ambassador Oakley: Exactly.

Mr. Krepon: We have with us, also, Colonel Donald Jones, who was the attaché in Pakistan at the time. Would you care to add to this record?

Colonel Jones: Yes, thank you. I am fortunate because the Pakistan side is only represented by Ambassador Oakley and me, so we can only contradict each other, right? But I would never contradict the ambassador.

We were doing pretty much the same on our side as DAO New Delhi was doing on their side. Starting in February through about May, we were on the road at least every other week, and usually once a week, going through every major area that we could find.

We covered everything from Kashmir all the way down to Karachi trying to find signs of military activity. And as the crisis developed, we discovered that it was pretty much limited to an area about 50 to 75 miles south of Lahore up through Jammu and Kashmir and there wasn't much happening south of that.

I think we entered, at least from my perspective, our office entered the crisis feeling that there was really no intent to go to war. We don't think that anybody really wanted to fight. We feared that they were going to stumble into something, that an isolated incident would occur at some point on the border and that would result in a conflict.

And so, we were really concerned about the incremental buildups in all the areas, for fear that there would be a clash that got out of control. So we spent a lot of time on the road, and we spent an awful lot of time talking to the embassy in Delhi, which I thought was really helpful.

I thought if anything really came out positive from our side it was the really good cooperation we had between Delhi and Islamabad and the constant—that is between our embassies—talking about US cooperation.

Ambassador Oakley: Don, I don't want to put words in your mouth, but with respect to Seymour Hersh's allegation or claim that Pakistani nuclear devices were starting to be deployed from Kahuta to the various airfields—that's because they were in big crates on big trucks. And on top of each crate it said, "Pakistan Nuclear Devices,"—headed for airport—(Laughter.)

Colonel Jones: I'm living in south Texas, now, so I don't see these stories. I'm not in D.C. anymore, so I had not read that particular article until John showed it to me and I was fairly amused by it this morning.

In fact, I remembered that incident—Mr. Ambassador, you probably remember when we found out the trucks were being moved—and how that got blown up out of proportion.

There were many allegations in that article which I found curious, to say the least, and amusing. You know, certainly, from on the ground and—on the ground, I think we were worried that there was a possibility of a conflict, but it wasn't because we

saw any attempt on either side to really go to war with each other.

There was just a fear that something would happen. And so all of our efforts were spent in trying to find out where everybody was, and then act as an honest broker. And we were spending a lot of time talking to our counterparts in the Pak military trying to feel out what they had to say, what they wanted to say, what their fears were, and doing our best to assure them that we did not think that Delhi was going to attack.

And we didn't see any movements. We spent a lot of time looking at the—our indicators were—we really had two indicators. One was the strike corps. We really wanted to know where I Corp and II Corp were, because if they moved, then we had a problem.

The second indicator was the forward operating bases for the Air Force. If they opened up their forward operating bases, then we felt that we had a problem. But they never were opened. There never was any massive deployment. We never saw any, really, massive increase in readiness. And so, therefore, we concluded that if we could avoid a mistake, a passionate response, then probably you could avoid a conflict altogether.

Ambassador Clark: I'd like to make one point. John said that there had been deployments into Kashmir because of the disturbances, and that's true. But in a way, we were fortunate that this—if you want to call it a crisis—but at least this confrontation happened at that time, because that was still the time when the Indian government was trying to handle this with the Border Security Force and the Central Police Reserve, and the Indian Army was trying mightily to stay out of the civil war in Kashmir. And certainly, to stay off of the border, where it is very easy to get your troops corrupted with the other things that flow back and forth across the border, as well.

So, the crisis itself, and the very rapid spooling down of it afterward, was beneficial in that when the Indian Army finally did deploy into Kashmir, they were able to do it and say, we have left heavy equipment at home. These are mountain troops from Assam, and what have you.

And we had enough credibility that we could verify it and say to Islamabad, this indeed is what's happening, and it didn't crank up again.

Colonel Sandrock: I wanted to pick up on something that Ambassador Oakley said, and which I frankly admit I had forgotten in the meantime. You and I have had this discussion, Michael. Basically, I considered

that by the time the Gates mission came around, the crisis was largely over; it was a thing of the past.

This was true for several reasons. One, all of us who have been to South Asia and particularly India recognize that the temperature hits about 100 degrees Fahrenheit sometime between the 1st and 15th of April each year, and it becomes very uncomfortable to fight at those temperatures. General Sundarji would know this far, far better than I do, but it becomes extremely difficult to fight at such temperatures.

So, by the time the Gates mission came to South Asia, tensions were winding down not only because the political climate had settled down, but also because keeping the troops in the field was becoming increasingly difficult because of the weather. But, I think the point that Ambassador Oakley made is very valid. We all were concerned that if no real solution or ratcheting down of tensions had occurred, there was, in fact, a real danger that tensions would reawaken in the fall when the weather is better, and when traditionally the tensions, if they're going to rise, rise.

I wanted to make that point. I think the immediate crisis had been resolved, or not resolved but at least had been subdued by the time the Gates mission came to town. But there was concern that it could rise again later on in the fall.

Mr. Krepon: Shirin?

Amb. Tahir-kheli: I was wondering if we could get both Bob and Colonel Jones to comment on what—I thought I heard them saying, that at least that part of the Hersh article that talks about bomb racks and preemptive attack. Are you saying that is completely not true?

Ambassador Oakley: Just like this vast deployment of armor on the Indian side. It just wasn't there.

Colonel Jones: I'll say it's not true. It was the silliest thing I read in that article. I can say this without fear of contradiction, looking up from south Texas, that particular allegation was ridiculous. If you know anything about military at all, it was just the silliest allegation I read in the article, and there were a lot of silly things in the article.

Ambassador Oakley: Don's top priority was to keep a watch on exactly that sort of thing.

Colonel Jones: I spent the whole time becoming very familiar with the Pak Air Force. I'm an Air Force pilot anyway, so I understand that. And some of the things they were talking about and some of the

things he said were just on the face of it, ridiculous. It's not true.

Amb. Tahir-kheli: Was there anything that he said that was true, or do you think that whole thing was fabrication—in terms of the ratcheting up on the Pakistani side?

Colonel Jones: I think he was right when he said the crisis occurred in early 1990. (Laughter.)

Mr. Krepon: To be more specific, because I think it's very important to nail this down, are you saying that the allegations that F-16s were on the runway with bomb racks and ready to go with nuclear force loadings—that was untrue?

Amb. Tahir-kheli: Because, it's very important.

Colonel Jones: Well, let me say this. Let me say that from my perspective, I did not see anything that would indicate that the Pakistani Air Force had done anything other than take the appropriate precautions that any military force would do, given that situation.

Amb. Tahir-kheli: It doesn't matter if it substantiates what he said.

Ambassador Clark: No, it doesn't. The only thing I ever saw that indicated that there might have been anything anywhere close to nuclear, was one report that said that Pakistani aircraft had been seen practicing what might possibly be a maneuver that one would use if one were launching an—

Colonel Jones: Well, you know, the problem with that is, the procedure used to deliver a nuclear weapon is the same as you would use to deliver many high explosives.

Ambassador Clark: That's my point. But that was the only—that's the foundation.

Colonel Jones: How you can define what the difference is between a bomb toss delivery, whether you drop a nuke or drop a 2,000-pounder, is beyond me.

Ambassador Clark: That's the point.

Ambassador Oakley: Bill, let me say this. So far as I can recall, we never had any credible evidence that the F-16s were fitted out to deliver a nuclear device; that Pakistan had a nuclear device that could be delivered by an F-16; or as Don said earlier, conventionally, that they had begun to deploy their planes to forward operating bases, which they would have done if they were—if something were imminent. Nor did we know anything about any nuclear devices being moved from point "x" to point "y," if there were any.

Colonel Jones: Not at all. And let me point out something else. The Pakistan Air Force F-16s were sheltered. They were all in sheltered revet-

ments. You'd have to have a camera capable of seeing through three feet of concrete to know what was underneath. They did not leave their alert birds out in the open. They were all sheltered. So from any aspect that you care to look at it, that particular statement simply was not—does not hold water. It's so silly that it—that it found its way in print astounds me, really.

Ambassador Oakley: And we had a fair amount of access to find out ourselves what was going on. We never saw anything of that nature at all.

Colonel Jones: Well, at the time, I would have started packing my bags, if the Pak Air Force had deployed to the forward operating bases, but they never did that.

And if I may say one thing. I have a lot of respect for the Pak military and the Indian military, because when [everyone around] was losing their heads, by and large, they kept the thing under control.

Yes, they were responding, and there was a ratcheting, but any military guy is going to respond. I mean, you've got a job to do. You've got a job to do. That's your job.

But the politicians were going berserk, and the military guys were fairly calm. The newspapers were full of stuff. The military guys were maintaining a pretty good hold on the situation.

They could have deployed. They had any number of opportunities to do some real serious things and they didn't. And I, to this day, think that the Pak Military and the Indian Military probably deserve more credit for resolving that situation than they're given.

Lt. Col. Daves: I agree with that, too. I think they're very good at controlling the hostilities along the Line of Control, which is not really a formal border. The fact is that they have these flag meetings whenever they need them, and the communication lines which are there on a fairly decentralized basis along the border, work very well, or have worked very well.

I think having been here in Washington during Brasstacks and being in New Delhi in 1990, the atmosphere of crisis was much greater here in '87 than it was out there in '90. And from the contacts that I had in the Indian military in 1990—I did not have any impression that there was a real crisis. And most of the friends and official contacts at army headquarters reassured me that there wasn't going to be a fight.

Colonel Sandrock: Let me add something to that. I believe that I can give you an example that illustrates the calmness and deliberation of the military—an example that is probably not known to others in

this room. As most of us know, the MiG-29 is India's most capable air-to-air fighter. Prior to 1990, all of these aircraft were stationed in central India. The Indian Air Force, however, had long-standing plans to activate a MiG-29 squadron in the northern area fairly close to any potential crisis area.

I can tell you with a great deal of confidence that a senior Indian Air Force officer asked the Pakistani Air Attaché to meet with him in his office, where he told the attaché that the Indian Air Force intended to activate the MiG-29 unit in the north, that this activation had been planned for some time, and that Pakistan should not suspect anything sinister or misinterpret the move. The reason I can relate this story with some confidence is that I was told essentially the same information by some friends in the Indian Air Force and by some friends in the Pakistani Air Force at different times and at different locations.

Perhaps because of the crisis, or perhaps for its own operational reasons, no movement of aircraft took place until after the 1990 crisis was largely defused. I think the reason for the delay was to make sure that there would be no misunderstanding and that the already tense situation would not be further aggravated. So, I think the military was certainly aware of the tensions and was conscious of the fact that its actions could complicate the situation.

Lt. Col. Daves: At the same time, at least on the Indian side, I also got the impression, even though it was never said, that we're going to let them sweat a little bit, and that there was a political motivation behind the whole atmosphere.

Mr. Krepon: All right, Grant Smith, you were the deputy-chief-of-mission in New Delhi.

Mr. Smith: Yes, I was, but I was also involved earlier, in the Brasstacks crisis, when I was the country director for India [at the US Department of State]. And I think that the two need to be seen somewhat together. I'm not sure that the politicians on each side saw them together, but I would suspect that the defense establishment leadership saw them in light of one another.

I know that there is a study going on of Brasstacks, which should be relevant later on, as we look more at the 1990 events. Certainly, one of the conclusions that both of us—both the country director for Pakistan at the time and I—had on Brasstacks was that there was no major political issue driving the crisis.

In the case in 1990, there was more of an issue, and that was Kashmir. That was a big difference between the two. As Ambassador Oakley said, Kashmir had not been an issue in Pakistan. I

very clearly remember having lunch with Leo Rose in 1988 when I first got to Delhi. Leo had just come from Pakistan and said, you know, there is just nothing about Kashmir in the Pakistani press, and it's amazing. I served in Pakistan in 1963, and I remember very well that it was in the press all the time. But by early 1990, Kashmir had again become an issue. So there was, perhaps, something more there than there had been in 1986.

On the other hand—and we have people here who know far more about this than I do—but my perception, coming back to what Joe Daves said, was that there was more equipment out in the field in 1986 than there was in 1990. In that sense, I would suspect that the defense establishments looking at the situation saw that it hadn't even gotten to the Brasstacks stage.

Mr. Krepon: George Sherman, you were also at the embassy at the time.

Mr. Sherman: Right. I'd like to speak about the political situation from the perspective of New Delhi, because that formed the framework for the crisis.

First of all, I would like to correct any impression that's been left by the discussion of military activity that somehow the military was acting in a framework of frenzy on the civilian side in India, at least, for going to war.

My impression throughout this crisis was that there was no war fever in India. There was no war party. There was no desire to have a war, either inside the government or outside the government.

You may recall that V.P. Singh had come to power at the end of the previous year as an extremely weak government. They were determined to concentrate on the domestic situation; they wanted to end the image they perceived had grown during the Congress period, of India being the bully of its neighbors. They wanted to make a real effort to improve relations with Pakistan as well as other neighbors.

And also regarding Kashmir, that was—as Grant said—an issue driving the government. But let's not judge Kashmir in those days according to what it grew into in subsequent months and years. At that time, the government was still absorbing the shock of what was just beginning in Kashmir.

And though they were appalled and angry and hostile to Pakistani intervention, I did not perceive that the furor had reached the point that it reached in subsequent months and years, that at that time they were really prepared to take action against Pakistani intervention.

And another point I would like to make, too, is to disagree a bit from my perspective with Ambassador Oakley about the Soviet role. I'm not aware that the Soviets in this crisis ever sent a strong message to New Delhi. Indeed, we were after the Soviet embassy to do exactly that. The embassy in New Delhi was in favor of doing that, but they were turned down in Moscow.

Mr. Krepon: The Soviet Embassy in New Delhi?

Mr. Sherman: The Soviet Embassy in New Delhi. And also, as I recall, there was an effort to get the Soviets to sign onto the Gates mission to make it a joint Soviet-American venture. The Soviets would not do it.

I think the 1990 events were the first graphic demonstration of the shifting balance of outside power in South Asia. As far as the super powers were concerned, there was absolutely no doubt that the United States was taking the lead, was the only one actively involved in trying to restrain both parties.

The Soviets were somewhat on the defensive regarding India. They would not—this is my recollection—they would not take a strong stand in seeking to restrain the Indians. If they had, I don't know whether the Indians would have listened to them anyway.

Ambassador Clark: Let me add to that a little. Victor Isakhov was the Soviet Ambassador in Delhi at the time. Victor had spent years in Washington as congressional liaison, which might have contributed to the deterioration of relations; I'm not sure; but anyway — Victor was then locked in a personnel battle, which he lost. He was sent back home and was replaced by the personnel director. But he was not getting support from Moscow on that, and we had talked about it a good bit.

What did happen, however, was that Bob Gates did come from Moscow, and he could report on his talks there, and he could bring an oral message that in his talks with the Soviets, they supported the position that there should not be a war between them. So I think that's the way the message came from Moscow. It didn't come directly through—

Mr. Sherman: I'm not aware that the Soviets ever, themselves, followed up to say "Gates is speaking for us."

Ambassador Clark: No, no. It didn't come from them.

Ambassador Oakley: George, you're absolutely right, the United States was the one that was taking the active lead, but there were also signals from Beijing which came to the Pakistani—

Mr. Sherman: The Soviets did go through Gates, but not through Isakhov.

Ambassador Oakley: But you're right. The United States was playing the active role. The EC and the Japanese also weighed in eventually.

Amb. Tahir-kheli: But Bob, only the United States could have played an active role in any case such as this.

Ambassador Oakley: Of course.

Mr. Sherman: But taking John Sandrock's point about the crisis having been virtually diffused by the time Gates came, my recollection is that's not true.

What is true, I think, is that the timing was felicitous; they were both moving toward trying to diffuse the crisis, and the Gates mission gave them the perfect cover in that sense.

Colonel Sandrock: Yes, but as I remember, I think the troop withdrawals had started by somewhere close to the first of May at the latest. If I remember correctly, there was a reduction in the number of troops in Mahajan, and in some of the other areas that were south of the area of concern. The troop build-up in Kashmir continued because of Indian security concerns there, and the security crisis over Kashmir did not abate. I think that the Kashmir crisis, which actually began in 1989 and reached its peak in early 1990, is still with us today—we are going into about four and a half years on the current Kashmir crisis.

Mr. Sherman: Well, the Kashmir crisis really began in December of '89. That's true. It's '89, but very late in '89, with the kidnapping of the new Home Minister's daughter and the subsequent disruption.

The point I am making is, the Indians and Pakistanis may have been taking steps on the ground, but I didn't have the sense that they were communicating with each other at the political level. That did happen after the Gates mission.

Mr. Krepon: Doug Makeig, you were at the Defense Intelligence Agency looking at this crisis. We've heard that there were different perceptions of the threat of war here.

Can you talk about our intelligence community's views about the likelihood of inadvertent war or preemptive war?

Mr. Makeig: Well, clearly, the concern was inadvertent war and not so much a planned operation or strike by the Indian Army. I'm a little bit leery of getting into the specifics on this. We'll have to wait for years for the documents to be declassified and then we can really get the full story. I welcome anyone who wants to do that.

I think one of the real functions that the intelligence community provided, primarily for the ambassadors and the embassy, was verification of military movements, using all the resources of the intelligence community.

A lesson the Indians and Pakistanis can take out of this is their need for better intelligence and confidence-building measures to get over these misperceptions. The '87 and '90 crises are classic examples of just dreadful intelligence.

I agree with Ambassador Oakley that Washington was a bit more alarmed, perhaps, than the field, but I don't necessarily see anything wrong with it. We do see a more complete picture in some cases. Also, it's our job to warn. As we see more indicators being tripped and as the pressures build, well, we're going to ring more alarm bells. And so I think the intelligence was helpful. I don't see any real problem with the disagreements between Delhi, Islamabad and Washington on this.

As to our assessment at the time—again, I don't want to get into specifics, but I can guarantee you that dispatching the Gates mission was a presidential decision that was based on intelligence assessments at the very highest level. There were a wide range of views, and there probably are today. From talking to my colleagues who worked on the problem, I find they still have wildly different memories of how serious it really was. So I don't think we'll ever get to the bottom of the story.

And lastly, I would like to reinforce what has been said in several different ways. I think the United States merely facilitated what India and Pakistan were intending to do all along, but they couldn't really get themselves to do it. I think the Gates mission allowed both sides to back down gracefully. I think the intelligence community basically supported that all along.

Mr. Krepon: Walter Anderson, you were in Delhi at the time.

Mr. Anderson: I tend to agree with Doug Makeig, but I think we have to be very careful about the role of Washington, because sometimes Washington can be part of the problem.

Exaggerated rumors that somehow get verified often leak, and can build up a suspicion on one side or the other, and usually it's on the Pakistani side, that the Indians are up to no good regarding some action or the other.

I can recall when we were out there and going around and talking to politicians, including BJP politicians. I remember we'd get together and I'd see some of them, and I wondered what I was hearing from Washington about the reality on the ground in Delhi. I didn't see war hysteria, and we didn't see the military

acting in ways that would lead to war. So I think we have to be very careful about what we say here, because Washington can become part of the problem.

Mr. Krepon: Shirin, did you want to add?

Amb. Tahir-kheli: Yes, I wanted to sort of respond to what Mr. Makeig said. But with all due deference to the intelligence community, I don't think it was just the assessment of the intelligence community that resulted in the mission.

I think it was more the political assessment rather than the intelligence. And that came from the two ambassadors. I think that's what lent credibility. It is the job of the intelligence community to do what they were doing, and it was very important that they continue to do that.

But having seen presidential decision-making at close quarters, I don't think that every time the intelligence community sets up an alarm, that the President signs up a presidential mission.

I think in crisis situations like that, the political decision was that it provided a very good way of diffusing the crisis, which both countries wanted to do.

Mr. Krepon: Ambassador Kettis, you were looking at it from the Swedish mission in New Delhi, were you not?

Ambassador Kettis: Yes, and I am in full agreement with what Ambassador William Clark and his former staff members at the US embassy in New Delhi have expressed here. In my view India and Pakistan were in a confrontational mood but their respective actions were limited to verbal attacks and sabre-rattling. At no time, I believe, were they close to starting a war or preparing for one.

At the Embassy of Sweden, we had reasons and opportunities to follow developments in Kashmir which, of course, would have been a key area in an armed conflict. Precisely at that time, we were starting up a big, hydro-powered project at Uri close to the Line of Control in Kashmir. There were no signs of an Indian military build-up in Kashmir which affected the project preparations along the main highway from Srinagar to the LOC with many fixed military installations.

As we all know, there were other serious problems in Kashmir—an insurgency that grew every day with demonstrations (*bandh*), curfews and shootings that brought most everything to a standstill for long periods.

Ambassador Clark: And the later kidnappings.

Ambassador Kettis: Yes, but in spite of that, the preparations for the hydropower project went ahead. Now there are more that 200 expatriate engineers with 250 family members and a Swedish school in place, and the Indian workforce is 4,000.

I want to take the opportunity to state that the US diplomatic activities in both countries were very valuable and had long-lasting effects. Now the US has regular bilateral consultations on security matters with the two countries. But even without these efforts, I believe there would not have been a fourth war in 1990.

More jokingly, I remember that not only Colonel Sandrock and I were very early risers—to play golf at five-in-the-morning to avoid the scorching heat during the spring of 1990. With us was one of the Indian service chiefs. My conclusion was that he would not be there if India was going to war.

Mr. Krepon: That's a good indication.

Colonel Sandrock: Actually, on that point, Ambassador Kettis and I frequently met on the golf course very, very early in the morning, and at other times as well. I think it's important to note that never was there any sense of urgency or crisis. I mean, one of our other golf partners, whose name I will not mention, was a fairly senior individual in the ministry of foreign affairs, who was very, very much concerned about what was going on in Pakistan and so on, at the time, because that was part of his charter. He was also out there with us. Perhaps not as frequently as we were, but he was out there and we had a chance to chat.

So I think, you know, there's certainly no denying that there was a crisis in 1990, but I'm not sure it ever reached the proportions that certainly were implied by Seymour Hersh, nor was there ever this kind of war attitude that we've seen reflected in some of the other writings.

Mr. Krepon: General Sundarji, the shadow of Brasstacks seems to have fallen heavily on this particular case study. Do you have any comments you would like to add?

General Sundarji: Well, I was safely retired by the time the next crisis took place. I was writing a column at that time for *India Today*. And I stopped around that time, I think. In February of that year, they interviewed me at length. They came out with a cover story—"War Clouds over the Subcontinent" kind of stuff—that generally portrayed the kind of drum-beating that was going on in the media on both sides of the border. I debunked this in my main interview and so they didn't publish it. They went ahead with this cover story and they left me out of it and then used parts of this interview of mine in the April issue.

And I had said in February that there's no question of any crisis—there's no war, there will be no war, in my judgment as an analyst. And I didn't see any hysteria, either, from the military on either side. I was most certain.

There are reasons as to why it would not occur—I won't bore you to death with a detailed analysis. But the bottom line was, that there wouldn't be war and there was no crisis.

Mr. Krepon: Ambassador Sattar, where were you at this time, and what are your thoughts?

Ambassador Sattar: I was gripped at the time by the earthquake in Moscow, and too disconnected from the seismometers in Islamabad and New Delhi, to feel any tremors. But let me just say that in the first week of January 1990, I was sent as special envoy to meet the new leaders who had come into power a couple of months earlier, whom I had known during my previous tenure in the late '70s and early '80s.

I think this point has already been made, that the government led by Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh and his Foreign Minister I.K. Gujral were personally committed to improvement of relations with Pakistan. And they would not have wanted to contribute to the building up of a crisis.

And perhaps in the month of January, it was a bit too early, but there was a certain sense of anxiety that they communicated to me when I was there in the first week of January 1990; that they seemed to assume that what was happening in Kashmir had been instigated and provisioned by Pakistan. They didn't say so directly, and as a matter of fact, over the 45 minutes of conversation the Prime Minister of India gave me the privilege of having with him, he spoke 30 seconds with reference to Kashmir, although a different story came in the press.

The vehemence of the press was surprising. The reports said I had been "rapped on the knuckles" and asked to "give explanations," et cetera, et cetera. There was a certain sense of sensationalism in the press, but the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister only shared a certain sense of anxiety and expressed hope that Pakistan would not provide any assistance to the Kashmiris.

I think we have had comments questioning whether there was a crisis or there wasn't a crisis. Seymour Hersh has been criticized for having exaggerated and perhaps sensationalized the events of 1990. I think what is important is not what was happening in the months of January and February, but the projection of what might happen if the trends in motion were not ar-

rested. And I think it is here that the American diplomacy deserves credit.

There is a lot of modesty around here—"the Gates mission was perhaps not really necessary," and things like that. I think it was. What happened in the spring of 1990 is an illustration of good, useful preventive diplomacy. And I personally would like to add that from all that I've heard, mostly from my Indian friends and from my American friends, and to some extent in Pakistan, leads me to believe that the Gates mission was very, very valuable.

And therefore, all the people who were involved in contributing to the prevention of a possible crisis merit the tribute, even if they are so modest as to not to want to accept it. That is what appears to me from all of the comments.

One other point. We are speaking so far, basically, about crisis diffusion, and war prevention. But let us be clear that this is not an instance of conflict resolution. This is not an instance of diffusing tensions, which, unfortunately, have continued to build in spite of the fact that this crisis or non-crisis did not happen. The tensions have continued. I'd like to agree with the comment that has already been made, namely that the United States has a capacity to make a greater contribution than it has done in recent years. Thank you.

Mr. Krepon: Sarwar, where were you in 1990?

Mr. Naqvi: In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad. I think I'll go by what Doug Makeig hinted at, that is to avoid disclosures or the open discussion of the specifics. I am bound by that.

But I'll make two small observations. One related to what Ambassador Oakley said, the question of the nuclear program in Pakistan. Now, I don't want to go into it much, but here in the US and in published material, I've seen comments and speculation that our program was exactly where it was in 1989 when it was certified, as in 1990 when certification was denied.

If that is true, that would not imply a triggering of the nuclear program in the spring of 1990. And in fact, this is something that we maintain as well, that the certification, if it was to be denied to us, could have been denied to us in 1989 as much as in 1990. So this is food for thought.

The other point is about Seymour Hersh. I do take a skeptical view of much of what he has said, that which is aimed at sensationalizing. But I think Ambassador Sattar's point about the alertness of the US government to this situation needs to be praised and given due credit. But there is in the news magazine

article—and *The New Yorker* is known for these kinds of long articles that astound and excite—the element of sensationalizing is very much there.

Now, to return to your question as to where I was in 1990, I was in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at that time, and Mr. Gates says in his interview with Seymour Hersh that the Prime Minister of Pakistan did not want to meet him. Now, that is totally incorrect.

We tried to monitor Mr. Gates from Moscow, and he was to go to Sanaa in Yemen and it was then that Mr. Gates decided not to see Benazir Bhutto, so it is totally different from what the article says. The Prime Minister very much wanted to receive the US special envoy, because there was no problem. I mean, we did not have something going which we didn't want the United States to know about or get involved with.

Mr. Krepon: I would like to conclude the meeting on the subject of prospective steps and lessons learned. It has been mentioned by Shirin that the United States can be in a position to play this useful role when it has good standing in both countries.

In future crises, this country may not be in good standing in both countries. What then? The ideal situation would be for India and Pakistan to work out arrangements among themselves so they don't have to look to outside help to resolve crises. What if this isn't the case?

So what lessons have been learned and what steps might usefully be taken to assist countries in the region to diffuse tensions themselves?

Ambassador Oakley: First, I think we ought to hear from the Indian and Pakistani military attachés.

Amb. Tahir-kheli: May I just back up? I think apropos of your question, I think as part of an important subset of what you've just raised, is the question of Indian perceptions of the active stance taken by the US vis-à-vis the crisis. Sarwar Naqvi just said the alertness of the US needs to be praised. The Government of India also perceived this great alertness.

Mr. Krepon: Brigadier Shergill, would you like to say a few words?

Brigadier Shergill: Certainly. At the moment when this crisis was supposed to have taken place, and I'm sure it did at various levels in various places, I was commanding an independent armored brigade, and I can assure you that it would have been tasked for battle if required.

However, at that time the question was not of heading towards Pakistan, but it was heading the other way, about 150 kilometers, to go out and do training. That's exactly what my brigade was doing in January and February, 150 miles away from my base, further to the east.

As also, in September and October, we were in the very same training area, where my brigade had gone previously. And I'm pretty certain that if hostilities were imminent, I would not have been allowed to go out my base.

Ambassador Clark: Since we don't have anyone here speaking for the Indian government, I can only go by what they told me.

Mr. Krepon: Yes.

Ambassador Clark: And as I say, I didn't find a great deal of concern that war was imminent. I did have several senior people, including the Prime Minister, tell me afterwards that it had been a useful visit, it had allowed a way to back off for both sides, without having one to back down to the other, if you will.

And we did—Bob Gates, when he came, did not just come and say, "Yeah, stop this." He came with some ideas about actions that could be taken. And he came with credibility on both sides, because he was asking the Pakistanis to stop doing something on their side. He was also asking India to stop doing certain things on its side, and had some ideas as to how you might thicken the net, if you will, between the two in terms of CBMs.

I know General Sharma would never admit it, but it was easier not to have to answer the phone all the time and get on with training his army and doing other things. And I know that the Indian political side was really finished with its posturing—by that time they were starting to get engaged in another debate about OBCs and other domestic issues.

Mr. Krepon: OBCs?

Ambassador Clark: Other Backward Castes.

Mr. Anderson: Can I add something to that? If you look at the Indian press and politicians and how they reacted to the Gates mission both before, during and after the visit, it was surprising to me anyway at the time, how that mission was well-received in India.

The press was actually quite good, and there's a series of articles I've kept from the time written by Dilip Mukhergee—which was an excellent series praising that mission.

Ambassador Clark: Which was not always Dilip's stand.

Mr. Anderson: Which was not always his stand.

Ambassador Oakley: Usually, outside intervention is the tactic.

Mr. Anderson: Right. And I think that the lesson to be drawn, referring to the point that Shirin made earlier, is that the Indians at the political level and the journalistic level seemed to accept the mission; we have to be trusted by both sides. I think it's almost an obvious point in order to play a role. We have to be careful that both sides trust us.

Ambassador Oakley: And this gets down to little things like going back and saying, no, your intelligence on this point is wrong, your intelligence on that point is wrong. It's working, Shirin, on the big relationship as you've talked about at the top level and all the way down. But it's playing it straight. And above all, that's the way you get credibility.

Ambassador Clark: It was really, Bob, I think, taking time to find those suggestions that were balanced, which may or may not be adopted, and that's what you and I did. It was our sense that a balance between both sides was needed, and certainly when we suggested that there might be a possibility for a five nation discussion on the nuclear question, we had that in mind.

No one criticized us for not having it balanced; it never came about. But we were not seen as trying to favor one side or the other. Later on, the suggestion of renunciation of missile deployment, which has only been accepted by one—but there's been no missile deployment.

These are seen as balances, and I think that's a role that we can play in coming up with things that one side or the other might be reluctant to do because if it were done by one of the two, the other one would have to look under every comma and period and letter in the proposal to see what the ulterior motive was.

If we can maintain our level of credibility, perhaps we can foreshorten that scrutiny, because we won't be seen as having an ulterior motive in that respect.

Mr. Krepon: Do you have any thoughts about steps that might be usefully taken in the region to help reduce tensions in the event of future situations of this kind?

Ambassador Oakley: No, I just would say more of the same. It was interesting that ideas which the United States had put forward—by Gates or others—came out as something which the Indians and the Pakistanis had agreed upon, and not something which had been proposed by somebody else, which is fine, so far as I'm concerned. That's also a part of the process. You have to allow these things

to be internalized, rather than appear as something we imposed from the outside.

But the process of dialogue and establishing confidence is a long one. You and I have talked about this before, Michael. I think in some ways—perhaps there was a keener realization than we have discussed here at senior military levels by 1991—that they were bound and determined not to allow another Brasstacks and not to allow another ratcheting-up toward confrontation, such as had occurred in the first half of 1990.

And I say that because of the way in which the hotline was used and the fact that they used it frequently and when things began to get hot up along the LOC, the DGMOs would talk to each other and tension would come down. And this I found very, very interesting. The US and the Soviets went through something similar after the Cuban Missile Crisis. That was sort of the beginning of our CBM period.

It was a real shock, and afterwards people began to think more seriously about the need to communicate. And I think this is another case in point, if you will.

Ambassador Clark: But there's also, you know—we tend to overlook the connectors, too, that exist between India and Pakistan.

Ambassador Oakley: Precisely.

Ambassador Clark: Because at the time when all of this crisis was going on, there was a reunion in Delhi of the old Rimcolians, which are the Royal Indian Military College graduates. They were all retired. The two remaining serving general officers in Pakistan who were Rimcolians couldn't attend, but many of the retired generals did. And there was a party for them in Delhi, which the general officer commanding—General Sharma who himself was a Rimcolian—attended.

You find it hard to believe that you're going to go to war if you've got these folks going back and forth.

Ambassador Oakley: Absolutely, Bill. I think that probably the fact that you have a Pakistani brigade and an Indian brigade in Somalia—all these things help, because they produce a sort of human communication and dialogue that's been lacking, unless you go way back to the time that you were talking about.

Mr. Krepon: I'd like to ask this very same question of the attachés. Are there steps that you found particularly useful that you would propose, or new steps that you would propose to reduce tensions?

Colonel Jones: No, I think—no, not any new steps. But you certainly have to emphasize the traditional one, which is you have to maintain an exceptionally good relationship with your counterparts. You have to know them and you have to be able to talk to them and you have to have credibility.

If you have a set of attachés who have established that kind of relationship with their counterparts, then you can speak to them, frankly, and they'll believe you. But you've got to have credibility with them. It's very important. And I like to practice historic revision whenever possible, but I tell you, I thought there was going to be a war. I mean, I was predicting that, so I wouldn't let anybody lead me through in thinking that there wasn't a lot of anxiety in Islamabad and Delhi.

Although I respect what everybody says, I don't think there was an intent to go to war, but we were working real hard trying to avert an inadvertent clash. And from an attaché's standpoint, we spent a lot of time confirming what was going on with our counterparts in Delhi and then talking to our Pakistani contacts and saying, "hey, we don't think there's any big deal, and what's with you guys?"

I will admit, like anything, you can gin up a lot of activity on your own. Maybe we worried ourselves to death; I don't know. But there was a pretty tense three or four months there, and I think by and large, our contribution was in talking to our Pakistani counterparts and trying to tell them that we really didn't have a problem with these.

Ambassador Oakley: John, the point you made that later on when India did deploy some of its regular military up to Kashmir, the situation did not hit the same scale or crisis, is a good one. Because also by 1991, it's interesting that when there were military movements on the Indian side—centered upon concerns over Kashmir and the continuing insurgency there.

It was interesting that the politicians and the media didn't play it up. Whereas in 1990, every little thing was played up and sensationalized in the press and the politicians immediately began to sound off, which increased the heat and the anxiety level.

By 1991, it had gone the other way around. These things would get out, and they'd appear in the press the first time, and then a damper would be put on it, which is interesting.

Colonel Sandrock: I think there were a couple of things at work here. One was that, as has been pointed out, in 1990—early 1990—there was a new, fairly weak government in India. Later, the government was considerably more confident.

But, to address your question a little more directly Michael, as far as lessons learned and things that could be done, first of all I think that all the mechanisms that are required to defuse the India/Pakistan crisis are there and in place between India and Pakistan if they would only use them.

I think that the Simla Accord is a good basis to work from. I think the provisions of that accord provide ample mechanisms to resolve the crisis. My experience, both while I was there and in observing what has happened since I left India in 1992, is that whenever there is a step in the right direction, there is something else that blocks progress or intervenes in some fashion. For instance, it seems that every time there is a high-level meeting between senior Indian and Pakistani officials, like the ministerial talks that were held this last January, there are a series of incidents that damage the prospects for success.

There is harassment of diplomats on both sides. There are problems which seem to come out of the woodwork. Something occurs on one side and there is a tit-for-tat response by the other side. It may start in India; it may start in Pakistan. It seems as if there is some kind of effort to make it impossible for any talks to succeed.

I've coined a little phrase which may not be accepted by anyone else except me. I believe that when India and Pakistan recognize that the pain of continuing the present series of confrontations exceeds the pain of making peace then there will be genuine progress toward resolving some of the important outstanding issues. I think that the true cost of the continuing confrontation is not fully appreciated by India or Pakistan. The cost of the current stalemate and continuing low-level conflict is bearable by both sides, but there has never been a cost/benefit analysis. I think the costs of the continuing confrontation in economic and social terms is far higher than either nation is willing to recognize or admit. There are political risks in pursuing peace, but this cost, though it may be a bit high in the short-term is far less than the long-term cost of continuing for another 45 years the tensions and animosities of the past 45 years.

While I think that the United States and others can offer their good offices to assist, we are not going to be able to resolve the issues. They are not our issues, and we really can't do the things that need to be done in order to resolve them. We come in as johnny-come-latelies and offer our assistance. I think that can be valuable and useful as long as both sides agree, but we can't get anything done until the basic bilateral atmosphere changes.

On almost any issue, internal or external, there is almost always an effort to blame the problem on someone else. When something happens in India, Pakistan often gets the blame and vice versa. There are a lot of things that happen in Pakistan where the "foreign hand" is blamed, and, of course, in India, allegations that a "foreign hand" is involved are always there.

Nevertheless, I think we played a useful role in the 1987 and 1990 crises. I think both sides recognize that we made a useful contribution. And I think we ought to continue to be prepared to assist when such assistance is welcome and useful. But, the issues that divide India and Pakistan need to be resolved by India and Pakistan.

Lt. Col. Daves: I think that—and maybe it's wishful thinking—the obvious way to improve and increase confidence and reduce military tensions is if there were some mutual agreement to reduce the size of the forces in these countries.

The Indian and Pakistani military are well within the top ten in the world—in terms of size. And there's a lot of room for some reductions and pull-backs from some of the forward areas up along the Line of Control, maybe formalizing that as an international border. I think that—in line with what we're doing in the US forces, and the rest of the world—I think that would be appropriate.

Mr. Krepon: Grant?

Mr. Smith: Again, putting things in historical perspective, I always had the impression that there was a tendency in South Asia and in other parts of the world, too—and it may be particularly relevant to democracies or countries which have active public opinion—to talk the least when you needed to talk the most. As the crisis escalated, the two sides would stop talking, and that wasn't just between India and Pakistan.

I had the impression when I left in '91 that tendency had gotten less; that the mechanisms to talk were in place and the tendency to use them was greater, that there had been improvement.

I suspect that you also need to look at the larger picture. And again, I haven't kept up to date recently, but there was in this time frame the beginnings of limits on both sides on military budgets, which is a factor. But these points are relevant to crisis management; they are not conflict resolution measures.

Mr. Krepon: General, did you want to—

General Sundarji: Just one thing, Mike. I thought it rather strange that nobody has commented as one of the possible causes of the relative stability—or at least not permitting the incipient crises from spreading out of control—could well be de facto, perceived, non-deployed, nuclear deterrence in operation.

McGeorge Bundy calls it "existential deterrence" and many people give different names to it. It sort of sums up what the position of the government was—or the people's point of view—whether in Pakistan or in India.

And I thought it rather strange in today's discussion that this fact was being studiously avoided—swept under the carpet, almost, and denied what little credit it might claim for introducing an element of sobriety in the relations with India and Pakistan. And the politicians being a little bit jingoistic, perhaps, or the military being a little jingoistic, or in considering that in the past years, the two countries have gone to war three times.

As to whether that kind of thing would have happened is a silly hypothesis. But nonetheless, if this kind of a nuclear backdrop existed from '47 on, I wonder whether those crises would have spun out of control and ended up in shooting matches. My answer is perhaps not. I'm not saying that this can be proven. Obviously, it can't. But it's plausible, at least, and cannot be ignored.

Ambassador Sattar: I just want to raise this question with Ambassadors Oakley and Clark, as to whether Mr. Robert Gates deployed the threat of escalation to the nuclear level as an argument for prevention of the crisis. At least one account that I heard of the conversations that Mr. Gates had in Delhi—and I heard it later, because I didn't arrive in India until November 1990—suggested that this argument was used, that inherent in this crisis was the possibility of escalation to the nuclear level. And secondly, that the escalation could take place at an early rather than a late stage for reasons that Ambassador Oakley has indirectly referred to; namely, the worst case analysis on the Pakistan side.

It would be useful to determine the efficacy of this argument regarding nuclear deterrence if we knew that this had actually been used or at least there was some thinking on the two sides of the military that this might actually happen if the crisis wasn't prevented.

Ambassador Oakley: I have no idea. I don't believe that Bob Gates raised any such subject directly or indirectly in New Delhi. Certainly, it was not part of our dialogue, as Abdul Sattar knows. We did not, quite frankly—despite what Hersh says—at least in Islamabad, we were not worried about a conflict becoming nuclear. There's al-

ways that potential, but there was nothing at that time to indicate that this was the case.

We were worried over the long-term implications for the region, as well as for US-Pakistani relations, because by the time Gates got there, we had ascertained beyond a shadow of a doubt that the promises that Mrs. Bhutto had made and kept during 1989, and that the Chief of Army staff had made and kept during 1989, had been broken and the nuclear program had been reactivated.

This was a matter of discussion between Gates, myself, and the President and the Chief of Army staff, but not in the context of the Kashmir tension. It was a totally separate part of the conversation. I don't believe it came up in India at all.

Ambassador Clark: Let me, if I can. One, it would be, I think, something of concern to both Pakistan military and the Indian military, because both of them believe the other have it. The official Indian government position, I know is, that India has never militarized its nuclear knowledge. That's fine. It's an official position. I don't argue with that.

All I'm saying is that in Pakistan, since there was a peaceful nuclear explosion in 1974, reasonable men believe that there could be a nonpeaceful nuclear explosion at some other point in time.

The United States and others have been worried about Pakistan's nuclear program for a long time. In posts around the world, I have worked on other governments with questions like, "Let's not ship that, We understand you have an order for this — please don't ship it to Pakistan, because there is a nuclear program."

Any reasonable—and I assume even General Sundarji—any reasonable general officer would assume that he might possibly have to cope with that type of weapon if India and Pakistan went to war. But it was not an element that Bob Gates was using to frighten someone. How do you frighten someone with something he already knows, to start with?

But no, it wasn't used in that context. That it may have played a role in the thinking of both militaries—I think that's a reasonable assumption, but I can't verify it.

Mr. Sherman: Could I just take it one step further? What you've put your finger on is the different perceptions that existed in the field, both in Islamabad and in New Delhi, and in Washington. The alarmism that Doug mentioned goes exactly to that point.

And we in the field, as the two ambassadors have said, did not see there was a danger of a nuclear exchange here or that matters were heading that way. But I think in Washington and in the intelligence community, there was much more emphasis given to that danger. That was the difference in perceptions. It was never mentioned specifically in the Gates mission, but I think that danger was one of the driving forces behind the Gates mission.

Mr. Krepon: Doug?

Mr. Makeig: General Sundarji raises a very interesting point. This is the school of thought in India and in Pakistan, that by Joe, nuclear deterrence works. If there's a positive lesson that we can draw from this, I would be very leery of drawing that conclusion, mainly because of a conventional war between two nuclear capable states has never really been fought.

We have no idea how—and neither do the Indians or the Pakistanis know how it would be fought, either. It's a theory that I wouldn't want to see tested. It probably had been tested in '87 and '90 and perhaps it did work in those cases. But it's something that I wouldn't like to see tested again.

Colonel Sandrock: I'm not sure that we can answer General Sundarji's question from here. The only ones who can really provide an answer are the senior officials in the Indian and Pakistani governments. Did they, in fact, feel themselves constrained from taking action in any way as a result of the knowledge or the belief that the other side had a nuclear capability?

For instance, did Prime Minister V.P. Singh think, "Let's see; we better not take this next step,"—whatever it might have been—because India would aggravate the situation to the point where the Pakistanis might consider the deployment of nuclear weapons or turning the last screw, or whatever is required?

On the other hand, did Prime Minister Bhutto consider that we must restrain ourselves as a result of the Indian potential for a nuclear weapon? I don't know that. Among those with whom I spoke—and I spoke with some fairly senior people—there was no indication whatsoever that they considered a potential nuclear use by Pakistan in the 1990 crisis, nor did they consider that if we go to war, there is that potential.

Ambassador Sattar: Well, it was this fact, I think, which has been brought out that sometime in 1990 Pakistan crossed the red line. Was that the term used at that time?—the nuclear program.

Colonel Sandrock: General Beg said that was in 1987.

Ambassador Sattar: Right. What I'm saying is that the United States, with its independent means of verification, can monitor an evolution and play a role for crisis prevention. I think that happened in 1990 and it can happen in other situations as well. I understand that this is not "a problem of the United States." This is a problem of India and Pakistan. And if India and Pakistan don't want to take the initiatives, nobody in the world can force them.

Now in 1989, October, the President of the United States issued a certification, and a year later, he did not. So from that, I think it follows, that something happened between October '89 and the decision date in 1990 when it was decided not to issue the certification.

But the question, really, that is in my mind—and I haven't discussed this with anybody in Islamabad—is as to whether that decision by Pakistan in 1990 to raise the level of uranium enrichment—to cross the red line—was influenced in any way by the assessment in regard to where the crisis might lead.

I think we generally agree that the situation had the potential of deteriorating to a point that there might be a conflict between Pakistan and India. At what point that judgment was made is a question for ascertainment.

But if it is so that there was this threat of escalation to the level of a conflict, then was this decision to cross the nuclear red line in 1990 related to that threat?

Ambassador Oakley: In my initial presentation I said I felt that it did have an effect. But you're right; when General Beg discussed with me the possibility of hostilities and said that he had discussed it with the Iranians, and the Iranians had promised him full support in the event of such hostilities, that obviously means it was something on his mind. He thought that it was a possibility—a live possibility, otherwise, he wouldn't have gone into such discussions with the Iranians.

Therefore, I would judge, although I have no way of knowing that the same fear—the fear that the United States would not be supportive of Pakistan in the event of a confrontation with India, which is the proverbial Pakistani fear—probably weighed in the balance.

Mr. Krepon: The Brigadier, and then Neelam.

Brigadier Shergill: I'd like to make two points, really. The first is, we are talking about 1990, and the thought has been raised about a backdrop of a probable nuclear side to it. However, we know that both governments in India and Pakistan are responsible.

We also know that anybody who visualizes a nuclear threat on either side would first, even before thinking that they can carry out offensive measures, would go in for defensive measures. We also know the kind of capability that might be there would not really be tactical in nature. It would be of the type that would be affecting civil centers.

So the fact to note in 1990 is, did anybody, any side, ever go in for realistic civil defense measures from the point of the nuclear issue, and the answer is that they did not. So to put in a nuclear bogey at this stage is, I think, pushing imagination beyond limits. In 1990, I personally don't think that this was a real issue.

The second point I want to raise is, that we are talking about CBMs. And when we talk about CBMs in a forum like this, we eventually go into military issues, and issues that are hard points. But I would like to say that the real issue between India and Pakistan is for the people who have a common heritage to really get to know each other—to know each other again. Because the fact of the matter is, that the political apparatus is responsible to the people and at present, since the people don't know each other, it is the more volatile issues that matter. The only people who are talking to each other are leaders, are certain bodies who are not really the mass of the people.

So until you can get the mass of the people to interact with each other through trade and commerce and open frontiers, I'm afraid we're not really tackling the issue of CBMs. We're looking at small issues, and we're looking at symptoms, but we're not treating the disease.

Ms. Deo: This is just, really, a matter of detail, related to what Mr. Abdul Sattar said. If I understood it correctly, '89 was the last time the US President found it possible to give the certification. While the crashing through, or crossing the line, may have happened sometime in '89 or '90, the lead up to it may be sought earlier.

Whatever inputs go into that kind of decision-making have to be traced to an earlier period. To suggest that solely the events in the 1990 crisis led to the decision to crash through is somewhat difficult to accept. There must have been various issues considered. Perhaps that happened at some earlier time, many months before the crisis actually began to build up, if it was a crisis!

Mr. Krepon: Raja Mohan has been extremely patient.

Mr. Mohan: Ambassador Sattar may have an important point that something did happen in 1990 that made it impossible for the United States to certify that Pakistan does not possess a nuclear weapon device. The Bush Administration did indicate in 1988

and 1989 it was becoming difficult for it to continue providing non-nuclear certification to Pakistan. As we reconstruct the events of spring 1990, and the present discussion has been valuable, we are yet to explain the shift from certification to non-certification.

From the various accounts we have, including the one in the book, *Critical Mass*, two aspects of the crisis stand out. The first is the conversion of Pakistan's nuclear capability into nuclear weapons. There are specific references in the book to the conversion of enriched uranium gas into metal and their shaping into nuclear cores. There are several juicy bits in *Critical Mass* about Ambassador Oakley's conversations with Pakistani officials and his demands that the metal be returned to gas-form.

We need to ask ourselves what specific motivations or pressures drove Pakistan to transform its nuclear capability into nuclear weapons during April-May 1990. Why did Pakistan cross the so-called nuclear "red-line"? Did Pakistan have any specific fears about India? Did the weaponization of Pak nuclear capability have something to do with the Pakistan's larger strategy towards Kashmir?

The second set of questions relate to specific actions by the Pakistani military during the spring 1990 crisis. It is one thing to run down the broad picture painted by Seymour Hersh and the authors of *Critical Mass*, that India and Pakistan were close to a nuclear confrontation in 1990—it is another to cope with the specific details put across by them. The nuclear story in 1990 hangs on four pieces of intelligence information. One, there was an intercept by the US National Security Agency on General Beg's orders for nuclearization. Two, there were attempts to evacuate the Kahuta nuclear facility. Three—

Ambassador Oakley: We know nothing about any evacuation of Kahuta.

Mr. Mohan: A movement of trucks was noticed from Baluchistan at a facility that was supposed to store Pakistan's nuclear weapons. And finally, the Pak F-16s were observed to be on full alert. Are these four elements real or imaginary? Did they have any meaning at all? Those of us who are outside Pakistan and the United States would like to know whether we should just ignore all these aspects that are reported on the Pakistan's nuclear program.

Mr. Naqvi: Poppycock. Poppycock.

Mr. Mohan: These four elements that Mr. Hersh reports are based on his interviews with a former intelligence official, Mr. Barlow, who was monitoring Pakistan at the Central Intelligence Agency. Do we take it that Mr. Barlow's assertions are entirely imaginary?

Even if the picture of dangerous military activity in Pakistan during the crisis are overdrawn, we still need to figure out an explanation to the weaponization of Pak nuclear capability in the spring of 1990, on which obviously the American non-certification was based.

Ambassador Clark: I'll answer from my side of it. I'm not aware of any of the four of them. I mean, F-16s on alert, hell—this can be—there's always aircraft on alert; where, who, what. But a mass movement? No.

Ambassador Oakley: You heard Don Jones talk about that. I was never aware of any evacuation of Kahuta. People came up with it later on. So far as I know, it never happened.

Ambassador Clark: How about the trucks in Baluchistan?

Colonel Jones: The article said they were trucking nuclear weapons to—

Mr. Mohan: We're just asking, does it have any basis at all.

Ambassador Oakley: Let me say one more thing about the red line and all of that. This was something that was maintained in the strictest confidence between a very few people in the Pakistani government and the government of the United States up until the President was unable to certify in October of 1990.

And it had nothing to do, as Don and I have said before, at least so far as we knew, with the preparation or deployment of nuclear weapons. It had to do with other factors, which were required for certification or which were made public. So that was not a part of this problem.

Mr. Krepon: As I hear the answer to Raja's question, at least with respect to the evacuation of Kahuta and this truck convoy with nuclear material in Baluchistan, and F-16s armed or equipped to carry nuclear weapons, we have categorical "No's."

Ambassador Oakley: So far as I know.

Colonel Jones: And so far as I know.

Mr. Sherman: And how about the NSA intercept?

Mr. Krepon: And how about the NSA intercept?

Mr. Sherman: That's the most crucial accusation. It's unimaginable something like that existed and only one person—

Ambassador Clark: I'd be furious if they hadn't told me.

Mr. Sherman: I mean, exactly. They didn't inform the ambassadors?

Ambassador Oakley: Listen, even the National Security Council on the Iran thing was unable to shut off all the NSA traffic. It could not have been suppressed.

Mr. Krepon: I would like to bring this discussion to a close. Ambassador Clark has another appointment, and Ambassador Oakley has been very, very generous with his time, as have you all. I will give the floor to Ambassador Clark for the last word.

Ambassador Clark: Okay, and then I'll turn it over to Bob. Let me wrap up one thing, because it seems to me that we talk about confidence-building measures and in fact, 1990 was in itself a confidence-building measure. There were some things that were learned from it.

One of them was, we said—and I think Grant had a good point—the governments weren't talking to each other. In a way that's true. In a way, they were talking to each other and then neutralizing it in the press, if you will. And it was true on both sides.

Prime Minister Bhutto made some very positive statements, and then made a speech at a rally in Islamabad that sort of negated it. V.P. Singh made some quiet comments that were good. The BJP, despite what Walter said, had a rally in Calcutta, where not L.K.[Advani]—but the man after him on the platform called for war, because I remember going to talk to L.K. about that. And he showed me the communique, and he showed me exactly what he said, and he said he didn't say that. And I said, that's fine, but the man following you did. I mean, you've got to take the whole—so I think both sides learned that you do need to talk and you do need to be careful with the press, and how you do that. And it has been better since 1990. So maybe that's one of the best confidence-building measures that came out of it.

Mr. Krepon: I would like to close with a message to the media representatives from the region who are present. I take it you will be reporting back to your home papers on this session. There's a lot of sensationalism about these events, including stories that are currently being published in *India Today*.

I think you have a very heavy responsibility to report in the same balanced and accurate fashion as the people who have spoken here today.

So I leave you with that message, because the last thing we need, at this point, is to further cloud the story. We need to clarify the story of what happened in 1990. So I want to thank everybody who came. We will publish a transcript. Thank you.