

UNREVISED ARTICLE FORTHCOMING IN **THE NATIONAL INTEREST** FALL 1987 NO PUBLIC CITATION WITHOUT PERMISSION OF THE AUTHOR UNTIL FINAL PUBLICATION

## **AMERICA AND SOUTH ASIA. LOOKING AHEAD**

Stephen Philip Cohen

(Stephen Philip Cohen is Professor of Political Science at the University of Illinois and served as a member of the Policy Planning Staff U S Department of State 1985-87 The views expressed in this article are solely those of the author)

The most perplexing international issues are those not critical enough to threaten vital national interests but still important enough to shape the future While often subordinated to more pressing or glamorous concerns they eventually return to haunt policy makers For America Pakistan and its larger South Asian neighbor India have historically fallen into such a policy black hole Both were far enough away from European and East Asian points of confrontation with the Soviet Union to make them marginal players in the strategy of containment Nor was South Asia itself a major prize Lacking significant natural resources an advanced industrial structure or a critical geostrategic position (compared say with that of Iran) it took special circumstances between 1965 and 1979 for the region to claim American attention It often did so with a vengeance as in the 1971 tilt to Pakistan or the shock of the late 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in these and other instances years of neglect found Washington uninformed and unprepared to deal with significant regional crises

For better or worse those days are behind us While neither India nor Pakistan threatens (or could significantly advance) vital American interests they now command sustained American attention

because of their role in the U S Soviet-PRC competition because of unprecedented regional developments (including but not confined to nuclear proliferation) and because they are likely to play an enhanced economic military and political role in the Persian Gulf the Indian Ocean and beyond (Pakistan for example is Iran's leading trading partner and one of the major suppliers of heroin to the U S market while India has become a leading exporter of computer software to Europe and North America)

South Asia is evolving into an historically significant regional system with India and Pakistan on the edge of a military nuclear capability with China and the Soviet Union on their borders and with the United States as a de facto participant in regional affairs we are witnessing the evolution of a five-sided security system All of the members of this pentagonal system are either nuclear or near nuclear states none are in close alignment and each is in varying degree suspicious of the other Such a system is historically unprecedented the closest parallel being the 19th Century European balance of power

### **America's Dilemmas in South Asia**

Six years of sustained attention to Pakistan and its neighbors have brought about a degree of maturation in America's understanding of South Asia<sup>1</sup> Yet the dilemmas remain that faced the U S in its initial response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late 1979

- Washington's military and economic assistance relationship with Pakistan serves the interests of both countries yet while they often overlap these interests are not identical
- The most significant point of divergence is Pakistan's evident pursuit of a military nuclear program But terminating the U S relationship would certainly speed up rather than retard Pakistan's effort to join the nuclear club and could endanger support for the Mujahiddin freedom fighters
- In seeking to contain Soviet power by building up Pakistan the U S necessarily strengthens Pakistan against India the region's dominant power and the state which Islamabad identifies as its chief threat

---

<sup>1</sup> For an authoritative statement see the address of Michael Armacost Under Secretary of State South Asia and the United States An Evolving Partnership before The Asia Society Washington D C April 29 1987

- India not only has the capacity to undercut U S support for Pakistan by putting political and military pressure on Islamabad it has the option of defeating the purpose of such support by enhancing its own cooperation with the Soviet Union

American policies on all of these issues are largely but not entirely shaped by the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. Although there has been an effort to develop a regional South Asian policy even that is conceived in anti-Soviet terms. This approach has sufficed for the past six years since there was little likelihood of the Soviets pulling out of Kabul. However the successes of the Mujahiddin the failure of the Soviets to impose either a political or a military settlement on the Afghan people and the continuing pressure on Moscow from virtually the entire free world have given rise to a new round of speculation that the Soviets may be seriously reconsidering their Afghan adventure.

If this is the case and I am optimistic that it is then the U S needs a coherent post-Afghanistan policy for South Asia—while guarding against an increase in Soviet forces and an increase in Soviet pressure on Pakistan. Indeed a narrowly drawn policy that only deals with the Soviet threat will fail in regional terms which means that it will fail completely. Both Indian and Pakistani leaders are concerned about the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and possible further Soviet advances into South and Southwest Asia but they remain obsessed with their own relationship and other regional issues.

America is thus faced with two sets of policy issues in South Asia. The first involves establishing a relationship with Pakistan that keeps the pressure on the Soviets without conceding to Pakistan a *carte blanche* on other issues. The second set has to do with the development of a regional arrangement that will stabilize South Asia after the Soviets depart. While the first issue cluster is of obvious and immediate importance it is not too soon to consider the second set. Indeed the evolution of a stable and secure South Asia is a necessary—although not sufficient—condition to rid the region of its Soviet presence.

### **The U S and South Asia A Part-Time Player?**

From 1947 onward U S policy in South Asia has been chiefly influenced by the strategy of containment. This strategy was applied to South Asia late in that year when American officials had to respond to requests for weapons from both India and Pakistan. They concluded that the objective of U S regional policy should be to prevent Soviet encroachment or domination prevent Soviet access to the region and encourage cooperation between regional countries.

There was also the expectation that America and its Western allies might be granted the use of areas or facilities which might be required for operations against the U S S R in the event of war. Finally American policymakers were aware of the dangers of alienating either India or Pakistan should the U S develop a too-close relationship with the other <sup>2</sup>

This strategy was unevenly implemented over the years. After an initial attempt to avoid regional engagement entirely—in the hope that India and Pakistan would submerge their differences and act together to preserve the regional security system built up by the British—the U S entered into a major arms relationship with Pakistan in 1954. Simultaneously it made major economic grants to India, funding both sides of a regional arms race but also in effect strengthening both sides against outside powers.

American policy unravelled not because the U S was trying to support two hostile neighbors but because these states did not share America's threat perceptions. India was willing to accept substantial U S military assistance after its 1962 war with China but never regarded the Soviet Union as a regional problem. Pakistan, while strongly proclaiming that such a Soviet threat existed, sought political and military ties (in the face of stiff American opposition) to Beijing in the mid-60s and deployed virtually all of its U S-supplied equipment against India.

By 1965 containment of Soviet influence ceased to be a major factor in U S policy towards South Asia. The U S went so far as to support the Soviet peacekeeping effort after the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war and virtually ended its military relationship with both regional states. Except for the tilt to Pakistan during the 1971 Indo-Pak war and a strenuous effort to stop the Indian and Pakistani nuclear programs during the Carter administration, South Asia ceased to exist for Washington. Ironically, these two interventions proved devastating for American policy. The tilt angered the Indians and utterly disillusioned the Pakistanis (who still believe they were betrayed by the U S). Carter's crude attempt to stop proliferation may have actually stimulated regional nuclear ambitions and led Indians and Pakistanis alike to conclude that the U S was an unreliable and fickle superpower with little interest in this area.

### **The U S and Pakistan: a Limited Partnership**

Two events resurrected American interest in South Asia, particularly in Pakistan. The most significant, of course, was the

---

<sup>2</sup> See U S Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, Vol. 3, 1947 (Washington D C 1972)

Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. However, the earlier fall of the Shah signalled the vulnerability of America's regional position. Throughout the fifties and much of the sixties Pakistan had been regarded as the stable pro-western power and Iran an important but lesser state. Pakistanis were chagrined by Carter's cultivation of the Shah especially when contrasted with his derision of Pakistan's admittedly shaky human rights record and his attempts to stop Islamabad's bomb project.

These concerns were quickly put aside after the Soviet invasion. The Carter administration offered Islamabad a one-year renewable arms assistance package which was promptly rejected as peanuts by President Zia. The Pakistanis had warned of the buildup of Soviet influence in Afghanistan after the 1978 coup and were not impressed with Carter's strategic judgement. They coolly waited out the U.S. election and were rewarded with an unprecedented six-year arms and assistance package. A few advanced systems were included in that package (chiefly F-16s and Harpoon SSMs) but most of it was devoted to the limited modernization of Pakistan's obsolete Chinese-supplied military establishment. Importantly, the package was intended not only to strengthen Pakistan against Soviet pressure but also to enhance its overall security position (implying the India threat) so that it would not have to go down the nuclear road.

This assistance program has been a success. The weapons provided to Islamabad are tangible evidence of America's renewed interest in the containment of Soviet power. Pakistan, which remains the temporary homeland for nearly three million Afghan refugees, would not have been able to stand up to Soviet pressure without U.S. help. There was strong sentiment even in the Pakistan Army to concede Afghanistan to the Soviets rather than take them on unassisted. Instead, with Western, Chinese, and strong Middle Eastern support, Pakistan has backed a number of Mujahiddin groups. These have put effective pressure on the Soviets and the puppet Afghan regime. But Pakistan has, with U.S. encouragement, also pursued a diplomatic strategy designed to get the Soviets out of Afghanistan without embarrassment. This carrot and stick approach is working, and it is only a matter of time before the Soviets wind down their war.<sup>3</sup>

Even this unprecedented U.S. assistance package has not eased Pakistani concerns about U.S. policy. Pakistan, which is now a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, does not want to be seen solely as an instrument of American containment policy. The difference between the two countries on this issue is epitomized by

---

<sup>3</sup> The U.S. Pakistan relationship has also enhanced American influence on such non-strategic issues as the democratization of Pakistani politics and the control of narcotics and terrorism. Similarly, the expanded U.S. India dialogue prompted by strategic concerns has also led to close cooperation on narcotics and terrorism issues.

the Pakistani refusal to identify themselves as a frontline state even though the term is freely applied by American officials

While cooperating with the U S on Afghanistan Pakistanis are hedging their bets for four reasons First the Pakistani leadership remains unsure about continuity in U S policy especially after the 1988 elections Pakistanis still regard China as their most reliable friend and have doubts about U S constancy once the Afghan issue is settled Second Pakistan intends to pursue its nuclear program and the U S shows no sign of accepting Pakistan as a nuclear power Third Pakistan has been unable to obtain security guarantees from the U S that would apply against India which remains Pakistan's chief military threat

Finally Pakistan is unsure about the harmony of interests between Washington and Islamabad in the Gulf and Middle East Pakistan sees itself as an independent force in the Gulf and has managed to retain good ties to both Iran and the conservative Gulf Arab states Pakistani officials are astonished at inconsistencies in U S Gulf policy and suspicious of the influence of Israel While recognizing a fundamental harmony of interest in the Gulf they are wary of open cooperation with an unpredictable and unreliable America This is partly the result of twenty years of neglectful and erratic U S policy but America's image in Pakistan has not been helped by nearly forty years of extremist anti-U S propaganda emanating from PLO Arab League Soviet and more recently revolutionary Iranian sources

The current assistance package coupled with regular high level talks on Afghan-related issues and regional policies meets immediate U S and Pakistani interests That package and these discussions have enabled the two countries to coordinate their Afghan policies and explore common interests in Southwest Asia and the Gulf There is still no strategic cooperation between the U S and Pakistan in the Gulf but there is sufficient understanding of how to react to any sharp increase in Soviet pressure against Pakistan In time there may yet emerge a degree of coordination of policies in the Gulf between the Islamabad and Washington which might in turn lead to actual cooperation Here the chief obstacle is American not Pakistani inconsistency

The assistance package should be renewed It is a vital component of the U S -Pakistan relationship a relationship which serves both countries well Although there are legitimate questions concerning particular systems (especially as these might affect India) the more difficult problem is the linkage of the program to Pakistan's nuclear program

The Carter administration was unable to stop this program by threats and by cutting off a very modest aid program The Reagan

administration bought time by strengthening Pakistan's conventional forces this deferred but has not terminated Pakistan's nuclear ambitions

The tension between Pakistani nuclear ambitions and U S non proliferation objectives was brought to a new peak by a series of revelations in mid-Summer 1987<sup>4</sup> These efforts contradict explicit Pakistani pledges that the U S would not be embarrassed by Islamabad's nuclear program They also threaten to activate the Solarz Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act This requires a cut off of U S assistance to any country which illegally procures nuclear-related material in the United States U S law allows for a waiver of this provision if the President determines that the termination of such assistance would be seriously prejudicial to the achievement of United States non-proliferation objectives or otherwise jeopardize the common defense and security but this would only temporarily defer a showdown between Congress and the executive and the U S and Pakistan<sup>5</sup>

However Pakistan would not think of giving up its program without ironclad guarantees against India or unless India itself gives up its own nuclear program Neither condition is likely Indeed there is ample evidence that Pakistan has for years seen its nuclear program as part of a broader westward looking strategy Popular Pakistani opinion looks towards the Indian border but most of the Pakistani leadership sees the Indian threat as the lever by which it can obtain nuclear and conventional systems which will enable Pakistan to assume a major strategic role in the Gulf and West Asia

The assistance package still gives the U S some leverage over Islamabad's nuclear program This might yet be capped without endangering current U S -Pakistan cooperation on Afghanistan and future cooperation in the Gulf and Southwest Asia Highly restrictive Congressional proposals to terminate aid to Pakistan are simply not credible (Pakistan would certainly exercise its option should the U S apply heavy pressure to terminate the nuclear program) But the increasing degree of ambiguity that will accompany further Pakistani nuclear developments is also not tolerable Islamabad's program threatens to provoke a South Asian nuclear arms race it will activate Israeli nuclear concerns and it could undermine the entire non

---

<sup>4</sup> New York Times July 16 and 18 1987 carry stories of two covert Pakistani purchasing operations in the United States one for the purchase of special steels used in the construction of a uranium enrichment facility the other for the illegal purchase of special test instruments Other Pakistani purchasing activities in Europe have also come to light

<sup>5</sup> Public Law 99 83 August 1985 Section 1204 amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961

proliferation regime. However imperfect the importance of this regime is newly underscored by U S Soviet talks over deep cuts in nuclear systems

One way out of this nuclear policy dilemma is to establish short term positive incentives for Pakistan to suspend its nuclear program. Without cutting the size of the assistance package the sale of specific weapons and the balance between military and economic assistance could be linked to specific Pakistani restraints. Since a major justification for the arms program was to reduce Pakistani incentives to go nuclear such a linkage is in conformity with established U S policy it would in effect test the intensity of Pakistan's nuclear ambitions. It may be that nothing will temper these ambitions on the other hand offering positive inducements for Pakistani restraint (coupled with an effort to establish a regional nuclear agreement to be discussed below) could have a fair chance of success

Failing this it is important to prepare now for the emergence of Pakistan as a regional nuclear power. A nuclear capability will strengthen Pakistan's position as a mediator in the Iran Iraq war it may increase Islamabad's leverage with the Soviets on the terms of an Afghanistan settlement and it would certainly enhance Pakistan's prestige in the Islamic and non-aligned movements. These developments are not necessarily harmful to American interests. But given Pakistan's past record of domestic instability and its occasional flirtation with the most radical Arab regimes a nuclear Pakistan could also become the source of fissile material nuclear technology and political support for extremist anti-American countries. American interests lie in a close relationship with a moderate Pakistan. If despite American cautions such a Pakistan should decide to become a nuclear power there remain good strategic reasons to continue the relationship even if this requires the rewriting of restrictive U S non proliferation legislation

### **The U S and India An Uneasy Accommodation?**

One of the enduring puzzles of American diplomacy in South Asia is that it has never been able to accommodate the region's dominant power India. Indeed there is a paradox behind the puzzle some of the reasons cited in favor of such an accommodation are actually obstacles to U S -Indian cooperation. Two examples will suffice. First the fact that the U S and India are large pluralist democracies also means that it is easy for groups in both countries to poison the relationship. Ignorance about India is widespread in the U S misinformation about the U S — compounded by an active Soviet disinformation program— is widespread in India. Second the fact that India is the regional dominant power is seen in New Delhi as justifying an Indian version of the Monroe Doctrine in South Asia but because

the U S has legitimate interests in other regional states (especially Pakistan) it cannot fully concede India's claim. This American reluctance to give India its way in South Asia when coupled with American statements of India's power and greatness contribute to the paranoid Indian view (a view encouraged openly by the Soviets) that the U S regards large powerful India as a threat!

Nevertheless the U S and India have been forced to take each other seriously. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan brought the U S back into South Asia as Pakistan's main arms supplier. Yet the U S cannot—even if it wanted to—supply Pakistan with the weapons that would ensure its security against the much larger and more powerful India let alone enable Pakistan to resist a combined Indo-Soviet onslaught.

India on the other hand cannot view the supply of U S weapons to Pakistan with complacency. Yet New Delhi must hesitate before it joins with Moscow to pressure Pakistan. To do so risks direct American-Soviet conflict in South Asia even if successful such pressure might lead to the destruction of Pakistan. This at best would result in the creation of a group of weak buffer states between India and the Soviet Union at worst India would share a long contested border with the Russians.

The Indian leadership belatedly recognizes how costly its own Soviet tie has been (the two have a Treaty of Peace and Friendship). Not only did the Soviets fail to consult with New Delhi on the eve of their invasion of Afghanistan. Moscow has begun to normalize its relationship with China undercutting the chief premise of Indo-Soviet strategic cooperation. Yet because New Delhi is still dependent upon the Soviets for arms it has been unable to contemplate a truly independent policy settling instead for a half-hearted dialogue with the U S as a way of warning Moscow not to take it for granted.

This strategy is unlikely to succeed in either Moscow or Washington. New Delhi remains too aloof and too suspicious of U S intentions to accommodate important American regional and global interests (its gratuitous fawning over the Sandinista junta is only the most notorious of its attempts to prove its independence from the U S). Moscow treats Indian leaders, scholars, and soldiers with astonishing hospitality but a closer look reveals that it has given up on New Delhi for serious strategic purposes. India refuses to pressure Pakistan on Moscow's behalf it refuses to offer bases to or engage in joint military planning exercises or intelligence sharing with Moscow and its importance for the Soviets vis a vis China is declining as Sino-Soviet normalization proceeds.

The net result of these trends has been an increasingly isolated and frustrated India. Such an India is more rather than less likely to harm important American interests. There are recent signs of this:

- In February in the midst of their largest ever military exercises Operation Brass Tacks the Indian military suddenly proclaimed a crisis with Pakistan and dramatically rushed massive reinforcements to the Pakistan border
- At the same moment army officials informed visitors of a Spring exercise (Operation Checkerboard) on the eastern border facing China. This has led to a major Indian buildup just south of Tibet (and a Chinese counter buildup) which could very well lead to hostilities in late Fall
- In early June in a highly publicized military operation the Indian Air force flew several relief missions over Sri Lanka accompanied by advanced IAF Mirage fighters
- India's nuclear debate seems to have reached the conclusion that a limited covert nuclear program is necessary to keep up with Pakistan's effort. India's nuclear hawks have not yet carried the day but a weak and frustrated India is more likely to exercise the nuclear option than a strong and confident one

None of these trends are in America's interest. India is the dominant country in a region that contains exactly a quarter of mankind and the largest group of people living under the rule of law. Numbers alone do not necessarily add up to power but India's scientific and military establishments are among the best in the world certainly the equal of China's. A militant expansionist India could wreck American-Pakistan relations entangle the Chinese in irrelevant regional conflicts stimulate global nuclear proliferation and spawn new terrorist and irredentist movements throughout South Asia.

Accommodating legitimate Indian interests while pursuing important American ones is today the most difficult task facing the United States in South Asia. It is a task made especially frustrating by the Indian diplomatic style which has gratuitously alienated several generations of American politicians and diplomats (the Pakistanis with their long experience of dealing with Americans from the position of junior partner have no such problem). Of course while the Indian negotiating style is partly cultural in origin it is complicated by deep ambivalence as to the kind of state India should become—an accommodating generous regional power or one that commands and demands obedience from its smaller neighbors.

Given Washington's preoccupation with Afghanistan for the past seven years—and thus a special focus on Pakistan—it is surprising that U S -Indian relations are still viable. However, the strategic dialogue begun in June 1985 (during Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Washington) is frozen. This is partly because the Reagan administration was unable to provide certain dual-use high technology items to New Delhi but chiefly because of New Delhi's ambivalence over its opening to the U S. Clearly, the opening was seen by India as a way of reducing U S support for Pakistan. This has failed to occur; one is reminded of earlier optimistic Indian statements that the Soviets would soon quit Afghanistan. In both cases New Delhi has chosen to blame Washington for its own strategic miscalculations.

What steps can the U S take to repair its relationship with India—or at least to reduce the damages to important American interests?

First, in these matters, there is no substitute for sustained high level interest. Indian leaders resent being equated with Pakistan by Washington and regard China as their natural counterpart. If Washington were to devote half the attention and resources to India as they give to China that would probably be twice what is necessary—but still far more than India receives today. Of course, India has not generally behaved with the skill and maturity of a China—some would argue that it is getting all the attention it deserves. Still, this attention is primarily in the context of America's Afghanistan and Pakistan strategies.

On regional matters, American policy has been correct and has not challenged Indian dominance. The U S has refrained from the temptation to expand its ties to those regional states (such as Sri Lanka and Bangladesh) that are in domestic difficulty. In Sri Lanka, the U S has consistently supported Indian peacemaking efforts, even though it is clearly one of the parties to the dispute through its support of extremist Tamil revolutionary groups.

The most serious point of disagreement between New Delhi and Washington is over U S relations with Pakistan. New Delhi is both fearful and jealous of the attention Pakistan has received and vastly exaggerates the alleged U S -Pakistan strategic alliance. Nothing will completely alleviate Indian suspicions, and the best cure for them is direct India-Pakistani discussions on regional security issues (where the Indians will have to do some explaining about their own ties to the Soviet Union, which, on paper, are more binding than those between Pakistan and the U S). The point to be made to thoughtful Indians is that a limited U S security tie to Pakistan is in India's own interest, since a weak and unstable Pakistan would only draw the Soviet Union further into the Subcontinent.

As for nuclear issues there may be more of a chance of restraining India's program—or at least suspending it—than Pakistan's. Any progress in capping the Pakistani nuclear program will strengthen the hands of the significant anti nuclear lobby in India. There is no chance that India will shut down its nuclear research program and there is little chance that it will sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty but movement in Islamabad could be parlayed into a fixed-period regional nuclear freeze in South Asia (accompanied by limited verification or inspection arrangements to ensure that neither side was cheating). This in turn could lay the groundwork for a more comprehensive regional non-nuclear arrangement. Even if such an arrangement fell short of full NPT safeguards it would be a triumph for American and regional diplomacy.

Finally in India more than Pakistan America faces a real problem in getting its message across. Over the past twenty years U.S. cultural and information programs have been gutted and those that remain are often ineptly run. India is deluged with skilful Soviet propaganda and the Indian state information services are often pro-Soviet. Balancing this thousands of Indians turn to the United States for higher education and very few leading families do not have one or more relatives resident in America. A well-funded sophisticated cultural and information program would build on this base and on the essential compatibility of American and Indian political economic and ideological interests. It would also try to reach out to the vernacular elites who will increasingly dominate a country whose population is projected to exceed that of China's in twenty years.

### **Policy and Process for the Next Decade**

American policy in South Asia had a relatively easy task over the past seven years. It required neither massive resources nor strategic innovation nor much skill to respond effectively to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. That response has helped stabilize Pakistan; it is beginning to turn the tide in Afghanistan itself and it has not yet damaged U.S. relations with Pakistan's chief threat and the region's most powerful state, India. As long as the Soviets remain in Afghanistan the U.S. should continue to provide credible assurances to Pakistan that it will be protected from Soviet threats and pressure.

But these assurances need not spill over into a commitment against India. Pakistan's security ultimately rests on forging a stable strategic relationship with New Delhi. That relationship must rest upon a balanced imbalance—a Pakistani capability to make unacceptably costly an Indian attack coupled with a Pakistani inability to initiate and prevail in a conflict with India. The present Indo-Pakistani military relationship meets these criteria although stability could be enhanced by explicit confidence-building and arms control measures between the two countries.

Given such a balanced imbalance and further reduction in the ideological and political tensions between the two countries India and Pakistan could restore something of the strategic integrity the Subcontinent had under the British Raj. These are long term considerations but not idealistic ones a new generation of strategic thinkers in both countries have come to regard the Indo Pakistani dispute as an anachronism<sup>6</sup> It is very much in America's interest to encourage such regional thinking together India and Pakistan have the resources to defend the Subcontinent and even play a constructive role in nearby regions our major policy failures in the area have come about when we either chose sides in the Indo-Pakistan dispute or dropped out of the region altogether The original impetus of U S policy makers at the dawn of the containment era was correct support for Indo-Pakistan normalization is an often frustrating but necessary prerequisite for the broader goal of an independent South Asia

One way the U S can enrich the regional security dialogue is by clarifying with Pakistan and India the criteria for U S military assistance to each This is really is a multilateral issue since U S arms supplied to Pakistan directly affect Indian security and many of the advanced dual-use technologies that have been provided to India will find their way to the border with Pakistan (and indeed to India's border with China) The U S has often failed to take the regional balance of power into account needlessly raising suspicions among Pakistanis that the U S is only waiting until the end of the Afghan war to tilt to India and in India that the U S has entered into a tight long-term security relationship with Pakistan Neither is the case neither would enhance complex U S regional interests

Such an initiative would necessarily involve China The U S is the only major state with good ties to India Pakistan and China a regional understanding between these three is in America's interest and not beyond reach American apathy—or a single-minded focus on the Afghanistan issue—only provides another opening to an increasingly flexible and imaginative Soviet diplomacy It is not in Washington's interest to again allow the Soviets to serve as the regional peacekeeper cum balancer

The United States could also more actively promote a nuclear agreement that will survive the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan Although such an agreement must rest on Indian and Pakistani self-interest it is not necessarily in their interest to become nuclear powers Both have legitimate regional and global ambitions and neither will permanently give up the nuclear option Yet a military nuclear program would be costly for each country and would

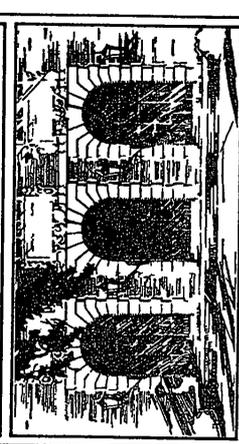
---

<sup>6</sup> For a sample of the range of Indian and Pakistani strategic thinking see Stephen Philip Cohen ed The Security of South Asia American and Asian Perspectives (Chicago and Urbana University of Illinois Press 1987)

expose them to certain risks and uncertainties as they became fledgling nuclear powers While I tend to agree with Indian and Pakistani nuclear advocates that regional nuclearization would stabilize the Subcontinent (a la Kenneth Waltz and Andre Beaufre) and in these terms might be welcomed it would be globally destabilizing and harmful to the interests of the U S and many other nuclear and non nuclear countries As we have suggested the appropriate strategy to contain regional nuclear programs in South Asia is not threat and bluster but the development of an array of positive incentives Certainly the U S will have to approach the PRC and perhaps the Soviet Union in assembling such a package of incentives one of which should be the declaration of South Asia as a nuclear free zone in exchange for regional nuclear abstinence

Finally the U S is inadequately organized to deal with an emerging South Asia In almost every U S foreign policy bureaucracy South Asian issues receive less than their due share of high level attention In some places even Afghanistan is not accorded the bureaucratic clout it deserves South Asia is too volatile too complex and ultimately too important for a wide range of American interests to allow the present arrangements to continue A thoroughgoing adjustment in responsibilities and the creation of an Assistant Secretary-level position for South and Southwest Asia in State will meet half of the organizational problem The other half will take longer and requires the rebuilding of enfeebled regional expertise in the Foreign Service the U S Information Service and the intelligence community Without this expertise and without sustained high level attention the U S will have to settle for a less than a marginal role in shaping the future of a quarter of mankind

---

<p>LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN</p> <p>NOTICE According to Sec 19 (a) of the University Statutes all books and other library materials acquired in any man- ner by the University belong to the University Library When this item is no longer needed by the department it should be returned to the Acquisition Department, University Library</p>	
--	---

---