Review - Reconceptualising Deterrence

Reconceptualising Deterrence: Nudging Toward Rationality in Middle Eastern Rivalries
By: Elli Lieberman
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The contemporary field of international relations has moved beyond State-centric connotations and now manifests in the postmodern structures characterized by multilateral governance and soft borders. Despite this multilayered fabric, the discipline is still entrenched in the trappings of the modern Westphalian system in regards to sovereignty and territorial integrity. The securitization of physical threats to territoriality and war making for the defence of the State still constitute part of the core agenda of States. Such expectations are mainstream within Security Studies, which has been influenced by structural realism, or neo realism—a dominant approach to the theorization of State behaviour in international relations.

Neorealism or structural realism treats States as unitary rational and functionally undifferentiated actors, with differences only in the distribution of their capabilities. It argues that the international system molds the States and defines the possibilities of conflict and cooperation. Thus, for structural realism, international security concerns are overtly statist, having apparent military connotations. During the Cold War, the concept of security mainly denoted the security of the State, which meant that in the discourse of Security Studies, the State was the major referent object (Williams 2008: 7). Stephen P. Walt largely emphasized the military dimension of security and hence for him, the threat of war and the requirement for military preparedness to mitigate war were crucial for security in international politics. Thus, the State's security was the most important component of Security Studies for Walt (1991: 213). Hence, the logic of political realism formed the crucial disciplinary cannon of Security Studies.

The book under review, Elli Lieberman's *Reconceptualising Deterrence: Nudging Toward Rationality in Middle Eastern Rivalries,* can be situated within this disciplinary framework of Security Studies. Currently, the sub-field of Security Studies has moved beyond statist assertions of security in international politics; the focus has shifted to non-military components of security. Critical Security Studies in this regard has challenged the orthodox notions of security based on State-centricism and militarism. However, the State remains the most important actor in international politics and, in this sense, the security of the State cannot be entirely discounted in Security Studies' discourse. Mohammad Ayoob is one of the strongest proponents of this argument. For him, the entire non-Western world is still grappling with problems like State legitimacy, political order and capital accumulation, which are yet to be resolved (1995: 11). Hence, the approach of critical Security Studies is largely applicable to the West. Non-Western States are far from reaching the stage of being postmodern States and hence, in their case, the ideology of political realism aptly suits Security Studies.

The Logic of Political Realism

In *Reconceptualising Deterrence*, Lieberman has attempted to explain the centrality of understanding the concept of deterrence in non-Western States of the Middle East as part of contemporary Security Studies. He has emphasized how the logic of political realism, revolving around notions of State survival, nationalism, territoriality, balance of power, balance of interests and the balance of capabilities, emerged as the key driver of discourses on security in the context of Israel and Egypt. Here, the author seeks to establish how deterrence is stabilized when two States act in a

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manner that demonstrates their appreciation of mutual interests and recognizes respective capabilities. This comports with the structural realist argument regarding States being functionally undifferentiated actors; their actions, in terms of conflict and cooperation, are structurally determined by the anarchical international system. In contrast, the author also presents deterrence in the context of conflict between a State and a non-State actor. Using the case study of the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, the author examines the question of a State's survival when faced with a threat posed by a non-State actor. Lieberman argues that the stability/instability paradox and the balance of terror created by the non-State actor largely determine the nature of deterrence.

When a non-State actor (Hezbollah) fashions its attack based on the capabilities of the defender and uses 'Salami' tactics (a mode of gradually eliminating political opponents, likened to 'cutting off like slices of salami'; the term originally coined by Hungarian Communist leader Matyas Rakosi), a different dynamic is created in which the defender cannot send a costly signal in the form of disproportionate response. This then leads to the State's development of a reputation of irresoluteness and results in the breakdown of deterrence. When a non-State actor like Hezbollah uses 'salami' tactics, the absolute impact is small and, thus, the use of a disproportionate response is not justified. In other words, by engaging in disproportionate responses to attack, the defender (Israel) can undermine its own position of legitimacy (p: 201). With this longitudinal approach, the author has tried to explore the linkages between the two conflicts by situating them in the continued significance of State-centrality in Security Studies.

Situated in the spatio-temporal dynamics of the Cold War and then spilling into the post Cold War epoch, the book reflects on how the notion of State centrality has been pivotal to the understanding of international security, despite the structural transformations that the global order has undergone. Looking beyond critical Security Studies' emphasis on the non-military and non-statist dimensions of security, the book revitalizes the need to bring back the statist discourse in Security Studies. By focusing on the concept of conventional deterrence in the enduring conflicts of Israel/Egypt and Israel/Hezbollah, the book has attempted to demonstrate how in cases of long-standing conflicts, the opponents tend to go beyond redressing issues of State survival and interests through conflict and move toward a more rational approach to stabilize peace and deterrence. The book contends that deterrence works in cases of enduring rivalries wherein rationality leads to the internalization of deterrence.

Post-Cold War Deterrence

The book also examines the new lines of argumentation regarding deterrence that were developed after the Cold War. It was thought that deterring a terrorist organization and a non-State actor such as Hezbollah was very difficult, if not impossible, and often led to failure. The argument also stated that the end of Cold War had created new complex deterrence environments, making the success of deterrence difficult. It was further argued that the new situation characterized by new power asymmetries between State and non-State actors and the combination of nationalism and indirect strategies made it harder to achieve deterrence. Developments in cognitive and neuro-cognitive sciences also demonstrated that in threatening situations, individuals react emotionally, not rationally. Thus, establishing deterrence is difficult. It was also argued that the complexity of the deterrence environment was due to the newly emerging organizational structures, namely, non-State actors. Finally, cultural differences between the State and non-State actors also contributed to the further complication of the deterrence environment (pp: 172-173). Putting all these arguments into perspective, the book argues that attempts at understanding individual cases of deterrence failure and success leads to misleading conclusions. The gloomy predictions that deterrence is not a viable strategy for the complex world that emerged after the end of Cold War are misguided. Hence, understanding how deterrence works needs a long-term perspective. Deterrence, when properly understood, can solve security dilemmas and lead to stability. Hence, deterrence must be contextualized from the perspective of the nature of the long-term rivalry in which these cases are embedded (p: 44).

According to Lieberman, whether deterrence works or not and how it works is a hotly debated issue in the literature relating to deterrence. The author argues that a large gap exists in this literature between theory and evidence. The theory of deterrence still contains many unresolved issues and also lacks empirical validity. The thesis of the book is that the literature on deterrence has been struggling with the problem of identifying deterrence successes because past researches have narrowly focused on single deterrence encounters instead of a larger conflict structure within

which deterrence encounters take place. Deterrence literature has also narrowly defined deterrence success as prevention from attack and stemming any challenge to deterrence. Challenging the conventional notion of deterrence, the author argues that deterrence may or may not succeed, but in the long run, the relationship may not transform structurally, in the sense that the strategic interaction based upon deterrence may not have a long-term impact on the relationship of two States.

Deterrence may only be understood by a long process of learning through failures. This the author describes in the words of Lawrence Freedman as internalized deterrence (p: 5). According to the author, the notion of internalized deterrence is under-developed because of the narrow scope of deterrence theory itself. He further elaborates that the deterrence theory was developed in the nuclear age during the Cold War by Western nuclear strategists. This meant that theory development's preoccupation was nuclear deterrence and that the interest in theory and its development would depend on US foreign policy concerns. Nuclear deterrence theory was developed in the United States in response to the immediate challenge posed by nuclear weapons (p: 6).

On the contrary, the author argues that the credibility problem is much greater with conventional weapons. The question is whether the defender has the capability to deny or punish the aggressor. There are objective barriers to the accurate assessment of capability. These objective barriers are made more complicated by regime structure variables. Military calculations of the balance of capabilities and assessment of military effectiveness in the conventional world are difficult (p: 12). The author argues that technological innovations have revolutionized the dynamics of warfare and hence, transformed the turf of deterrence. By inflicting heavy damages upon the opponent's population with well developed air power and missile systems, deterrence can be achieved even without defeating the rival army. In the missile age, a contest in military capability is not a contest in destructive power, but a contest of endurance.

However, political pressures lead to psychological pathologies and results in miscalculations of capabilities and military balance. The absence of capabilities and knowledge requirements results in deterrence success at the strategic level. However, it creates conditions for deterrence failure at lower levels of conflict. This is similar to Glenn Snyder's concept of stability/instability paradox (p: 59).

Israel and Egypt

Regarding the 1948-1956 hostilities and the 1954-1956 low level conflict between Israel and Egypt, the author challenges the theoretical notion of deterrence that interests are used as powerful explanatory variable in cases where deterrence fails and especially when the weak attack the powerful States. States that have strong interests are highly resolute and are willing to go to war even when the balance of capabilities favours their opponent. If interest driven, highly motivated challengers are willing to go to war even if the balance of capabilities favours the defender, we should expect that defenders that are favoured by balance of interests, even if they are weaker, should deter. The author argues that this did not happen as the balance of interests favouring the defender does not have the same effect. The balance of interests that favoured the defender did not deter aggression. This is an important finding because the critiques of deterrence place too much emphasis on capability and resolve while ignoring the importance of interests. According to the critiques of deterrence, commitments cannot substitute interests, but the author found that intrinsic interests cannot guarantee stability.

By invoking Morgan's thesis, the author states that rationality and deterrence can be reconciled through a longitudinal training process that may be imperfect and irrational at times, but which eventually leads to a rational outcome. This happened, the author argues, as the defender (in this case, Israel) was able to teach the challenger (Egypt) that the only option available was the diplomatic one. The defender, through a costly and irrational process, was able to nudge the challenger toward rationality. Due to this, the author argues Egypt's motivation to attack changed. Deterrence got stabilized because Egypt was convinced that it could no longer successfully attack. In the entire process, Egypt realized Israel's capabilities and Israel understood Egypt's motivations. Owing to this, a balance of capabilities and a balance of interests was achieved which internalized deterrence.

The author has found this in his study of the later stages of the Israel/Egypt conflict that occurred during 1956 to

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1973. The author argues that due to this, stability exists on the Egyptian Israeli axis until the present day (p: 171). Regarding the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, the author argues that although psychological war continues, deterrence has been established. The author demonstrates that in the case of Israel and Egypt deterrence got stabilized due to diplomacy, but with regard to Israel and Hezbollah, deterrence was achieved with the use of considerable degree of force. In any case, the author argues that deterrence was achieved in both circumstances as Israel was able to teach both Egypt and Hezbollah to act rationally. But this happened only when Israel itself learnt to be a status-quo State (p: 207).

Major Contributions

The book is a major contribution to the literature on conventional deterrence. It also presents an elaborate historiographic treatment of the issue of Palestine by locating it in the larger dynamics of the Arab Israel and Israel Hezbollah conflict. The book advocates the examination of deterrence not from the perspective of its periodic success and failure, but on the basis of the nature of long term rivalry in which it is situated. The author also brings in factors such as domestic political pressures and psychological pathologies that determine the assessment of capabilities and the understanding of the military balance. These elements, according to the author, are factored deeply in shaping the nature of deterrence.

The most crucial contribution of the book has been its emphasis on the limitations of deterrence theory. According to the author, deterrence theory was developed during the Cold War in the context of the two super powers possessing nuclear weapons. The immediate concern of the theory was to address as to how to prevent catastrophic wars. However, the logic of deterrence in a nuclear scenario was not established empirically. The preoccupation with stability hindered the development and testing of the logic and requirements of credibility. The logic of conventional deterrence is very much different. The tension between stability and credibility in conventional deterrence according to the author must be resolved by deference to credibility, an issue which has not been fully explored (p: 212).

The book also accents the significance of reconceptualising the theory of deterrence in a non-western, non-nuclear context and locating it beyond the Cold War paradigm. In this regard, one crucial aspect that can be picked up from the book is its understanding of the phenomenon of reconciliation between stability and credibility in situations of conventional deterrence. This notion can be employed to explore the possibility of establishing conventional deterrence in cases where two nuclear powered adversaries are engaged in an enduring rivalry. However, such a rivalry is staged predominantly with the use of conventional military tactics, with the threat of nuclear weapons having failed to bridle the conflict and establish stable deterrence. The question that arises in this circumstance is regarding the credibility in the context of conventional capability because nuclear weapons have been unable to bring in stability. At the root of this phenomenon, lies the very notion of nuclear weapons being viable options neither for staging conflicts, nor to act as instruments of fear to deter aggression.

From the classical mainstream perspective, there is an old and time tested presumption that nuclear weapons cannot be an effective tool to deal with routine foreign policy matters (Spanier 1989: 112), mainly because the fear of destruction in the wake of a war between two nuclear powered adversaries is mutual and catastrophic (Kissinger 1957: 15). Hence, nuclear deterrence, rather than nuclear conflict, should naturally characterize the relationship between two nuclear powered adversaries. This was exactly the case between the two Cold War rivals, the US and the USSR. However, if we examine the nuclear situation in South Asia, it appears unique and marks a clear departure from the super power rivalry at the time of Cold War because their nuclear weapons' status has not created fear of catastrophe and deterred aggression. Hence, the classic deterrence theory is insufficient to explain the Indo-Pak nuclear situation (Sridharan 2007: 9-10). The book under review comes in very handy here. The author's thrust on credibility in the conventional sense, as against stability in the nuclear sense, can prove to be significant tool to analyze the feasibility of deterrence getting established in the conventional context of the ongoing India Pakistan rivalry. This is because although nuclear weapons are the prevalent fact, they have not tangibly contributed in determining the nature of their conflictual equations, specifically when we see the unremitting military exchanges over their borders, creating an ever lively hostile situation.

India and Pakistan

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India and Pakistan are two nuclear powered adversaries whose tumultuous history, after their overt acquisition of nuclear weapons capacity in 1998, has tended to contravene the classical theorizing on nuclear deterrence. Both countries have proved to be recurrently incapable of reducing the intensity of the conflictual nature of subcontinental politics. This phenomenon is paradoxical, when we contextualize the impact of nuclear deterrence, upon Cold War politics. It is now well accepted among historians and scholars of international relations that the emergence of a nuclear deterrent situation between the Soviet Union and the US largely contributed to the reduction of tension between them. However, this has not been the case as far as India Pakistan nuclear relationship is concerned. Rather the matters have been made worse. According to Sridharan, this is mainly because dissimilar to the US and USSR, India and Pakistan share common history and were once the part of a common territory. So, the distance between the two is too short to avert any massive destruction. Additionally, their conflict prone history, a US dominated global order with South Asia becoming the hub of the post 9/11 American war on terror and an ontologically pro-Pakistan China with its own nuclear capabilities, further complicate the situation (*Ibid*: 10).

Thus, owing to the recurring instances of conflictual situations between India and Pakistan manifest in the Kargil crisis of 1999 and the 2001-2002 military impasse after the overt nuclearisation of India and Pakistan, the significance of the deterrence theory in a post Cold War non-Western setting is profoundly questioned. From this perspective it may be noted that if nuclear deterrence actually worked in the context of the subcontinental conflicts, instability on the Indo-Pak borders would not have intermittently escalated to perilous proportions making the region constantly vulnerable to threats of a nuclear exchange (Kumar 2002: 11). Hence the repeated degeneration of the security situation in the subcontinent within a short span of time, further reiterated the notion that overt nuclearisation of India and Pakistan has not affected a deterrence situation in the region. As a contrast, instances of terrorism have persisted intermittently. Pakistan's continuing success as a revisionist State in taking India to the threshold of conflict through its abetment to non-State anti India extremist organizations and India's inability to raise the level of offensive as a status-quo State has imparted a great degree of ineffectiveness to the nuclear status of the two countries. This means that the holding of nuclear weapons has not contributed in any way to the war making strategy or the peace building endeavours of the two States. Rather, ridiculing the nuclear deterrence doctrine, the security scenario of the subcontinent has turned to be more advantageous for Pakistan at the expense of India's long-established hegemony in South Asia.

It seems that overt acquisition of nuclear capability by India and Pakistan has brought contrasting ramifications for State behaviour of the two subcontinental adversaries. On the one hand, it appears to have enfeebled India's capacity to initiate even a limited conventional military offensive and on the other hand, it seems to have emboldened Pakistan in the pursuit of more hawkish strategic and foreign policy against India. This is evident by the fact that India had initiated a plan for conventional strikes across the Line of Control to dislodge terrorist infrastructure in 2002 (Gupta 2002: 3), which failed to materialize. This happened due to Pakistan's brazen proclamation regarding its intention to use nuclear weapons. In June 2002, Pakistan's ambassador to the United Nations, Munir Akram, cautioned that Pakistan could resort to the use of nuclear weapons even in a conventional conflict if it considers the losses to be unacceptable (Jayaraman 2002, cited in Sidhu 2007: 227).

In addition to this, the United States strategic presence in the region, as a part of its war on terrorism, increased the complication of the already perplexed dyadic nuclear relationship between India and Pakistan (Sidhu 2007: 209). It also led to skepticisms that Washington might provide Pakistan with technology to ensure the safety of nuclear weapons which in turn might give Islamabad enough confidence to field its nuclear arsenal with greater self-assurance (Hoagland 2002).

However the most crucial aspect to be reckoned with is that the two recent instances of conflicts, the Kargil crisis and the 2001-2002 pandemonium, makes it clear that nuclear weapons can deter only a nuclear war and not a conventional or sub-conventional war (Kumar 2007: 256). Out of the five instances of conflict or the situation reaching the threshold of conflict between India and Pakistan that may be taken into cognisance here, the first three wars: the 1947-48 Kashmir war, the second Kashmir war of 1965, and the war of 1971 resulting out of the crisis in East Pakistan, it is apparent that all of them were asymmetric conflicts. Especially, the war of 1971 decisively established India's conventional military superiority and by this also braced India's position as a regional hegemon.

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As a paradox, the overt nuclearisation of 1998, was the first source for the creation of splinters in India's hegemony in South Asia as it brought the two subcontinental adversaries on an equal footing. Hence the latter two instances of conflict, the Kargil crisis that symbolized a high level conflict in a localized area (Sidhu 2007: 208), and the 2001-2002 instability that merely proved to be a brilliant military exercise devoid of any concrete results. Both cases highlighted India's inability to cross the LOC and affect a military victory which could be deemed anything near parallel to those of that occurred prior to 1998. The two recent examples, one of a limited war and another averted at the threshold of conflict, invariably have been symmetric conflicts.

This scenario, however, has not been an abrupt phenomenon and is rooted in the enduring rivalry between the two countries. Since the 1970s, prognosis of the potential nuclearisation of India-Pakistan conflict was manifest. This appeared first in Pakistan's defeat in the war of 1971 and the subsequent germination of a hidden motive for countering India's conventional military superiority with nuclear weapons. India's nuclear test of 1974 acted as a catalyst to this effect and its ramifications were visible during 1980s, when the covert presence of nuclear weapons in the subcontinent created serious tensions between the two countries. The testing of nuclear weapons in 1998 brought all this into the open and resulted in the explicit nuclearisation of the long-standing bilateral conflict. Thus, in the subcontinent, the post 1998 security scenario has been marked by a crisis prone brittle nuclear deterrence situation which has experienced strains intermittently due to the continuing low intensity war on Indo-Pak borders, bolstered by terrorism and violence perpetrated by Pakistan based non-State actors.

There are five crises situations to be reckoned with when we examine the impact of nuclearisation upon India-Pakistan adversarial relationship and they must be categorized into two broad streams. The instances in the 1980s fall under the phase in which the two subcontinental rivals possessed a de facto nuclear status and after 1998, the condition of conflict transformed drastically, as both brazenly unveiled their nuclear weapons capabilities. However, all the five crisis situations: the crisis over the fear of an Indian attack over the Kahuta nuclear complex in Pakistan of 1984, the 1986-1987 operation Brass tacks crisis, the May 1990 tension in the Kashmir valley, the Kargil crisis and the 2001-2002 border mobilization after the December 13 terror attack on the Indian Parliament, fall in a single line and must be viewed as a montage. Specifically, in so far as the impact of covert or overt presence of nuclear weapons constituting the quintessential component underlying all these crises situations is concerned.

One factor separating the covert and overt phases of subcontinental nuclear scenario is that during the 1980s, covert presence of nuclear weapons was considered to be a deterring phenomenon in averting three crises, that of 1983-84, 1986-87 and 1989-1990. These crises situations occurred against an emerging nuclearised security environment in South Asia, but each one stopped short of getting precipitated into a full blown conflict. It is at this juncture that scholars, strategists and policy-makers on both sides of the subcontinental divide became optimist of the prevalence of a stable deterrence situation in the region. Firstly, in 1983-1984, there were persistent reports that India intended to attack Pakistan's nuclear weapons production facilities and Pakistan threatened to retaliate with a similar attack on Indian facilities (*Nightly News* 1994). In 1986-1987, there occurred a crisis when India conducted its biggest military exercise named Operation Brass tacks near the borders. The latter fearing that this was a preparation for an attack on it launched a defensive operation named Operation Sledgehammer. In reaction, India launched its Operation Trident and the situation reached the threshold of a massive conflict which was fortunately averted without any further damage. It is at the height of this crisis that Pakistan made an apparent admission that it had acquired nuclear weapons capability.

Lastly, the crisis in the Kashmir valley that transpired in the spring of 1990 was the offshoot of Pakistan's biggest military exercise 'Zarb-i-Momin' in late 1989. Due to this, insurgency, which was being spawned from the camps located in Pakistan, precipitated to unprecedented proportions in the Kashmir valley. Responding to this, India threatened to carryout cross-border attacks in Pakistan to dismantle the terror infrastructures. Considering this as an act of hostility, Pakistan threatened to weaponize its nuclear capability to confront any Indian attack. Fears of escalation to the nuclear threshold brought in the active diplomatic engagement of the US and USSR in order to dilute the crisis situation. By the time the US sent the deputy national security adviser, Robert Gates, to visit India and Pakistan, the crisis had almost reached the stage of resolution (See Krepon and Faruquee 1994; Hersh 1993).

These crises were not played out with ready nuclear arsenal, but all the three crises were about nuclear weapons. It

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was the threat of preventing the construction of nuclear weapons by the opponent in 1983-84, there was the threat to build nuclear weapons in 1986-87, and in 1989-1990 it was the threat of nuclear weapons being used in future. In these crises situations, war supposedly did not occur because of the tacit recognition on both sides regarding the surreptitious presence of nuclear weapons capabilities with the opponent. This kind of an opaque nuclear situation has been described in different ways such as non-weaponised deterrence, wherein deterrence is derived by the power of each to construct nuclear weapons quickly (Perkovich 1993: 86). Or, recessed deterrence is a situation in which the countries have the capability to build and deliver nuclear weapons, but that capability is not exercised (Singh 1993: 66). It is also called as existential deterrence which argues that any aggressor would be deterred from attacking if it feared a similar kind of retaliation. In this way, nuclear weapons, rather than encouraging wars, help to secure peace (Bundy 1984: 8-9).

But, the post 1998 subcontinental situation entirely metamorphasised and the perceived stability of nuclear deterrence was pushed into a shambles. The explicit nuclearisation of subcontinental security coerced the entire region into the short fuse of a nuclear conflict. This scenario was demonstrated firstly during the Kargil crisis. The continuity of an irredentist policy by Pakistan even after the nuclearisation of the subcontinent resulted in a disturbing expression of conflict in Kargil. In this sense, Pakistan's action in Kargil marked a clear departure from the earlier three Indo-Pakistani conflicts. Before this had happened, several experts on strategic affairs had contemplated that Pakistan might use the nuclear status as a better bargaining clout to advance its goals in Jammu & Kashmir (Ganguly 1995: 328). In addition to this, many important American and other officials had emphasized the enhanced perils of a nuclear war in the region, given its conflict prone history (Kinzer 1999). Kargil crisis seems to be the first epitome of such prognostications. The conflict ridiculed the nuclear deterrence framework and was symptomatic of the ugly ramifications of overt declaration of nuclear weapons capabilities. Kargil thus exhibited that the presence of nuclear weapons did not positively contribute in transforming the security competition between the two (Tellis et. al. 2002: 1).

However, the nuclear dimension was most apparent during the 2001-2002 military impasse that resulted out of the terror attack on the Indian parliament by Pakistan based militant outfits. This event was preceded by a successful terror strike, on Jammu and Kashmir assembly house in Srinagar in October. All this, ushered in with one of the most perilous security situations in the chequered history of India-Pakistan relations, only to be retrograded by the diabolic acts of militants in Kaluchak in May 2002. Owing to these developments, the then Indian Prime Minister, A. B. Vajpayee, went to the extent of declaring that the war on terror had now reached a definitive stage. With Pakistan exhibiting a sense of reticence towards Indian admonitions regarding its involvement in the trail of terrorist attacks, the latter took recourse to military brinkmanship. The result was consternating. Both India and Pakistan ordered the largest mobilisation of their armies in 15 years and a million troops on each side of the border were stationed (Milewski 2002: 123).

Owing to all this, a number of scholars and experts in India also argue that overt acquisition of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan has created a kind of stability-instability paradox which has proved to be favourable for Pakistan. Rajagopalan (2005: 47) argues that the stability-instability paradox has benefited Pakistani interests to walk on the edge of war. Due to this, the penalties of the stability-instability paradox have been borne disproportionately by India, as it has facilitated Pakistan's support for militancy across the Kashmir divide (Krepon 2003: 18). In view of this, Varun Sahni has cogently argued that the impact of the nuclearisation of South Asia on India and Pakistan has been asymmetric as regards their respective capabilities to use force against each other is concerned. While it has given unlimited freedom to Pakistan for using force against India, it has placed serious constraints on India to do the same against it. In this regard, the weaker State seems to have largely benefited by this strategic parity as it has gained greater confidence to follow an offensive policy against the stronger State, simultaneously restricting the availability of policy options and maneuverability for the stronger State to counter such ascendancy of the weaker State (Sahni 2007: 194).

These arguments attempt to indicate how disadvantageous for India the post-May 1998 strategic scenario of the subcontinent has been, mainly due to the decline in its capability to obtain a decisive military victory over its nuclear neighbour. This was clearly exemplified during the 2001-2002 crisis. India's inability to launch a conventional military strike even after mobilizing large number of troops along the border, due to sheer fear of inadvertent use of nuclear

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weapons, enabled Pakistan to resist the severe pressure exerted by India. Sahni has noted thus: although India supposedly has escalation dominance, but it has been unable to respond to Pakistan's asymmetric challenge by upping the ante (*Ibid*: 201). India's inability to make a decisive attempt at dislodging the terrorist-infrastructure across the LOC even after an animated public wrath in the aftermath of the 26/11 Mumbai ordeal seems to be yet another manifestation of the strategic balance that has been created between the two subcontinental adversaries and is symptomatic of the decline of India's hegemony in South Asia. It also reestablished to a considerable extent, the benefits of the stability-instability paradox for Pakistan.

The India Pakistan equations after their overt nuclearisation indicate that neither nuclear weapons' status has brought in a credible nuclear deterrence situation, nor the two countries have been successful in establishing a credible conventional deterrence. The book under review argues that once the problem of credibility is solved through repeated failures, deterrence becomes the mechanism through which security dilemma is solved (p: 220). This has not been the case in the Indian subcontinent. Both India and Pakistan have fought four overt wars and thrice in the 1980s and once during 2001-2002, they were at the threshold of conflict. But, despite the challenger's (Pakistan) motivations being made apparent and the defender's (India) capabilities demonstrated consistently, achievement of credible conventional deterrence has turned out to be an illusion. Besides, Pakistan has exhibited a continued success in exerting pressure on India's defence capacity by engaging in low intensity conflict. This it has done, by aiding non-State actors engaged in extremist activities against India and repeated ceasefire violations along the Line of Control. Hence, although nuclear weapons' status has been able till now to prevent catastrophic war in the subcontinent, but, it has not been able to restrict the enduring conflictual situation and stabilize deterrence and peace.

The conventional imbalance of capabilities favouring India has now been attenuated by the nuclear balance of capabilities and the balance of interests and the balance of resolve has prodigiously favoured Pakistan. The political will displayed by Pakistan to keep its stakes high in the conflict has overpowered India's defence capacity by tying down its potential to go beyond the threshold and restricting it from sending a costly message by a disproportionate response. This has led to the development of India's reputation as being irresolute and the subsequent breakdown of deterrence. Thus, India and Pakistan relations are imbricated in a complex deterrence environment wherein India has to face the double mimesis of challenge both by a State and a bunch of non-State organizations, fighting in tandem for the same cause. If Pakistan as a State has posed a challenge through direct military strategy, its subsidiary non-State agencies have used 'salami' tactics. Such a double edged challenge has resulted in India's inability to stabilize deterrence, either by diplomacy, or by force.

India, in this sense, has failed to teach Pakistan the benefits of deterrence and nudge it toward rationality. The evolutionary theory of deterrence is also unable to explain such a situation. According to it, the challengers behave irrationally in the initial stages. However, after a series of nasty deterrence encounters and after they have learnt about the defender's capability they start behaving rationally. When this happens, they are nudged toward rationality. Anyhow, this has not been the case with Pakistan. Rather, Pakistan's behaviour corroborates the position of those critiques of deterrence who draw from organization theory and cognitive psychology to argue that leaders are unable to make rational decisions and in this way, it may be stated that the challenger has defeated deterrence by acting emotionally and not rationally. Above all, India has also not been able to nudge Pakistan toward rationality, even by using irrational techniques. Due to this, the uncertainties of capability, reputation and will, imbued in the Indo-Pak dyadic context, still remain unresolved. In any case, the key argument of the book that even though the balance of interests and the balance of capability favour the defender, it failed to deter aggression , holds in the context of India Pakistan conflict. The longitudinal approach adopted by the book to study deterrence in the Middle East, can also be an apt tool for examining subcontinental scenario.

The Likelihood of Deterrence Success

The book finally argues that as a result of this study, a different perspective to the likelihood of deterrence success emerges and analysts and leaders alike will have a greater understanding of the phenomenon. They learn that deterrence works but that to observe how it works they will have to analyze it in larger conflict structures. Further, the study states that deterrence works against non-State actors or in cases in which the challengers and defenders are

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highly committed to challenge and defend. The author argues that the way to observe deterrence success is to look at the process through which deterrence becomes internalized. Learning does take place in conflict structures and if conflict does not beget conflict. The important element in decisive victories that create deterrence stability is not the military outcome, but the fact that the victors were able to undermine the challenger's legitimacy and strategy in the conflict. Further, the study also demonstrates that there is a way to reconcile deterrence and rationality (p: 244). The book in this sense can be a good guide to analyze the issue of deterrence in the context of India Pakistan rivalry. It is a significant contribution to the field of Security Studies. Its value lies in its revitalization of conventional discourse of Security Studies wherein the State is the key referent object. It also reestablishes the logic of political realism by locating the security problematique in the context of the State, dilemmas of its survival and the interface between political strategy and military capability for the protection of its cartographic identity.

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