Research Paper

Cite this article as: Fatemi Nejad, S. A. (2025). De-escalating the India-Pakistan Conflict in the Shadow of Nuclear Weapons: A 27-Year History. *Journal of World Sociopolitical Studies*, *9*(3), 519-558. https://doi.org/10.22059/wsps.2025.387716.1491

De-escalating the India-Pakistan Conflict in the Shadow of Nuclear Weapons: A 27-Year History*

Seyed Ahmad Fatemi Nejad[1]

1. Associate Professor of Political Sciences, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran (a.fatemi@um.ac.ir) 0000-0001-7112-1852

(Received: Dec. 27, 2024 Revised: May. 20, 2025 Accepted: Jun. 19, 2025)

Abstract

Recently, the India-Pakistan conflict has escalated after the Pahalgam terrorist attack. The Indo-Pakistani conflict has been one of the longest running issues in International Politics since World War II. The two countries' nuclear weapon tests in May 1998, as a turning point, have had a profound effect on the conflict. Since then, two views have emerged on the impact of these weapons on the conflict. On the one hand, the followers of the optimistic view have emphasized the stabilizing nature of nuclear weapons, and on the other hand, those who are known for their pessimistic approach have spoken of the possibility of an escalation of the Indo-Pakistani conflict. The purpose of this article is to investigate the consequences, whether positive or negative, of possessing nuclear weapons on India and Pakistan's bilateral conflict; more precisely, the article focuses on answering the following question: What role have nuclear weapons played in de-escalating the India-Pakistan conflict? An investigation of the events of the last 27 years in India-Pakistan relations, especially its critical points, reveals that nuclear weapons have had an impact on the New Delhi-Islamabad conflict by deterrence and compellence. Adopting a moderate approach (between optimists and pessimists), an attempt has been made to examine the de-escalation of tensions between India and Pakistan over the past 27 years in the shadow of nuclear weapons.

Keywords: Compellence, De-escalation, Deterrence, India-Pakistan Conflict, Nuclear Weapons

---

* The author has no affiliation with any organization with a direct or indirect financial interest in the subject matter discussed in this manuscript.

Journal of **World Sociopolitical Studies**| Vol. 9| No. 3| Summer 2025| pp. 519-558
Web Page: https://wsps.ut.ac.ir//Email: wsps@ut.ac.ir
eISSN: 2588-3127 PrintISSN: 2588-3119

Journal of WORLD SOCIOPOLITICAL STUDIES | Vol. 9 | No. 3 | Summer 2025

1. Introduction

Recently, India and Pakistan have entered a new round of tensions following a terrorist attack in Kashmir in April 2025. The Indo-Pakistani conflict is one of the most enduring modern international conflicts that has affected the foreign policy of the two states, the regional security, and international politics. In addition to colonialism and colonial policies, this conflict stems from several factors, the most important of which are the following. One of the causes of this conflict goes back to the old violence between Hindus and Muslims (Betts, 1979, p. 1059), who may not even have had a clear idea of territorial independence (Kapur, 2011, p. 65). The second factor in the Indo-Pakistani conflict stems from identity concerns, which have also become ontological as tensions between them continue (Harshe, 2005, p. 51; Thakur, 2011, p. 200; Nasr, 2005, p. 197). That is, the greater the conflict between the two sides, the stronger their identity. The third factor in this conflict is rooted in Islamabad's baseless fear of India, trying to dominate Pakistan and the formation of 'Hindu Rashtra' (Vohra, 1998, p. 69), and New Delhi's fear of Pakistan and its proxy forces for creating insecurity in India (Kapur, 2008, p. 73; Oren, 1994, p. 202; Behuria, 2009, p. 435). Territorial disputes, including over Kashmir, are the fourth cause of conflict between India and Pakistan (Ganguly, 1995a, pp. 169-70; Harshe, 2005, p. 52; Ganguly, 2001, p. 4; Anderson, 2006, p. 292; Zinkin, 1987, p. 37; Kapur, 2010, p. 106; Ganguly & Kraig, 2005, pp. 312-13). The fifth cause of the India-Pakistan conflict is related to their relationship with the great powers and the structure of the balance of power at regional and global levels (Singh, 2011, pp. 69-70; Kumar, 2010, p. 40; Shrivastava, 1975, p. 23; Kapur & Ganguly, 2007, p. 644; Ayoob, 1982, p. 197). However, the Indo-Pakistani

conflict, which was influenced by these factors, among others, has entered a new phase since the 1998 nuclear weapons tests.

Today, twenty-seven years after the nuclear weapons tests of India and Pakistan, the effects of these weapons on the relations between the two states have been investigated in many studies. This does not mean that the role of other variables in the quality of India-Pakistan relations has not been considered, and in numerous researches, the effect of bilateral dialogues (Wojczewski, 2014), psycho-cultural factors (Kadir, 2019) and interpersonal emotional variables (Kadir, 2020) have been discussed. However, due to the limited effect of the mentioned variables, the focus here is on the role of nuclear weapons. In this regard, some researchers, relying on the logic of deterrence, believe that nuclear weapons have brought stability and peace to India-Pakistan relations (Waltz, 2003; Basrur, 2005, 2011; Hagerty, 2009). Accordingly, nuclear weapons have reduced the risk of full-scale war in the region and thus contributed to strategic stability (Ganguly, 2008, p. 46). In comparison, other observers believe that nuclear weapons have, on the one hand, increased the likelihood of unforeseen dangerous events (Kraig, 1999; Sagan, 2003, 2004) and, even, encouraged Pakistan to be at enmity with India (Kapur, 2008, 2009a). More importantly, policies that seek to maximize strategic stability in South Asia may make India-Pakistan nuclear relations more secure, but they dramatically increase the likelihood of low-level conflicts (Kapur, 2005, p. 127). That is, nuclear weapons have not only failed to bring security and peace to India-Pakistan relations, but have also intensified their conflict. In this article, an approach between these two ends of the spectrum is adopted. Therefore, this article seeks to answer the following question: what role have nuclear weapons played in de-escalating the India-Pakistan conflict?

Journal of WORLD SOCIOPOLITICAL STUDIES | Vol. 9 | No. 3 | Summer 2025

The main argument here is that nuclear weapons have contributed to de-escalate tensions between India and Pakistan through deterrence and compellence. This helps to move beyond the hegemony of the straitjacket of deterrence in explaining the function of nuclear weapons for the India-Pakistan conflict. Considering deterrence and compellence together leads to see the active role of coercive diplomacy and blackmail, which fall under compellence, alongside the passive consequences of deterrence. De-escalation is not defined here as detente; Rather, it means preventing escalation of tensions to the point of full-scale war. That is, there are still tensions and crises, but they do not lead to a full-scale war and, in the next stage, a nuclear one. The method for examining this idea is a functional explanation. Functional explanation is a causal explanation that elucidates why a phenomenon exists by showing the function of a structure. In this regard, the post-1998 India-Pakistan conflict environment is seen as a structure that has been affected by the existence of nuclear weapons, both as a deterrent and as a compelling factor. The function of this structure is examined in particular during five crucial events, discussed below:

a) The 1999 Kargil War: the first crisis that occurred after Indian and Pakistani nuclear weapon tests in their bilateral relations was the Kargil War. In the war, India claimed that Pakistan-supported forces have participated in anti-Indian operations in Kashmir, while Pakistan replied that these forces were emancipator militants who fought to emancipate Indian-controlled Kashmir. Although objective evidences suggest that aggression of Pakistan-supported militants was the main factor in this tension, it seems that Indian concerns from the intensification of the tension prevented her intense reaction. This conflict was the first serious test of nuclear

deterrence in the Indo-Pakistani rivalry. Moreover, the two actors restructured their military forces after the Kargil crisis.

b) The 2001-2002 standoff: The terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001 led to a crisis which, according to Kapur (2008, p. 80), was the greatest military 'standoff' between India and Pakistan. The second phase of the 2001-2002 standoff began after the May 14, 2002 attacks on the Indian military base at Kaluchak near Jammu (Ganguly & Kraig, 2005).

c) The 2008 disputes: One of the major problems in the Indo-Pakistani bilateral relations occurred when terrorist militants targeted India's economic centers in November 2008. On November 26, 2008, gunmen targeted civilians in several parts of Mumbai, including the Taj Mahal Hotel, the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, the Oberoi Trident Hotel, the Leopold Café, the Cama Hospital, the Nariman House Jewish Center, the Metro Cinema, where approximately 160 people were killed (Rath, 2010, p. 361). Ajmal Kasab, as the only surviving attacker, confessed to being a member of Lashkar-e-Taiba (Worth, 2008); which showed that these attacks are supported by Pakistan. The crisis prompted India and Pakistan to once again move their troops to intimidate the other side. Pakistan began reducing its forces from the border with Afghanistan and moving them near the India-Pakistan border in Kashmir and Lahore (Oppel et al., 2008). India had also deployed large numbers of troops in Kashmir since the August riots and was ready for a military confrontation.

d) The 2016-2018 border skirmishes: The clashes occurred mainly around the Line of Control after the Indian strikes against Azad Jammu and Kashmir. New Delhi claimed that the attack has been on the retaliation of militant operation on Indian Army base in

Journal of WORLD SOCIOPOLITICAL STUDIES | Vol. 9 | No. 3 | Summer 2025

Uri. During the skirmishes that happened, several Indian and Pakistani soldiers were killed and injured. The important point in these clashes is that the operation of each of these two countries is quickly retaliated by the opposite side; but none of them goes to the exacerbation of the conflict.

e) The 2019 standoff: The latest crisis to be examined here is the 2019 India–Pakistan standoff. The crisis began after the Pulwama attack in February 2019, in which a suicide attack by a Muslim militant killed 40 Indian police officers. The incident sparked border clashes and airstrikes between India and Pakistan, pushing the two countries to the threshold of full-scale war. In this crisis, the air force of the two was the most important coercive factor: on the one hand, India reacted strongly to the militant suicide operation by targeting the Jaish-e-Mohammed base in Balakot. On the other hand, Pakistan managed to shoot down an Indian fighter and capture the pilot.

To evaluate and validate the above-mentioned argument, a theoretical framework on nuclear proliferation and deterrence is first proposed. The quality of deterrence in the Indo-Pakistani conflict over the last quarter of a century is then examined. Third, an attempt has been made to show that nuclear weapons have played a role in controlling tensions between India and Pakistan, not only through deterrence, but also through compellence. Finally, the contents of the article are summarized and the path of the effect of nuclear weapons on de-escalation is reviewed.

2. Proliferation, Deterrence and Beyond

Nuclear proliferation is the process by which countries approach the inputs of acquiring an atomic bomb. Waltz (2003, p. 3)

distinguishes between 'proliferation' and 'spread'. He defines the former as vertical proliferation by nuclear powers, and the latter as the horizontal spread around the world. Although the distinction between vertical and horizontal proliferation is accepted (Gartzke & Kroenig, 2009, p. 153), others do not follow Waltz's lexical distinction between 'proliferation' and 'spread' and generally refer to both as proliferation (see Hagerty, 2012; Sagan, 2003; Gartzke & Kroenig, 2009; Asal & Beardsley, 2007; Horowitz, 2009; Basrur & Kartik, 2011; Singh & Way, 2004; Quackenbush, 2011). However, the main issue discussed in this article is what are the consequences of nuclear proliferation for de-escalation and international peace. In this regard, a distinction can be made between the two approaches adopted in this study.

The first approach follows the logic of non-proliferation and considers the proliferation of nuclear weapons to be very dangerous (Sagan, 2003; Asal & Beardsley, 2007, pp. 139-42; Gartzke & Jo, 2009, p. 209). In contrast, the second approach relies on the logic of deterrence and shows that the proliferation of nuclear weapons leads to peace (Berkowitz, 1985, p. 115; Waltz, 1990, 2003; Basrur & Kartik, 2011, p. 188). The controversy between the two views, known as pessimists and optimists about nuclear warheads respectively, stems in part from differences in their theoretical framework. Optimists ignore the psychological and informational aspects of proliferation, and pessimists do not distinguish between accidental and regular consequences (Gartzke & Jo, 2009, p. 213). In this article, I choose the optimistic approach from the two perspectives above, because given the experience of India and Pakistan, as well as that of other states, it cannot be denied that enemies with nuclear weapons are less likely to fight a particular issue than enemies without them (Gartzke & Jo, 2009, p. 221). In

Journal of WORLD SOCIOPOLITICAL STUDIES | Vol. 9 | No. 3 | Summer 2025

other words, as Waltz argues, if the pessimists were right, nuclear deterrence would have failed again and again (Sagan & Waltz, 2003, pp. 115-16).

As optimistic arguments for nuclear weapons show, the factor that makes these weapons peaceful is deterrence. Deterrence means using a direct or indirect threat from one side to persuade the other to maintain the status quo (Quackenbush, 2011, p. 741). In other words, deterrence is essentially an attempt by one side to deter the other from attacking; This is done by showing off the cost of the invasion (Segal et al., 1988, p. 13). If the warnings of the first party are clear, but in any case the second party launches an attack, deterrence has failed. In short, it is not possible to say with certainty when deterrence worked, but one can clearly state when it failed (Brown & Arnold, 2010, p. 298). Deterrence can be categorized in several ways: unilateral vs reciprocal deterrence, depending on the strength of the actors involved (Berejikian, 2002, pp. 174-78; Quackenbush, 2011, pp. 749-52); General vs immediate deterrence, given the severity of the attack (Huth et al., 1993, p. 610; Quackenbush, 2010, p. 61); Conventional vs nuclear deterrence, based on the weapons available to the actors involved (De Santana, 2011, pp. 7-8; Waltz, 2003, pp. 6–9; Mearsheimer, 1990, p. 19).

The most important issue regarding this matter is whether the deterrent function of nuclear weapons in developing states is different from that in developed ones. In response to this question, two types of negative and positive strategies could be undertaken: I must first explain why developing countries do not differ from developed ones in the field of nuclear deterrence, and then, I need to show how these countries could achieve this. As for the negative strategy, it should be noted that all nuclear rivalries follow a

common pattern (Basrur, 2011, pp. 12-13), the failure of nuclear deterrence does not necessarily mean Armageddon (Waltz, 1990, pp. 731-33), and in international relations there is no law more ironic than the nuclear-weapons states do not fight with each other (Hagerty, 1998, p. 184). In terms of positive strategy, a distinction must be made between the two nuclear periods through which the new nuclear-weapon states have gone: Periods of nuclear opacity and transparency. During the period of nuclear ambiguity, one could follow the logic of 'existential deterrence' that McGeorge Bundy founded (Hagerty, 1998, pp. 45-52). Then, for the era of nuclear transparency in developing countries, it is possible to follow the 'minimal deterrence' approach that has been effective in practice (Brown & Arnold, 2010, p. 300).

Finally, it should be noted that nuclear weapons in conflict between nuclear rivals are effective not only through deterrence, but also through compellence. Compellence means using any coercive mechanism to prevent the conflict from escalating into war. Deterrence and compellence differ on several counts: initiative, time scale and the nature of demands (Freedman & Raghavan, 2008, p. 218). The difference between deterrence and compellence is that in the former the enemy must be persuaded not to do anything, but in the latter the enemy is forced to do something (Freedman, 2003, p. 197). In other words, the enemy in compellence not only deters from further aggression, but must openly surrender to the coercer. (Ganguly & Kraig, 2005, p. 294). A comparison of deterrence and compellence shows that there is a binary distinction between the two, but both are far from war (see table 1). In the next parts, an attempt will be made to apply this conceptual framework to the Indo-Pakistani conflict.

Journal of WORLD SOCIOPOLITICAL STUDIES | Vol. 9 | No. 3 | Summer 2025

Table 1. Differences Between Deterrence and Compellence

	Target	Nature of demands	Tactics
Deterrence	Maintain status quo	Defensive	First strike
			Second strike
Compellence	Change status quo	Offensive	Coercive diplomacy
			Blackmail

Source: Author

3. Deterrence and India-Pakistan De-escalation

While treaties such as the NPT have increased proliferation costs and reduced the likelihood of proliferation in recent decades (Diehl & Moltz, 2002, p. 50), India and Pakistan have not acceded to the treaty. This led them to deviate altogether from the norms, rules, and regulations that underlie the international non-proliferation regime (Hagerty, 2012, p. 219), and finally to test nuclear weapons in May 1998. Today it is not possible to be sure whether nuclear weapons are needed for a military balance between the great powers (Diehl & Moltz, 2002, p. 28), but this seems to be the case for India and Pakistan. As Waltz argues, the question raised about India and Pakistan's nuclear weapons tests is not whether these weapons should have been tested or not, but whether the security of these two states forced them to do so (Sagan & Waltz, 2003, p. 111). This is a significantly important issue that will be studied in this section, following the logic of deterrence.

Previously, the arms dimension of the Indo-Pakistani conflict was directly related to their relationship with the great powers (Sanjian, 1998, 1999). This equation was shattered even by India and Pakistan's opaque achievement of nuclear capability in 1974

and 1987 (Beardsley & Asal, 2009, p. 252), and then, their conflict was more or less influenced by the logic of nuclear deterrence. Thus, during the 1980s and 1990s, a 'non-weaponized deterrence' (Perkovich, 2002) was established in Indo-Pakistani relations, and after 1998, a credible nuclear deterrence prevailed. The importance of nuclear deterrence in the Indo-Pakistani conflict is such that some believe that after the Cold War, this concept is only valid for small nuclear rivals such as India and Pakistan, not for great powers (Diehl & Moltz, 2002, p. 31).

Here, an attempt will be made to clarify the role of nuclear deterrence in the Indo-Pakistani conflict by examining the doctrines of the two separately. Nuclear doctrines of countries in a general category can be divided into two types: first-use and non-first-use doctrines. According to the first-use doctrine, the nuclear-weapon state uses these weapons when its vital interests are at stake. As will be discussed below, available reports show that Pakistan's nuclear doctrine fits into this framework. This doctrine, which is usually used by the weaker actor in terms of conventional military power, is also related to compellence in addition to deterrence. But according to the no-first-use doctrine, the nuclear-weapon state will not be the first actor to use these weapons. Relying on this doctrine requires stronger conventional forces. The effectiveness of this doctrine goes back to the deterrent function of nuclear weapons, to which India has declared its commitment. To understand the impact of nuclear deterrence, the nuclear doctrines of India and Pakistan are examined separately below.

4. Indian Nuclear Doctrine

India's nuclear doctrine is based on a form of credible minimum

Journal of WORLD SOCIOPOLITICAL STUDIES | Vol. 9 | No. 3 | Summer 2025

deterrence, and in accordance with this policy, India has adopted a no-first-use policy (Lo, 2003, p. 405). Of course, India's no-first-use policy has always been controversial and debated. India's nuclear doctrine allows the country to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states allied with nuclear weapon ones. Critics believe that this is a deviation from the no-first-use policy (Singh, 2011, p. 65). In addition, India's nuclear weapons are said to be aimed at deterring chemical and biological attacks by other state actors in addition to nuclear deterrence. All these indicate the broad objectives of India's nuclear weapons and some ambiguity in its nuclear doctrine. To clarify the discussion, the formation process of this doctrine is evaluated below.

After 1971, the balance of power in South Asia was in India's favor. From New Delhi's point of view, two factors could have changed this: Pakistan achieves nuclear weapons capability and the granting of a military base to China or the United States by Islamabad (Makeig, 1987, p. 279). Both of the above threats became *somewhat* practical in the post-1970s. On the one hand, Pakistan came closer to China and the United States, especially during the Cold War, and on the other hand, Islamabad gained the capability to build nuclear weapons in the late 1980s. Therefore, New Delhi sought to develop a nuclear doctrine and resort to deterrence. The foundations of India's nuclear doctrine are based on a series of unilateral plans and initiatives that have changed over time and should be reviewed annually in light of the region's rapid change (Singh, 2011, pp. 59-73).

India has always rejected the intervention of other states in its nuclear agenda (Commuri, 2009, pp. 8-17). Furthermore, as noted above, it did not accede to the NPT (Cheema, 2010, p. 81) because of unequal security guarantees, imbalances between nuclear and

non-nuclear weapon states, and non-obligation of nuclear powers to disarm (Lo, 2003, p. 401). In 1998, the Vajpayee administration abandoned India's 'policy of nuclear restraint' and began conducting nuclear weapon tests. Numerous reasons have been cited for this behavior, including showing the BJP government's power to the Indian masses, strengthening BJP ties with its parliamentary opponents, promoting India's status in the international system, and playing the role of some influential Indian scientists (Ganguly, 1999, pp. 148-49).

Immediately after the May 1998 nuclear weapon tests, the Vajpayee administration committed itself to the no-first-use position by emphasizing the doctrine of "credible minimum deterrence" (Basrur, 2001, p. 188). By 1999, India had drafted a plan as a nuclear doctrine, according to which India only needed minimal deterrence and a no-first-use position (Ghose, 2009, p. 434). India then stated that its nuclear weapons were 'only' aimed at deterring Chinese or Pakistani nuclear attacks, and that New Delhi would never be the first country to use nuclear weapons in conflict (Hagerty, 2012, p. 222). Both the size and structure of India's nuclear program are consistent with the aim of creating simultaneous deterrence against China and Pakistan (Davies, 2004, p. 64). According to structural realism, too, India's nuclear program makes sense primarily in the face of the nuclear threats posed by China and Pakistan (Das, 2010, p. 148). It is therefore argued that the fundamental purpose of the country's nuclear weapons is to deter others from using them or threatening to use them against India (Hagerty, 2012, p. 222).

The main features of the nuclear doctrine of the Vajpayee government included no-use of nuclear weapons against nuclear-free states, unilateral moratorium for nuclear weapon tests, credible

minimum deterrence, and a commitment to global disarmament (Jain, 2010, p. 59). But India's nuclear doctrine has been revised after confronting major crises with Pakistan. After the Kargil War, the fundamentals of India's nuclear doctrine shifted to disarmament, right of self-defense, no-first-use strategy, and a valid minimal deterrence. Likewise, India's nuclear doctrine underwent a series of reforms after the 2001-2002 deadlock.

The most important components of India's nuclear doctrine after the 2001-2002 deadlock were the production and stockpiling of credible deterrent weapons, the adoption of a no-first-use policy, strong first-strike retaliation, the exclusivity of decision-making on nuclear retaliation to the civilian political leadership, prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons against states that do not have these weapons, reserving India's right to use the nuclear option in dealing with a large-scale chemical or biological attack against Indian forces, continuing strict control over the export of nuclear materials and technologies, and a lasting commitment to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world through universal non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament (Singh, 2011, pp. 61-62). This was partly in order to emphasize India’s nuclear forces and the credibility of its “second strike nuclear capability”, and partly to convey its already much-delayed formal nuclear doctrine and assuage the growing concerns of the international community (Roy-Chaudhury, 2009, p. 408). Further, issues such as the monopoly of political leaders to decide on a nuclear military confrontation, and the recognition of New Delhi's right to use the nuclear option to counter a widespread chemical or biological aggression are significant. Thus, these positions were formulated in an official document in January 2003 by the Indian government and announced as India's nuclear doctrine. This document both confirmed the 1999 draft and

officially announced new items (Pant, 2007, p. 238). As Kazi (2014, p. 46) states, "unlike its nuclear neighbors, India articulates a well-written official document underlining its nuclear posture" (Kazi, 2014, p. 46).

As a result, the official nuclear doctrine of India 'contemplates the use of nuclear weapons in retaliation for attacks with chemical and biological weapons (Sundaram & Ramana, 2018, p. 155). Moreover, India's doctrine may have the flexibility to allow for "pre-emptive counterforce strikes" designed to neutralize "Pakistan's nuclear arsenal" before Islamabad could retaliate. In addition to a larger nuclear arsenal, India would need to develop more accurate missiles and effective tracking of Pakistani systems to technologically carry out a pre-emptive counterforce strike (Sanders-Zakre & Davenport, 2017).

Overall, India now has a credible deterrence to its enemies. But in the case of Pakistan, few elements remain to be considered, as they increase the threats facing India. First, the focus of Pakistan's military program is enmity with India; Second, the current instability in Pakistan runs the risk of the irrational elements of the country gaining control of its nuclear capability; Third, despite the civilian rule in Islamabad, the country's army has the upper hand over nuclear weapons; And fourth, nuclear weapons may be used as a shield against Pakistan's quasi-conventional attacks on India (Ghose, 2009, p. 437). The variables and concerns reviewed above, especially the terrorist attacks suspected to be supported by Pakistan, intentionally or unintentionally affect the deterrent or compelling function of India's nuclear weapons. It is true that India's nuclear weapons are only aimed at deterring nuclear as well as chemical and biological attacks by other states, but Pakistan has challenged this intention. Since proxy warfare mostly takes the

Journal of WORLD SOCIOPOLITICAL STUDIES | Vol. 9 | No. 3 | Summer 2025

game out of states' responsibility, and nuclear deterrence works in a rational state-centric situation, this has happened regardless of the intent of India's nuclear doctrine. Based on this background, Pakistan's nuclear doctrine will be discussed below.

5. Pakistan's Nuclear Doctrine

Pakistan, similar to India, pursued a policy of opacity before the 1998 nuclear weapon tests (Chakma, 2011a, p. 46). Islamabad leaders have been sensitive to India's nuclear program, closely monitoring it since the mid-1960s. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the then Foreign Minister of the country, declared in 1965 that if India acquired a nuclear weapon, Pakistan should acquire it as well (Cheema, 2010, p. 148). Thus, Pakistan's nuclear weapons program is closely related to its tense relations with India (Ahmed, 2000, p. 782). Pakistan has always used two inferential rules to gauge India's hostile intentions: The more hostile the past behavior of India, the more aggressive its future intentions, and the weaker India, the more deliberate its aggressive behavior (Oren, 1994, p. 195). While this is Pakistan's perception, historical record shows that Islamabad has been more effective in escalating the Indo-Pakistan conflict through direct or proxy procedures.

Pakistan sees its only way to confront India in nuclear parity with the country as India has often rejected a non-aggression pact with Pakistan (Commuri, 2009, p. 177). In addition, Pakistan's decision to develop nuclear weapons stemmed from several fundamental factors: Reaction to the defeat and disintegration of Pakistan in the 1971 war, concerns of Islamabad over India's nuclear activity, the importance of nuclear weapons in the eyes of Islamabad elites as the only way to guarantee Pakistan's national

survival in the face of conventional and nuclear threats from India (Chakma, 2011a, p. 42), and the use of these weapons as a means of strengthening the bargaining position of Islamabad in the regional arena towards India (Ahmed, 2000, p. 783). If the first three factors are considered in the framework of deterrence, the latter case is mostly compatible with compellence.

Although some believe that Pakistan lacks an official nuclear doctrine (Chakma, 2011b, p. 75; Chakma, 2011a, p. 39), its approach may seem realistic (Das, 2010, p. 149). After the 1998 nuclear weapon tests, Pakistan introduced itself as a nuclear power and replaced the policy of ambiguity with the position of minimal nuclear deterrence (Chakma, 2011a, p. 46). Pakistan's minimalist approach to its nuclear program shows that it is merely seeking a 'meaningful deterrent' to India (Davies, 2004, p. 64). Despite the resemblance of Islamabad to New Delhi in its choice of doctrine based on minimal deterrence, Pakistan, unlike India, rejects the policy of no first use. Islamabad leaders believe that any state's efforts to acquire nuclear weapons show that it will use them under certain conditions (Lo, 2003, p. 406). Therefore, instead of the no-first-use approach, they emphasize the nuclear first-use principle. During the Kashmir crisis in the 1990s, Pakistan allegedly prepared F-16 fighter jets for a nuclear confrontation with a possible Indian invasion of Kashmir (Geller, 2003). After the nuclear weapons test in May 1998, Nawaz Sharif explicitly acknowledged the policy of first use (Chakma, 2011b, p. 77). In another example, General Khalid Kidwai, then director general of the Strategic Plans Division, stated that if India threatened Pakistan's entity as a state, Islamabad would use nuclear weapons (Hagerty, 2012, pp. 223-24).

According to Pakistan's policy of first use, the conditions of Islamabad for the use of nuclear weapons become important.

Journal of WORLD SOCIOPOLITICAL STUDIES | Vol. 9 | No. 3 | Summer 2025

Among the main conditions that have been raised by some Pakistani officials and commanders are the infiltration of Indian forces to the other side of the Line of Control, the imminent capture of one of the important cities of Pakistan such as Lahore or Sialkot, the destruction of the conventional armed forces of Pakistan, attacking any of Pakistan's strategic targets such as dams or nuclear facilities including Tarbela, Mangla, Kahuta, Chashma, etc., exerting pressure or encircling Pakistan in such a way as to prevent the continuous transfer of vital supplies, and Indian forces crossing the Line of Control to the extent that it threatens Pakistan's control over Azad Kashmir (Chakma, 2011b, p. 79). Thus, Pakistan's main purpose for its nuclear weapons is to simultaneously deter nuclear and conventional attacks from its larger neighbor, India.

Finally, it is noteworthy that despite Islamabad's concerns about New Delhi's territorial intentions, India was not interested in invading Pakistan before Islamabad gained nuclear capability (Marwah, 1981, p. 179). This situation changed after 1998, and especially during the Kargil Crisis, New Delhi sought to disrupt the status quo (Basrur, 2010, p. 117), but Pakistan's nuclear weapons did not allow it. The following section examines the impact of the minimal deterrence doctrines of India and Pakistan, together with their different strategies on no first use/first use of nuclear weapons, on the peaceful function of these weapons.

6. Nuclear Deterrence

After explaining the nuclear doctrines of India and Pakistan, the question arises as to whether the two countries' nuclear weapons and their doctrines have been deterrent. While some nuclear pessimists, such as Kapur (2009b, p. 400), believed that ‘nuclear

weapons have inspired strategic developments that will make the outbreak and rapid escalation of regional crises more likely in the future', twenty-seven years after the Indo-Pakistani nuclear weapon tests, it seems that instead of escalating the conflict between them, there has been a de-escalation based on deterrence. When it comes to deterrence in the India-Pakistan conflict, there are at least three characteristics to consider:

(a) Minimal deterrence: Minimal deterrence is somewhat different from nuclear deterrence, for example during the Cold War between the United States and the former Soviet Union, which is based on credible first and second strike capabilities. India has explicitly based its doctrine on minimal deterrence or, more accurately, 'reliable minimum deterrence'. Pakistan has practically followed the same doctrine over the past 27 years, given its nuclear weapons capability and behavior. Thus, for various reasons, it can be argued that India-Pakistan relations in the shadow of nuclear weapons have been based on a minimal deterrence: First, the nuclear doctrine of the two was not based on a tangible threat to retaliation, and as a result, the two countries kept their weapons 'unassembled'. Second, while the major nuclear powers have conducted extensive nuclear weapon tests to ensure the validity of their weapons, India and Pakistan have contented themselves with fewer tests. Third, unlike other nuclear rivals, India and Pakistan have sought from the outset to negotiate and agree on nuclear stability (Basrur, 2011, pp. 13-14). This minimalist approach has overshadowed the nuclear deterrence between India and Pakistan throughout the last quarter of the century.

(b) Reciprocal deterrence: As discussed above, deterrence can be unilateral or reciprocal. Mutual deterrence occurs when both actors are in the same situation and seek to maintain the status quo.

Journal of WORLD SOCIOPOLITICAL STUDIES | Vol. 9 | No. 3 | Summer 2025

This type of deterrence is more likely to continue in a win-win game than a lose-lose game (Berejikian, 2002, pp. 174-78). Therefore, the question is whether India and Pakistan have been in a similar situation in terms of military nuclear power. Have these countries sought to maintain the status quo over the years? The 1971 war and its aftermath had led many security analysts and military strategists to conclude that India's military superiority in South Asia is undeniable. But the situation has slightly changed since the May 1998 nuclear weapons test. That is, although India is still in a better position in terms of conventional and nuclear military power, Pakistan also has a painful response capability. It should be noted that Pakistan's capability toward India's threats was related to its nuclear weapons and Islamabad's unconventional practices, such as its suspected support for extremist and terrorist militias. This situation seems to have created a relative reciprocal deterrence and prevented the escalation of tensions and crises between the two countries.

(c) General deterrence vs immediate deterrence: The general deterrence is based on the capabilities and continuous efforts of both parties to the conflict in the long run, but the immediate deterrence refers to a specific crisis in the short term. The effectiveness of deterrence in Indo-Pakistani conflict has been present not only since their apparent nuclear weapons tests in 1998, but also before. Thus, since the mid-1980s, despite serious provocations, neither India nor Pakistan has been ready for a full-scale conventional war. This precaution was partly due to the possibility of its escalation to the nuclear level (Ganguly, 1995b, p. 326). If one looks at the relations between India and Pakistan in the last twenty-seven years, he/she can say that both types of deterrence (general and immediate) has existed, since on the one

hand, throughout the period under review, a general nuclear deterrence dominated their relations and caused them to behave cautiously, and on the other hand, in times of crisis, a nuclear immediate deterrence is visible, which is especially prominent in the Kargil War and the 2001-2002 standoff.

According to Falarti & Abbas (2020, p. 193), "the Kargil War was the first and last major battle between nuclear-capable Pakistan and India". Regarding the role of nuclear weapons in the Kargil War, two optimistic and pessimistic approaches can be distinguished, which are in debate. This debate has two dimensions: First, was the Kargil crisis a war or not? (Beardsley & Asal, 2009, p. 252); Second, was the end of the war due to nuclear deterrence or not? Optimists do not see this crisis as war and believe that nuclear deterrence has prevented war (Sagan & Waltz, 2003; Hagerty, 2009; Ganguly, 2008), but pessimists see it as war and highlight the role of other factors in concluding it (Sagan & Waltz, 2003; Kapur, 2008). Despite this disagreement, the followers of the above two approaches more or less adjusted their analysis of the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons after the Kargil War. According to Waltz, for example, the Kargil War showed that deterrence does not definitively prevent conflict, but it does limit violence. On the other hand, Sagan acknowledged that the presence of nuclear weapons made India and Pakistan cautious in using conventional weapons in the War (Hagerty, 2009, p. 112). As an intermediate analysis, it could be said that during the Kargil War, Pakistan's nuclear weapons provoked a reactionary action - not a massive aggression like the one in 1965 - in New Delhi, and even when India actually entered the war, it acted in a rather restrained manner (Commuri, 2009, p. 167).

Another crisis in the Indo-Pakistani conflict after 1998, in which

nuclear weapons played a role in de-escalation, is the 2001-2002 standoff. This crisis was similar to the Berlin Crisis and the Cuban Missile Crisis, and their common point is in managing tensions between nuclear rivals (Davis, 2011, p. 8). Nuclear weapons appear to be particularly effective in the second phase of the crisis and have prevented escalation of tensions (Kumar, 2010; Kapur, 2008; Swami, 2009). The second phase of the 2001-2002 crisis, which began with pro-Pakistani militants attacking Kaluchak military station, pushed the two countries to the brink of a full-scale war. But the nuclear weapons of the two sides caused an immediate deterrence.

During the other three crises in India-Pakistan relations in the last twenty-seven years, namely the 2008 disputes, the 2016-2018 border skirmishes, and the 2019 standoff, the intensity of the conflict between the two countries has been less. While nuclear weapons have continued to play a role as a general deterrent since the 2001-2002 crisis, their role as an immediate deterrent during the recent three crises cannot be said with certainty. This is partly because the recent three crises in Iino-Pakistani conflict have not been as severe as those of the Kargil War and the 2001-2002 standoff.

In addition, a review of credible news and statements by the leaders of India and Pakistan reveals that the two countries have gradually become more experienced as nuclear rivals and have less reference to their nuclear deterrent power in the day-to-day crises of their bilateral conflict. That is, India and Pakistan have experienced intense tensions during the recent triple crisis of 2008 disputes, the 2016-2018 border skirmishes, and the 2019 standoff, but these crises have not been raised as an issue of immediate deterrence.

Lastly, given the approaches to nuclear deterrence on the one hand, and the experience of the Indo-Pakistani conflict over the past twenty-seven years on the other, it seems that nuclear proliferation has contributed to de-escalate the conflict between the two countries. Due to the course of the Indo-Pakistani conflict and the evolution of their nuclear capability, it could be concluded that an existential deterrence has prevailed in their relations since the early 1980s. Over time, the same situation has been explicitly or implicitly recognized as a minimal deterrence in the nuclear doctrines of the two countries. Thus, when looking at the Indo-Pakistani conflict from the perspective of nuclear deterrence over the last twenty-seven years, there is a general deterrence throughout the period in question and an immediate deterrence during the Kargil War and the 2001-2002 stalemate. It should be noted, however, that the effectiveness of nuclear weapons in de-escalating tensions between India and Pakistan has been effective not only through deterrence, but also through compellence, which is explained in the following section.

7. Along with Deterrence: Compellence and India-Pakistan De-escalation

Despite the relative transparency of the nuclear doctrines of India and Pakistan, and the fact that the two countries did not enter the war after 1998, there are differing views on whether or not nuclear deterrence has been achieved in South Asia. In this regard, three approaches are distinguished:

a) The optimistic approach to the effectiveness of nuclear deterrence, referring to the crises in Indo-Pakistani relations after the 1998 nuclear weapon tests and the non-escalation of these

Journal of WORLD SOCIOPOLITICAL STUDIES | Vol. 9 | No. 3 | Summer 2025

crises to the level of conventional or nuclear war (Ganguly & Kraig, 2005; Hagerty, 2012; Beardsley & Asal, 2009; Ganguly & Hagerty, 2005; Hagerty, 2009).

b) The pessimistic approach that does not rule out the possibility of a war between the two nuclear powers in South Asia by highlighting Kargil's limited war and other conflicts such as the 2001-2002 standoff, the 2008 disputes, the 2016-2018 border skirmishes, and the 2019 standoff (for example, see Kapur, 2008; Carranza, 2009; Kapur, 2005; Lo, 2003).

c) Thinkers who take an intermediate approach and believe in a minimal deterrence and paradox of stability/instability in the region (Basrur, 2011).

In the following lines, the compelling effect of nuclear weapons in preventing the escalation of the conflict will be discussed: What sets the South Asian strategic environment apart from similar examples is the path of compellence that India and Pakistan have repeatedly taken; this refers to using any coercive means to prevent the conflict from escalating into war. As discussed above, compellence causes the enemy to surrender and thus compromise. Deterrence and compellence, respectively, involve inaction and action in the face of threats (Schaub, 2004, p. 389). When one looks at the behavior of India and Pakistan towards each other, he/she sees that both have more or less used compellence in the shadow of nuclear weapons. India and Pakistan, for example, tried to coerce and change each other's policies during the 1999 and 2001-2 crises (Basrur, 2010, p. 119).

However, when it comes to the duality of deterrence and compellence, India's behavior in the context of deterrence and Pakistan's behavior in terms of deterrence and compellence are

mainly explained. In other words, nuclear weapons have both a deterrent and a coercive function for Pakistan, but only a deterrent one for India. That is why India has much more military power than Pakistan and does not need nuclear power to force it. More importantly, deterrence is mainly considered as a cause of de-escalation and compellence is considered as a factor in escalating tensions. Thus, it is concluded that Pakistan's nuclear weapons are likely to exacerbate tensions with India[1]. However, it seems that although the de-escalating effect of compellence is not as much as deterrence, it can prevent the escalation in different ways. Three prominent methods in this field are:

(a) Nuclear weapons as a tool of compellence: Nuclear weapons can offer compelling advantages in "international crises bargaining" (Sechser & Fuhrmann 2013, p. 173). The use of these weapons as coercive tools is manifested in relatively formal forms, such as coercive diplomacy, and sometimes through explicit or implicit threatening messages. Both India and Pakistan, for example, repeatedly resorted to this tactic in common bilateral bargaining during the 2001-2002 crisis. India, in particular, devoted considerable power to coercive diplomacy at this time[2]. Of course, according to Gartzke and Kroenig (2009), Pakistan also has the power of forced bargaining with India by relying on its nuclear capability. There is often emphasis on Pakistan resorting to compellence. Pakistan's nuclear doctrine is directly influenced by its smaller size, weaker conventional forces and strong will to change the status quo (Lo, 2003, p. 405). All of these are evidence of compellence. Furthermore the threat of nuclear escalation appears to have enabled Pakistan to engage in low-level violence

1. see for example: Kapur, 2008
2. see Ganguly & Kraig, 2005

Journal of WORLD SOCIOPOLITICAL STUDIES | Vol. 9 | No. 3 | Summer 2025

without fear of retaliation from India. That is, the current climate in South Asia enables Pakistan to launch limited conventional attacks against India, while at the same time avoiding the possibility of a full-scale conventional Indian retaliation (Kapur, 2005, pp. 142-51). This is true, but if one considers that the 1965 and 1971 wars between India and Pakistan were practically due to India's strong reaction to Pakistan's low-level violence, he/she could say that owing to nuclear weapons, compellence has de-escalated tensions in the India-Pakistan conflict. In other words, Pakistan, relying on its nuclear weapons, has carried out limited conventional attacks against India. This, of course, has not led to a strong Indian response and, as a result, a full-scale war.

(b) Nuclear weapons as a means of blackmail: This is the use or, more accurately, abuse of nuclear weapons by the weak side in day-to-day conflicts with a powerful enemy to advance goals that it would not otherwise have been able to achieve. There is a fine line between the use of nuclear weapons as a coercive tool and the instrument of blackmail. In the Indo-Pakistani conflict, both sides are using their nuclear weapons as a tool of compellence, but it seems that only Pakistan is using them as a tool of extortion. This is because Pakistan, after acquiring a nuclear weapons capability, engages in behaviors and demands from the other side that would not otherwise exist without fear of consequences. That is, India's fear of escalating the conflict to the nuclear level, especially before the Balakot incident, prompts it to react more cautiously to the daring behavior of Pakistan or its proxy forces. These proxy forces are accused of carrying out terrorist acts against India in many cases, including the 2008 attacks. Of course, in addition to Pakistan's trying to blackmail India, the unstable situation in the region and Islamic extremists, have paved the way for Islamabad in

this tactic. Moreover, the de-escalating effect of nuclear weapons is confirmed by nuclear blackmail, which could be used as compellence.

(c) Nuclear weapons as the worst option: As a result of this strategy, conflicting governments are harassing each other in ways that are more tolerable than nuclear war. In other words, nuclear rivals are pushing each other to the point where it will not lead to a nuclear war. In this case, achieving the goals of the two warring countries does not depend on deterrence, but on the pressure they have put on each other until the stage before entering the nuclear war. In this situation, any tool, whether military or civilian, explicit or implicit, formal or informal, and symmetric or asymmetric, could be used as a pressure lever. For example, during the period under review, observers witnessed the infiltration and operations of Pakistani-affiliated militias in India, among the most prominent of which led to the 2008 crisis, but India failed to react strongly. In another instance,

> On 18 September 2016, armed militants targeted an army camp in Uri, a garrison town close to the LoC and killed 19 Indian soldiers. The Indian government claimed that items bearing Pakistani markings were found at the site, and held the organization Jaish-e-Mohammad responsible for the attack. Later, another organization, Lashkar-e-Taiba, was identified as carrying out the attack. Considering that the BJP was again in power, this time under Prime Minister Narendra Modi –a known hardliner on the issue of Pakistan– there were fears of escalation (Sasikumar, 2019, p. 160).

However, despite all this, Pakistan's strike did not escalate the conflict to the level of full-scale war, as it seems that such blows and injuries are still more bearable than the nuclear option.

Journal of WORLD SOCIOPOLITICAL STUDIES | Vol. 9 | No. 3 | Summer 2025

In short, the Indo-Pakistani conflict seems to have been more or less managed by force and fear for all the years since their nuclear weapon tests. This force and fear is the main basis of compellence. The effectiveness of compellence in managing the Indo-Pakistani conflict can be attributed to factors such as the nuclear weapons of the two sides, India's powerful conventional military, and Pakistan-backed Kashmiri militias and militants. In other words, these factors together have created compellence and thus prevented the escalation of the conflict between the parties in the crises examined here in a kind of full-scale war. This is precisely why it can be said that the function of compellence must be sought in an event (i.e., full-scale war) that did not actually occur.

8. Conclusion

India and Pakistan have had many reasons and motives for fighting since their independence in 1947, and have clashed several times. These range from colonial legacy to ethnic issues, from superpower interventions during the Cold War to regional and bilateral rivalries, and from territorial tensions to identity conflicts. This bilateral conflict entered a new phase after the 1998 nuclear weapons test. Now that about 27 years have passed since the nuclear weapon tests of India and Pakistan, nuclear proliferation seems to have been effective in de-escalating tensions between the two countries. It should be kept in mind that the bilateral relations between India and Pakistan during the period under review have been subject to several factors such as the economic priorities of these two actors, environmental issues, their relations with third actors, maritime issues, and division of border waters, but in this study only the effect of nuclear weapons has been considered. In this article, an attempt was made to examine this effect from the perspective of deterrence as well as compellence.

Given the existing literature on deterrence and compellence on the one hand, and the Nuclear Guidelines of India (based on no-first-use policy) and Pakistan (based on first-use doctrine) on the other, it is argued that there is a combination of nuclear deterrence and compellence in South Asia that has played a role in de-escalating tensions between the two countries. In other words, nuclear weapons of Pakistan and India have both a deterrent and a compelling function.

Lastly, it is concluded that India and Pakistan have used nuclear compellence to bring the other side closer to their demands and, at the same time, have relied on nuclear deterrence to prevent a strong reaction. While India has mainly used nuclear weapons to deter its rivals such as Pakistan and China, Pakistan has mainly and practically used them to coerce India. Surprisingly, Pakistan's nuclear weapons have also contributed to the compelling function of its conventional weapons. Despite the effectiveness of nuclear weapons in de-escalating the conflict, the context and drivers of the conflict have always been present during the period under review. In addition to the territorial disputes between the two actors, suspected Pakistani-backed terrorist operations and India's continued discrimination against Kashmiri Muslims also contribute to the intensity of the conflict; The Pahalgam terrorist attack in April 2025 and the subsequent bilateral tension also took place in this atmosphere. However, the experience of the Indo-Pakistani conflict over the past twenty-seven years shows that nuclear weapons, both as a deterrent and as a compelling tool, have contributed to de-escalate the bilateral tensions.

References

Ahmed, S. (2000). Security Dilemmas of Nuclear-Armed Pakistan. *Third World Quarterly, 21*(5), 781-793. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590075011972

Anderson, R. S. (2006). The Shadows of Kashmir and Bombs in the Pakistan-India Conflict: A Review Article. *Pacific Affairs, 79*(2), 291-297. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40022693

Asal, V., & Beardsley, K. (2007). Proliferation and International Crisis Behaviour. *Journal of Peace Research, 44*(2), 139–155. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343307075118

Ayoob, M. (1982). India, Pakistan and Super-Power Rivalry. *The World Today, 38*(5), 194-202. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40395383

Basrur, R., & Kartik, B. (2011). The India-China Nuclear Relationship. *Strategic Analysis, 35*(2), 186-193. https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2011.542914

Basrur, R. M. (2001). Nuclear Weapons and Indian Strategic Culture. *Journal of Peace Research*, *38*(2), 181-198. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343301038002004

Basrur, R. M. (2005). International Relations Theory and Minimum Deterrence. *India Review, 4*(2), 125-143. https://doi.org/10.1080/14736480500225608

Basrur, R. M. (2010). Nuclear Weapons and Crisis Stability in South Asia. In S. Ganguly, A. Scobell & J. Ch. Liow (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Asian Security Studies* (pp.115-1260). Routledge.

Basrur, R. M. (2011). Two Decades of Minimum Deterrence in South Asia: A Comparative Framework. In B. Chakma (Ed.), *The Politics of Nuclear Weapons in South Asia* (pp.11-29). Ashgate.

Beardsley, K., & Asal, V. (2009). Nuclear Weapons as Shields. *Conflict Management and Peace Science, 26*(3), 235-55. https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894209104550

Behuria, A. K. (2009). Pakistan's Approach to Kashmir since the Lahore Agreement: Is There Any Change? *Strategic Analysis, 33*(3), 433-449. https://doi.org/10.1080/09700160902790126

Berejikian, J. D. (2002). A Cognitive Theory of Deterrence. *Journal of Peace Research, 39*(2), 165-183. https://doi.org/0022343302039002002

Berkowitz, B. D. (1985). Proliferation, Deterrence, and the Likelihood of Nuclear War. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution, 29*(1), 112-136. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002785029001006

Betts, R. K. (1979). Incentives for Nuclear Weapons: India, Pakistan, Iran. *Asian Survey, 19*(11), 1053-1072. https://doi.org/10.2307/2643954

Brown, A., & Arnold, L. (2010). The Quirks of Nuclear Deterrence. *International Relations, 24*(3), 293–312. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117810377278

Bull, H. (1968). Strategic Studies and Its Critics. *World Politics, 20*(4), 593-605. https://doi.org/10.2307/2009685

Carranza, M. E. (2009). *South Asian Security and International Nuclear Order: Creating a Robust Indo-Pakistani Nuclear Arms Control Regime*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

Chakma, B. (2011a). The Pakistani Nuclear Deterrent. In B. Chakma (Ed.), *The Politics of Nuclear Weapons in South Asia* (pp. 39-53). Ashgate.

Chakma, B. (2011b). Pakistan's Post-test Nuclear Use Doctrine. In B. Chakma (Ed.), *The Politics of Nuclear Weapons in South Asia* (pp. 75-90). Ashgate.

Cheema, Z. (2010). *Indian Nuclear Deterrence: Its Evolution, Development, and Implications for South Asian Security*. Oxford University Press.

Commuri, G. (2009). The Relevance of National Identity Narratives in Shaping Foreign Policy: The Case of India-Pakistan Relations. *Journal of South Asian Development, 4*(2), 161- 202. https://doi.org/10.1177/097317410900400202

Das, R. (2010). State, Identity and Representations of Nuclear (In) Securities in India and Pakistan. *Journal of Asian and African Studies, 45*(2), 146-169. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909609357778

Davies, S. J. (2004). Community versus Deterrence: Managing Security and Nuclear Proliferation in Latin America and South Asia. *International Relations, 18*(1), 55-72. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117804041741

De Santana, A. H. (2011). The Strategy of Non-proliferation: Maintaining the Credibility of an Incredible Pledge to Disarm. *Millennium - Journal of International Studies, 40*(1), 3-19. https://doi.org/10.1177/0305829811413312

Diehl, S. J., & Moltz, J. C. (2002). *Nuclear Weapons and Non-proliferation: A Reference Handbook*. ABC-CLID, Inc.

Falarti, M. M., & Abbas, S. A. (2020). Foreign Military Aid as Good Governance? The Case of South Asia. In *Global Governance & Regulation: Order and Disorder in the 21st Century* (pp. 92–206). Routledge.

Freedman, L. (2003). *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy* (3rd ed). Palgrave Macmillan.

Freedman, L., & Raghavan, S. (2008). Coercion. In P. D. Williams (Ed.), *Security Studies: An Introduction* (pp. 216-228). Routledge.

Ganguly, S. (1995a). Wars without End: The Indo-Pakistani Conflict. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 541*(1), 167-178. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716295541001012

Ganguly, S. (1995b). Indo-Pakistani Nuclear Issues and the Stability/Instability Paradox. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 18*(4), 325-334. https://doi.org/10.1080/10576109508435989

Ganguly, S. (1999). India's Pathway to Pokhran II: The Prospects and Sources of New Delhi's Nuclear Weapons Program. *International Security, 23*(4), 148-177. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2539297

Ganguly, S. (2001). *Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions since 1947*. Columbia University Press.

Ganguly, S. (2008). Nuclear Stability in South Asia. *International Security, 33*(2), 45–70. https://casi.sas.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/iit/Nuclear%20Stability%20-%20International%20Security%20-%202008.pdf

Ganguly, S., & Hagerty, D. T. (2005). *Fearful Symmetry: India-Pakistan Crises in the Shadow of Nuclear Weapons.* University of Washington Press.

Ganguly, S., & Kraig, M. R. (2005). The 2001–2002 Indo-Pakistani Crisis: Exposing the Limits of Coercive Diplomacy. *Security Studies, 14*(2), 290-324. https://doi.org/10.1080/09636410500232958

Gartzke, E., & Jo, D. (2009). Bargaining, Nuclear Proliferation, and Interstate Disputes. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 53*(2), 209-233. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002708330289

Gartzke, E., & Kroenig, M. (2009). A Strategic Approach to Nuclear Proliferation. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 53*(2), 151-160. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002708330039

Geller, D. S. (2003). Nuclear Weapons and the Indo-Pakistani Conflict: Global Implications of a Regional Power Cycle. *International Political Science Review*, *24*(1), 137-150. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512103024001009

Ghose, A. (2009). Nuclear Weapons, Non-proliferation and Nuclear Disarmament: Evolving Policy Challenges. *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs, 65*(4), 431-40. https://doi.org/10.1177/097492840906500410

Hagerty, D. T. (1998). *The Consequences of Nuclear Proliferation: Lessons from South Asia.* The Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

Hagerty, D. T. (2009). The Kargil War: An Optimistic Assessment. In S. Ganguly & S. P. Kapur (Eds.), *Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia: Crisis Behaviour and the Bomb* (pp.100–116). Routledge.

Hagerty, D. T. (2012). The Nuclear Holdouts: India, Israel, and Pakistan. In T. Oglivie-White & D. Santoro (Eds.), *Slaying the Nuclear Dragon: Disarmament Dynamics in the Twenty-First Century* (pp. 219-249). The University of Georgia Press.

Harshe, R. (2005). India-Pakistan Conflict over Kashmir: Peace through Development Cooperation. *South Asian Survey, 12*(1), 47-60. https://doi.org/10.1177/097152310501200104

Horowitz, M. (2009). The Spread of Nuclear Weapons and International Conflict: Does Experience Matter?. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 53*(2), 234-257. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002708330388

Huth, P., Gelpiand, Ch., & Bennett, S. (1993). The Escalation of Great Power Militarized Disputes: Testing Rational Deterrence Theory and Structural Realism. *The American Political Science Review, 87*(3), 609-623. https://doi.org/10.2307/2938739

Jain, B. M. (2010). *India in the New South Asia: Strategic, Military and Economic Concerns in the Age of Nuclear Policy*. I. B. Tauris Publishers.

Kadir, J. (2019). Perceiving the Enemy Differently: A Psycho-cultural Analysis of Pakistan–India Conflict. *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, *6*(2), 189–216. https://doi.org/10.1177/2347797019842445

Kadir, J. (2020). The Role of Emotions in Interstate Relations: Using an Interpersonal Conflict Model to Reconceptualize Pakistan's Obsession vis-a-vis India. *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, *7*(3), 399–418. https://doi.org/10.1177/2057891119900651

Kapur, S. P. (2005). India and Pakistan's Unstable Peace: Why Nuclear South Asia Is Not like Cold War Europe. *International Security, 30*(2), 127-152. https://doi.org/10.1162/016228805775124570

Kapur, S. P. (2008). Ten Years of Instability in a Nuclear South Asia. *International Security, 33*(2), 71–94. https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.2008.33.2.71

Kapur, S. P. (2009a). *Dangerous Deterrent: Nuclear Weapons Proliferation and Conflict in South Asia.* National University of Singapore Press.

Kapur, S. P. (2009b). South Asia's Unstable Nuclear Decade. *Strategic Analysis, 33*(3), 393-403. https://doi.org/10.1080/09700160902790068

Kapur, S. P. (2010). Kashmir Dispute: Past, Present, and Future. In S. Ganguly, A. Scobell & J. Ch. Liow (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Asian Security Studies* (pp. 103-114). Routledge.

Kapur, S. P. (2011). Peace and Conflict in Indo-Pakistani Rivalry: Domestic and Strategic Games. In S. Ganguly & W. R. Thompson (Eds.), *Asian Rivalries: Conflict, Escalation, and Limitations on Two-Level Games* (pp. 61-79). Stanford University Press.

Kapur, S. P., & Ganguly, S. (2007). The Transformation of U.S.-India Relations: An Explanation for the Rapprochement and Prospects for the Future. *Asian Survey, 47*(4), 642-656. https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2007.47.4.642

Kazi, R. (2014). India's Nuclear Doctrine: A Study of its Tenets. *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal*, *9*(1), 46–55. https://www.jstor.org/stable/45340950

Kraig, M. R. (1999). Nuclear Deterrence in the Developing World: A Game-Theoretic Treatment. *Journal of Peace Research, 36*(2), 141–167. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343399036002002

Kumar, S. (2010). Internal Dynamics of Sub-Continental Security: Indo-Pak Tensions and the Political Response. *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs, 66*(1), 35-50. https://doi.org/10.1177/097492841006600103

Lo, J. (2003). Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia: Theory and Practice. *International Journal, 58*(3), 395-414. https://doi.org/10.2307/40203865

Makeig, D. C. (1987). War, No-War, and the India-Pakistan Negotiating Process. *Pacific Affairs, 60*(2), 271-294. https://doi.org/10.2307/2758135

Marwah, O. (1981). India and Pakistan: Nuclear Rivals in South Asia. *International Organization, 35*(1), 165-179. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300004124

Mearsheimer, J. J. (1990). Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War. *International Security, 15*(1), 5–56. https://users.metu.edu.tr/utuba/Mearsheimer.pdf

Nasr, V. (2005). National identities and the India–Pakistan conflict. In T. V. Paul (Ed.), *The India-Pakistan Conflict: An Enduring Rivalry* (pp. 178-201). Cambridge University Press.

Oppel, Jr., Richard, A., & Masood, S. (2008, Dec. 26). Pakistan moves troops amid tension with India. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/27/world/asia/27pstan.html.

Oren, I. (1994). The Indo-Pakistani Arms Competition: A Deductive and Statistical Analysis. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 38*(2), 185-214. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002794038002002

Pant, H. V. (2007). India's Nuclear Doctrine and Command Structure: Implications for Civil-Military Relations in India. *Armed Forces & Society*, *33*(2), 238–264. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X06291852

Perkovich, G. (2002). *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*. University of California Press.

Quackenbush, S. L. (2010). General Deterrence and International Conflict: Testing Perfect Deterrence Theory. *International Interactions: Empirical and Theoretical Research in International Relations, 36*(1), 60-85. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050620903554069

Quackenbush, S. L. (2011). Deterrence Theory: Where Do We Stand?. *Review of International Studies, 37*(2), 741-762. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000896

Rath, S. K. (2010). New Terror Architecture in South Asia: 26/11 Mumbai Attacks Inquiry. *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs*, *66*(4), 359-381. https://doi.org/10.1177/097492841006600403

Roy-Chaudhury, R. (2009). India's Nuclear Doctrine: A Critical Analysis. *Strategic Analysis, 33*(3), 404-414. https://doi.org/10.1080/09700160902790084

Sagan, S. D. (2003). More Will Be Worse. In S. D. Sagan & K. N. Waltz (Eds.), *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed* (pp. 46-88). W. W. Norton and Company.

Sagan, S. D. (2004). The Problem of Redundancy Problem: Why More Nuclear Security Forces May Produce Less Nuclear Security? *Risk Analysis, 24*(4), 935-946. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0272-4332.2004.00495.x

Sagan, S. D., & Waltz, K. N. (2003). Indian and Pakistani Nuclear Weapons: For Better or Worse? In S. D. Sagan & K. N. Waltz (Eds.), *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed* (pp. 88-125). W. W. Norton and Company.

Sanders-Zakre, A., & Davenport, K. (2017). Is India Shifting Nuclear Doctrine?. Arms Control Association. https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2017-05/news/india-shifting-nuclear-doctrine

Sanjian, G. S. (1998). Cold War Imperatives and Quarrelsome Clients: Modeling U.S. and USSR Arms Transfers to India and Pakistan. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 42*(1), 97-127. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002798042001005

Sanjian, G. S. (1999). Promoting Stability or Instability? Arms Transfers and Regional Rivalries, 1950-1991. *International Studies Quarterly, 43*(4), 641–670. https://doi.org/10.1111/0020-8833.00140

Sasikumar, K. (2019). India-Pakistan Crises under the Nuclear Shadow: The Role of Reassurance. *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, 2*(1), 151-169. https://doi.org/10.1080/25751654.2019.1619229

Schaub, G. (2004). Deterrence, Compellence, and Prospect Theory. *Political Psychology, 25*(3), 389-412. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2004.00377.x

Sechser, T. S., & Fuhrmann, M. (2013). Crisis Bargaining and Nuclear Blackmail. *International Organization*, *67*(1), 173–95. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818312000392

Segal, G.et al. (1988). *Nuclear War and Nuclear Peace*. The Macmillan Press LTD.

Shrivastava, B. K. (1975). Indo-American Relations: Retrospect and Prospect. *International Studies, 14*(1), 21-37. https://doi.org/10.1177/002088177501400102

Singh, S., & Way, Ch. R. (2004). The Correlates of Nuclear Proliferation: A Quantitative Test. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 48*(6), 859-885. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002704269655

Singh, S. (2011). India's Nuclear Doctrine: Ten Years since Kargil Conflict. In B. Chakma (Ed.), *The Politics of Nuclear Weapons in South Asia* (pp. 57-75). Ashgate.

Sundaram, K., & Ramana, M. V. (2018). India and the Policy of No First Use of Nuclear Weapons. *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, 1*(1), 152-168. https://doi.org/10.1080/25751654.2018.1438737

Swami, P. (2009). A War to End a War: The Causes and Outcomes of the 2001-2 India-Pakistan Crisis. In S. Ganguly & P. S. Kapur (Eds.), *Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia* (pp. 144-162). Routledge

Thakur, R. (2011). Delinking Destiny from Geography: The Changing Balance of India-Pakistan Relations. *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs, 67*(3), 197-212. https://doi.org/10.1177/097492841106700301

Vohra, A. M. (1998). India and Pakistan: Towards Better Understanding. *South Asian Survey, 5*(1), 65-75. https://doi.org/10.1177/097152319800500106

Waltz, K. N. (1990). Nuclear Myths and Political Realities. *The American Political Science Review, 84*(3), 731-45. https://doi.org/10.2307/1962764

Waltz, K. N. (2003). More May Be Better. In S. D. Sagan & K. N. Waltz (Eds.), *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed* (pp. 3-46). W. W. Norton and Company.

Worth, R. F. (2008, Dec. 1). In Wake of Attacks, India-Pakistan Tensions Grow. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/02/world/asia/02mumbai.html.

Wojczewski, T. (2014). The Persistency of the India–Pakistan Conflict: Chances and Obstacles of the Bilateral Composite Dialogue. *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, *1*(3), 319–345. https://doi.org/10.1177/2347797014551269

Zinkin, T. (1987). The Background to Indo-Pakistani Relations. *International Relations, 9*(1), 31-38. https://doi.org/10.1177/004711788700900103