

Strategic Delusions – The Cold Start Doctrine: Proactive Strategy

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

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The inimical rivalry between South Asian neighbors, India and Pakistan since their inception into statehood, has resulted in four major wars, countless border skirmishes, and continual interference. Notwithstanding ground realities, both states have remained perpetually entwined in an arms race to outdo each other in the political, social, economic, and diplomatic arenas; internally, regionally, and internationally. Despite, their entry into the established realm of nuclear club, which should have introduced a degree of deterrent certainty, the ground reality has not changed much. The introduction of Cold Start Doctrine / Proactive Strategy, i.e. a limited war under a nuclear overhang, by the Indian Army has had the effect of negatively escalating the fragile balance between the two nuclear-armed states. Ironically, this strategy has gained a fair degree of currency in academic circles, bordering on the possibility of strategy's applicability. Theoretically, the Proactive Strategy enables for attaining politico-military objectives in a very short span of time, while remaining below the nuclear threshold. However, it merits critical review under the constraints of realistic strategic assumptions, operational responses, and more importantly, the strategy's premise of remaining limited in nature.

To this end, two case studies, the 1999 Kargil war between India and Pakistan and the 2008 Mumbai Terror Attacks, demonstrate the inability of the Cold Start Doctrine / Proactive Strategy in attainment of politico-military objectives as well as keeping a future war between India and Pakistan, below the nuclear threshold. The findings, analysis, and conclusions substantiate the fact, that the Cold Start Doctrine / Proactive Strategy is not the answer to attainment of politico-military objectives in the case of Indian and Pakistan.

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	v
Acronyms.....	vi
Introduction.....	1
Research Questions.....	4
Limitations.....	5
Section Two: Literature Review.....	8
Section Three: Methodology.....	19
Section Four: Case Study.....	24
Section Five: Findings and Analysis.....	43
Conclusions.....	49
Bibliography.....	54

Acknowledgements

The idea of ascertaining the viability of the Cold Start Doctrine / Proactive Strategy intrigued me since 2012. In that year, as the Brigade Major (Chief of Staff) of an infantry brigade, I had the privilege of participating in the Pakistan Army war-game titled Azm-e-Nau 4. The long arduous period of about 6 months of many operational discussions and planning sessions resulted in a very detailed and comprehensive understanding of the Indian Army's Cold Start Doctrine / Proactive Strategy and the Pakistan Army's New Concept of War Fighting. Notwithstanding, the veracity of the experience gained during the war-game, there were still gaps in my mind warranting a reappraisal of the Cold Start Doctrine and Proactive Strategy. The intellectual pursuit of filling these gaps followed through a period of reflection, study, and research. Eventually the School of Advanced Military Studies provided me with the tools to articulate my train of thoughts in a succinct form in this monograph.

Several people helped me in undertaking and completing the rather strenuous discourse of this monograph. First, I would like to thank my loving wife Tayyaba and daughters, Haniya and Khadija, for being very patient and highly supportive. Tayyaba was also pregnant with our third child, Anaya, who arrived on 10 March 2016. Without my wife's resilience, I would not be where I am today. Second, Brigadier Muhammad Imtiaz Khan, Pakistan Army, who guided me about the strategic and operational context of the Cold Start Doctrine / Proactive Strategy. He has been a watchful mentor and a friend during my years in the Pakistan Army. Third, Ms. Patricia Ann Bielling, US Army North, for her insightful editing and proof reading. Without her help, the monograph would not have attained the final shape and form. Finally, my monograph director Dr. Bruce E. Stanley, for helping me every step of the way professionally as well as personally. He has a remarkable understanding and grasp of the geo-strategic peculiarities specific to South Asia and that helped a lot in articulating my thoughts and ideas. I dearly value his guidance, outreach, and indomitable patience with me for usually missing set deadlines. +

Acronyms

CSD	Cold Start Doctrine
HPO	Hot Pursuit Operations
IBGs	Integrated Battle Groups
NCWF	New Concept of Warfighting
PAS	Proactive Strategy
TNW	Tactical Nuclear Weapons

Introduction

Operation Parakram, the Indian military's escalation with Pakistan, precipitated a major shift in India's security strategy that has brought greater insecurity to South Asia.¹ The Indian military's inability to rapidly mobilize during the 2001-2002 crisis led that country to develop its Cold Start Doctrine (CSD), which was later refined into Proactive Strategy (PAS). The doctrine envisages a swift, short-lived blitzkrieg type military operation to attain politico-military objectives.² The doctrine's central tenet is woven around the perceived availability of space for a limited war under a nuclear overhang. The doctrine is operationalized by the positioning of integrated battle groups near the border. This alert posture, combined with an "attack first, mobilize second" strategy, decreases opportunities to defuse a crisis through diplomacy while greatly increasing the likelihood of strategic miscalculation and nuclear escalation.³

The strategy's assumption of engaging in a limited war with no nuclear spiral out is questionable for a number of reasons. First, the notion of operating below the nuclear threshold is directly related to the escalatory redlines of both the states. There is no credible methodology to accurately gauge the perceived or established redlines in a fluid war-like situation. Second, the disconnect between the politico-military objectives of India and Pakistan in a future conflict may induce the losing side to introduce limited nuclear weapons to address battlefield imbalance. This calls into question the validity of the CSD / PAS as a viable instrument of policy in the context of strategy and operational art. Furthermore, the availability of such an instrument in the hands of a

¹ Gurmeet Kanwal Brig, "Lost Opportunities in Operation Parakram," in "Net Edition," special issue, *Indian Defence Review* (December 13, 2011): 1, accessed August 23, 2015, <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/lost-opportunities-in-operation-parakram/>.

² Sannia Abdullah Dr., "Cold Start in Strategic Calculus," *Islamabad Policy Research Institute Journal* 12, no. 1 (2012): 1-27, accessed August 23, 2015 www.ipripak.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/art1asanw12.pdf.

³ Muhammad Azam Khan, "India's Cold Start Is Too Hot," *US Naval Institute*, March 2011, 1, accessed April 17, 2016, <http://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2011-03/indias-cold-start-too-hot>.

hardline administration raises serious concerns about regional stability and associated effects internationally.

Many theoreticians believe that nuclear weapons in South Asia have made the strategic environment more alarming instead of bringing stability to the region.⁴ The main reason for this anomaly are the divergent doctrinal perspectives of the two countries and equally divergent cost-benefit analysis. The default status of being a nuclear power assures Pakistan the deterrent credibility in the face of Indian conventional military superiority. Conversely, India believes Pakistan lacks the political will to use nuclear weapons. These misperceptions, though understood by both belligerents still give way to flawed strategic assumptions. This paradigm directly undermines the credibility of the CSD / PAS to attain politico-military strategic objectives under the construct of a blitzkrieg-type limited war.

Given the propensity of Prime Minister Narindra Modi's government to ideological rhetoric, the Indian Army's introduction of a doctrine of limited war under a nuclear overhang has negatively escalated the fragile balance between the two nuclear-armed states. Ironically, this strategy has gained a fair degree of currency in academic circles regarding the possibility of the strategy's applicability. On the face of it, the PAS would seem an impressive medium for attaining politico-military objectives in a very short span of time while remaining below the nuclear threshold. However, such an approach merits validation under the constraints of realistic strategic assumptions, operational responses, and more importantly, the strategy's premise of remaining limited in nature.

⁴ Sannia Abdullah Dr., "Cold Start in Strategic Calculus," *Islamabad Policy Research Institute Journal* 12, no. 1 (2012): 24, accessed August 23, 2015 www.ipripak.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/art1asanw12.pdf.

Clearly, the first dictate of business between nuclear-armed states is to validate the ability of mutual deterrence to maintain stability.⁵ Doing so requires understanding the interplay of imperatives and variables. Obviously, the validity of deterrence lies in the strategic domain with the national leadership, national will, and the policy-maker, which serve as imperatives. The national domestic, inter-state, regional, and international alliances tend to serve as an addendum, which act as variables. The amalgam of these imperatives and variables define the national policy and strategy and invariably decides the instruments best suited to attain policy objectives. An anomaly at the policy-making level can lead to flawed strategic assumptions with disastrous consequences.

As good as it looks on paper, the PAS doctrine may well be an anomaly in context of strategy and operational art. This necessitates a pragmatic review to ascertain the strategy's viability in the context of statecraft and international relations in order to understand possible implications. This monograph certainly will not be definitive in the context of India-Pakistan relations; however, it will allow the two states and the international community to undertake holistic stock of ground realities and associated implications. Moreover, this monograph will assist the contemporary operational artist better articulate the linkages between policy, strategy, and the operational art.

A brief overview of the doctrine is in order. To correct the perceived deficiencies in India's conventional war-fighting doctrine, the chief of army staff unveiled the Cold Start Doctrine concept in April 2004.⁶ The goal of this limited war doctrine is to establish the capacity

⁵ Zulfqar Khan Dr. and Rizwana Abbasi Dr., "Regional-Centric Deterrence: Reassessing Its Efficacy for South Asia," *The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis* 25, no. 4 (December 2013): 1, accessed August 23, 2015, http://www.academia.edu/8598618/Regional-centric_Deterrence_Reassessing_its_Efficacy_for_South_Asia.

⁶ Walter C. Ladwig III, "A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army's New Limited War Doctrine," *International Security* 32, no. 3 (Winter 2007/08): 158-90, accessed August 24, 2015, https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/international_security/toc/ins32.3.html.

to launch a retaliatory conventional strike against Pakistan. That aim is to inflict significant harm on the Pakistan Army before the international community can intercede and, at the same time, pursue narrow enough aims to deny Islamabad a justification to escalate the clash to the nuclear level.

The Proactive Strategy / Operations (PAS) is a refined version of the Cold Start Doctrine. It is premised around seamless integration of integrated battle groups (IBGs), theater force reserves, and defensive balance forces at the tactical and operational levels to achieve politico-military objectives in a short span of time. It is also known as Proactive Operations (PAO).

This study will use the theoretical framework of strategy and operational art to analyze the intricacies and associated implications with the construct of the CSD / PAS. The framework of a structured, focused approach will allow an operational artist to better articulate the linkages between policy, strategy, and the operational art. This study focuses on identifying and bridging these gaps. To this end, the monograph will rely on strategic frameworks and theories to ascertain the missing links.

The study addresses the following hypotheses and research questions to ascertain the validity and feasibility of the Proactive Strategy in the context of operational art and strategy.

Hypothesis 1: Given the proclivity of ultranationalist and neo-conservative ideology in mainstream Indian polity within the ongoing political discourse of the Modi government, the possibility of an armed clash between nuclear-armed neighbors India and Pakistan cannot be overruled. In this backdrop, the Indian army's Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) / Proactive Strategy (PAS) has gained considerable currency in the context of a swift yet limited war below the nuclear threshold to attain perceived politico-military objectives.

Research Questions:

- Can the Indian military's PAS attain politico-military objectives for India?
- What is the Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) and Proactive Strategy (PAS)?

- What is the feasibility and viability of Indian Army's PAS from the perspective of Operational Art through the lens of history and theory?

Hypothesis 2: When India commits herself to a limited war against Pakistan under the ambit of the PAS, it would not be possible to keep the conflict limited to the conventional domain given the limitation of exit points and apparent inviolability of deterrence (ideology, national will, alliances) on either side. In the case of a conventional reversal for the Indian army at the strategic or operational level, internal domestic pressure in the mainstream masses and political makeup may force India to introduce nuclear weapons.

Research Questions:

- What strategic assumptions and type of operating environment (national domestic, regional, and international) allow the Indian government to pursue the attainment of politico-military objectives under the ambit of PAS?
- What is the degree of success or parity guaranteed by the PAS given the constraints of the geo-political situation, terrain, and envisaged assembly of offensive formations in a near peer scenario?
- What would be the response of major regional and international powers in a PAS scenario between India and Pakistan? Would such a conflict allow rational actors to intervene or escalate the conflict at a regional level?

This paper entails an academic assessment of the feasibility and viability of the PAS from the perspective of strategy and operational art. Apropos, the scope of the paper will be limited to the domain of strategic and operational imperatives using history and theory as a lens. Given the history of direct (conventional) and indirect (unconventional) rivalry between India and Pakistan, this paper will not delve into associated ramifications of subversion, insurgencies, and terrorism; nuclear command and control regimes of either states; or issues falling within the domain of division of natural resources and disputed border areas. However, for the sake relevance, the

paper will touch upon the strategic contours of relations between both states at the national domestic, inter-state, regional, and the international level.

The origin of the hostility between Pakistan and India lies in the historical legacy of the British Empire. The partition of 1947 left some territorial issues, specifically the Kashmir region, unresolved to this day.⁷ Notwithstanding diplomatic overtures, both cis-trans frontier efforts to resolve these issues often shift from the political arena to the military domain. In addition to territorial disputes, this seesaw equation has its genesis in a typically traditional political makeup on both sides of the international border.⁸ Political leaders primarily rely on finding fault outside the territorial borders to offset domestic inadequacies.

The incumbent “Bahartiya Janata Party” led Modi Indian administration fits the description.⁹ Consequently, a recent tactical strike in Myanmar is miscued as a precursor for times to come in the regional context.¹⁰ These tactical actions also known as Hot Pursuit Operations (HPOs), are understandable in context of India’s non-nuclear neighbors but do not fit the balance of scales with reference to Pakistan. Any political jockeying in the context of counterterrorism—that is using HPOs as a premise to introduce the PAS to gain domestic political or regional, international diplomatic mileage—may well spiral out of control.

This study encompasses six sections. Following the introduction is the literature review. The literature review provides an expanded discussion of the strategic, operational variables and

⁷ Sannia Abdullah Dr., “Cold Start in Strategic Calculus,” *Islamabad Policy Research Institute Journal* 12, no. 1 (2012): 1-27, accessed August 23, 2015 www.ipripak.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/art1asanw12.pdf.

⁸ Niharika Mandhana and QASIM NAUMAN, “Talks between Pakistan and India Called Off,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 23, 2015, accessed August 24, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/talks-between-pakistan-and-india-called-off-1440334237>.

⁹ “Philosophy,” accessed August 24, 2015, <http://www.bjp.org/about-the-party/philosophy>.

¹⁰ Niharika Mandhana, Indian Army Attacks Militant Camps in Myanmar, *Wall Street Journal*, June 10, 2015, accessed August 24, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/indian-army-attacks-militant-camps-in-myanmar-1433927858>.

imperatives associated with the Indian PAS and its validation through the framework of strategy and the hypotheses driving this study. The methodology that follows explains how the study will test the hypotheses. Next, the case studies provide an understanding of the strategic equation that drives India to pursue the CSD / PAS as a viable offensive strategy against Pakistan. Once the case study is complete, this monograph correlates the findings and analysis to the research questions. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the study and discusses the findings and their implications for India, Pakistan, regional actors, and the international community.

Literature Review

The literature pertaining the Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) / Proactive Strategy (PAS) is comparatively monocentric with a rather biased contextual tint. The obvious reasons are the typical strategic predisposition, domestic political landscape, alliances, and operational security. Notwithstanding geocentric grounding, there is a significant volume of literature available to discern specific strategic contours and allied imperatives. However, there are gaps in the available literature concerning the plausibility of attaining the politico military aims and the way forward. Apropos, this monograph will analyze the CSD / PAS with a view to ascertaining the strategy's viability in attaining perceived politico-military objectives. This review will frame the broad strategic context, constructs, and theories relevant to the purpose of this study.

In order to develop a better understanding of the CSD / PAS, it is imperative to overlay the theoretical context of strategy and operational art. Traditionally, strategy has been shaped largely by considerations of time and space.¹¹ Given the construct of time and space alone, CSD / PAS does seem feasible given the conventional superiority enjoyed by the Indian armed forces.¹² However, when we add factors like adversary responses, domestic politics, regional, and international imperatives, the validity of CSD / PAS becomes questionable. This brings to fore the two conceptual underpinnings for this study: first, the politico-military outcome of a CSD / PAS directed military engagement; second, the ability of the Indian government and military to

¹¹ Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War, Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective*, 4th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 11.

¹² Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment. India, Army (ihs.com), June 24, 2015. Also see, "Comparisons of World Military Strength Results," Global Fire Power (GFP), last modified February 17, 2015, accessed September 29, 2015, <http://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-comparison-detail.asp?form=form&country1=india&country2=pakistan&Submit=COMPARE>.

ensure that there is no escalation of the conflict beyond perceived time and space dimensions of the CSD / PAS. This paradigm affects strategic stability.¹³

In his book *The Direction of War*, Hew Strachan notes that, “In war the clash of two opposing wills in a resistant environment gives particular play to personality and accident. The job of strategy in war is to work with contingency. Of course, strategy aspires to create a theory of war. It uses theoretical insights to question real events in a bid to shape them according to the needs of policy. But as soon as it allows the expectations of theory to obscure its vision of what is really happening, then strategy is not only no longer helpful, it is positively pernicious.”¹⁴ This brings out the problem of strategic assumptions, specifically that of flawed strategic assumptions, which will be discussed later in the monograph.¹⁵

This predicament resonates with Dolman who opines that, the tactical thinker seeks an answer which permeates into a defined action and usually signals the end of critical thinking. Conversely, a strategist searches for the right questions, those to which the panorama of possible answers provides insight and spurs ever more questions. No solutions are possible in this construct, only working hypotheses that the strategist knows will one day be proven false or

¹³ Elbridge Colby, ed., “Defining Strategic Stability: Reconciling Stability and Deterrence,” in *Strategic Stability: Contending Interpretations*, ed. Elbridge A. Colby and Michael S. Gerson (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute and US Army War College Press, 2013), 48, accessed September 27, 2015, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/>. Strategic stability emerged as a concept during the Cold War as part of an effort to find a *modus vivendi* for the two hostile superpowers. Its basic logic was to stabilize the bipolar confrontation by ensuring that each side had the ability to strike back effectively even after an attempted disarming fist strike by its opponent. This would give each party the confidence to wait even in the event of attack by the other party, while removing the obverse temptation to strike first to gain fundamental advantage. Thus, the chances of war through the fear of disarmament or through the temptation to gain an advantage by attacking fist would lessen.

¹⁴ Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War, Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective*, 4th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 103-4.

¹⁵ South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI), Three day International Workshop, “Indian Military’s Cold Start Doctrine and Its Implications for Strategic Stability in South Asia” (lecture, Serena Hotel, Islamabad, Islamabad, Pakistan, July 20-22, 2010).

tossed aside. Strategy is thus an unending process that can never lead to conclusion.¹⁶ The first notion that a military strategist must discard is victory, for strategy is not about winning but about pursuing a continuing advantage. The pure strategists understands that war is but one aspect of social and political competition, an ongoing interaction that has no finality.¹⁷

Thus, strategy is oriented towards the future. It is a declaration of intent and an indication of the possible means required to fulfil that intent. However, once strategy moves beyond the near term, it struggles to define exactly what it intends to do.¹⁸ This also brings out the role of policy [Grand Strategy] in driving the framework of the CSD / PAS. Here Strachan very correctly highlights the dilemma: “If strategy is a matter of combining means, ways, and ends, what are the ends toward which a state, nation or group is aiming when it cannot be precise about the future context within which its means and ways are being applied.”¹⁹ This resonates with the Army Doctrine Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, which defines operational art as “the pursuit of strategic objectives, in whole or in part, through the arrangement of tactical actions in time, space, and purpose.”

The preceding overlay teases out the question of strategic objectives in relation to politico-military objectives. Strachan quotes Brigadier (later Lieutenant General Sir) Alistair Irwin in *The Direction of War*, “when he went on describe the functions fulfilled at the operational level, he reckoned that the strategic objectives would be clear, with the result that the operational commander would be able to convert them into operational actions... All this was

¹⁶ Everett C. Dolman, “The Path of Pure Strategy,” in *Pure Strategy: Power and Principles in the Space and Information Age* (New York: Frank Cass, 2005), 4.

¹⁷ Everett C. Dolman, “The Path of Pure Strategy,” in *Pure Strategy: Power and Principles in the Space and Information Age* (New York: Frank Cass, 2005), 5.

¹⁸ Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War, Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective*, 4th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 235.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 235.

entirely logical, but it begged a very important question: what would happen if there were no strategic goals?"²⁰ Herein lies the CSD / PAS's fallacy in attaining politico-military objectives in a defined time and space dimension while keeping the war limited.

The theoretical overlay of strategy and operational art in relation to the CSD / PAS merits conceptual qualification, beginning with limited war. The concept of limited war goes back to the nineteenth century when military theorists underscored the determinative relationship between political ends and military means.²¹ In his book *On Limited War, The Challenge to American Strategy*, Robert E Osgood has succinctly defined limited war. He describes it as one in which the belligerents restrict the purpose for which they fight to concrete, well-defined objectives that do not demand the utmost military effort of which the belligerents are capable and that can be accommodated in a negotiated settlement."²² The significant aspect of Osgood's definition contrasting the CSD / PAS are the words "belligerents" and "negotiated settlement."

This contrast can be best understood through the Clausewitzian dictum, "No one starts a war—or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it. The former is its political purpose, the later its operational objective."²³ Where the architects of the CSD / PAS posit war to remain limited, they also tend to miscalculate the adversary responses and the possibility of unintended spiral effects. Thucydides cited three reasons that a nation will go to war. Those

²⁰ Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 216.

²¹ Khurshid Khan, "Limited War under the Nuclear Umbrella and Its Implications for South Asia," Stimson, May 1, 2005, accessed December 30, 2015, <http://www.stimson.org/essays/limited-war-under-the-nuclear-umbrella-and-its-implications-for-south-asia/>.

²² Robert E. Osgood, *Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 1-2.

²³ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Trans. and ed. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 579.

reasons are fear, interest, and honor.²⁴ Total wars focus more on fear. Conversely, limited wars are wars that we choose to fight. The other two causes of war that Thucydides mentioned, interest and honor, are the ones that are more likely to be found in limited wars.²⁵

This brings to the fore the question of exit strategy and an obtainable conclusion towards attainment of war objectives. However, before that the value of deterrence in relation to the CSD / PAS merits quantification. The word deterrence is based on the Latin *deterre*, to frighten from or away.²⁶ In the book *Complex Deterrence*, T.V. Paul notes that classic conventional and nuclear deterrence theory is based on three core premises. First, in order for deterrence to succeed a deterrer should have sufficient capability. Second, the threat should be credible. Third, the deterrer should be able to communicate the threat to its opponent.²⁷ These elements should operate across all classifications of deterrence relationships—that is, in general, immediate, and extended deterrence—and when both deterrence by denial and deterrence by punishment are attempted.²⁸

²⁴ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. and ed. Rex Warner (New York: Penguin Books, 1972), 80.

²⁵ Joseph McCallion Jr., “Achieving Total War Goals with a Limited War Force: Convincing the Enemy to Accept Defeat” (master’s thesis, School of Advanced Military Studies, 2004-05), 30, accessed January 1, 2016, <http://cgsc.cdmhost.com/u/?p4013coll3,351>.

²⁶ Freedman, Lawrence. “The Rationality of Irrationality.” In *Strategy a History*, 158-64. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. 157.

²⁷ T V. Paul, Patrick M. Morgan, and James J. Wirtz, eds., *Complex Deterrence: Strategy in the Global Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 2.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 24. The authors write, “In general deterrence, opponents keep military forces for future contingencies with the implicit understanding of their use (as they expect no imminent challenge), whereas in immediate deterrence, a crisis situation has arisen, the prospects for war are high, and a retaliatory threat is what prevents war initiation. Extended deterrence involves the protection of an ally by a stronger state using retaliatory threat. Deterrence by denial is obtained by convincing an opponent that it would be denied politico-military victory, while deterrence by punishment is obtained when an enemy forgoes an attack fearing unacceptable punishment.”

Retrospectively, the deterrence equations primarily rely on the context, relevance, and evolution of the politico-military objectives within a given contemporary environment.²⁹ Henry Kissinger has aptly stated that the relationship between military strength and politically usable power is the most complex in all history.³⁰ This paradox is more complicated in the India-Pakistan scenario.³¹ In his book *The Future of Power* Joseph Nye contends, “Successful strategies must take into account the context of the targets of power, the conditions, or environment of the action, and whether targets are likely to respond by acceptance or resistance.”³² Khurshid Khan notes that the Indian leadership’s exaggerated sense of its armed forces’ capabilities is dangerous and very risky. India’s political leadership aspires to operate along the Pakistani border on similar lines to the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.³³

²⁹ George Perkovich, “The Non-unitary Model and Deterrence Stability in South Asia,” in *Deterrence Stability and Escalation Control in South Asia*, ed. Michael Krepon and Julia Thompson, Stimson Center South Asia Program (Washington: Stimson Center, 2013), 18, accessed September 30, 2015, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?id=175015&lng=en>.

³⁰ Joel J. Snyder, “Military Concepts for Political Objectives,” *The Air University Review* no. 1 (January-February 1976): 1, accessed January 2, 2016, <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/aureview/1976/jan-feb/snyder.html#snyder>.

³¹ Michael Krepon and Julia Thompson, eds., *Deterrence Stability and Escalation Control in South Asia* (Washington, DC: Stimson, 2013), 11-13, accessed January 2, 2016, http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/deterrence_stability_dec_2013_web.pdf. Krepon writes, “Military capabilities and doctrine have far outpaced nuclear risk reduction diplomacy in the 15 years since India and Pakistan tested nuclear devices in 1998. New Delhi and Islamabad have made numerous overtures signaling an interest in improving bilateral relations, including declaratory statements and trade initiatives, prisoner exchanges and the release of fishermen, but these gestures have not led to meaningful steps and have had little impact.”

³² Joseph S. Nye, *The Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, ©2011), 41.

³³ Khurshid Khan, “Limited War under the Nuclear Umbrella and Its Implications for South Asia,” Stimson, May 1, 2005, accessed December 30, 2015, <http://www.stimson.org/essays/limited-war-under-the-nuclear-umbrella-and-its-implications-for-south-asia/>.

Hassan Askari opines that the political logic of such aspirations is an outcome of India's inability to control the indigenous freedom movement in Kashmir. Since the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, India's defense establishment has been exploring ways to bring Pakistan under military pressure without provoking an all-out war due mainly to the nuclear factor.³⁴ This brings to the fore the aspect of rationality, specifically that of the rational actor. Graham T. Allison contends that "rationality refers to consistent value maximizing choice within specified constraints." From an academic point of view, the rational actor model is used to understand the decisions that a nation-state or organization makes. This model consists of four postulates to determine a course of action: the goals and objectives; the alternatives; the consequences; and the choice the nation made.³⁵

At this stage, it is pertinent to highlight the context of rational actor model, which not only refers to India and Pakistan but also other regional and international actors. Donald Wittman notes that "an agreement (either implicit or explicit) to end a war cannot be reached unless the agreement makes both the sides better off; for each country the expected utility of continuing the war must be less than the expected utility of the settlement."³⁶ The operational timeframe of the

³⁴ Hassan Askari Rizvi Dr., "Can Coercive Diplomacy Work?," *Express Tribune with The International New York Times*, September 20, 2015, accessed January 2, 2016, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/960406/.../>.

³⁵ Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), 29-30, accessed January 2, 2016, http://ils.unc.edu/courses/2013_spring/inls285_001/materials/Allison.1971.Essence_of_Decision.pdf.

³⁶ Donald Wittman, "How a War Ends: A Rational Model Approach," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 23, no. 4 (December 1979): 743-63, accessed January 2, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/173882>.

CSD / PAS by default precludes meaningful involvement of other rational actors.³⁷

Notwithstanding operational security imperatives, the available literature can be grouped into three broad categories: Indian, Pakistani, and international insights and perspectives. Since its inception in 2004, the CSD over time has been refined into the construct of PAS, though it has not seen the test of actual combat albeit corps level field exercises.³⁸ The Indian academia is somewhat divided, yet remains inquisitive about the prospects of fielding the strategy in a nuclear environment. Writings by Ali Ahmed, research fellow Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses in India from 2008 to 2012, are indicative of the structure and apparent loopholes in the CSD / PAS. Ahmed touches upon nuclear-conventional interface, addressing Indian sensitivities as well as suggesting an India-centric roadmap.

Paul S. Kapur, along with other prominent Indian strategists and intellectuals, has revisited the structure, nature, and implications of the CSD / PAS. These studies have taken into account the trans-frontier as well as regional and international imperatives.³⁹ The majority of these writings focus on the nuclear quotient with a view to further refine the CSD / PAS as well

³⁷ Khurshid Khan, "Limited War under the Nuclear Umbrella and Its Implications for South Asia," Stimson, May 1, 2005, accessed December 30, 2015, <http://www.stimson.org/essays/limited-war-under-the-nuclear-umbrella-and-its-implications-for-south-asia/>. Also see P.R. Chari, "Nuclear Crisis, Escalation Control, and Deterrence in South Asia" (the Stimson Center, Washington DC, August 2003), 12-14, accessed January 3, 2016, http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/escalation_chari.pdf. Khan writes, "Contrary to the thesis that has gained currency in India that limited wars can be fought under the rubric of nuclear deterrence, Dr. Chari is of the view that limited war in the present state of Indo-Pakistan nuclear relations cannot be pursued as a national strategy. Limited war theory remains untested and the question remains unanswered. Limited war has the potential to escalate across the nuclear threshold and therefore is essentially unworkable."

³⁸ Masood Ur Rehman Khattak, "Indian Military's Cold Start Doctrine: Capabilities, Limitations and Possible Response from Pakistan" (research fellow, South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI), March 2011), 14-22.

³⁹ Stephen P. Cohen and Sunil Dasgupta, *Arming Without Aiming: India's Military Modernization* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2010).

as to identify and design a feasible construct of said strategy.⁴⁰ However, these studies collectively argue that the CSD / PAS will have a destabilizing effect on the region owing to the likelihood of nuclear escalation.

A number of notable Pakistani strategists, retired military officials, and intellectuals have written about the ramifications of the CSD / PAS at length. Understandably, Pakistan's sensitivities stem from India's conventional military superiority, its regional superpower aspirations, and the usual Indian proclivity of apportioning blame on to Pakistan. The available literature oscillates between reliance on nuclear deterrence and established percepts (politico-military objectives) of pursuing a conventional (limited) war with India on terms favorable to Pakistan. Among those opining on the escalatory dimensions of the CSD / PAS and possible resultant instability are Ikram Sehgal, retired Brigadier General Feroz Khan, and Drs. Maria Sultan, Khurshid Khan, and Zafar Jaspal.⁴¹

Walter Ladwig's 2004 article, "A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army's New Limited War Doctrine," addresses the strategy and discusses India's ability to implement it.⁴² Conversely, for obvious operational security reasons, there is little open source material available on the New Concept of Warfighting (NCWF). The NCWF is the Pakistan Army's response to the CSD / PAS, which has been validated over a four year period during the "Azm-e-Nau" series of

⁴⁰ Shashank Joshi, "India's Military Instrument: A Doctrine Stillborn," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 38, no. 5 (August 2015).

⁴¹ Maria Sultan Dr., Cold Start Doctrine and Pakistan's Countermeasures, *News International*, September 28, 2011, accessed September 30, 2015, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-13-9168-Cold-Start-doctrine-and-Pakistans-countermeasures>.

⁴² Walter C. Ladwig III, "A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army's New Limited War Doctrine," *International Security* 32, no. 3 (Winter 2007/08): 158-90, accessed August 24, 2015, https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/international_security/toc/ins32.3.html.

war games.⁴³ The NCWF offsets the strategic and operational reframe attained through rapid mobilization of the Indian strike formations and holding corps. Analysts perceive the Pakistani concept as a very potent and effective counter to conventional overmatch in terms of time and space imperatives.⁴⁴

The majority of other articles come from Indian, Pakistani and international think tanks, as well as defense review journals dealing with South Asia.⁴⁵ Notable among these are South Asian Strategic Stability Initiative, Islamabad Policy Research Institute, South Asian Analysis Group, Institute of Defense Studies and Analyses, Stimson Center, International Relations and Security Network, Brookings, and the Naval Postgraduate School.⁴⁶ Understandably, the majority of written material contains respective individual, national, and regional biases.

Apropos, given the diversity of approaches and thought processes highlighted above, this monograph will test two hypotheses. First, given the proclivity of ultranationalist and neo-

⁴³ Staff Reporter, "Armed Forces Ready to Face Any Challenge, Says Kayani," *DAWN*, June 17, 2013, accessed September 30, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1018737>. Staff Reporter, Army Plans Largest Exercise Since '98 Zarb-i-momin, *DAWN*, April 6, 2010, accessed September 30, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/856416/army-plans-largest-exercise-since-98-zarb-i-momin>.

⁴⁴ Kamran Yousaf, "Countering Cold Start: Military to Adopt New War Concept," *Express Tribune*, June 4, 2013, accessed April 18, 2016, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/558604/countering-cold-start-military-to-adopt-new-war-concept/>. Also see Brigadier Dr Muhammad Khan, "From Cold Start to Cold Storage," Inter Services Press Relations, January, 2014, accessed April 18, 2016, <https://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-article&id=87>.

⁴⁵ Neil Joeck, "Prospects for Limited War and Nuclear Use in South Asia," in *Deterrence Stability and Escalation Control in South Asia*, ed. Michael Krepon and Julia Thompson, Stimson Center South Asia Program (Washington: Stimson Center, 2013), 107-22, accessed September 30, 2015, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?id=175015&lng=en>.

⁴⁶ Michael Krepon and Toby Dalton, "A Normal Nuclear Pakistan" (Video of lecture, Stimson Center, Washington., DC, USA, September 14, 2015), accessed September 27, 2015, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Video/Detail/?lng=en&id=193691>. Harsh V Pant, "India's Controversial New War Doctrine," The International Relations and Security Network, January 25, 2010, accessed September 30, 2015, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Articles/Detail/?ots591=4888caa0-b3db-1461-98b9-e20e7b9c13d4&lng=en&id=111662>.

conservative ideology in mainstream Indian polity within the ongoing political discourse of the Modi government, the possibility of an armed clash between nuclear-armed neighbors India and Pakistan cannot be overruled. In this backdrop, the Indian army's CSD / PAS has gained considerable currency in the context of a swift yet limited war below the nuclear threshold to attain perceived politico-military objectives.

Second, when India commits herself to a limited war against Pakistan under the ambit of PAS, it would not be possible to keep the conflict limited to the conventional domain given the limitation of exit points and apparent inviolability of deterrence (ideology, national will, alliances) on either side. In case of a conventional reversal for the Indian army at the strategic or operational level, internal domestic pressure in the mainstream masses and political make-up may force India to introduce nuclear weapons.

Summing up, there is a binary vision of the CSD / PAS in terms of feasibility, acceptability, and viability. Military strategists and theorists in India and Pakistan are in awe of the likely possibilities and outcomes the CSD / PAS and the NCWF. Some analysts believe in the viability of the CSD / PAS as a feasible discourse to attain politico-military objectives. Yet another school of thought has concerns that the envisaged construct of the CSD / PAS may lead to eventual nuclear exchanges, tactical or otherwise. However, what is amiss is the "what now" part of the strategy in context of politico-military aims and the subsequent courses of action. Identifying and bridging these gaps is the central focus of this study. To this end, the monograph will rely on strategic frameworks and theories to ascertain the missing links. The following section will elaborate the methodology used to address the hypothesis in line with a structured focused approach to the study.

Methodology

This section describes the methodology to determine if the Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) / Proactive Strategy (PAS) can help India attain its desired politico-military objectives. Unlike contemporary doctrines and strategies, the actualization of the CSD / PAS has not gone beyond the realm of map exercises and war games. This necessitates a historical case study approach in order to ascertain the viability of the CSD / PAS. In this case, the 1999 Kargil conflict between India and Pakistan and the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks are the closest historical references for guiding the research project.⁴⁷ The 1999 Kargil conflict took place under a nuclear overhang and saw application of maximum combat power in a defined [limited] geographic space.⁴⁸

Given that India has not applied the CSD / PAS in actual combat, the logical course of action is to analyze the doctrine's potential to attain politico-military objectives through a case study methodology.⁴⁹ The case study serves as one of the three basic observational testing methods for analysis. This methodology also fits well with the unique situation of the construct of the CSD / PAS which, though reminiscent of the Cold War era, has significantly different contextual contours. The thesis will then follow the structured focused approach set out by George and Bennett.⁵⁰ This entails addressing specific questions to collect relevant data to test the hypotheses.

⁴⁷ The Kargil Conflict predates the advent of the Cold Start Doctrine / Proactive Strategy. Though limited to the glaciated Himalayan terrain, it is a classic example of limited war under a nuclear overhang. The 2008 Mumbai Terror Attacks fit well within the envisaged strategic and operational premise of the operating environment set for the Cold Start Doctrine / Proactive Strategy.

⁴⁸ Though not exactly fought under the nuclear overhang, the 1999 conflict has some parallels with the structural framework of the Cold Start Doctrine / Proactive Strategy.

⁴⁹ Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 50-51.

⁵⁰ Andrew Bennett and Alexander L. George, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences (BCSIA Studies in International Security)* (United States: The MIT Press, 2005), 66-69.

The central tenet of this study from an academic point of view is that of strategy. During the course of research, the study itself and the reference material will touch upon significant terminologies. These include deterrence, coercive diplomacy, the impact of domestic politics on policymaking, and war termination. However, these terminologies will be addressed as necessary within the case study. Finally, the variables employed to research the hypothesis are policy imperatives, political objectives, military capabilities, regional configuration, and diplomacy.

Six questions guide the collection of empirical evidence required to establish the ability of the CSD / PAS as an instrument to attain politico-military objectives. The first question deals with the strategic context of the PAS. The second question deals with the structural context of the CSD / PAS. The third question deals with the historical frames of references to ascertain feasibility, viability, and suitability the CSD / PAS. The following three questions deal with the political, strategic, and diplomatic context of the CSD / PAS.

First, can the Indian military's Proactive Strategy (PAS) attain politico-military objectives for India? The 2008 Mumbai terror attacks presented the Indian government with an opportunity to exercise the option of the CSD / PAS. Notwithstanding a range of options, the Indian government realized that it was not in a position to execute any military plans. Major inhibitors identified were lack of intelligence, significant likelihood of corresponding response by the Pakistani government to include nuclear escalation, and international pressure.⁵¹

Second, what is the Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) / Proactive Strategy (PAS)? The inability of the Indian military hierarchy to attain designated politico-military objectives during operation Parakram, the 2001-2002 escalation, precipitated a strategic and operational review.⁵²

⁵¹ Sandeep Unnithan, "Why India Didn't Strike Pakistan After 26/11," *India Today*, October 14, 2015, accessed December 17, 2015, <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/why-india-didnt-strike-pakistan-after-26-11/1/498952.html>.

⁵² Gurmeet Kanwal Brig, "Lost Opportunities in Operation Parakarm," in "Net Edition," special issue, *Indian Defence Review* (December 13, 2011): 1, accessed August 23, 2015, <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/lost-opportunities-in-operation-parakram/>.

Consequently in 2004, the Indian military came up with the concept of “Cold Start Doctrine,” (CSD) which was later refined into “Proactive Strategy” (PAS). The doctrine envisages a swift, short-lived blitzkrieg-type military operation to attain politico-military objectives. The central tenet of the doctrine revolves around the perceived availability of space for a limited war under a nuclear overhang.

Third, what is the feasibility and viability of the Indian Army’s PAS from the perspective of Operational Art through the lens of history and theory? The 1999 Kargil conflict between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan is the closest frame of reference relevant to the CSD / PAS. Even though it predates the advent of the Indian military strategy in question, the conflict was limited in nature. Apart from tactical capital, neither side gained any worthwhile strategic advantage. Notwithstanding a declaration of peace, the subsequent sequence of events led to the ten month long 2001-2002 escalation between the two countries. In essence, the course of limited war did not allow India to attain her politico-military objectives.

Fourth, what strategic assumptions and type of operating environment (national domestic, regional, and international), allow the Indian government to pursue the attainment of politico-military objectives under the ambit of PAS? In the post 9/11 environment, the Indian government finds it convenient to shift focus of the domestic audience for political expediency. The domestic issues include poor governance, fissiparous tendencies, and racial-sectarian issues as well as channeling ultranationalist Hindu ideology. The time-tested modus operandi is to stoke war rhetoric against Pakistan to divert attention of the masses. Regionally, India wants to assert herself as formidable mini superpower and finds it convenient to use her military muscle. Internationally, India is taking undue advantage of the war on terror. India is also intelligently playing the western sensitivities concerning China and Iran to her advantage.

Fifth, what is the degree of success or parity guaranteed by the PAS, given the constraints of geo-political situation, terrain, and envisaged assembly of offensive formations in a near-peer scenario? The inability of the Indian Army to mobilize in an earlier timeframe given the

inadequacy of existing military hardware forecloses any significant strategic outcomes. The advent of NCWF by the Pakistani Army also forecloses attainment of India's politico-military objectives. Moreover, the infrastructure and hardware requirements in themselves are time-intensive, precluding practical manifestation of the CSD / PAS in the short term. Additionally, Indian political leadership looks at the CSD / PAS as an instrument to punish Pakistan in the event of Mumbai-like incident. This incident-based approach towards Pakistan may have a spiraling effect much beyond the ends of perceived politico-military objectives.

Sixth, what would be the response of major regional and international powers in a PAS scenario between India and Pakistan? Would such a conflict allow rational actors to intervene or escalate the conflict at a regional level? The likelihood of a limited war between two archrivals will certainly not fit well with the regional and international powers. Regardless of events leading up to initiation of hostilities, the aggressor will be on a weaker footing. The calculus of cost-benefit analysis does not bode well for India as an initiator of war. By answering these questions, the study will attain requisite insight, evidence, and logic to support or negate the hypothesis.

Owing to operational security reasons, the research work will primarily rely on open source material such as books, academia, defense reviews, journals, and think tanks dealing with South Asia. In order to retain balance as well as depth, the majority of this material will comprise works of Indian, Pakistani, and international subject matter experts. This will make the study pragmatic, as most of the regional open source, material has an understandable degree of national or ideological bias.

Once sufficient credible data is collected, the study will conduct process-tracing to initiate qualitative analysis. This analysis will ascertain the viability of the CSD / PAS in attaining politico-military objectives. It will ascertain the capability of the Indian Army to initiate combat operations under the ambit of the CSD / PAS. To this end, the existing force structure, reorganization efforts, and communication infrastructure as compared to opposing forces and availability of battle space will determine the variation. In order to decipher the context of

strategic assumptions, an assessment of political will and contours of operating environment in relation to historical instances becomes necessary. This assessment will allow the research work to assess availability of strategic space to conduct the CSD / PAS.

This section reviewed the overall purpose for this research and introduced the case study methodology to test the hypothesis. It accounts for the technique of collecting specific data for the purpose of this monograph. The structured, focused approach serves to qualitatively distill relevant data for subsequent development of the study. The research questions assist in accurately identifying and exploring the variables to ascertain the specific contours of the strategy. The next section will present the case study of 1999 Kargil war and the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks in tandem to draw pertinent lessons.

Case Study

The Kargil War (1999) and the Mumbai Terror Attacks (2008)

In order to ascertain the viability of the Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) / Proactive Strategy (PAS) in the context of strategy and operational art, it is imperative to lay all associated aspects threadbare. This analysis includes the strategic context, the structural organization, and the contemporary operating environment. Apropos, this chapter provides a case study of the 1999 Kargil War between India and Pakistan, and in tandem, the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks in India to ascertain the viability of the CSD / PAS. It begins with an overview that ties the historical background with the strategic and operational context. Subsequently, the case study will answer each of the six structured, focused questions with the supporting evidence. This chapter ends with a summary of the case study.

In order to overlay the context of this monograph, a brief synopsis of the India, Pakistan rivalry since the inception of both the states is mandatory. In August 1947, both states gained independence at the terminus of the British colonial rule in the sub-continent. The unequal division of the sub-continent on religious and racial lines left divisive fault lines. From the beginning, Kashmir emerged as a permanent flashpoint between both the states. As a result, India and Pakistan have engaged in wars in 1948, 1965, 1971, and 1999.⁵³ Additionally, there were near misses in 1986 with Operation Brasstacks, in 2001-2002 with the Operation Parakram military standoff and, most recently, in 2008 with the Mumbai terror attacks, all bordering on

⁵³ Peter R. Lavoy, ed., *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia: The Causes and Consequences of the Kargil Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 23-26.

nuclear brinkmanship.⁵⁴ There is also the constant element of use of proxies by both sides to attain strategic objectives or influence outcomes.⁵⁵

India has had its share of insurgencies. An estimated thirty armed insurgencies sweep across the country, reflecting an acute sense of alienation of the people involved and sustained mainly by failure to attend to their grievances and human rights violations by the government.⁵⁶ In a post 9/11 scenario, India finds it convenient to brand these insurgencies as terrorism and associate most of them with Pakistan. Given these factors, the genesis of the CSD / PAS is synonymous with the theoretical construct of compellence-deterrence strategy.⁵⁷ Retrospectively,

⁵⁴ P.R. Chari, “Nuclear Crisis, Escalation Control, and Deterrence in South Asia” (Washington DC, The Stimson Center, August 2003), 12-14, accessed January 3, 2016, http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/escalation_chari.pdf. Also see Steve Coll, “The Stand-Off,” *The New Yorker*, February 13, 2006, 1, accessed January 4, 2016, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2006/02/13/the-stand-off>.

⁵⁵ Jamal Hussain, “Nuclear Weapons Balance Sheet,” *Defence Journal* 17, no. 3 (May 2015): 24, accessed January 17, 2016, <http://www.defencejournal.com/2015-4/lte.asp>. Hussain writes, “Since 2011 the two continue to trade accusations of conducting proxy war on each other through terror raids. Pakistan says it has solid proof of India abetting and financing the Baloch rebels and the TTP while the Indians blame the Pakistani ISI for masterminding a number of terror attacks inside Afghanistan, specifically the one that attacked and damaged the Indian embassy in Kabul. Besides trading barbs and firing across the LOC in Kashmir that has risen in intensity ever since the Modi government has assumed power the uneasy peace between the two nuclear armed warring nations has held so far.”

⁵⁶ Shahid R. Siddiqi, “Rise of Armed Insurgencies in India,” *DAWN*, February 12, 2011, accessed January 3, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/605861/rise-of-armed-insurgencies-in-india>. Siddiqi writes, “Broadly, these can be divided into movements for political rights (Kashmir, Khalistan, Assam), social and economic justice (Maoists/Naxalites, North Eastern states), and autonomy (Ladakh).”

⁵⁷ Branislav L. Slantchev, “Introduction to International Relations Lecture 8: Deterrence and Compellence” (lecture, Department of Political Science, University of California – San Diego, San Diego, California, May 2, 2005).

bilateral relations between both states have always had an element of distrust, hostility, and a perpetual imbalance in diplomatic overtures.⁵⁸

As Dolman very correctly points out, “at the strategic level, one quickly loses faith in such calculations. It is quite possible to win the battle and lose the war. It is moreover possible to win the war and lose the strategic advantage.”⁵⁹ In this backdrop, the advent of the CSD / PAS by the Indian military post Operation Parakram, merits validation as well as academic qualification.⁶⁰ The idea of a space for a limited war under a nuclear overhang calls into question the conceptual validity of deterrence between the two states.⁶¹ More significantly, the exit points in the strategy remain unclear. Who will decide, at what point in terms of time and space, that the short-lived but violent phase of war has achieved the set politico-military objectives?⁶² The

⁵⁸ Rishi Lyengar and Nilanjana Bhowmick, “Military Action, Diplomatic Threats between India and Pakistan in Kashmir,” *TIME Asia*, October 10, 2014, 1, accessed September 27, 2015, <http://time.com/3489191/military-action-diplomatic-threats-between-india-and-pakistan-in-kashmir/>.

⁵⁹ Everett C. Dolman, “The Path of Pure Strategy,” in *Pure Strategy: Power and Principles in the Space and Information Age* (New York: Frank Cass, 2005), 3.

⁶⁰ Gurmeet Kanwal Brig, “Lost Opportunities in Operation Parakarm,” in “Net Edition,” special issue, *Indian Defence Review* (December 13, 2011): 1, accessed August 23, 2015, <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/spotlights/lost-opportunities-in-operation-parakram/>.

⁶¹ Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War, Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective*, 4th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 17. Strachan writes, “that we live with the intellectual legacy of Cold War more than we recognize. Then deterrence and dissuasion were the essence of strategy: this was where reciprocity was played out, but it was a field of activity devoid of actual fighting. He also entails that, the pursuit of balance was vital to mutually assured destruction, the foundation stone on which deterrence came to rest. But deterrence said nothing much about what generals did in wartime. Notions of victory seemed irrelevant at best and often obscene, since victory in European warfare would not, it seemed. Be secured without the use of nuclear weapons and that would involve catastrophic destruction. Soldiers lost control of strategy, and so the discipline which defined and validated the art of the commander, the business of general staffs and the processes of war planning, was no longer theirs.”

⁶² Tariq M. Ashraf, “Doctrinal Reawakening of the Indian Armed Forces,” *Military Review* Volume LXXXIV no. 6 (November-December 2004): 58. Ashraf notes, “Implementing Cold Start Doctrine requires a high degree of coordination between India’s political and military leaders. The speed with which military action is likely to unfold would not allow political leaders to waver once they make a decision.”

viability of exits points has a direct bearing on the accuracy of strategic assumptions. A miscalculation at the strategic level or flawed strategic assumptions can be disastrous.

The transition to the construct of the CSD / PAS evolved in the aftermath of the 1999 Kargil War and the 2001-2002 military stand-off between the two states. With Pakistan's 1998 entry into the nuclear club, India realized that she could not utilize her comparative conventional advantage over Pakistan due to fear of nuclear retaliation.⁶³ From an Indian perspective, the notion of compelling Pakistan to stop supporting proxies in Kashmir or elsewhere in India resulted in evolution of the CSD / PAS. The Indian military's doctrinal configuration preceding the CSD / PAS was based on the Sundarji doctrine. This doctrine relied on the use of superiority of numbers and mechanized forces.⁶⁴ The doctrine failed to achieve any worthwhile politico-military objectives during the 1986-1987 Brasstacks and the subsequent 2001-2002 military standoff.⁶⁵

The 1999 Kargil conflict is a case in point. Occurring less than a year after India and Pakistan openly tested unclear weapons, Kargil dispelled the common notion that nuclear-armed states cannot fight one another in conventional mode.⁶⁶ Prior to the Kargil operation, the most recent conflict in this area occurred in 1984, when Indian forces occupied the strategic Sia La and

⁶³ Jeffrey D. McCausland, "Pakistan's Tactical Nuclear Weapons: Operational Myths and Realities," *Stimson* (April 19, 2011), 13, accessed January 18, 2016, <http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/McCausland.pdf>.

⁶⁴ Stephen P. Cohen, *India: Emerging Power*, softcover ed. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2002), 146-47. Also see Walter C. Ladwig III, "A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army's New Limited War Doctrine," *International Security* 32, no. 3 (Winter 2007/08): 158-90, accessed August 24, 2015, https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/international_security/toc/ins32.3.html.

⁶⁵ Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons a Debate Renewed*, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003), 120.

⁶⁶ Peter R. Lavoy, ed., *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia: The Causes and Consequences of the Kargil Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-5.

Bilafond La Mountain passes along the Siachen glacier. After the Siachen operation, any perceived vulnerability along enemy lines was to be surveyed, probed, and, if possible, attacked by both belligerents.⁶⁷ From the late 1980s onward, both the Indian and Pakistan armies launched daring operations to seize opposing posts and tried to retrieve those they had lost to the enemy.

In April 1999, the Pakistani Army had occupied approximately one hundred thirty posts in the Dras, Mushkoh, Kaksar, Batalik, and Chorbat La sectors of Kargil, covering an area of sixty-five miles in length and five to six miles in width. The Indian army's initial attempts to retrieve the heights, which they initially believed were held by Kashmiri militants, were rebuffed. The Indian army launched a major counteroffensive during the third week of May 1999, codenamed Operation Vijay (Victory). On May 26, the Indian Air Force commenced air strikes in support of ground troops, vertically escalating the conflict. To intensify strategic pressure on Pakistan, Indian troops began mobilizing to war locations in other parts of the country, which included the deployment of troops along the India-Pakistan international border.⁶⁸ The conflict finally resulted in a ceasefire and near withdrawal of Pakistani forces in July 1999 following US intervention.

Peter R. Lavoy contends that,

The Kargil conflict is significant not only for what happened, but also for what did not occur in 1999 and in subsequent years. Rather than moving toward mutual deterrence secured through arms control, as the United States and the Soviet Union did after the Cuban missile crisis, India and Pakistan suspended all dialogue after Kargil, ramped up their production of nuclear weapons and missile delivery systems, and accelerated preparations for conventional war, which nearly occurred in January 2002 and again in May 2002. The behavior of India and Pakistan during and after the Kargil conflict,

⁶⁷ Peter R. Lavoy, ed., *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia*, 6-18.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 6-22. Also see Sumit Ganguly, *Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions Since 1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 114-16. Lavoy writes, "It was widely believed that mujahideen, or civilian "freedom fighters" involved in a Muslim war or struggle, played a significant part in the Kargil intrusion – a falsehood caused by the initial confusion of India's civilian and military intelligence services, a carefully planned Pakistani denial and deception campaign, and opportunistic Islamic militant groups."

therefore, offers important new insights about the political-military behavior of competing states equipped with nuclear weapons and engaged in an enduring rivalry.⁶⁹ In his master's thesis for the Naval Postgraduate School, Quinn J. Rhodes notes that the overall outcome of the Kargil conflict had major implications for a conflict fought according to the Cold Start doctrine. "Thus, rather than demonstrating the fallacy of limited war under the nuclear umbrella, Kargil proved to India just the opposite: such a war could be fought and it could even be escalated if the circumstances required it. For the Indian Army, Cold Start would help further India's capabilities to fight and win such a war, regardless of the potential for escalation, which India saw not as a detriment but instead as a useful tool to intimidate Pakistan."⁷⁰ The subsequent outcome of the 2001-02 military standoff between India and Pakistan further crystallized the evolution of Indian strategic thought process.

The near realization of the CSD / PAS came on November 26, 2008, when terrorists attacked multiple soft targets in Mumbai, India. The Mumbai attacks caused a media hype in India that tended to parallel 9/11 with 26/11 and raised a clamor about Pakistan's involvement in the attacks. The Indian investigation concluded that intercepts of telephone calls made by the terrorists established their links with Lashkar-e-Taiba, a jihadi outfit operating from Pakistan.⁷¹ Notwithstanding the veracity of Indian claims, which are now under investigation, "a former home ministry officer has alleged that a member of the CBI-SIT (Criminal Bureau of Investigation-Special Investigation Team) team had accused incumbent governments of

⁶⁹ Peter R. Lavoy, ed., *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia: The Causes and Consequences of the Kargil Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 6-22. Also see Sumit Ganguly, *Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions Since 1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 22.

⁷⁰ Quinn J. Rhodes, "Limited War under the Nuclear Umbrella: An Analysis of India's Cold Start Doctrine and Its Implications for Stability on the Subcontinent" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, June 2010), 69.

⁷¹ Sannia Abdullah Dr., "Cold Start in Strategic Calculus," *Islamabad Policy Research Institute Journal* 12, no. 1 (2012): 1-27, accessed August 23, 2015 www.ipripak.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/art1asanw12.pdf.

orchestrating the terror attacks on Parliament and the 26/11 carnage in Mumbai.”⁷² The balance of fragile strategic relationship between India and Pakistan rapidly deteriorated.

The Indian government and the military hierarchy contemplated a number of punitive options against Pakistan.⁷³ According to Sandeep Unnithan, “the range of options included Special Forces missions, covert attacks, and strikes by the air force on terrorist training camps and even an option of a limited war. If a conflict broke out, the military leaders discussed, Pakistan’s limited strategic depth and its apprehension of India gaining the upper hand would encourage them to move up on the nuclear escalatory spiral. In other words, Pakistan had a national compulsion to project a very low nuclear threshold. If conflict broke out, keeping an Indian attack ‘limited’ would not be a Pakistani priority.”⁷⁴ In a book for Stimson Center,

⁷² Thomas K. Mathai, “Govt Behind Parliament Attack,” 26/11: Ishrat Probe Officer, *Times of India*, July 14, 2013, accessed January 4, 2016, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Govt-behind-Parliament-attack-26/11-Ishrat-probe-officer/articleshow/21062116.cms>.

⁷³ “Kasuri Claims India Had Planned Air Strikes in Pakistan After Mumbai Attacks,” *DAWN*, October 6, 2015, accessed January 4, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1211283>. Kasuri contends, “Former foreign minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri has revealed that India planned to launch air strikes on Pakistani soil following the 2008 Mumbai attacks in order to target the banned militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jamaatud Dawa (JuD), *India Today* reported. Talking to host Karan Thapar on India Today television, Kasuri said that a United States (US) delegation led by Senator John McCain had met him after the terror attacks expressing concern that India may carry out surgical air strikes to target LeT and JuD in Punjab’s Muridke town.”

⁷⁴ Sandeep Unnithan, “Why India Didn’t Strike Pakistan After 26/11,” *India Today*, October 14, 2015, accessed December 17, 2015, <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/why-india-didnt-strike-pakistan-after-26-11/1/498952.html>. Unnithan writes, “One alternative included a ‘Cold Start,’ the Indian Army’s plan for swift and shallow thrusts across the international border without waiting for a full-scale mobilization... But the options of using Cold Start was discarded. The government was clear that a strike across the international border (at the JuD headquarters in Muridke, Lahore, which Kasuri suggested) would be provocative and escalate matters. It would also be unacceptable internationally... The armed forces, particularly the army and the navy, were still short of options for striking back at the LeT.”

Michael Krepon has concluded that the Indian government realized that “the likelihood of punishing Pakistan would likely be modest and the risks would likely be great.”⁷⁵

The first structured, focused question is can the Indian military’s Proactive Strategy (PAS) attain politico-military objectives for India? India cannot attain her politico-military objectives through the PAS. In a paper for South Asia Analysis Group, Dr. Subhash Kapila notes that

Such an offensive strategy can only be successful if the Indian political leadership at the given time of operational execution of this strategy has: (1) Political will to use offensive military power; (2) Political will to use pre-emptive military strategies; (3) Political sagacity to view strategic military objectives with clarity; (4) Political determination to pursue military operations to their ultimate conclusion without succumbing to external pressures; and (5) Political determination to cross-nuclear threshold if Pakistan seems so inclined.⁷⁶

He further notes that, “If the above are missing, as they have been from 1947 to 2004, the Indian Army’s new war doctrine would not add up to anything.”⁷⁷ In a seminal paper for Stimson, Khurshid Khan notes that

Unlike the United States and the former Soviet Union, India and Pakistan have direct and very high stakes due to geographical contiguity, the Indian leadership has contemplated fighting and winning a limited conventional war against Pakistan. Such a limited war strategy is part of its doctrine for achieving desired political objectives by exploiting the strategic space beneath the nuclear threshold. Many scholars believe that this strategy is potentially dangerous as it has the inbuilt threat of escalation. Therefore, India’s strategy

⁷⁵ Michael Krepon and Nate Cohn, *Crises in South Asia: Trends and Potential Consequences* (Washington, DC: Henry L. Stimson Center, 2011), 9-10, accessed January 17, 2016, http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/crises_complete.pdf.

⁷⁶ Subhash Kapila Dr., “India’s New 'Cold Start' War Doctrine Strategically Reviewed,” *Strategic Affairs & Security*, May 4, 2004, accessed January 4, 2016, <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/paper991>.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 3. Also see Walter C. Ladwig III, “A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army’s New Limited War Doctrine,” *International Security* 32, no. 3 (Winter 2007/08): 162, accessed August 24, 2015, https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/international_security/toc/ins32.3.html. Ladwig writes, “The Indian Army’s postmortem analyses of Operation Parakram sought to understand why India had been unable to achieve significant political aims through its military deployment. Part of the blame fell to the Indian political leadership, which failed to define any strategic objectives for the mobilization, making it impossible to define victory or defeat for the operation.”

of limited conventional war will continue to cause instability and uncertainty in South Asia.⁷⁸

The dialectic between the operational level of war and the strategic ends is in itself a predicament in such a scenario.⁷⁹ Notwithstanding the ability or inability of the Indian armed forces to execute such blitzkrieg operations, two aspects merits particular attention. First, there is one significant commonality between the Kargil conflict, Operation Parakram, and Mumbai crisis: the role of international mediators and Indian sensitivities to international perceptions. In all three cases, despite the capability to exact a significant toll on Pakistan, the Indian government was restrained by external pressure and diplomatic considerations. Second, in all three instances, the Indian political leadership and military brass proved unable to assess the Pakistani response and, thus, were constrained by the likelihood of Pakistan escalating the situation.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Khurshid Khan, "Limited War under the Nuclear Umbrella and Its Implications for South Asia," Stimson, May 1, 2005, accessed December 30, 2015, <http://www.stimson.org/essays/limited-war-under-the-nuclear-umbrella-and-its-implications-for-south-asia/>.

⁷⁹ Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War, Strategy and the Operational Level of War*, 4th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 212-16.

⁸⁰ Walter C. Ladwig III, "A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army's New Limited War Doctrine," *International Security* 32, no. 3 (Winter 2007/08): 172, accessed August 24, 2015, https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/international_security/toc/ins32.3.html. Ladwig writes, "Indian military planners may not have considered how threatening Cold Start offensive operations could appear to an opponent. The intent to pursue limited objectives may not be clearly perceived by the other side. Given the Pakistan Army's doctrine of "offensive defense," which seeks to respond to an Indian attack with aggressive counterattacks on Indian territory, Pakistan could react to Cold Start in a manner that Indian leaders view as "disproportionate" to the amount of force employed in pursuit of their own limited goals. This could prompt India to escalate the conflict, thereby heightening Pakistan's perception that Indian aims are not limited, and potentially leading to an escalation spiral between the two sides." Also, see, Ali Ahmed, *Idsa Monograph Series*, vol. 10, *India's Limited War Doctrine: The Structural Factor* (New Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses, 2012), 10. Ahmed writes, "Pakistan's offensive posture at the sub-conventional level and the consequent Indian offensive orientation at the conventional level, leads to heightened nuclear possibilities... This challenge has proven difficult, with Pakistan attempting to posture a low nuclear threshold. India for its part has attempted to raise this threshold by promising higher order nuclear retaliation."

Lieutenant General V.R. Raghavan has concisely summed up the paradox of attaining politico-military objectives. He opines, “How would the political and military leadership in India and Pakistan plan and conduct limited war against each other? Can they unilaterally limit political and operational objectives? The answers to these questions remain uncertain, as one side’s limited political and military objectives could be viewed as unlimited and unacceptable by the other.”⁸¹

The second structured focused question is, what is the Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) / Proactive Strategy (PAS)? To correct the perceived deficiencies in India’s conventional war-fighting doctrine, the chief of army staff unveiled the new Cold Start concept in April 2004. The goal of this limited war doctrine is to establish the capacity to launch a retaliatory conventional strike against Pakistan that would inflict significant harm on the Pakistan Army before the international community could intercede, and at the same time, pursue narrow enough aims to deny Islamabad a justification to escalate the clash to the nuclear level.⁸²

Walter C. Ladwig has succinctly outlined the parameters and relevant details of the CSD / PAS. This doctrine requires reorganizing the Indian Army’s offensive power away from the three large strike corps into eight smaller division-sized “integrated battle groups” (IBGs) that combine mechanized infantry, artillery, and armor in a manner reminiscent of the Soviet Union’s operational maneuver groups. Rather than seek to deliver a catastrophic blow to Pakistan that is, cutting the country in two, - the goal of Indian military operations would be to make shallow territorial gains, fifty–eighty kilometers deep, that could be used in post-conflict negotiations to extract concessions from Islamabad.⁸³

⁸¹ V.R. Raghavan, “Limited War and Nuclear Escalation in South Asia,” *Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Fall/Winter 2001), p. 8.

⁸² Walter C. Ladwig III, “A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army’s New Limited War Doctrine,” *International Security* 32, no. 3 (Winter 2007/08): 163-64, accessed August 24, 2015, https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/international_security/toc/ins32.3.html.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 164-65.

Although the operational details of Cold Start remain classified, it appears that the goal would be to have three to five IBGs entering Pakistani territory within seventy-two to ninety-six hours from the time the order to mobilize is issued. As one Indian analyst argues, “[The IBGs] should be launching their break-in operations and crossing the ‘start line’ even as the holding (defensive) divisions are completing their deployment on the forward obstacles. Only such simultaneity of operations will unhinge the enemy, break his cohesion, and paralyze him into making mistakes from which he will not be able to recover.”⁸⁴

The perceived advantages of the Cold Start doctrine over its predecessor are fivefold. First, forward-deployed division-sized units can be alerted faster and mobilized more quickly than larger formations. If the battle groups and the pivot corps start closer to the international border, their logistics requirements are significantly reduced, enhancing their maneuverability and their ability to surprise. Second, even though division-sized formations can “bite and hold” territory, they lack the power to deliver a knockout blow. In the minds of Indian military planners, this denies Pakistan the “regime survival” justification for employing nuclear weapons in response to India’s conventional attack. Third, multiple divisions, operating independently, have the potential to disrupt or incapacitate the Pakistani leadership’s decision-making cycle, as happened to the French high command in the face of the German blitzkrieg of 1940.⁸⁵

Fourth, having eight (rather than three) units capable of offensive action significantly increases the challenge for Pakistani intelligence’s limited reconnaissance assets to monitor the status of all the IBGs, thereby improving the chance of achieving surprise. In a limited war, India’s overall goals would be less predictable than in a total war, where the intent would almost certainly be to destroy Pakistan as a state. As a result, Pakistan’s defense against Indian attacks

⁸⁴ Walter C. Ladwig III, “A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army’s New Limited War Doctrine,” *International Security* 32, no. 3 (Winter 2007/08): 165, accessed August 24, 2015, https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/international_security/toc/ins32.3.html.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 166.

would be more difficult because the military objectives would be less obvious. Finally, if Pakistan were to use nuclear weapons against Indian forces, divisions would present a significantly smaller target than would corps.⁸⁶

The third structured focused question is, what is the feasibility, viability of Indian Army's PAS from the perspective of Operational Art, through the lens of history and theory? The CSD / PAS though operationally (tactical mechanics) sound, proves to be a fallacy from the perspective of history and theory. The misconception of Indian thinkers with the CSD / PAS is best summed up in the words of Dolman, "The strategists does not achieve victory. Rather, victory is one means to achievement. Victory is not an end for strategy, any more than a finished portrait is the end of art. The parallels between art and strategy, craft and tactics, are profound... Strategy, like art, is about exploration and the development of new ways of seeing, thinking, and being."⁸⁷

Evidently, the Indian strategic thinking in context of Pakistan has evolved over time transitioning from the Sundarji doctrine to the CSD / PAS. However, the PAS has not delivered the envisaged deliverables relevant to the Indian strategic security. The perceived Indian [oft-purported] problems and perceptions associated with Pakistan have to date lingered on. There have been instances of minor to significant political gains, which were certainly a result of international pressure and mediation.⁸⁸ In relation to Dolman's perspective, we do find the evidence of seeing and thinking but not that of being. For example, the Kargil conflict in

⁸⁶ Walter C. Ladwig III, "A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army's New Limited War Doctrine," *International Security* 32, no. 3 (Winter 2007/08): 167, accessed August 24, 2015, https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/international_security/toc/ins32.3.html. Also See Masood Ur Rehman Khattak, "Indian Military's Cold Start Doctrine: Capabilities, Limitations and Possible Response from Pakistan" (research fellow, South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI), March 2011).

⁸⁷ Everett C. Dolman, "Is Strategy an Art?" in *Pure Strategy: Power and Principles in the Space and Information Age* (New York: Frank Cass, 2005), 188.

⁸⁸ Adekeye Adebajo and Chandra Lekha Sriram, *The Cass Series On Peacekeeping*, vol. [9], *Managing Armed Conflicts in the 21st Century* (London: F. Cass, 2001), 190-93.

continuum with Operation Parakram, the only strategic advantage India accrued was reduced support for the Kashmiri mujahedeen. Again this was more a case of the fringe effects of international pressure of global war on terrorism and growing instability (terrorism) inside Pakistan.

The post 26/11 Mumbai sequence of events also point in the same direction. The Indian hierarchy was not in a position to initiate military action (Hot Pursuit Operations or Limited War) against Pakistan. There is also the question of Pakistani understanding of a limited war and under what circumstances, Pakistan would decide to keep the war limited or escalate it. Owing to lack of strategic depth and the sensitivity to loss of space, Pakistan's nuclear threshold redlines are significantly lower.⁸⁹ This predicament places the feasibility and viability of the CSD / PAS in doubt.

The fourth structured focused question is, what strategic assumptions and type of operating environment (national domestic, regional, and international), allow the Indian government to pursue the attainment of politico-military objectives under the ambit of PAS? The following strategic factors enabled the Indian government and military hierarchy's shift to the CSD / PAS. First, Indian political leadership failed to define and set clearly attainable political objectives during Operation Parakram. Second, the mobilization differential allowed international actors to intervene well before the Indian military could bring to bear the full combat potential at

⁸⁹ Walter C. Ladwig III, "A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army's New Limited War Doctrine," *International Security* 32, no. 3 (Winter 2007/08): 169, accessed August 24, 2015, https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/international_security/toc/ins32.3.html. Ladwig writes, "The clearest articulation of Pakistan's "red lines" comes from Lt. Gen. Khalid Kidwai, who, while head of the Strategic Plans Division, outlined the general conditions under which nuclear weapons could be used: India attacks Pakistan and conquers a large part of its territory; India destroys a large part of Pakistan's land or air forces; India blockades Pakistan in an effort to strangle it economically; or India pushes Pakistan into a state of political destabilization or creates largescale internal subversion in the country."

her disposal.⁹⁰ Third, the Indian political and military hierarchy risk assessments, under which Pakistan would not be tempted to cross the threshold of limited war.⁹¹ Fourth, the threat of—or punishment through—limited war would inhibit and restrain the Pakistan from perceived sponsorship of proxies (Kashmiri freedom fighters).⁹²

Subhash Kapila opines that, “India in the past has been hamstrung in cutting Pakistan to size due to a combination of United States pressures coming into play in the run-up to decisive military action and the hesitancy of India’s political leadership. Military surprise was lost due to long mobilization times. The ‘Cold Start Strategy’ can be said to be aimed militarily at Pakistan and is offensive-operations specific.”⁹³ This predicament resonates with Michael Krepon’s findings, which highlight the potential for a more aggressive posturing by the Bharatiya Janata Party led Indian government towards Pakistan. He quotes V.R. Raghavan, about the shift in

⁹⁰ Walter C. Ladwig III, “A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army’s New Limited War Doctrine,” *International Security* 32, no. 3 (Winter 2007/08): 162-63, accessed August 24, 2015, https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/international_security/toc/ins32.3.html.

⁹¹ V.R. Raghavan, “Limited War and Nuclear Escalation in South Asia,” *Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Fall/Winter 2001), p. 12. Also see Joshi Shashank. “India’s Military Instrument: A Doctrine Stillborn.” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 38, no. 5 (August 2015): 4-5. Raghavan writes, “India’s challenge in engaging Pakistan in a limited war would be to ensure that Pakistan does not face circumstances in which a nuclear strike becomes necessary. The circumstances under which Pakistan would use nuclear weapons would therefore be dependent on the military and territorial losses it can sustain. The losses Pakistan can sustain would be of two kinds: actual losses as a consequence of combat, and potential losses as a consequence of Indian nuclear retaliation which would follow a Pakistani nuclear strike on India.”

⁹² Tariq M. Ashraf, “Doctrinal Reawakening of the Indian Armed Forces,” *Military Review*, Volume LXXXIV no. 6 (November-December 2004): 55-59.

⁹³ Subhash Kapila Dr., “India’s New ‘Cold Start’ War Doctrine Strategically Reviewed,” *Strategic Affairs & Security*, May 4, 2004, accessed January 4, 2016, <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/paper991>.

Indian decision making “from a collegial and consensus-based process to decisions arrived at by a small group of individuals based in the prime minister’s office.”⁹⁴

In a July 2010 international workshop on the CSD / PAS held at Islamabad under the auspices of South Asian Strategic Stability Institute, the Indian strategic assumptions associated with the CSD / PAS were summarized as

Pakistan ostensibly has a low nuclear threshold, which is artificial. Thus, there is a space for limited war under the nuclear overhang. By countering the Pakistan army’s mobilization differential, a strategic surprise can be achieved against Pakistan by the Indian armed forces. All terrorist activities inside the Indian Territory are linked to Pakistan. Thus, sub conventional war can lead to a conventional response by India. The Pakistani national response would not be very strong because there is a difference of opinion in the Pakistani nation and the army vis-à-vis India. The international response would also not be as hard as during other crises because of limited time and space of the strikes. War would end within seventy two to ninety six hours. Indian nuclear doctrine will certainly deter Pakistan from using any nuclear option in the limited time frame. Although, sufficient military objectives will be achieved by the Indian army to paralyze a cohesive Pakistani response yet, the Pakistani forces would stay confident of their conventional war fighting capabilities, which would keep them from using nuclear weapons or lowering the threshold.⁹⁵

The unresolved status of the Kashmir issue has a significant impact on the strategic assumptions and the perceived operating environment. Khurshid Khan notes that “the Indian government is frustrated by and running out of patience with the Kashmir problem. It is serious about achieving defined political and military objectives through a limited war against Pakistan... Notwithstanding the means and strategy that India may adopt for conducting limited war, the minimum aim would be to create an environment where Pakistan is made to give up its moral

⁹⁴ Michael Krepon and Nate Cohn, *Crises in South Asia: Trends and Potential Consequences* (Washington, DC: Henry L. Stimson Center, 2011), 24, accessed January 17, 2016, http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/crises_complete.pdf. Also see V.R. Raghavan, “Limited War and Nuclear Escalation in South Asia,” *Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Fall/Winter 2001).

⁹⁵ South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI), Three day International Workshop, “Indian Military’s Cold Start Doctrine and Its Implications for Strategic Stability in South Asia” (lecture, Serena Hotel, Islamabad, Islamabad, Pakistan, July 20-22, 2010).

support for the people of Kashmir, accept the existing Line of Control as permanent border, and force Pakistan to live according to the terms and conditions dictated by its adversary.”⁹⁶

The post 9/11 regional and international operating environment has allowed the Indian hierarchy to pursue such strategic assumptions. The danger lies in the fact that India may commence the CSD / PAS type operations against Pakistan following a future event similar to the 2001 Parliament attacks or 2008 Mumbai terror attack. Michael Krepon posits that in the event a Mumbai-like attack is linked to Pakistan, the prior pattern of Indian restraint will likely end, especially if the Indian Army and Air Force are well prepared for limited military campaigns.⁹⁷

The fifth structured focused question is, what is the degree of success or parity guaranteed by the PAS given the constraints of geo-political situation, terrain, and envisaged assembly of offensive formations in a near-peer scenario? There is no existing precedent to the CSD / PAS type operations to assess the degree of success or parity. The two available frames of reference, Kargil and Mumbai, are contextually different situations at the strategic and operational level. The geo-political situation in the region in Afghanistan, China, and Iran in particular, has shifted significantly since the advent of the CSD / PAS. These dynamics have an indirect impact in themselves on the bilateral relations between India and Pakistan. One case in

⁹⁶ Khurshid Khan, “Limited War under the Nuclear Umbrella and Its Implications for South Asia,” Stimson, May 1, 2005, accessed December 30, 2015, 23, <http://www.stimson.org/essays/limited-war-under-the-nuclear-umbrella-and-its-implications-for-south-asia/>.

⁹⁷ Michael Krepon and Nate Cohn, *Crises in South Asia: Trends and Potential Consequences* (Washington, DC: Henry L. Stimson Center, 2011), 9-10, accessed January 10, 2016, http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/crises_complete.pdf.

point, the January 2, 2016 terrorist attack on an Indian air force base at Pathankot, India, has seen no conflagration like the one following 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks.⁹⁸

Notwithstanding bilateral “confidence building measures,” both countries continually revisit their operational and tactical options in terms of terrain and assembly. Masood-Ur-Rehman Khattak has identified five constraints towards realization of a CSD / PAS type operation. These are: infrastructure barriers for the eight integrated battle groups (IBGs) at the borders; uncertainty in keeping the war limited; shortage in military weapons and equipment; shorter lines of communication to assembly areas for Pakistan; and the possibility of nuclear escalation.⁹⁹ The fact that Pakistan has operationalized her Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNW) also significantly denies any degree of success or parity to India.¹⁰⁰ However, certain academics in India discount this fact, which may lead to flawed strategic assumptions.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Tariq Naqash, “Kashmiri Separatist Group UJC Claims Pathankot Attack,” *Dawn*, January 4, 2016, accessed January 17, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1230726>. I.A Rehman, “After the Pathankot Affair,” *Dawn*, January 7, 2016, accessed January 17, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1231250>. A.G Noorani, “Terror and Diplomacy,” *Dawn*, January 16, 2016, accessed January 17, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1233248/terror-and-diplomacy>.

⁹⁹ Masood Ur Rehman Khattak, “Indian Military’s Cold Start Doctrine: Capabilities, Limitations and Possible Response from Pakistan” (research fellow, South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI), March 2011), 26-30. Also, see, Walter C. Ladwig III, “A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army’s New Limited War Doctrine,” *International Security* 32, no. 3 (Winter 2007/08): 173-89, accessed August 24, 2015, https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/international_security/toc/ins32.3.html.

¹⁰⁰ Anwar Iqbal, “Tactical N-Arms to Ward off War Threat, Says FO,” *Dawn*, October 20, 2015, accessed January 18, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1214196>. Also see “Press Release,” Pakistan Army, December 5, 2013, accessed January 18, 2016, <https://www.pakistanarmy.gov.pk/awpreview/pDetails.aspx?pType=Pressrelease&pID=131>. Jamal Hussain, “Nuclear Weapons Balance Sheet,” *Defence Journal* 17, no. 3 (May 2015): 26, accessed January 17, 2016, <http://www.defencejournal.com/2015-4/lte.asp>. Hussain writes, “Pakistan apparently has embraced the Andre Beaufre doctrine when in 2013 it formally demonstrated the firing of the short-range Surface to Surface Missile Hatf 9 (nusr) that can be armed with tactical nuclear warheads.”

¹⁰¹ Arun Vishwanathan, “Pakistan’s Nasr/hatf-Ix Missile: Challenges for Indo-Pak Deterrence,” *Strategic Analysis* 48, no. 4 (July 28, 2014): 445-47, accessed January 18, 2016, <http://issp.in/tag/tactical-nuclear-weapon/>. Also, see, Gurmeet Kanwal, *Indian Army, Vision 2020* (New Delhi: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008), 81-86.

The sixth structured focused question is, what would be the response of major regional and international powers in a PAS scenario between India and Pakistan? Given the dynamics of South Asia, regional and international actors would try to mitigate any conflagration at the very onset. Michael Krepon notes that threat inflation is difficult to avoid when an India-Pakistan crisis is unfolding, in part because officials in both countries seek to mobilize the United States to help engineer a satisfactory, if not favorable, outcome.¹⁰² However, there are certain caveats to this precedence, and these lie in the degree of Indian restraint to another Mumbai-like incident as well as the make-up of the incumbent Indian government.¹⁰³ The first caveat is that, with each succeeding crisis and with India's growing conventional capabilities, Pakistan's reliance on nuclear weapons for deterrence has grown.¹⁰⁴ Second, notwithstanding past precedence, the degree of US effectiveness to forestall or mitigate potential future crisis is gradually becoming marginal. After each crisis, US relations with Pakistan have become more problematic while US-Indian ties have markedly improved. When combined with vastly improved US-Indian relations, including the US-India civil nuclear cooperation agreement, defense technology transfers, arms sales, and joint military training programs, Washington has lost the status of honest broker in

¹⁰² Michael Krepon and Nate Cohn, *Crises in South Asia: Trends and Potential Consequences* (Washington, DC: Henry L. Stimson Center, 2011), 12, accessed January 10, 2016, http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/crises_complete.pdf.

¹⁰³ Jeffrey D. McCausland, "Pakistan's Tactical Nuclear Weapons: Operational Myths and Realities," *Stimson* (April 19, 2011), 36, accessed January 18, 2016, <http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/McCausland.pdf>. McCausland writes, "It [Pakistani military] assumes that, even after the Mumbai attacks, Indian leaders would continue to show restraint in the event of a large-scale terrorist attack occur on Indian territory. This may turn out to be true, but it seems less likely following the election of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has called for a more muscular approach to India's national security policies. With reference to the 2008 Mumbai attacks, he pointedly criticized the previous government led by Manmohan Singh by observing that "Indians died and they did nothing.... Talk to Pakistan in Pakistan's language because it won't learn lessons until then."

¹⁰⁴ Michael Krepon, *Crises in South Asia* 13.

Pakistan.¹⁰⁵ Third, China has been astute in dealing with recent (1999 and 2008) India--Pakistan crises and has cautioned restraint.¹⁰⁶

Clearly, the key factor in assessing the viability of the CSD / PAS is the attainment of politico-military objectives. The overview of the case study, accompanied with the evidence presented in answering the research questions, negates this very possibility. It is also evident that both India and Pakistan have significantly entrenched views about the plausibility of limited war under a nuclear overhang. India feels compelled to force Pakistan towards desired aims and objectives through the force of arms. The Kargil conflict and Operation Parakram further crystallized this perception. Conversely, the strategic and operational imperatives following the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks denied the Indian government the luxury of attaining her objectives through the CSD / PAS.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 25.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 21.

Findings and Analysis

The Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) / Proactive Strategy (PAS) evolved out of the Indian inability to attain politico-military objectives during the course of the Kargil conflict and Operation Parakram. Over time, the doctrine has been refined at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. It has further emboldened the Indian hierarchy in their approach towards Pakistan. They believe that, given the right circumstances, the Pakistani government can be punished to inhibit her support for proxies or non-state actors. However, such thinking does not account for the Pakistani misgivings and degree of threat perception associated with the CSD / PAS. A robust Pakistani response may warrant an escalation by the Indian side, foreclosing any notions of keeping the war limited. This section will detail the findings and analysis of the case study.

In this delineation, the research questions have enabled the following findings. First, India cannot attain her stated politico-military objectives through the CSD / PAS. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that a latent degree of disconnect exists between the Indian political hierarchy and the military brass. There is also the question of Pakistan's level of patience and threshold in a limited war with India. Any perceived reversal would, in all likelihood, witness a nuclear spiral of the conflict. There is also the aspect of divergence between the strategic and operational orientation of India and Pakistan in the context of politico-military objectives.

Second, the CSD / PAS is India's answer to address her inability to attain politico-military objectives. It addresses the cumbersome mobilization differential of strike corps while leveraging the combat potential of pivot (holding or defensive) corps. Moreover, it warrants a swift yet limited war below the perceived Pakistani nuclear threshold to acquire limited territorial gains. That would then be used to obtain concessions from Pakistan during the post-war dialogue process. Exercises conducted by the Indian army posit a seventy two to ninety six hours preparatory period with seven to nine days of combat operations.

Third, though theoretically sound the CSD / PAS does not serve the perspective of strategic context of operational art. It takes into account the near and immediate, strategic and

operational objectives. However, the long-term calculus is not definitive in nature. The divergent notions of strategic stability, deterrence, and politico-military objectives of both states place the viability of the CSD / PAS in doubt.

Fourth, the Indian government believes that the medium of the CSD / PAS precludes any possibility of a third party intervention between India and Pakistan in case of a future conflagration. In such a swift and short war, India will bring Pakistan to her knees by degrading her military potential and force her to submit to desired outcomes. Notwithstanding Pakistani misgivings, India also believes that she has correctly identified spaces in Pakistan wherein she can exploit her conventional superiority without risking a nuclear spiral. Consequently, in the face of Indian conventional superiority, Pakistan has been forced to lower her deterrence threshold to ward off any Indian misadventure.

Fifth, the degree of success or parity attained through the CSD / PAS, if not questionable, is certainly not assured. Structurally, the Indian army has yet to attain the desired level of technical expertise and equipment to mount CSD / PAS type operations. Pakistan's new concept of warfighting (NCWF) and her introduction of tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs) also limit any success potential for the CSD / PAS. Sixth, notwithstanding pursuit of a limited war by India, the international community would try to resolve the situation as soon as possible. However, this would only be possible if both India and Pakistan in their respective reckoning attain a favorable war termination criterion. Any unilateral arrangement would result in a likely conflagration and perhaps nuclear spiral.

The first hypothesis states that given the proclivity of ultranationalist and neo-conservative ideology in mainstream Indian polity within the ongoing political discourse of the Modi government, the possibility of an armed clash between nuclear-armed neighbors India and Pakistan cannot be overruled. In this backdrop, the Indian army's CSD / PAS has gained considerable currency in the context of a swift yet limited war below the nuclear threshold to attain perceived politico-military objectives. Evidence suggests that the first hypothesis is not

supported and that India cannot attain her politico-military objectives through the construct of the CSD / PAS.

There are three components to support this assessment. First, the relative disconnect between India's political and military approaches towards attaining objectives in a CSD / PAS driven war have yet to mature in to a well-oiled system. The degree of decentralization vested in the military commander posited by the CSD / PAS is not evident in the traditional Indian hierarchy. For example, in the Kargil conflict the operational commanders were restrained to operate cis-frontier, which inhibited initiative and operational shock. Moreover, during Operation Parakram, the absence of clearly defined politico-military objectives precluded a worthwhile notion of success or victory. The half measures adopted after the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks are again indicative of this disconnect.

The second component pertains to the Indian misperceptions of keeping the war limited. The equations of the limited war in the perception of both the adversaries have divergent contexts. Evidently during the Kargil conflict, Operation Parakram, and the 2008 Mumbai incident, the Indian government was primarily restrained by the likelihood of escalatory potential. Conversely owing to conventional imbalance, the CSD / PAS has pressured Pakistan to significantly lower her nuclear threshold. The third component is the non-availability of any space for diplomatic maneuvering in the operational time horizon of the CSD / PAS. Once the operational commander gets a go-ahead, there is no room for second thoughts or diplomatic intervention. In their calculations, the Indian politico-military hierarchy is cognizant of the post war international pressure as a significant impediment. Though operationally sound in terms of attaining immediate politico-military objectives, the CSD / PAS does not resonate with the strategic imperatives in the mid and long term. As a result, the CSD / PAS as a "threat in being" is causing further instability in the region.

The second hypothesis states that when India commits herself to a limited war against Pakistan under the ambit of the PAS, it would not be possible to keep the conflict limited to the

conventional domain given the limitation of exit points and apparent inviolability of deterrence (ideology, national will, alliances) on either side. In case of a conventional reversal for the Indian army at the strategic or operational level, internal domestic pressure in the mainstream masses and political make-up may force India to introduce nuclear weapons. The evidence suggests that the second hypothesis is supported. However, more work needs to be done in order to correctly identify the nuclear thresholds of both states.

The relative notion of employment criteria of TNWs and strategic nuclear weapons is divergent in the case of India and Pakistan. Growing conventional asymmetry has pushed Pakistan to significantly lower her nuclear threshold. There is considerable evidence to suggest that a limited war initiated by India would not remain limited and may escalate. Correspondingly, there is considerable parity between the purported nuclear doctrines of the two adversaries. Pakistan has exhibited her willingness to use TNW against an invading Indian military inside Pakistani territory. India has a stated nuclear doctrine of massive retaliation even in the case of a TNW strike against Indian field formations inside Pakistan. The Indian notion of massive retaliation coupled with the CSD / PAS poses a significant security dilemma for Pakistan. Given a future escalatory scenario, the chances of strategic miscalculation on both sides are severe.

The internal domestic order of societal make-up in both states is woven around strong ideological leanings. The past history of four wars between both the states and the unresolved status of the Kashmir issue provides political actors on both sides sufficient cause and reason to stoke war rhetoric. The predicament is best understood in words of George Perkovich, who contends

Pakistan and India compete sharply in Kashmir and, now, in Afghanistan. Each believes with varying intensity and evidence that the other projects agents of violence to subvert its domestic order. India cites the terrorist attacks on Mumbai in 2008 and on the Lok Sabha in New Delhi in 2001; Pakistan alleges that India abets the insurgency in Balochistan. These causes of insecurity stimulate conventional military preparations and

an unregulated buildup of fissile material stockpiles, nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles.¹⁰⁷

The Indian government's tendency to tie all or any type of domestic disturbances including terrorist attacks to Pakistan also adds up to the conundrum. Given the prolonged history of enmity and mistrust, veiled or overt threats by the Indian political setup have become the new norm. Politically as well as from the perspective of statecraft, India finds it convenient to brandish the CSD / PAS as a threat in being to further coerce Pakistan. Coercion of this type is not without cost or implications for domestic as well as international audiences. A miscalculation or neo-conservative adventurism to bolster domestic political ratings may compel India to initiate war. In this backdrop, the possibility that the Indian government may initiate a CSD / PAS driven war based on a flimsy pretext is not lost on the Pakistani hierarchy.

The NCWF is designed to address such contingencies in order to avoid strategic surprise and operational shock. Hypothetically, if it does initiate a CSD / PAS driven war against Pakistan on some pretext and faces a conventional reversal, India incurs significant costs. India may lose domestic political capital and struggles to maintain strategic relevance (messaging) with other regional actors (China, Iran), which may force her to resort to nuclear strikes. From an academic perspective, the medium of the CSD / PAS does not seem to meet the test of rationality. There is a clear disconnect between the objectives, alternatives, consequences, and choices made under a CSD / PAS driven scenario. Another aspect is in context of capability; the Indian armed forces have yet to attain the requisite wherewithal to initiate the CSD / PAS operations. Absent a qualitative conventional overmatch, the Indian military hierarchy was limited in her response options to the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks.

¹⁰⁷ George Perkovich, "The Non-unitary Model and Deterrence Stability in South Asia," in *Deterrence Stability and Escalation Control in South Asia*, ed. Michael Krepon and Julia Thompson, Stimson Center South Asia Program (Washington: Stimson Center, 2013), 18, accessed September 30, 2015, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?id=175015&lng=en>.

In continuum, the Indian strategic assumption of compelling Pakistan to a desired outcome is fundamentally flawed. It is premised on exploiting identified spaces along the border, the loss of which would not warrant a nuclear strike by Pakistan. The proposed NCWF by the Pakistan Army with TNW wherewithal calls into question the viability of the CSD / PAS and associated strategic assumptions. In addition, these strategic assumptions do not account for the escalatory potential of non-state actors. In the contemporary operating environment, where Pakistan is aggressively engaged in battling militancy and extremism, the Indian rhetoric of state-sponsored terrorism by Pakistan does not allow India the requisite leverage to conduct CSD / PAS type operations. Regional and international actors would also forestall any eventuality at the very outset, as demonstrated by the international reaction to the Pathankot air base terrorists' attack.

Theoretically, the CSD / PAS seem to be an attractive medium for India to attain limited military objectives. Contextually, it reflects upon the discourse of Indian frustration in attaining her defined politico-military objectives ranging from Brasstacks (1987) to Mumbai (2008). Strategically, the CSD / PAS has more escalatory potential as compared to the Sundarji doctrine. Instead of inhibiting Pakistan, the doctrine has further stoked the Pakistani sensitivities associated with her ideological adversary and created further instability in the region.

Conclusions

The Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) / Proactive Strategy (PAS) evolved out of Indian inability to attain politico-military objectives against Pakistan. The genesis of the strategy lies in the outcome of the 1999 Kargil conflict and 2001-2002 military stand-off between the nuclear-armed adversaries. It would not be wrong to state that the Kargil misadventure gave the Indian military hierarchy the idea of the feasibility of a limited war under a nuclear overhang. This idea was further crystallized in the post Operation Parakram period. Incidentally, the overt entry of both states into the established realm of nuclear powers did little to create an environment of stable deterrence in the South Asian region. The doctrine's central tenet of availability of space for a limited war under a nuclear overhang is questionable and acts to undermine deterrence.

From a purely military perspective, the genesis of the CSD / PAS is understandable and relevant. It capitalizes on a mobilization differential to accord the Indian army the capability to exploit her conventional overmatch in terms of strategic surprise and operational shock. However, the associated strategic assumptions (politico-military domain) offset the cutting edge of the said doctrine. First, the strategy assumes keeping the war limited to the conventional domain under a nuclear overhang. The Indian political hierarchy believes that the Pakistani nuclear threshold is artificial, and the Pakistani hierarchy lacks the political will to use nuclear weapons. This belief is self-defeating in nature. Moreover, the Indian assertion of having identified spaces or objectives which, if captured by the Indian army would not elicit a nuclear response by Pakistan, is positively pernicious.

Second, the use of the CSD / PAS as a policy instrument to punish Pakistan against alleged terrorist activities inside India will likely backfire and lead to general war. In such a situation the possibility of either side introducing nuclear weapons cannot be overruled. Third, the Indian assumption of their nuclear doctrine of massive retaliation acting as a deterrent against Pakistani TNW is at best whimsical and detached from ground realities. For this reason, the

Pakistani hierarchy has been forced to lower her nuclear threshold in order to address the conventional overmatch enjoyed by the Indian army.

Apropos as a nuclear armed state, Pakistan finds it convenient to pursue her geo-political and strategic objectives in the region, especially the resolution of the Kashmir issue as well as maintaining an equal peer status with her eastern neighbor. Conversely, in the construct of the CSD / PAS the Indian military believes that it has finally found an efficient and effective medium to curtail and marginalize any misadventure by Pakistan. The “misadventure” is in the context of diplomatic, tacit, or overt support to the Kashmiri freedom fighters. The military leadership also hopes that the Indian political hierarchy would not succumb to political-diplomatic expediency subject to international intervention in a future conflict with Pakistan. Moreover, that the CSD / PAS would allow the Indian military to aptly utilize her conventional asymmetry against the Pakistani military in a conventional setting.

However, the CSD / PAS is a stumbling block for a variety of reasons. First, the context of Kargil conflict under a nuclear overhang can be best described as an aberration and a military misadventure. Notwithstanding the potential to escalate, both sides exhibited restraints; Pakistan did not raise the ante by introducing her air force in response to Indian air force and India, for her part, restrained her forces from crossing the Line of Control. Evidence suggests that both states were willing to escalate, but international intervention stopped the situation from spiraling out of control. Herein, it is important to note the role of neutral / international mediators as a safety net.

The operational timeframe of the CSD / PAS disallows a window for any fruitful international intervention or reconciliatory efforts. It also effectively forecloses the flexibility of any political expediency once the initial go ahead is given to the Indian military. The shortened operational timeframes also adversely affect the value of deterrence between India and Pakistan. In the face of complete surprise or imbalance, Pakistan may resort to nuclear weapons posturing at the operational and strategic level. Even if no tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs) are introduced

by Pakistan, any misinterpretation or misperception by India may escalate the situation well beyond the conventional realm.

The likelihood of a nuclear spiral places significant strain over the attainment of desired politico-military objectives on both states. Perhaps the most difficult part of the equation would be the assessment of the adversary's political-military objectives on both sides. Moreover, the definition of a limited war is certainly not common in the Indian and Pakistani dictionaries of statecraft. Hence, the strategic premise of having correctly identified the Pakistani sensitivity to loss of space is highly questionable. Growing conventional asymmetry between India and Pakistan is another cause of concern for the Pakistani hierarchy, allowing her to lower her nuclear threshold significantly.

The threshold equation brings out another conundrum: to what degree do India and Pakistan actually believe in each other's purported nuclear thresholds? Evidence suggests that India does not believe in Pakistan's political will to exercise the nuclear option. Conversely, Pakistan finds it expedient to resort to declaring her willingness to introduce and if the situation so warrants, use TNW against an adversary inside Pakistani territory. Understandably, Pakistan is trying to assert her deterrence in the backdrop of the Kargil conflict to forestall any Indian misadventure. However, even minus the TNW, a future conflict between the two states will only terminate on a conventional note, when both sides have attained their politico-military objectives or the war results in a stalemate.

Hypothetically, in case of a limited war between India and Pakistan, three scenarios are possible. First, India makes considerable gains and despite reversals, Pakistan does not introduce TNWs. India gains political concessions and the Pakistani military lives to fight another day. This scenario would result in persistent instability. Second, Indian forces are halted well below the desired objectives and Pakistani forces make considerable gains inside Indian territory. This scenario ends, when bowing to domestic pressure India resorts to nuclear posturing and awaits international intervention or risks losing any credibility by subjecting Pakistan to a nuclear strike.

In the third scenario, Pakistan uses TNW on Indian forces inside her territory, India resorts to massive nuclear retaliation and Pakistan follows suit by striking India: result, total annihilation.

Given the scenarios, there are pertinent lessons for contemporary strategists and operational artists. First, a military strategy cannot function in a vacuum devoid of policy imperatives or geo-strategic variables. The CSD / PAS is operationally sound but lacks strategic wherewithal. The doctrine addresses the immediate concern but fails to take into account long-term security and stability imperatives. Second, the structural (time and space) dynamics of the CSD / PAS warrant a lock, fire, and load methodology. Once initiated, the operational commander would require complete autonomy and unfettered decision-making authority, including risk assessment, to attain designated objectives. This arrangement almost precludes the role of the political hierarchy to intervene and interject as per the evolving geo-strategic and diplomatic realities. Conversely political interjection, though necessary, would stem the element of operational shock and war termination criterion.

The CSD / PAS also inhibit the ability of the international bodies and state actors to effectively intervene in such a limited war scenario. The operational time frame precludes the possibility of a meaningful diplomatic intervention. Moreover, any time compression in a case of a future Mumabi-like incident would disallow any state actor to effectively intervene until it is too late.

Summing up, the CSD / PAS is not the answer to long-term Indian strategic aims and objectives. The mere existence of such a doctrine / strategy has adversely affected the deterrence value of nuclear weapons for both states. Not only India and Pakistan, but any state attempting to craft strategies or implement doctrines to fight limited war under a nuclear overhang, must undertake a holistic view of all aspects beyond the scope of battlefield imperatives and variables. The monograph does not conclude with any recommendations owing to the obvious complexity and associated intricacies in the India-Pakistan state relations. However, it is meant to serve as a

guideline and a frame of reference for the incumbent as well as future, policy makers, strategists, and operational artists.

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