Original Article

Explaining the evolution of contestation in South Asia

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Abstract India's claims for regional hegemony have regularly been contested since its independence in 1947. The self-proclaimed emerging power is locked in an enduring rivalry with the South Asian secondary power, Pakistan. This article outlines the evolution of Pakistan's contestation since independence and seeks to demonstrate how, when and why Pakistan adapted its foreign policy toward India. While the goals of Pakistan's contestation remained constant, its means varied at two points in post-independence history. From 1947 to 1971, territorial disputes combined with a nascent nationalism drove the secondary power's foreign policy elite to engage in war and open resistance, and the divergent domestic political ideologies of both countries complicated conflict resolution. With Pakistan's devastating war defeat in 1971, direct means of contestation were no longer an immediate option, and a period of reluctant acquiescence ensued. The alleged involvement of Pakistani intelligence proxies in a crisis in Jammu and Kashmir in 1987 marked the beginning of a renewed phase of resistance, though now through indirect means of nuclear coercion and subconventional warfare. This form of contestation has increasingly manifested itself in bilateral crises with high potential of escalation and primarily targeted symbols of India's South Asian hegemony, including its political and commercial centres in Delhi and Mumbai in 2001 and 2008 respectively or India's diplomatic representations in Afghanistan. The article concludes that the current conditions of regional contestation in South Asia, most importantly the persistent revisionist versus status-quo domestic agendas, the presence of growing nuclear arsenals, and multi-tiered Asian rivalry constellations, undermine prospects for conflict resolution and complicate modelling future strategic behaviour in the region.
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Introduction

India is increasingly considered as an important player at the global level, yet its regional hegemony has regularly been contested since its independence in 1947. Contestation has primarily come from its most proximate South Asian rival, Pakistan. In raw material terms (population, economic resources, military manpower and equipment), India dominates in every respect. However, despite the clear imbalance between the two powers, Pakistan has persisted in its efforts to contest India's regional hegemony. What were the motivations behind this contestation? Through which means did Pakistan seek to challenge the Indian hegemon over time?[1]

Pakistan's capabilities and strategies are pivotal to understanding the prolongation of this conflict. While Islamabad openly contested India's regional supremacy in the first three decades following independence and initiated frequent crises and wars, it suddenly halted after its decisive military defeat of 1971. However, this acquiescence of India's military superiority was hardly an acceptance of the new status quo and an adoption of an alignment or bandwagoning strategy. In fact, Pakistan started to contest India's hegemony again by the late 1980s. The Pakistani government sought to counter-balance the ever-increasing dyadic asymmetry with India by acquiring nuclear weapons as a 'great equalizer' in the South Asian asymmetric power relations and by resorting to militant proxies.

This article examines how, when and why Pakistan's contestation has changed from 1947 to present. Depending on the regional and international contexts, the perception of its own internal material capabilities, and the outcomes of the conflicts with its Indian neighbor, Pakistan's strategy of contestation has evolved and taken different forms. Pakistan's behavioral repertoire can be ranged along a continuum that alternated from open resistance to India's hegemony to (reluctant) acquiescence of the asymmetric structure of the existing regional system (see Figure 1), based on the continuum of responses to (regional and global) hegemony presented in Williams *et al* (2012, p. 14). To different degrees, domestic, regional and systemic constraints and opportunities urged Pakistan's foreign policy executive (FPE) to adopt and to revise its strategies over time (Lobell *et al*, 2009).

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. We begin by presenting a historical background that looks at how and why Pakistan first openly contested Indian regional hegemony and then opted for a more neutral strategy following the outcome of the 1971 conflict with India. In the second section, we discuss the changing conditions in the late 1980s that led Pakistan to resume its balancing behavior, albeit in an indirect fashion. We then investigate three bilateral crises that

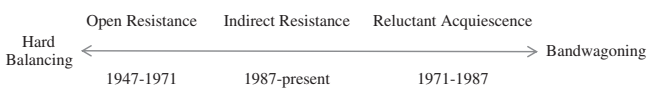

Figure 1: Pakistan's strategies vis-à-vis India from 1947 to today.

occurred in 1999, 2001 and 2008, and outline their implications for the evolution and future of Pakistan's strategy of resistance. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of the findings of balancing behavior in South Asia, and the avenues for further research on regional contestation.

From Open Resistance to Reluctant Acquiescence: 1947–1987

Since the partition of the subcontinent in 1947, Pakistan has openly challenged India's regional supremacy. The most important driver of Islamabad's contestation was a territorial dispute. Since partition, the Pakistani elite has unwaveringly sought to control over the valley of Kashmir by military force. The Kashmir dispute in the context of partition is crucial in order to understand the prolonged antagonism. In the overall absence of alternative sources for social cohesion, connecting the territorial dispute over Kashmir with the fundamental quest for a sustainable national identity in that period has inextricably and invariably linked Pakistan's domestic politics with its foreign policy making, turning the contestation of India's hegemony into a raison d'état to protect the state's integrity (Basrur, 2010, p. 6). At the time of independence, the two parties opposing British rule, the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, failed to negotiate a workable compromise over a unified India and were induced to accept the concept of partition. However, partition involved two categories of states. The first category was known as the states of British India, under direct rule, and the second comprised of the 532 nominally independent 'princely states', including Kashmir, which had some autonomy but were in fact controlled by the British in the domains of defense, foreign affairs and communications. In August 1947, these princely states were free to join India or Pakistan but could not choose to become independent. Based on their geographical position and their religious composition, these states had to choose which new country they would join. The Kashmir situation was complicated by the by the fact that it combined a Muslim majority population (around 80 per cent), a border with Pakistan, and a Hindu ruler (Ganguly, 1997, pp. 15–28).

Given that Kashmir was both contiguous to the new state of Pakistan and had a clear Muslim majority, Pakistani leaders expected Kashmir to be annexed to it. Furthermore, the incorporation of Kashmir was interpreted as an important legitimization of Pakistan's state-building strategy seeking to unite Muslims from the Subcontinent. The ideological basis for the belief that Pakistan must redeem the territory it had lost during partition in 1947, referred to as the 'Two Nation Theory', also became the fundamental pillar of its revisionist claim. In his Lahore Declaration of March 1940 to support the idea of an independent Pakistan, the erstwhile head of the Muslim League Muhammad Ali Jinnah felt it was more prudent for the minority Muslims to have their own separate nation where they could live peacefully according to their faith and belief (Khan, 1950). At the level of Pakistan's domestic politics, the Kashmir territorial dispute therefore immediately affected the core principles and the legitimacy of its

state-building project and is crucial to understand the choice for different generations of Pakistani decision-makers to openly challenge India.

For the 1947–1971 period, Pakistan pursued a traditional strategy of political and military resistance, which was made possible by external balancing and Anglo-US military support. This open challenge of Indian regional hegemony became too costly after 1971, following the military defeat against India and the dismemberment of the country into two new political entities.[2] This exogenous shift led Pakistan to adopt a reluctant acquiescence of Indian regional hegemony until the late 1980s. The nuclearization of the subcontinent and the insurgency in Kashmir reinvigorated Pakistani decision-makers into contesting India's regional position, although now in an indirect fashion. This section will discuss these historical periods.

1947–1971: Nationalism, open resistance and war

The newly independent Pakistani state faced an immediate strategic dilemma. Its unwavering motivation to directly contest the territorial status quo in South Asia was confronted with a clear military and economic asymmetry. Following the partition of British India, the dominion of Pakistan only had a fifth of the Union of India's population and a fourth of its size. India was a more influential state with all the attributes of a dominant regional power. However, contrary to popular perception, India's regional military hegemony was far from obvious, especially in the eyes of Pakistani decision-makers. While the bureaucracies, industries, resources and lands of British India were proportionately divided based on their size and population, Pakistan received nearly half of the British Indian Army (Jalal, 1990). The Pakistani military also had an exaggerated perception of its relative strength vis-à-vis India, especially in terms of military capabilities and competence (Cohen, 2005, p. 103). This gave Pakistan the inaccurate impression that it could openly contest Indian supremacy and initiate two wars with the expectation of obtaining Kashmir by force (Ganguly, 2001, pp. 7–8).

The first conflict over Kashmir in 1947–1948 must be understood through the diverging legal and political interpretations of the circumstances that were discussed earlier. In early October 1947, there was a tribal rebellion in the Poonch region, southwest of Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir. The tribesmen were quickly supported and led by Pakistani soldiers who entered Kashmir. The Maharaja had no other solution but to appeal to India for assistance (Dasgupta, 2002, pp. 42–52). However, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru imposed one main precondition before intervening: the Maharajah had first to accept to accede to India. A document titled the 'Instrument of Accession' was sent to the last British Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten. Mountbatten accepted the Maharajah's call for help in a letter that also ambiguously implied that 'the question of the state's accession should be finally settled by a reference to the people' after the military issue with Pakistan (defined as the 'intruder') had been resolved (Mountbatten, 1947).

Islamabad had a very different interpretation of the events, insisting on the fact that Pakistan only officially intervened in Kashmir to put an end to the Maharajah's repression of a popular uprising in October 1947 and only after prior Indian involvement. Pakistan did not consider itself as an aggressor state. After the conditions were met, India airlifted its soldiers into Srinagar. Although the Indian army managed to save the city, the tribesmen had taken over a third of Kashmiri territory. The conflict lasted until January 1949 when the UN sponsored a ceasefire. To push the Pakistanis out of 'Pakistani-occupied' Kashmir, Nehru decided to refer the dispute to the UN Security Council in January 1948 (Ganguly, 2001, p. 19). The first war fought against India, which Pakistan perceived as the regional hegemon at least partly justified Pakistani optimism about its relative position, for it left Pakistan in control of about a third of the old princely state of Jammu and Kashmir (even if failed to take Srinagar and the Vale as it had originally intended).

In addition, Pakistan considered India as the aggressor state and quickly realized that international mediation through a divided UN had not explicitly favored India. Pakistan's confidence was further enhanced by its subsequent membership in the Cold War alliance system initiated by the United States. It became a member of the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) in 1954 and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in 1955. This enabled Pakistan to acquire American tanks and fighter aircrafts (Haqqani, 2013, pp. 56–122; McGarr, 2013, pp. 16–25). Pakistan also began to receive direct political support from China starting in 1959, following the failure of Sino-Indian negotiations on their territorial dispute (Garver, 2001, pp. 187–215). As a result, territorial gains in 1948 and favorable international alliance opportunities initially gave the Pakistani leadership the impression that it could openly contest India's regional dominance and to envisage territorial revisionist goals.

Following India's weak performance in its 1962 conflict with China, Pakistan was emboldened to attempt another military venture (Ganguly, 2001, pp. 31–50). There was a first military clash in early 1965 along the poorly delineated border near the Western state of Gujarat, in the Rann of Kutch desert. The Pakistani military had operated a limited probe to test India's armed reaction. The test proved to be successful as India chose not to escalate the conflict and referred the case to international courts. The lack of Indian resolve further encouraged Pakistan's revisionist ambitions (Ganguly, 2001, p. 41; McGarr, 2013, pp. 301–308). However, 'Operation Grand Slam' was not as successful as the first Kashmir war and the result of the more than three weeks of fighting led to a military stalemate. The post-war agreement signed in Tashkent in January 1966 mostly confirmed the 1948 division of Kashmir. While Pakistan did not get new territorial concessions, it managed to stop the Indian counter-offensive in the outskirts of Lahore. Following the conflict, Pakistan lost US military support due to a weapons embargo that was imposed on both India and Pakistan (McGarr, 2013, pp. 324–326). The second conflict offered little clear insights to Pakistani policy-makers about the conventional military balance between the two countries. Furthermore, the two conflicts had been limited

to the Western border and gave little information about how a full-scale two-front conflict might unfold. Because of the remaining uncertainty, Pakistani leaders thought they could continue to try to directly counter-balance India's regional hegemony.

1971–1987: Democracy, asymmetry and reluctant acquiescence

The situation dramatically changed in the early 1970s. As the United States re-engaged Pakistan in order to build bridges with China, India's position became uneasy. To counter the political realignments in the region, India equally opted for a strategy of external balancing and signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the USSR in August 1971. Feeling confident about its military and diplomatic position, India took advantage of the violent civil war unfolding in East Pakistan by assisting the movement for an Independent Bangladesh (Bass, 2013; Raghavan, 2013). Yet again, the Pakistani military, emboldened by US (and Chinese) political and military support, struck first by attacking northern Indian airbases in the hope of decisively debilitating India's Air Force capabilities.[3] However, this time, the conventional military balance was overwhelmingly in India's favor: India had effectively a 2:1 superiority on the Eastern front (Gill, 2003). The brief war ended with the creation of the state of Bangladesh on the Eastern front, while the war on the Western front remained limited.

In 1971, a victorious India was in a strong military and political position to negotiate a new accord with Pakistan over the Kashmir border. The existing 1948 border became the Line of Control (LoC) through the Simla Agreement (Ministry of External Affairs, 1972). Because of the decisive military defeat and the loss of East Pakistan, Islamabad ceased to openly contest India's regional military and political supremacy, which was further reinforced by India's nuclear test in 1974.The first democratically elected government under Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto turned its attention to domestic reforms and revisionist ambitions in Kashmir became a secondary objective for almost two decades (Ganguly, 2001, p. 72). Pakistani decision-makers also concluded from the 1971 war that external military support was not sufficient or completely reliable to offset India's disproportionate military advantage.

Until the mid-1980s, the structure of the South Asian regional system was undoubtedly unipolar, with India standing as the strong regional power and Pakistan as a secondary state (Riencourt, 1982, p. 433). By the mid-1980s, India's military capabilities significantly exceeded those of Pakistan.[4] However, while Pakistan was considerably weakened and could no longer resist Indian actions and goals in the region, it chose not to opt for an accommodative behavior. One of the main explanations for this refusal to bandwagon is the continued grievance vis-à-vis the Kashmir territorial dispute. Another explanation is the Pakistani military leadership's need to sustain the rivalry with India to justify higher defense budgets (Haqqani,

2005, pp. 92–93). To counterbalance the increasing military asymmetry, Pakistan also began a quest in the 1970s for a nuclear weapons capacity, which it reportedly obtained by the mid-1980s.[5] As a result, Pakistan's more passive behavior from 1971 to the late 1980s can be more accurately defined as reluctant and temporary acquiescence of India's hegemony (comparable to what Lobell, Jesse and Williams describe in this special issue as 'neutrality').

Renewed Regional Resistance, 1987–Present

1987–1999: Kashmir crisis, nuclear weapons and the strategy of indirect resistance

Two important events in the late 1980s modified the regional situation and reshaped Pakistan's strategy of resistance to India's regional hegemony. First, by the mid-1980s, Pakistan crossed the threshold of weapons-grade uranium production and produced enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon (Khan, 2012, pp. 139–206). Pakistan notably received assistance from China. Beijing reportedly provided Pakistan with centrifuge equipment, warhead designs and missile systems (Paul, 2003). As it continued to advance its uranium-enriching program, it is believed that Pakistan had acquired the capability of carrying out a nuclear test by 1987.

Since the Indo-Pakistani conflict of 1971, India had a conventional military superiority over its adversary. This military imbalance was correlated with almost 30 years of relative absence of major conflicts. By the late 1980s, the acquisition of nuclear weapons (whether covert or not) actually reversed this military balance and emboldened the Pakistani leadership to resume its revisionist territorial goals (Kapur, 2007, pp. 115–140). The emerging asymmetry had become 'truncated' (Paul, 2006). Pakistan's acquisition of the 'great equalizer' encouraged a change of strategy vis-à-vis the regional hegemon. As Pakistan's strategic elite became more confident of their country's limited nuclear capability, it began to perceive the arsenal as a shield against India's conventional capabilities (Kapur, 2007, p. 9). Pakistan's asymmetric nuclear posture – where nuclear weapons are considered credible war-fighting instruments (even to respond to conventional military attacks) – uniquely deterred conflict initiation and escalation from the part of India (Narang, 2010).

Second, an insurgency erupted in 1987 in Kashmir against the Indian government. Unlike past Kashmir crises, which were partially fomented by Pakistan, the insurgency was first and foremost an internal uprising against the economic and political domination of New Delhi. The insurgency's outbreak can be linked to the outcome of the 1987 elections that triggered a vicious cycle of open popular defiance and state repression (Ganguly, 1997, pp. 98–100). Elements in Pakistan, backed by nuclear weapons capabilities, saw this new internal crisis as an opportunity to weaken India and to operate a proxy war (at little cost) bogging down huge Indian

military and financial resources. The Pakistani army, and especially the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), shared its insurrectional expertise and networks from Afghanistan with Kashmiri groups such as Hizb-ul-Mujahedeen (Swami, 2007).[6] Some Pakistan-based groups also joined newly armed Kashmiri militias such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). Pakistan has since then armed, trained and given sanctuary to these organizations and used them as tools of asymmetric warfare to tie down large numbers of Indian soldiers in Kashmir.

1999–present: Contested South Asian hegemony, pivotal deterrence and trilateral compellence

The combination of nuclear weapons capabilities and the build-up of proxy capabilities laid the ground for Pakistan's indirect resistance. When Pakistan successfully conducted its first public nuclear weapon tests in May 1998 in direct response to India's second nuclear tests, it took only one more year for its army to engage in open military confrontation against India. The 1999 Kargil crisis introduced a period of instability followed by two other crises that triggered fears of nuclear escalation, the India–Pakistan standoff in 2001–2002 and the Mumbai crisis in 2008.[7] These crises revealed two new dimensions that became dominant in the secondary power's strategy to achieve its revisionist goals under the condition of nuclear symmetry and increasing great power involvement in the region. First, the Pakistani FPE exploited the latent risk of nuclear escalation by using non-state actors to maximize its negotiation and deterrence leverage. Second, Islamabad sought to use the increasing involvement of China and the United States to advance its interest and engaged in 'multiple nested games' (for a discussion of multiple nested games, see Lobell *et al*, 2015). These multiple nested games substantially increased the options for contestation. Overall, these conditions generated a novel situation in which hard-balancing strategies dominating the period before 1971 have been replaced by calculated and indirect forms of resistance composed of nuclear risk-taking and subconventional warfare.[8]

The 1999 Kargil crisis constituted a watershed as it took place after the official nuclearization of the subcontinent and because it escalated into a violent military conflict (although concentrated and limited). In fact, a conflict over the entire Western border between India and Pakistan as it took place in 1965 never materialized despite increased conventional capabilities in both armies. Nuclear deterrence was the main explanation for the relative restraint that both countries demonstrated thus far. The Pakistani military arguably took into account the nuclear dimension when beginning their spring and summer incursion across the Indian border, around the city of Kargil. Pakistan's military aim for carrying out the intrusions was based on the exploitation of the large gaps that existed in the Indian surveillance and defense capabilities in the sector and on the assumption that India

would not escalate the conflict because of fear of nuclear retaliation. Pakistan hoped to impose a new territorial fait accompli. Without any declaration of war, India responded by a full-scale war and pushed back the Pakistani intruders by June 1999. While Pakistan did not obtain its territorial objectives, nuclear weapons encouraged its military to re-engage in direct military confrontation with the regional hegemon.

The 1999 crisis also demonstrated how strategic interactions between the primary and the secondary power are increasingly played out in multiple nested games and, in particular, triangular strategic relations in a nuclearized South Asia. The main motive that prompted the Pakistani leadership to engage in such a high-risk operation was to regain international and in particular US attention to resolve the Kashmir dispute. It hoped US involvement would force India to the negotiation table and that third-party mediation would enable Pakistan to negotiate from a position of relative strength and ultimately resolve the conflict on terms favorable to Islamabad (Chakma, 2012, p. 561).

The crisis in fact induced American intervention into successive regional crises. Washington's substantial 'deterrence diplomacy' and 'crisis management', however, did not favor the secondary power in Kargil (Mitra, 2011, p. 194). India had equally sought to mobilize Washington's support to advance its interest and succeeded by systematically compelling the United States to exert pressure on the Pakistani army, which Washington quickly saw as being mainly responsible for triggering the crisis. As a result, the Clinton administration explicitly tilted toward India. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's decision to pull out of Kashmir was essentially driven by behind-the-scenes pressure through the Clinton administration to defuse the crisis and to bring the confrontation to a quick conclusion (Ganguly and Hagerty, 2005, p. 188; Chakma, 2012, p. 556).

China has also played a significant (if secondary) role in Indo-Pakistani crises. From Islamabad's perspective, Beijing is perceived as the discreet and – in stark contrast to the United States – reliable 'all-weather friend' that also provides support for critical projects such as its nuclear arsenal.[9] Yet, Beijing shares with the United States an obvious interest in avoiding nuclear escalation and in containing Pakistan-based militant outfits that also affect its own security. The Chinese leadership has thus adopted complex policies toward the two adversaries. It has neither supported nor encouraged the Kargil intrusion and has quietly coordinated diplomatic responses with the United States (Chari *et al*, 2007, p. 219). Leading Pakistani policy-makers flew to Beijing for support and returned with empty hands. As Michael Krepon points out, 'China may well be Pakistan's "all-weather friend," but when very dark storm clouds gather over the subcontinent, Beijing has stood shoulder to shoulder with Washington in counseling restraint' (Krepon, 2011, p. 21).

The Pakistani military drew two conclusions from the Kargil experience: first, the use of conventional force had become an ineffective instrument of contestation, and, second, it needed to more successfully exploit third-party involvement to advance its interests. As a consequence, the 2001–2002 crisis was this time triggered by

non-state militant actors – which were reportedly backed by Pakistani intelligence – that attacked the Indian parliament. The crisis revealed that the dominant focus of contestation shifted away from challenging the territorial status quo of the post-independence era (1947 to mid-1980s) and the struggle over Kashmir (mid-1980s to late 1990s) to the primary goal of contesting India's claims of regional hegemony in South Asia. A multidimensional competition over regional power status became the core of Pakistan's revisionism, most prominently played out in Afghanistan as a key theater of Indian influence (Fair, 2012, pp. 250–251).

India's trilateral compellence was relatively less successful in 2001–2002. Washington recognized Pakistani-backed militants' responsibility for the crisis, but refused to take a hard stance against Islamabad whose cooperation it dearly needed for its anti-Taliban operations in Afghanistan (Chari *et al*, 2007, p. 193). This time, Washington navigated through the crisis as the 'preponderant pivot' by pressuring and incentivizing both parties at different times, including through the strategic sharing of intelligence information (Yusuf, 2011, p. 20). It urged Islamabad to take stronger action against militant outfits and Delhi to halt its military offensive (Chakma, 2012, pp. 564–570). As a result, Washington balanced both adversaries' interests and managed to de-escalate tensions. China again quietly coordinated with the United States and publicly called for caution – Pakistani attempts to gain more overt support again largely failed (Chari *et al*, 2007, p. 219).

The Mumbai crisis of 2008 occurred in the context of a peak of the US tilt toward India that culminated in the 2008 India-US nuclear agreement (Mitra, 2011, p. 194). As Washington refused to grant Pakistan a similar agreement, mistrust between both countries intensified to the extent that Washington was perceived as a greater threat to the Pakistani nuclear arsenal than the arch rival India (Carranza, 2007; *Express Tribune*, 2012). Pakistan's trilateral compellence in Mumbai hence revealed a paradox for its contestation, since it relied on crisis prevention by the same country that it perceived as a threat to its sovereignty and, in particular, its nuclear weapons program - a strategic ambiguity with deep socio-historical roots (Chari *et al*, 2007, p. 217). The Mumbai crisis also revealed that facing such a sensitive context, the United States refused to exert early and critical pressure against Pakistan even in a phase of historically cordial Indo-US relations (Yusuf, 2011). The Bush government hence predominantly played the role of an information broker and shaped its pivotal interventions cautiously to not favor one particular player nor to create conditions for escalation (Nayak and Krepon, 2012).[10] Combined with the presence of nuclear weapons, great power alliance politics hence further truncated the dyadic power asymmetry.

To summarize the changing conditions for contestation in the South Asian post-1998 sub-regional system, the United States after it had been relatively absent in the 1990s has become an increasingly engaged extra-regional player post-9/11, and India is a waxing regional hegemon with China becoming increasingly active. This development has increased Pakistan's perceived threat from Indian dominance and

created opportunities to externally balance Delhi through alignments with both its immediate neighbor China, and the global hegemon, the United States. Third-party deterrence diplomacy has become a potential strategic asset and an integral part of the secondary power's planning and decision-making. Pakistan has thus gradually replaced traditional dyadic deterrence with what can be called a 'trilateral compellence' strategy that seeks to anticipate external interference and exploit it for its advantage from Kargil onwards (Ganguly and Wagner, 2004, pp. 499–501). Trilateral compellence implies that when triggering a crisis, the secondary power addresses both the adversary and the third-party simultaneously (Chari *et al*, 2007, pp. 193–201; Basrur, 2009, pp. 90–93). The nuclear arsenal serves as a quasi-blackmailing means to compel the third party to intervene and de-escalate the crisis in favor of the compellent state. Yet, the growing great power engagement has not automatically created a more permissive environment for Pakistani contestation (for a theoretical elaboration of this argument, see Lobell, Jesse and Williams in this special issue). This systemic development actually offered additional strategic opportunities to *both* adversaries and both engaged in 'trilateral compellence'. Until present, Pakistan has to compete with India for third-party support to advance its national interests.

Conclusion

In this article, we discussed Pakistan's motivations to challenge India's regional hegemony as well as its shifting contestation strategies. The findings are summarized in Table 1. It is important to first emphasize that Pakistan's motivations have remained constant over the entire time period. As discussed in the first section, Pakistan had domestic incentives to maintain its irredentist claims in Kashmir. Pakistan also considered that it was perpetually threatened by its neighbor and therefore looked for different ways to deter any possible Indian aggression either through external balancing (US and Chinese support) or internal balancing (the development of nuclear weapon capabilities). Pakistani strategists, especially in the armed forces, have interpreted the accommodative strategies of other regional powers such as Nepal, Sri Lanka or Bhutan as having limited their freedom of action. Because Pakistan was the most proximate challenger to India, it refused any acceptance of the status quo (Cohen, 2002, p. 42; Schaffer, 2011, p. 285).

Initially, Pakistan openly resisted India's regional hegemony and felt confident enough to directly engage India (Scenario A). This military adventurism was not the result of a rational assessment of the existing material balance of force between the two countries. In fact, the threat assessment was ambiguous and incomplete as the outcomes of the two localized conflict along the Western border in 1947/8 and 1965 were not decisive, Pakistan received external support from the United States and China, and an assertive military had a strong say in Pakistan's foreign policy

Table 1: Summary of findings

Strategy	*Drivers*			
	Systemic (extra-regional) conditions	*Regional (dyadic/relative) conditions*	*Domestic conditions*	*Foreign policy executive*
Scenario A (1947–1971): 'Open Resistance'	Favorable (US, China support)	Unclear	Permissive (military capabilities)	Unconstrained
Scenario B (1971–1987): 'Reluctant Acquiescence'	Unfavorable (decline of US support)	Unfavorable (clear military asymmetry)	Restrictive (military capabilities, problems of internal cohesion)	Constrained
Scenario C (1987–present): 'Indirect Resistance'	Mixed (US military aid but no political support against India)	Mixed (conventional asymmetry but nuclear capacities)	Mixed (nuclear capabilities, militant groups, political instability)	Divided

decision-making. As a result, domestic political incentives and an inaccurate reading of the regional, international and dyadic conditions led Pakistan to embark in an ambitious and ultimately sub-optimal policy of open resistance, which led to its ultimate defeat and dismemberment following the 1971 conflict.

Following the exogenous shock of 1971, Pakistan no longer perceived to have the material capabilities to openly challenge India. This led to a change of Pakistan's contestation strategy, but not of its goals. Hence we identified this period as a phase of 'reluctant acquiescence' of India's regional hegemony (Scenario B). During this phase, the territorial claims over Kashmir and the threat of Indian power were still present in the mind of Pakistani decision-makers. When he learned that India had begun to develop its nuclear program, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (who was Foreign Minister at the time) famously declared in 1965 that Pakistan 'will eat grass or (leaves), even go hungry, but we (Pakistan) will get one of our own [atom bomb] … We [Pakistan] have no other Choice!'[11] The defeat of 1971 further encouraged the development of Pakistan's nuclear program. As Pakistan became an effective nuclear weapons state by the late 1980s, a concurrent exogenous shock happened in the Valley of Kashmir. The insurgency provided Pakistan's FPE with a structural opportunity to swamp down Indian forces at a limited cost by providing material and political support to militants. This led to the present phase of 'indirect resistance' (Scenario C).

The following 25 years, Pakistan pursued its revisionist agenda through a new strategy of contestation, mixing subconventional warfare and nuclear coercion. After almost 30 years of relative peace on the border, the development of a nuclear shield emboldened Pakistan to launch an operation to seize territory in Kargil. As India

ultimately managed to push back the infiltrated Pakistani troops beyond the line of control, it is not clear if Pakistan will attempt any other direct military operations. Pakistan has increasingly relied on militant proxies to inflict damage in Kashmir but also in New Delhi (2001–2002) and Mumbai (2008). It is also not yet obvious what Pakistani decision-makers have learned from these crises. We argue that the combination of nuclear capabilities with revisionist ambitions of a contesting secondary power complicates attempts at modeling expected strategic behaviors, and calls for a discussion of new explanatory approaches.

The Pakistani case is also imbricated into a series of multi-tiered Asian rivalries that muddle any modeling of a clear and long-term balancing behavior. Finally, the fragmented nature of the decision-making process in Pakistan, which is composed of multiple actors (Pakistani military, ISI, civilian government, business community, civil society and militant organizations) who all have their own agendas and strategy preferences vis-à-vis India and their own domestic constituencies, will further complicate the identification of a coherent Pakistani strategy in the short term. Pakistan's policies toward India's regional dominance are hence an illustrative example of how secondary powers engage in nested games among different actors and across multiple levels, as outlined by Lobell, Jesse and Williams (2015), and future research should develop methods to unfold these overlapping and sometimes contradictory trends.

About the Authors

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associate with Harvard University's Center for European Studies as well as an external policy analyst with the German Federal Foreign Office's policy planning staff. His work has been published in *Third World Quarterly, Strategic Analysis* and *Chinese Journal of International Politics*.

Notes

1 For a more detailed discussion on regional hegemony and the role and strategy of secondary and tertiary states, see Williams *et al* (2012).
2 Following partition, the newly independent state of Pakistan had a Western and Eastern wing separated by 1600 kilometres of Indian territory. East Pakistan became the independent state of Bangladesh in 1971.
3 While the military embargo was still in vigor, the United States provided Pakistan with military provisions through Jordan, Turkey and Iran. For a detailed account of the illegal weapons transfer, see Bass (2013, pp. 291–302).
4 Its total military expenditure in 1985 was US$8921 million against Pakistan's US$2957 million (see International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1999).
5 The impression that the United States was not a reliable military and political ally in times of crisis, the loss of East Pakistan and the Indian nuclear test of 1974 convinced Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto of the need to acquire a nuclear deterrent (see Khan, 2012).
6 The ISI is the premier Intelligence service of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, operationally responsible for ensuring national security and providing intelligence assessments to the Government of Pakistan.
7 This article will not delve into the empirical details of the different South Asian security crises of the last 20 years, but will instead focus on their theoretical implications for the study of Pakistan's strategic behavior. For more detailed accounts of these standoffs, see Chari *et al* (2007); Ganguly and Hagerty (2005); Narang (2010).
8 The following part builds on Blarel and Ebert (2013).
9 A high-profile nuclear deal in June 2010, for example, arguably followed the goal of establishing a counterweight to the Indo-US agreement and, similar to past nuclear material and technology transfers, to further balancing India (see Joshi, 2011; Paul, 2003).
10 For a discussion of the concept of 'pivotal deterrence', see Crawford (2003).
11 Quoted in Khan (2012, p. 87).

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