The Stability-Instability Paradox: The Case of the Kargil War

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This paper examines the role of nuclear weapons in the Kargil War in 1999 and finds that India and Pakistan both acted in ways consistent with the Stability-Instability Paradox. The paradox states that nuclear weapons simultaneously induce stability at level of nuclear war and instability at lower intensity levels of violence. The nuclear bomb gave Pakistan the assurance needed to initiate cross-border proxy conflict, while inducing cautious responses in India to avoid uncontrollable escalation. Ultimately, nuclear weapons spurred conflict initiation but also limited the conflict’s scope and duration.

Pakistan’s military incursion into Indian territory in May 1999 marked the beginning of the Kargil War. Although the war was the fourth armed conflict between the two countries since their inception, it was the first after both sides overtly demonstrated nuclear capabilities in the previous year. Thus, Kargil challenged traditional Cold War deterrence theory that nuclear weapons would make war too costly. Far from deterring war, the weapons gave Pakistan the assurance needed to initiate cross-border conflict. Nevertheless, that India’s measured and cautious response limited the conflict’s scope and duration supports the argument that nuclear weapons will prevent escalation and keep conflicts under control. Of all the wars between the two countries in their history, Kargil experienced the least escalation; it was the least violent and the quickest to end, with a peace deal brokered by the end of July 1999. Thus, the Kargil War is the epitome of the stability-instability paradox, which states that nuclear weapons simultaneously induce stability at the level of nuclear war and instability at lower intensity levels of conflict.

This paper builds on Jervis’s work in his essay “Kargil, Deterrence, and International Relations Theory” by further examining the role of international involvement in Kargil. It finds that international involvement was an additional mechanism for the paradox, acting as both an encouraging factor in Pakistan’s decision to initiate conflict and as a crucial element in de-escalating the conflict.

A Paradoxical War

Why was Pakistan not deterred by its opponent’s stockpile of nuclear weapons? Traditional deterrence theory rests on the notion that mutually assured destruction will dissuade states from risky behavior. When two competing states have assured second-strike capabilities – that is, the ability to inflict unacceptable amounts of damage on an aggressor even after being hit with a strike – they will not engage in war because it could

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lead to the destruction of both states. It is assumed that leaders will behave rationally. They will weigh the costs and benefits of using force and are likely to avoid conflict that could escalate to disastrous levels. For weaker states, nuclear weapons can reduce anxiety over inferior conventional capabilities. Moreover, when hostilities do break out, nuclear weapons tend to keep conflicts limited (Kumar 2008, 52). For deterrence to remain stable, it is necessary for both sides to have secure second strike capabilities to eliminate the temptation for one side to attempt to destroy its opponent’s nuclear weapons in a decapitating first-strike (Raghavan 2010, 13). According to deterrence theory, then, Pakistan should have avoided any confrontation with India.

Conditions for deterrence apply to the aggressor of the conflict. Therefore, to understand how deterrence broke down, an inspection of Pakistan’s options in its foreign policy towards India is necessary. In Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, Alexander George and Richard Smoke highlight the limitations of deterrence theory. In their discussion, George and Smoke argue that the most important determinant in deterrence failure is the availability of various options for the aggressor, only one of which is armed conflict. If alternative options are accessible, then the initiator does not have to challenge its adversary’s deterrent threat (George and Smoke 1974, 521). In the view of Pakistan’s leaders, however, other options to achieve their strategic objectives had failed over the previous two decades (Joeck 2009, 124).

A close examination of Pakistan motives reveals two major objectives: retribution for the Siachen Glacier territory lost in 1984 and renewing international attention on the Kashmir issue. In Pakistan, there prevailed a feeling of being wronged by previous Indian military encroachments. The Pakistan army saw India’s occupation of the Siachen Glacier, a relatively resource-poor and strategically unimportant region slightly north of the Line of Control, as a deeply embarrassing scar (Khan, Lavoy, and Clary 2009, 75). Its leaders wanted to make a point that Pakistan was not a pushover, and that Kashmir was still at the heart of Pakistani national pride. According to President Pervez Musharraf, “Kargil was fundamentally about Kashmir…The Indians have been snapping up bits of Pakistani territory…for example at Siachen” (Kapur 2009, 122). Pakistani commanders began to feel increasingly desperate that Kashmir would slowly fall into India’s hands, and that serious negotiations would never resume if the international community’s attention waned (Khan, Lavoy, and Clary 2009, 74). According to Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director General for South Asia Jalil Jalani, Kargil was a principled stand. “Countries do not just give up their territory.” Otherwise, “the high and mighty will continue to [take Pakistani territory] on a regular basis” (Kapur 2009, 123). For him, Kargil would limit further Indian operations in the region and say to the outside world that Kashmir still mattered. Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister of Pakistan at the time, stated, “the basic objective of Kargil was to draw the attention of the international community towards the Kashmir issue” (Kapur 2009, 122). Top Pakistani generals assumed victory in Kargil could place Pakistan into a position of strength and force India into talks on Pakistan’s terms (Gill 2009, 94).

Military incursion was the only way to achieve these two goals. Since 1984, international mediation had failed to resolve the Siachen Glacier dispute. The talks continuously devolved into accusations from both sides that the other was attempting to provoke war and unjustly take more and more land (Misra 2000, 29). Attempts to force India out of Siachen were costly and unsuccessful. Within Pakistan, Siachen became a domestic political issue, as political parties blamed Zia ul-Haq’s military government for failing to defend Pakistani territory. Facing increasing criticism from democratic elements of society, the military reasoned that it could pull off a parallel operation into the strategic hilltops of Kargil to restore its prestige (Khan, Lavoy, and Clary 2009, 75-76). In their minds, Kargil was necessary, not just to restore national honor, but also to reassert legitimacy of military leadership in the country.

Bilateral negotiations and support for indigenous Kashmiri separatists proved inadequate to rejuvenate the Kashmir issue internationally. When there was international intervention, it failed to resolve the dispute in a way favorable to Pakistan. There was little benefit available from seeking direct assistance from other countries; few allies would adopt Pakistan’s Kashmir cause wholeheartedly, and any such alliance would be sure to gain India support as well (Jervis 2009, 383). Furthermore, Pakistan had to deal with the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Faced with the threat of civil war to its north, Pakistan devoted much attention to set up a friendly regime there. “Isolated, preoccupied by Afghanistan, and challenged by India’s nuclear testing, Pakistan felt that the Kashmir issue was fading from international attention” (Joeck 2009, 119). Its leaders determined the best way to remind the world about Kashmir was to instigate an armed conflict. Now, with nuclear weapons, the international world could not sit idly by and take the risk escalation to nuclear use. Armed
conflict could simultaneously bring in third parties and give Pakistan leverage in negotiations. Challenging India militarily became the least unattractive option for Pakistani military leaders. Pakistan acted in what appeared to be “an inexplicable way because it [found] itself in a position where the bad option is… the best of poor alternatives available” (Tellis, Fair, and Medby 2001, 40). That Pakistan initiated conflict even under the shadow of nuclear weapons on the subcontinent has profound implications for deterrence theory.

The challenge to traditional deterrence theory is not merely the fact that Pakistan attacked India in the face of nuclear weapons, but that Pakistan attacked only after both sides unambiguously demonstrated nuclear capability. The aforementioned motivations for attack existed for at least the previous decade and a half, and Pakistani officials had been planning a Kargil operation throughout the 1980s (Kapur 2009, 117). Why was it that Pakistan attacked when it did? The answer exposes limitations and adds complexity to the general theory that nuclear weapons make conflict less likely. Nuclear weapons, rather than making conflict less likely, served to enable and encourage a Pakistani attack – “it was the critical permissive condition that made contemplating Kargil possible” (Tellis, Fair, and Medby 2001, 48).

Pakistan’s nuclear capability played a central role in its decision to initiate conflict. Without it, Pakistan would have lacked the ability trigger a crisis threatening enough to menace India. In a nonnuclear world, incursions like Kargil would have been little more than a nuisance because India could have safely repelled the attacks or threatened to respond militarily in other areas. Because these responses would have been relatively cheap and safe, India would not only easily be able to employ them, but the mere threat to do so would have been credible enough to make it improbable that Pakistan would initiate aggression in the first place (Jervis 2009, 384). Nuclear weapons, Pakistani officials thought, would deter India from using force in the event that India may have otherwise considered forceful retaliation. India would have to consider the possibility, however small, that any confrontation could escalate to nuclear use (Joeck 2009, 126).

Statements made by Pakistani leaders betrayed their reliance on nuclear threats. During the war, Pakistan’s Foreign Secretary warned Pakistan would use “any weapon” in its arsenal (Tellis, Fair, and Medby 2001, 48). The statement was deliberately ambiguous to ensure saliency of the nuclear threat. Pakistan’s Religious Affairs Minister Raja Muhammad Zafarul Haq publicly stated that Pakistan could fall back on the nuclear option should Pakistani security be threatened. Over the course of the war, Pakistani officials made no less than a half-dozen nuclear threats (Hoyt 2009, 157-161). Nuclear capability provided Pakistani military leaders the extra firepower they needed to make up for their conventional weakness compared to India. Pakistan’s limited resources ensured that its conventional inferiority in relation to India would continue to increase. Pakistan’s leaders foresaw continuously increasing military spending in India and knew that they would not be able to keep up. In this situation, Pakistani military brass began to depend more on its nuclear weapons as its conventional inferiority became more pronounced (Chari 2005, 18). Nuclear weapons could even the playing field by warding off worst Indian counter-responses by deterring conventional or nuclear retaliation (Tellis, Fair, and Medby 2001, 49). According to Jalani, “since Pakistan’s acquisition of nuclear capacity, Pakistan has felt much less threatened” by Indian conventional superiority (Kapur 2005, 144). Furthermore, nuclear weapons were perfect instruments to draw international attention to the Kashmir situation. Many senior Pakistani military officers made public statements stating their beliefs that the newfound nuclear capabilities would catalyze US diplomatic interest in bringing the conflict to a conclusion. (Tellis, Fair, and Medby 2001, 49).

Thus, Kargil exemplified the stability-instability paradox. The paradox, explained by Robert Jervis in The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy, holds that “to the extent that the military balance is stable at the level of all-out nuclear war, it will become less stable at lower levels of violence” (Jervis 1982, 31). The paradox was first applied to US-Soviet relations during the Cold War to explain the prevalence of low-level proxy wars in the absence of direct nuclear or conventional confrontation. Because both sides had survivable second-strike capabilities, the chance of nuclear escalation became extremely low. However, this induced instability at lower levels of violence. Confidence that the other side would not cross the nuclear threshold gave license to take limited coercive action (Krepon 2004, 1). Jervis’s larger point applies perfectly to South Asia – the nuclear bomb can serve as an insurance policy against the worst forms of escalation, thereby allowing lower levels of mischief-making well below the nuclear threshold (Krepon 2010). Indeed, Jervis revisited the stability-instability paradox specifically in the context of Kargil in his essay “Kargil, Deterrence, and International Relations Theory.” His conclusion was that Kargil was consistent with the paradox: “Strategic stability permits if not creates instability
by making lower levels of violence relatively safe because escalation up the nuclear ladder is too dangerous” (Jervis 2009, 393).

There were differences, of course, between the US-Soviet deterrent relationship and the India-Pakistan deterrent relationship. India and Pakistan had much smaller arsenals, were much closer to each other geographically, and had third-party terrorists and insurgents behind which an aggressor could plausibly deny its involvement in any attack (Kumar 2008, 54). Nevertheless, none of these differences implicated deterrence on the subcontinent. Despite having smaller arsenals, both India and Pakistan still maintained a relatively robust second-strike capability (a requisite condition for the stability-instability paradox to apply). It takes very little to have a second-strike capability sufficient to deter an enemy. The size of a country’s force matters little — nuclear weapons are highly mobile, and an enemy needs to know how many weapons to strike, the locations of the weapons, and whether they will be moved in order to carry out a successful first-strike. “To know all of these things, and to know that you know them for sure, is exceedingly difficult” (Waltz 1981, 9). During Kargil, neither India nor Pakistan had sufficient knowledge of the location, number, or security of the other’s nuclear weapons. Due to limited credible intelligence, neither side could guarantee that its first strike could entirely wipe out the other’s stockpile, and that is what mattered. Destroying even a major portion of a nuclear force is useless because of the horrific amount of damage even a small number of surviving warheads could do (Waltz 2003, 123). With the initial conditions being correct, and Pakistan emboldened by nuclear capability, the stability-instability paradox applies neatly to the situation on the subcontinent in 1999.

War Progression
India’s response further demonstrates the applicability of the stability-instability paradox to the Kargil War. Contrary to Pakistani expectations, India was undeterred from escalating the intensity of the conflict. India rapidly responded with an attempt to drive Pakistan back across the border (Joeck 2009, 131). Pakistani military leaders, realizing that India was prepared to respond with force, decided to hold ground in confidence that their troops held geographically superior locations. Nevertheless, dangers of nuclear escalation induced caution in Indian military leaders. They believed that Pakistan’s rash military leadership could not be trusted with nuclear weapons, and they believed that Pakistan might have used nuclear weapons preemptively or when pushed back to a wall by India’s conventional forces. This strategic uncertainty amongst Indian planners helped dissuade India from launching full-scale conventional retaliation (Joeck 2009, 131). In the face of little progress against Pakistani forces, Indian political leadership established a committee of strategic analysts, seasoned military leaders, and experienced diplomats to assess various political and military options to respond to Pakistani aggression. After careful calculation, consultation, and vigorous examination of all possible options, the committee decided that the Indian response was to repel the attack back across the border, but to not cross into Pakistani territory (Joeck 2009, 132). It placed formal political limitation upon the Indian military to not cross the Line of Control or open up new combat theaters (Gill 2009, 105). This restraint was an extreme deviation from India’s traditional strategy. India had responded to nearly every Pakistani attack before this (in the 1949 war, in the 1965 war, and several times in the 1980s) with escalation across the LOC. Indian military plans focused on broadening the conflict to play to India’s quantitative and economic advantages. Now, under the shadow of nuclear weapons, India responded with more caution (Hoyt 2009, 159-160). Moreover, the strategy made little tactical or military sense. Crossing the border would have allowed the Indian Air Force to choke Pakistani communications, supplies, and logistics, shorten the war, and deplete fewer resources. New combat theaters would have relieved pressure on Indian forces concentrated in the Kargil region and reduce Indian casualties (Kumar 2008, 69-70). It seems that India’s decision to not expand hostilities, and thereby escalate the war, was a deliberate calculation made in the face of the nuclear threat.

Still, India did not refrain from avoiding any and all instances of escalation. India mobilized its Air Force, deployed troops from its western and southern commands to positions along the border with Pakistan, and reinforced the western fleet of its Navy with support from the eastern fleet. These measures indicated that India was consciously raising the stakes by positioning forces along the international border (Joeck 2009, 132). Some argue that these steps show that the stability-instability paradox was actually not at play, and brinkmanship by both sides indicated a willingness to escalate if necessary (Chari 2005, 17). But this lower level competition in risk-taking is accounted for and expected in deterrence theory and the stability-instability paradox. Ultimately, even nuclear weapons cannot remove at least some jockeying and risk-taking in any conflict.
– one need look no further than the proxy wars fought between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Despite engaging in some level of brinkmanship, India still recognized the dangers of escalation and constrained its military movement in such a way that it effectively capped the level of escalation the war would reach. Indian military operations were targeted towards causing Pakistan to back down, rather than broadening the scope of the conflict via counterattack. Furthermore, as the conflict played out, the Indian government began to take a more optimistic view of nuclear stability in the region. Indian leaders became increasingly convinced that Pakistan’s aggressive behavior and nuclear posturing was just a bluff. According to a senior Indian strategic analyst, many Indian officials began to believe that “Pakistan will not use nuclear weapons until it is half gone” because India possessed a secure second strike capability (Kapur 2005, 147). A nuclear attack would come at a great cost to India, but any retaliation would mortally wound Pakistan. This nuclear asymmetry led Indian strategists to conclude that Pakistan would not escalate to nuclear use. Indeed, Pakistan’s own venture into Kashmir may have given India the most compelling evidence of the feasibility of limited war. If Pakistan could carry out Kargil, India could respond with something similar (Kapur 2005, 146). Therefore, India’s willingness to conventionally escalate is evidence of the stability-instability paradox rather than India’s disregard for the potential for the conflict to escalate to nuclear levels.

How willing would India have been to cross the Line of Control if Pakistani nuclear weapons did not exist? S. Paul Kapur argues in Ten Year of Instability in a Nuclear South Asia that the paradox was not at play because India “would have allowed the military to cross the Line of Control if doing so proved necessary… tactical and diplomatic calculations, rather than Pakistani nuclear weapons, were primarily responsible for the Indian refusal to cross the LOC” (Kapur 2008, 79). Indian restraint was motivated by desire for international support for its position in the war – Pakistani nuclear weapons were irrelevant because India could successfully repel Pakistan without expanding the conflict. Moreover, Indian leaders left the option to expand the conflict on the table, and if need arose, were willing to escalate it even in the face of the Pakistani nuclear threat (Gill 2009, 124). Many have used these arguments to contend that the stability-instability paradox was not at play during the conflict (Kapur 2008) (Mistry 2009).

However, these arguments fail to explain why India did not escalate the conflict. Although military outcomes demonstrated that it was unnecessary for India to cross the line in order to defeat Pakistan conventionally, crossing the line would have placed India in a tactically superior position and ended the war more quickly. The war would have cost less, both financially and in terms of military casualties. There would have been no reason, therefore, for India to avoid crossing the Line of Control had Pakistan not been able to threaten nuclear escalation. Even Kapur concedes “that Pakistan’s nuclear capacity was [not] entirely irrelevant to India’s decision-making” (Kapur 2008, 79). Even though India made plans to cross the LOC if necessary, the paradox still applies. Indian General Ved Prakash Malik believed that such plans were made merely because prudent military logic required it. Logistical requirements alone required preparation for all possible contingencies. Escalation across the LOC, then, was only a contingency plan, and even then, further escalation could still be controlled (Lavoy 2009, 192). The primary plan was to avoid full-scale war. Indian leaders were quite explicit. V.P. Malik, Indian Army chief of staff during the Kargil operation, explained that Pakistani nuclear weapons led Indian military planners to rule out full-scale conventional war with Pakistan (Kapur 2008, 79).

Pakistan reaction to Indian escalation was not further escalation, as one would predict would happen in a war. Islamabad was cautious of further intensifying the fighting. Its government did not mobilize its Air Force or Navy in the way that India did. Had Pakistan engaged the Indian Air Force and Navy with its counterparts, Pakistan risked having India respond across the international border, ensuring rapid expansion of the conflict to levels dangerously close to the nuclear threshold. “Thus, even at the cost of considerable loss of face, Pakistan acted prudently to avoid the risk of inadvertent escalation” (Kumar 2008, 71). It can be argued that Pakistan was deterred by India’s conventional superiority, not by the threat of nuclear war. This argument encounters two flaws. The first is that Pakistan decided not to retreat when its incursion into Kargil was discovered by India. Once India responded with force, Pakistan chose to stand its ground, knowing that India was conventionally superior. There is little reason to think that Pakistan’s decision calculus would have changed suddenly in later periods of the war (Ganguly 2001, 312). Secondly, and perhaps more convincingly, India had held a huge conventional military advantage since the creation of the two countries in 1945. India had a marked superiority on every conceivable front including twice as many active army
personnel, a six-to-one advantage in modern aircraft and a three-to-one advantage in tanks (Cordesman 2008). This conventional dominance has hardly deterred Pakistan from instigating conflict multiple times in the past. In 1947 and in 1965, Pakistan mobilized large portions of its military and did not back down when the conflict threatened to grow in intensity and geographic scale. This time, nuclear weapons were clearly the overarching deterrent in conflict escalation.

International Pressure
A vital facet of the war that is not accounted for in deterrence theory is the presence of a third party as a catalyst for the war’s conclusion. When Pakistan decided to enter the conflict, it held a strong belief that the international community, particularly the United States and China, would intervene on its side to help it achieve its strategic aims. As previously mentioned, one of Pakistan’s major goals was to reinvigorate the saliency of Kashmir as an international issue. By reminding the international community that Kashmir was a nuclear flashpoint, Pakistan hoped to rouse international involvement in the forging of a peace settlement over Kashmir. Pakistan expected the United States and China to show support based upon its previous condemnations of India’s nuclear tests (Tellis, Fair, and Medby 2001, 38). Pakistan, however, badly miscalculated. The international community was not willing to back Pakistan, who was seen as the clear aggressor. Pakistan was openly surprised by the United States’ relentless pressure to restore the status quo unconditionally and China’s reluctance to back Pakistan in any meaningful way (Kumar 2008, 72). India, on the other hand, was pleasantly surprised when unexpected American involvement was in their favor (Kumar 2008, 73).

How does international pressure interact with deterrence theory and the stability-instability paradox? Outside involvement has great potential for keeping a conflict from escalating – its influence was considerable in facilitating the conclusion of Kargil. This appears to lend support to the view that the spread of nuclear weapons deter war. Nevertheless, given Pakistan’s intentions to make the war an international issue before the war started, Kargil is clearly indicative of the fact that international pressure does not always strengthen the ability of nuclear weapons to deter war. In fact, expectations of international allies at least partially encouraged Pakistani adventurism. The events of the Kargil War demonstrate how international involvement can be a double-edged sword in conflicts between nuclear-armed adversaries – one that is wholly consistent with what the stability-instability paradox would predict.

It is quite evident that Pakistan was encouraged by the promise of international support. Pakistan saw it at least as an enabling factor, if not an outright incentive to start the war (Joeck 2009, 118). To Pakistan, the presence of nuclear weapons in any conflict was sure to bring about the involvement of outsiders. Scott Sagan argues that this expectation may cause nuclear powers to behave more belligerently. He says “the possibility of intervention may encourage the governments of India and Pakistan to engage in risky behaviors, initiating crises, or making limited uses of force, precisely because they anticipate… that other nuclear powers may bail them out diplomatically if the going gets rough” (Sagan 2009, 392). The United States, China, Russia, France, England, and Saudi Arabia all pressured both India and Pakistan to draw back their forces and end the military confrontation. These actions highlight what Peter Lavoy calls the non-proliferation hypothesis of the theory of the nuclear revolution. He argues “foreign powers will become actively involved to manage crises involving nuclear-armed states, reduce pressures for military escalation, and discourage any state from leveraging the fear of nuclear war to change the territorial and political status quo” (Lavoy 2009, 175). In this light, international involvement serves simply as another mechanism for the stability-instability paradox to explain the Kargil War. Apparent in Pakistan’s behavior and subsequent surprise at its diplomatic isolation, expectations of international involvement in nuclear crises led them to initiate a low-scale conflict.

For the paradox to hold, international involvement must not only play an enabling role in conflict initiation, but it also must help catalyze conflict resolution and prevent the conflict from escalating to nuclear levels. It is unambiguous that this did happen in the Kargil War. The United States played an important role in the resolution of the conflict. As soon as the war started going badly for Pakistan, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif desperately called on the United States to provide support. Washington was clear – any solution required nothing less than Pakistani withdrawal into its own territory. Only then did the United States help mediate a settlement (Reidel 2009, 4).

Critics would argue that the escalation was consequently managed wholly by international pressure, not by the presence of nuclear weapons. India and Pakistan were both engaging in brinkmanship and were prepared for the conflict to escalate further despite the threat of nuclear devastation. Additionally, they would argue that
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The results of the Kargil War demonstrate that conflict between India and Pakistan is hardly deterred by the presence of nuclear weapons. However, the likelihood of full-scale conventional war has significantly decreased because of the inability for either side to make significant gains in a quick timeframe (Tellis, Fair, and Medby 2001, 78). The result is room for mischief-making and limited, catalytic conflicts on the lower end of the escalation spectrum with behavior entirely consistent with stability-instability paradox. This state of constant violence with no organized application of force has been dubbed “ugly stability” (Tellis, Fair, and Medby 2001, 77). There will be a persistence of unconventional conflict such as cross-border terrorism and engagement with rebel groups because conventional wars have become prohibitively costly. Nuclear weapons will entice both sides to engage in subconventional conflicts. “While subconventional and unconventional wars can entail high levels of violence and are consequently quite problematic, they do not involve an organized application of force that limited wars invariably do. Organized applications of force bring in their wake the potential for escalation both horizontally and vertically and, as a result, challenge stability in a way that subconventional violence and unconventional violence often do not” (Tellis, Fair, and Medby 2001, 80).

Thus, the Kargil War provides empirical support for the stability-instability paradox. The implications of which offer strong support for deterrence theorists who believe that the mutual presence of nuclear weapons help enhance international peace. Of course, nuclear weapons can induce low-intensity violence, but this is surely better than returning to the considerably bloodier and recurring full-scale wars Indian and Pakistan fought before either obtained nuclear weapons. In the years since Kargil, the two countries have maintained peace, despite two major terrorist attacks and other flare-ups in their relationship. The South Asian sub-continent will see low levels of violence for some time to come, but large-scale wars will likely be very uncommon.

References


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