# India's Deterrence Goldilocks Dilemma in South Asia

GEOFFREY BROWN

### **Abstract**

In the last two decades, the world has experienced a massive shift. Developing countries have economically and militarily advanced and are more aggressively pursuing their national interests. The two largest of these countries, China and India, have been at odds for decades over border disputes. Compounding this, China's closer relations with Pakistan and attempts to encircle India have pushed the two countries on a collision course, one that the United States, which views China as a great-power rival, would be well-positioned to exploit. However, the nuclear standoff between Pakistan and India makes this a difficult task. According to Vipin Narang's works, Pakistan has adopted an asymmetrical escalation nuclear posture that effectively deters India from pressuring it, even in the face of terrorist actions like the 2008 Mumbai attacks. In my research, I seek to present the unique Goldilocks dilemma that balancing China and Pakistan presents to India and examine how closer Indo-American collaboration is the best path to prevent rapid instability and possible nuclear war in the region. This article examines why a closer future US-Indian partnership is needed to finesse India out of its Goldilocks dilemma.

### The Deterrence Goldilocks Dilemma

During the Cold War, deterrence was comparatively straightforward: have enough nuclear weapons and well-positioned ground forces to ensure that your enemy felt that their ability to act against your side was restricted. However, the bipolar world of the Cold War between the United States and Soviet Union is 30 years behind us, and while the economic integration of the world has increased dramatically, political integration and alliances have lagged. The result is that we live in a far messier multipolar international system, what author Ian Bremmer defines as G-Zero, a situation where "no country or bloc of countries has the political and economic leverage to drive an international agenda."1

In the realm of deterrence, one of the conundrums that this new normal presents to states is the Goldilocks dilemma. The Goldilocks principle is when something must be "just right," not too much and not too little. The Goldilocks dilemma is a balancing problem where this cannot be achieved. When two forces create a situation where "just right" is impossible, either you need more to avoid one problem or less to avoid another one.

This deterrence conundrum was less of an issue in the past during the more structurally bipolar Cold War but will become an increasingly common issue as more countries achieve nuclear breakout and the structures shift to a more multipolar paradigm. Recently, a great example of a state experiencing this dilemma was the United States and its Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) with Russia. On the one hand, this treaty helped maintain strategic stability with Russia and increased European confidence in American promises by ensuring that no local nuclear conflict at shorter range could leave the United States untouched. However, China was not bound by this treaty and possesses 2,650 land-based missiles that would be in violation of the treaty if Beijing were a member. The United States felt the need to counterbalance these weapons with assets banned by the treaty to establish strategic stability and reassure its allies in East Asia. Thus, on 2 August 2019, Washington withdrew from the treaty after a war of words with Russia regarding Moscow's compliance with the treaty—only to immediately turn around and test its own medium-range missile on 20 August. States are structured and test its own medium-range missile on 20 August.

The situation the United States found itself in was a result of two different rival forces acting upon it and challenging Washington's deterrence plans. However, America is far from alone in this regard, and its situation is, relative to others, stable. The award for the worst deterrence Goldilocks dilemma must go to India, which must contend with two rivals: a revisionist nuclear Pakistan, paranoid about its security situation and constantly supporting terror attacks across the border, and the rising regional power of China, with its territorial claims on Indian territory and ambitions to expand Beijing's control into the Indian Ocean. Like the American dynamic, India is faced with a conundrum where New Delhi must choose between having either stability on one front or deterrence on the other. Worse, either choice will result in disastrous consequences in the future for India

### Quadrilateral Nature of the South Asian Security Situation

The root cause of the South Asian security situation can be traced back to Kashmir. Ever since the bloody event that was the 1947 Partition of India occurred, there has been bad blood between India and Pakistan. Despite the shared linguistic and culture heritage, the Hindu–Muslim divide that Partition exacerbated resulted in a situation that was destined to produce war and strife. India was far from united when it won its independence, and the myriad of Princely States and their rulers had, in theory, the choice to accede to either India or Pakistan. Fifteen million people were forced to move, and 10 million lost their lives in the ensuing chaos. India's Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Patel, now famously known

as the Bismarck of India, worked endlessly to create a politically integrated India and managed to coerce all but three states into the Union.<sup>5</sup> In late 1947, Patel used force to bring Hyderabad and Junagadh, both states with Muslim rulers, to join the Union. On the other hand, Kashmir's Hindu ruler decided to join willingly, but his Muslim-majority population and Pakistan did not accept this, resulting in the 1947 Indo–Pakistan War that split Kashmir in two. It is this territorial conflict that keeps Pakistan and India perennially fighting and makes close relations realistically impossible.

Making the conflict even more complicated, Beijing's claims on northeast Kashmir and other parts of North India brought China into the mix in 1962, when, while the rest of the world was distracted by the Cuban missile crisis, Chinese troops took Indian-held territory in the Sino–Indian War.<sup>6</sup> Later that year, Pakistan ceded the territory China claimed that it held in Kashmir to end all disputes and foster better relations with Beijing. This was the start of the "All-Weather Friendship" between the two countries, forming, in India's view, an anti-Indian alliance. Pakistan would later go on to facilitate relations between China and the United States during the Nixon administration. Nowadays, China is Pakistan's most significant military ally and has referred to Pakistan as "our Israel."

However, in India's corner there is now the United States, which, while having supported Pakistan in the past for Islamabad's help in Afghanistan, has slowly shifted to a strongly pro-India stance since 2000.8 Washington sees in India a natural democratic partner that can help the United States maintain its position in the Indo-Pacific and greatly frustrate Chinese efforts at hegemony and power projection. As a result, Washington has sought closer relations with New Delhi since Pres. Barack Obama's "pivot to Asia." As of now, the United States and India have signed the 2012 Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) and, in 2014, the Declaration on Defense Cooperation. Later, President Obama and Prime Minister Narendra Modi met during India's 66th Republic Day and hammered out a framework for the US-India defense relationship and a joint strategic vision for the Indo-Pacific region, in addition to four projects under the DTTI. This all served, from the US point of view, to cement the partnership with India. One sign of the strength of this new partnership is how it has continued to blossom during the Trump administration, at a time when America has experienced fraying relations with most of its other major allies.<sup>10</sup>

From the Indian point of view, the United States is a welcome interloper whose support could help tip the scales in India's favor at bit. China is much more developed militarily and economically than India, and Beijing has used its financial resources to slowly cultivate relationships on India's borders, making New Delhi nervous and mistrustful of China's "peaceful rise." In addition, Chinese assistance

to Pakistan's military, nuclear programs, and in international bodies has become an unacceptable thorn in the side of India—not to mention the constant issues of territorial disputes that have existed since 1962 and which were exacerbated by the Doklam Standoff in 2017 and the ongoing situation in the Galwan Valley. At this moment, India is a defensive power under great pressure, pushed by a revisionist nuclear Pakistan on one side and a now superpower China on the other. Something not often appreciated by Washington is that India is not warming to the United States out of some feeling of brotherhood among democratic states but rather out of need and a shared interest in seeing the status quo in South Asia maintained. Which brings us to the main point of this article: How can a US—Indian partnership work to finesse India out of its Goldilocks dilemma?

In answering this question, we must understand more in-depth the two sides of India's Goldilocks dilemma, the forces that are acting upon it and have pushed the country that founded the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) into aligning itself with the United States. The first is what New Delhi can do to more effectively deter China from encroaching on Indian territory and New Delhi's sphere of influence. The second, and much trickier, issue is the South Asian nuclear dyad. According to Narang's work, Islamabad has already adopted an asymmetrical escalation nuclear posture that effectively deters India from pressuring Pakistan but also increases the risk of nuclear theft and accidental launch. This means that Pakistan has operationalized its nuclear capabilities to deliver a first strike against India should conventional conflict arise between the two. Since the events of the 1971 war, Pakistan has been very sensitive about the relative balance of power between itself and India, and with Pakistan's nuclear program, Indian plans for grand strategy has been consistently constrained. Thus, India has tried different strategies to reestablish deterrence that have only further increased instability. Essentially, this leaves New Delhi in a Goldilocks dilemma, where India must increase its capabilities so Chinese decision makers fear it, without causing Islamabad to panic.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the key to the Goldilocks dilemma for India is maintaining stability with or deterring Pakistan while simultaneously freeing up enough resources to be able to deter China. An extremely tall order for India on its own.

## **Deterring China**

One of the main goals of a US-India alliance, especially from the viewpoint of India, would be to deter China from further action and expansionism along the Indian border, in terms of both claimed territory and attempts to limit New Delhi's relations with India's neighbors. When it comes to understanding and conceptualizing deterrence, I find it most helpful to remember the *Doctor Strangelove* quote: "Deterrence is the art of producing in the mind of the enemy . . . the

fear to attack."<sup>14</sup> What is key here is the mind of the enemy, and as such we need to know what China thinks of India. To properly do this I would need to know Mandarin, but since I do not, I have based this part of my work on the scholarship of Xiaoping Yang of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and more recent work done by Yun Sun of the Stimson Center's East Asia Program.

My first and foremost takeaway from Yang's work is the simple fact that Beijing is not worried about New Delhi and does not view India as a security threat.<sup>15</sup> There are two chief reasons at work for this thinking. First is that there is a capability gap, especially in technology, between the two countries in favor of China. The second factor is the no-war bottom-line threshold, which simply means China believes neither side wants war and Beijing must merely avoid pushing any issue to that point. All of this is further built off the assumption that China does not need to respond to India as a nuclear power. Again, there are two reasons for this assumption. One is that Beijing does not fully believe the story that New Delhi developed India's weapons to deter China. While Beijing does understand that India feels pressured by the Sino-Pakistan alliance, Chinese leaders feel that, since China's nuclear capability is concentrated on the United States, India's worries are baseless. Instead, Chinese strategic circles believe that India went overtly nuclear for political reasons of prestige and that there is no real intention on New Delhi's part to threaten China. Secondly, China does not worry about India's nukes due to New Delhi's "no first use" policy and limited nuclear capability, again Beijing does not believe India's seriously intends to fight China. Essentially, at the root of China's threat perception of India lies the fact that Beijing does not see a situation in which the two countries would involve themselves in a full-scale war, conventional or nuclear.

However, despite this outlook, Yang points out several current events have given China some concern, all of which are tied with India's recent alignment with the United States. The US–India nuclear deal in 2008 was the first, though Beijing's main worry was the wavering support for the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime in Washington; furthermore, China expressed concern about the possibility of dual-use technology that could help lead to an arms race in Asia. The second event was when, in 2010, India's no-first-use policy seemed to evolve from a "no-first-use" to a "no-first-use against nonnuclear weapons states" policy. Again, this goes back to China's reasoning that if it sees no aggressive intention from India, Beijing does not need to worry, and these changes could snowball.

A further step in the wrong direction, from China's point of view, was the initiatives that India rolled out as a partner of the United States. Next, was India's formation of a special border force specifically meant to deal with Tibet and China-related border issues. Finally, there was the launching of India's nuclear

submarine, the *Arihant*, in 2016, which, while not worrying China due to the ship's lack of technical sophistication, was yet another step that increases the chance of future crisis. Again, China does not yet feel that India is a security threat, but Beijing is not happy with the direction New Delhi is going.

According to Sun's work, these previous actions, a more assertive Modi government, and a closer relationship with Washington have been enough to push Beijing to attempt forming better ties with New Delhi, with high-profile visits in 2019. While Beijing believes in China's superiority, Chinese leaders realize that their nation suffers from an asymmetry of threat perceptions. New Delhi views China as its primary threat, while Beijing only views India as one of many secondary challengers. Beijing realizes this could possibly result in China's own Goldilocks dilemma and as such wishes to avoid conflict with India. However, Chinese leaders find themselves unable to work with India diplomatically, since New Delhi's prerequisites for trusting China, resolutions to border issues and halting attempts to stop Pakistani backed terrorists via the UN, are hard commitments, while Beijing's need, that India becomes neutral, is ephemeral and easy to change. As such, the trajectory for Sino–India relations to become more conflictual in nature over time is high.

According to Yang, Beijing's future threat perception of India will be shaped by three factors: foreign support for India, the enhancement of India's conventional military, and how China's interactions with India regarding border disputes and Tibet play out. Sun's more recent work has shown that the situation has shifted enough to warrant Beijing's attention but not enough to result in any shift in policy. This is due to Chinese observers maintaining their low expectations for the US–India partnership. They believe there are too many issues, in strategic culture and choice of partners, for cooperation to go further and that the alignment of the two countries is merely tactical with little real depth. Therefore, Beijing believes that when a conflict arises cooperation will fall apart, unlike other US alliances with binding agreements. This understanding of how China views India gives us a basic road map about the direction the US–India partnership can go and what types of support would help India to be taken more seriously by China.

# Pakistani Nuclear Strategy and Full-Spectrum Deterrence

On the other end of the Goldilocks dilemma, there is the matter of Pakistan's nuclear capabilities, which Narang's work outlines meticulously. Pakistan has operationalized its nuclear capabilities to create an asymmetric escalation posture, where a state, historically a state conventionally inferior to its adversary, operationalizes its nuclear capacity so that it can launch a first strike, thus deterring the use of both nuclear and conventional capabilities against itself. For this

posture to be credible under circumstances when an adversary attacks, there must be some level of delegation of authority, and the state's nuclear capabilities must be married to its armed forces. This is to ensure the enemy understands that any aggressive action is likely to trigger a nuclear response despite how the enemy might try to sow confusion. Additionally, this means this posture relies partially on the state being unambiguous about its capabilities and deployment to get the maximum deterrence effect.<sup>18</sup>

Currently only Pakistan employs this posture, given the extreme difference in the power of its conventional forces and India's. Seared into the minds of all Pakistani commanders is the memory of their nation's humiliating defeat in the 1971 war, when India succeeded in splitting Pakistan in half in a mere 13 days, making Bangladesh, which had been East Pakistan, an independent country. While Pakistan would prefer a strategic restraint regime of some kind with India, which would limit conventional and nuclear forces, Islamabad understands that this will never happen due to India's security concerns regarding China. Furthermore, Pakistan does not view stability as possible until New Delhi shows India is serious about solving territorial disputes, which given India's advantageous position is highly unlikely. Therefore, the perceived growth in Indian capabilities, combined with the view that diplomatic solutions are a pipedream, has resulted in the current Pakistani strategy of full-spectrum deterrence, threating nuclear first use in conventional conflict through its nuclear posture.

In his experiment, Narang looks at the history of conflict between India and Pakistan since they gained nuclear capacities and evaluates the deterrence effect that each posture had while employed. His results are very straightforward in that the asymmetric escalation posture has been "deterrence optimal" for Pakistan. The evidence for this lies in the fact that while the United States was able to help deescalate and end conflicts for Pakistan while it employed the catalytic posture, such did not deter India from using conventional means against Pakistan at times. On the other hand, since employing the asymmetric escalation posture Pakistan has had, at the time of Narang's article, no Indian conventional forces setting foot on Pakistan's soil, even in the aftermath of two major Inter-Services Intelligence-supported terrorist attacks.<sup>21</sup> This posture has served as a shield from which Pakistan can use subconventional means to attack India with no fear of reprisal, resulting in a stability-instability paradox. The idea behind the paradox is that the nuclear weapons will deter major actions by an opponent resulting in strategic stability, which paradoxically makes lower levels of violence safer since the other party cannot escalate in response without threatening nuclear conflict.<sup>22</sup>

However, this has led to even greater escalation and instability in the region, as use of subconventional attacks has led India to become frustrated and desperate for reprisal, and New Delhi has attempted strategies, such as Operation Cold Start, which it believes will allow India to strike Pakistan in a limited fashion without crossing the nuclear red line.<sup>23</sup> However, this did not deter Pakistan, and New Delhi has likely been driven to skirt the edges of India's no-first-use policy to reestablish deterrence. Outlined in Narang's newer work, it is highly likely that India is putting the intelligence and weapons capabilities together to allow it to launch a preemptive counterforce strike that could credibly destroy Pakistan's nuclear capabilities<sup>24</sup>—a plan that is highly destabilizing, since it would push Islamabad to use all of its nuclear weapons in the event of a crisis out of fear that Pakistan could lose them. Additionally, this will result in Pakistan delegating even more authority, spreading out their weapons caches, and increasing the risk of accidental use and theft to maintain the credibility of Islamabad's deterrent against Indian conventional forces, which Narang asserts would put the region on permanent crisis footing, as both countries are playing evermore dangerous games of brinksmanship.

Recent events have seen the issue of such South Asian brinksmanship pushed to the forefront. At the end of January 2019, Pakistan tested a nuclear-capable close-range ballistic missile—the Nasr. The development of the Nasr was in response to the Indian Cold Start doctrine.<sup>25</sup> Then on 14 February 2019, the Pakistan-based terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammad killed 46 Indian soldiers in the Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir, leading New Delhi to respond with an airstrike on 26 February at Balakot, in Pakistan-held territory, with an Indian jet shot down and its pilot captured.<sup>26</sup> In the ensuing chaos, India escalated massively, and it was reported that Prime Minister Modi threatened to use missiles if the Indian pilot was not returned to India.<sup>27</sup> For the first time in this brinkmanship game since acquiring nuclear weapons, it appears Pakistan blinked, and Islamabad promptly returned the pilot. Furthermore, Pakistan responded to the first Indian warplanes to cross the line control since 1971 not with nuclear forces but with conventional airpower.<sup>28</sup> While it is only a small concession, this small victory for India will undoubtedly serve to strengthen existing plans to pursue preemptive counterforce strike to deter Pakistan. However, Pakistan will not sit on its hands and will likely be putting together its own plans, via increased survivability of weapons and/or more advanced designs, to break Indian confidence in its capabilities. The result appears more volatile than most of the Cold War, with no winners, and it is clear alternatives must be found to fix the situation.

# The Lukewarm Porridge: A Formal US-India Alliance Is the Only Option of Unappetizing Options

After considering the issues India has at both ends of its Goldilocks dilemma, it is clear how the dual pressures have pushed New Delhi into aligning with the United States. It deserves to be reiterated how big of a change this is for the country that founded the NAM during the Cold War. While this is a big step, it is also still not enough to allow India to fix its Goldilocks dilemma. The apparent brittleness of the US–India partnership means it does little to deter Beijing or constrict Chinese action in the region. At the same time, the nuclear dyad between Pakistan and India has only become more unstable, with India having barely managed to achieve what appears to be a short-term pyrrhic victory. The Modi and Trump administrations have continued to ramp up ties. However, this has still fallen short of a formal treaty alliance, which, as unappetizing as it might be, is New Delhi's best shot at solving India's Goldilocks dilemma.

New Delhi currently faces three possible paths India can pursue to escape its dilemma. The first path is the current one, where New Delhi continues to try to solve the matter with India's own power, maintaining some of its neutrality, only making some tactical partnerships at its convenience. However, as we can already see, this path fails to deter China from making moves against India, and the preemptive counterforce strategy will result in more crisis instability and is highly unlikely to reestablish deterrence with Pakistan in the long term. In fact, it will most certainly result in an arms race that will put the region at greater risk and drain resources needed to compete with China and restart the growth engine of the now sputtering Indian economy. In short, we already know that this path is going to fail.

A second path would be an attempt to work with China rather than the United States on fixing these issues. However, according to Sun's work, this path would likely be doomed to failure. Frustratingly, China finds itself pulled in two directions when it comes to India; on the one hand, Beijing has a genuine interest in maintaining peace so it can focus on China's conflict in the Indo-Pacific with the United States and not divert forces to its front with India. However, at the same time, Indian and Chinese plans and visions in South Asia are incompatible and a source of strife. Compounding this is the fact that South Asia is India's primary theater but only a secondary one for China; thus, there is an asymmetry of actions and demands. As previously stated, China only demands India remains neutral, while India demands actions from China that Beijing could not take back and that would strengthen India in the region. This is intolerable to Beijing, which views the demands as too much and feeding into India's internal politics. Beijing believes

that if China gave India any kind of victory, it would embolden New Delhi further. China's core interest here is that India remains struggling to control South Asia and neutral in China's conflict with the United States, as such it is clear that diplomatic attempts to find solutions to New Delhi's Goldilocks dilemma will be stalled by China, whose main goal is Indian passivity. In short it is a waste of time.

The third path is a formal alliance between the United States and India against China, and the extension of American security guarantees could be the most powerful deterrent that India could hope for against Beijing. While China might view its capabilities as far ahead of India's, Beijing is under no illusions about China's gap with the United States. Additionally, as mentioned before, this would force China to deal with a new front and split its forces, giving both India and the United States a better chance in the region. For dealing with Pakistan, an Indo-America alliance offers several possibilities. First it creates a problem for Islamabad, as India would, officially or unofficially (since the United States would never allow a nuclear attack on its troops to go unpunished), be under an American nuclear aegis, and the credibility of Pakistani threats that would escalate to attacks on Indian territory would be less believable. More importantly would be the possibility of India opening new options to increase costs of subconventional attacks committed by Pakistan via sanctions through the US alliance network. Finally, is the possibility that the response to a US-India alliance is a closer Sino-Pakistan alliance. Naturally, there are negatives to this eventuality; however, there could be two major positives. First, this would end the Goldilocks dilemma, since the conflict would become bipolar in nature and create two united fronts facing off. The second is that this bipolar scenario would more easily allow for treaties to prevent nuclear arms races and could generate some real strategic stability in the region. Everything considered, it is not guaranteed that a formal alliance would allow India to escape the Goldilocks dilemma, but it certainly gives New Delhi the best chance of deterring Beijing and new tools for dealing with Islamabad.

With this said, neither New Delhi nor Washington is quite ready for a formal alliance, as there are some speed bumps that need to be considered and remediated. Trump has furthered cooperation in meaningful ways and signaled a willingness to work more closely with the rebranding of US Pacific Command to US Indo-Pacific Command. However, his attitude and policies on immigration have not been well-received in New Delhi. Additionally, India's purchase of Russian missile defense systems, bought to enable India's new counterforce posture, according to Narang, and other weapons have made it difficult for the United States to work toward interoperability and position some of its most sensitive technologies in India. The US–India relationship is a relatively new one, and these are some of the kinks. However, there are going to be costs that New Delhi must deal

with to secure the alliance; namely, India will need to abandon its counterforce posture against Pakistan and the Russian missile defense that is a key part of it.

Furthermore, there are questions as to whether this alliance is desirable for the United States, given the current situation. India is facing major domestic challenges, and there are some real questions about New Delhi's ability to deliver on the hopes that US policy makers have for it. US interests are very much at the periphery of Indian domestic politics; while both countries are democracies, this has never led to especially good relations in the past as it did in the West. The Indian economy is growing fast but also generating massive income inequality, underemployment, brain drain, and drought. Militarily India's forces are primarily focused on Kashmir and Pakistan, tying down large quantities of manpower and military spending.<sup>29</sup> As much as India would like to remove itself from the India— Pakistan dyad, issues in Kashmir and growing nationalism constantly draw New Delhi back into a fight Washington would much rather not take part in.<sup>30</sup> The caution on both sides to solidify a defense relationship are built upon some major hurdles that will take time to overcome, but given it is India's best option to surmount the Goldilocks dilemma and America's best option to open a second front for China, Washington should continue pushing for a treaty alliance.

Finally, as American strategy clearly wants the Indo-Pacific to play a major role in its future plans for countering China, supporting India might be the cost Washington must bear to open another front against China in this new Cold War. Furthermore, the current state of Pakistan's and India's nuclear forces demands US attention, and given that China will be as useless in solving this crisis as it has proven to be with North Korea, a strategy to reestablish strategic stability by changing the conflict from multipolar to bipolar is one worth contemplating.

### Conclusion

India is in a Goldilocks dilemma in which New Delhi must increase its capabilities vis-à-vis China, but at the same time, Islamabad harasses and constrains India. Pakistan has used its nuclear capabilities to create an asymmetrical escalation posture and is seeking full-spectrum deterrence against India. In doing so, Islamabad has created a security situation with risks with which both the region and wider world must concern themselves. With this article, I have pointed out that to achieve both of its aims India's only feasible option is a formal alliance with the United States. Continuing the old Indian policy of nonalignment will never allow New Delhi to escape the Goldilocks dilemma, as India lacks the strength to do this on its own. Aligning India with China to solve the issue is doomed to fail, as Beijing views India, by virtue of New Delhi's position and level of power in South Asia, as a rival that must be subjugated to secure Chinese he-

gemony. The extent of Beijing's goodwill is limited, as China only wants to avoid conflict with India, while Beijing still must concern itself with the United States. These factors have already served to push India into aligning itself with America; the question remains if India and the United States can agree to the formal alliance necessary to counter China. If not, India is merely pushing off inevitable conflict with China over the Indo-Pacific—possibly to a time when New Delhi might not have the United States and US allies to help keep Indian borders and waters where they are today.

### Geoffrey Brown

Mr. Brown recently graduated with his master's degree from Georgia Tech's Sam Nunn School of International Affairs. While studying languages in India on a Boren SAFLI Fellowship in 2018, he became interested in South Asian security issues. Previously, he presented at the United States Strategic Command's Deterrence and Assurance Conference and later won the 2019 General Larry D. Welch Deterrence Writing Award (Senior Division) for his work.

### Notes

- 1. David Rothkopf, "G-Zero: Gee, Another Idea with Zero to Support It," Foreign Policy, 28 February 2011, https://foreignpolicy.com/.
- 2. Thomas G. Mahnken, "Countering Missiles with Missiles: U.S. Military Posture after the INF Treaty," War on the Rocks, 16 July 2019, https://warontherocks.com/.
- 3. "INF Nuclear Treaty: US Tests Medium-range Cruise Missile," BBC News, 20 August 2019, https://www.bbc.com/.
- 4. William Dalrymple, "The Bloody Legacy of Indian Partition," New Yorker, 22 June 2015, https://www.newyorker.com/.
  - 5. Daniel Argov, "Vallabhbhai Patel," Encyclopædia Britannica, 2018, https://www.britannica.com/.
- 6. Ishaan Tharoor, "What China's and Pakistan's Special Friendship Means," Washington Post, 21 April 2015, sec. World Views, https://www.washingtonpost.com/.
- 7. Thalif Deen, "China: 'Pakistan Is Our Israel," Al Jazeera, 28 October 2010, https://www .aljazeera.com/.
- 8. Paul Staniland, "America Has High Expectations for India. Can New Delhi Deliver?," War on the Rocks, 22 February 2018, https://warontherocks.com/.
- 9. US Department of Defense, "Fact Sheet: U.S.-India Defense Relationship," no date, https:// dod.defense.gov/.
- 10. Richard Fontaine, "U.S.-India Relations: The Trump Administration's Foreign Policy Bright Spot," War on the Rocks, 24 January 2019 https://warontherocks.com/.
  - 11. Staniland, "America Has High Expectations."
- 12. Dean Cheng and Lisa Curtis, "The China Challenge: A Strategic Vision for U.S.-India Relations," Backgrounder (Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation, 18 July 2011), http://thf media.s3.amazonaws.com/.
- 13. Yogesh Joshi, "Angles and Dangles: Arihant and the Dilemma of India's Undersea Nuclear Weapons," War on the Rocks, 14 January 2019, https://warontherocks.com/.
- 14. Stanley Kubrick, Dr. Strangelove: or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (Hollywood, CA: Hawk Films and Columbia Pictures, 1964), film.

- 15. Xiaoping Yang, "China's Perceptions of India as a Nuclear Weapons Power," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 30 June 2016, https://carnegieendowment.org/.
  - Yang, "China's Perceptions of India."
- 17. Yun Sun, "China's Strategic Assessment of India," War on the Rocks, 25 March 2020, https://warontherocks.com/.
- 18. Vipin Narang, "Posturing for Peace? Pakistan's Nuclear Postures and South Asian Stability," *International Security* 34, no. 3 (Winter 2009/10): 38–78, https://www.belfercenter.org/.
- 19. Sushant Singh, "India-Pakistan 1971 War: 13 Days That Shook the Subcontinent," *Indian Express*, 16 December 2016, https://indianexpress.com/.
- 20. Lawrence Rubin and Adam N. Stulberg, eds., *The End of Strategic Stability?: Nuclear Weap-ons and the Challenge of Regional Rivalries* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2018).
  - 21. Narang, "Posturing for Peace?"
- 22. Robert Jervis, *The Meaning of Nuclear Revolution Statecraft and the Prospect of Armageddon* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989).
  - 23. Narang, "Posturing for Peace?"
- 24. Christopher Clay and Vipin Narang, "India's Counterforce Temptations: Strategic Dilemmas, Doctrine, and Capabilities," *International Security* 43, no. 3 (2019): 7–52.
- 25. Ankit Panda, "Pakistan Conducts Second Nasr Nuclear-Capable Ballistic Missile Test in a Week," *Diplomat*, 4 February 2019, https://thediplomat.com/.
- 26. Soutik Biswas, "Viewpoint: India Strikes in Pakistan a Major Escalation," *BBC News*, 26 February 2019, sec. India, https://www.bbc.com/.
- 27. Jeffrey Lewis, "Night of Murder': On the Brink of Nuclear War in South Asia," NTI, 6 November 2019, https://www.nti.org/.
- 28. "Balakot: Indian air strikes target militants in Pakistan," *BBC News*, 26 February 2019, https://www.bbc.com/.
  - 29. Staniland, "America Has High Expectations."
  - 30. Rubin and Stulberg, End of Strategic Stability?

#### Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed or implied in *JIPA* are those of the authors and should not be construed as carrying the official sanction of the Department of Defense, Department of the Air Force, Air Education and Training Command, Air University, or other agencies or departments of the US government or their international equivalents.