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Transcript

**A CONVERSATION WITH GEN.
KHALID KIDWAI**

Khalid Kidwai, Pakistan's National
Command Authority
Peter Lavoy, Monitor 360

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TOBY DALTON

I'll invite Peter Lavoy and General Kidwai to the stage.

Since 1988 when both India and Pakistan tested nuclear explosive devices there has been one central figure whose vision and leadership has shaped Pakistan's nuclear program. That person is General Khalid Kidwai, who established and then served as Director General of Pakistan's strategic plans division from its inception until last year: an incredible span of 15 years.

It is rare that we in the non-governmental community have opportunities to interact with, and hear from officials like General Kidwai. Indeed I would note that we invited the General to speak twice at the conference before, we are very glad that he has accepted on the third try, and he is here with us today to discuss how he sees the nuclear landscape from Pakistan.

Joining General Kidwai to moderate the conversation is Dr. Peter Lavoy. Peter is known to many of you, having engaged in both academic and policy work over the course of his career. In recent years he has served in a series of senior positions in the US government, working on South Asia at the National Intelligence Council, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence in the Pentagon, and rumor has it that he will soon be re-joining government. There are people who understand the contemporary; there are few people who understand the contemporary security challenges in South Asia as well as Peter.

As with General Kidwai, we are very fortunate to have Peter here with us today. With that brief introduction I would invite General Kidwai to take the podium for some opening remarks.

KHALID KIDWAI

Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure indeed to be here for the prestigious annual conference of CEIP. As someone on whom successive Pakistani governments bestowed the unique responsibility and privilege of guiding Pakistan's nuclear program over the last 15 years, I look forward to interaction with this elite international galaxy through the medium of our conversation.

But before we do that, I would like to share a few thoughts which might help in focusing the conversation. This however is not meant to restrict the conversation in any way, far from it. I would be very happy indeed to attempt answers to any questions.

Today when I scan the global environments, as they have evolved over the last decade plus, I find that the early expectations and hopes generated by the end of the Cold War that the world might become a more harmonious and peaceful place have all but evaporated.

Instead what one finds today is a conflict ridden world, a revival of the Cold War with newer poles emerging from the earlier bipolar to unipolar to now, a multi-polar world. In this multi-polar world alignments have undergone change in Europe, and Asia particularly. And new equations have emerged, as nations reassess their interest, and readjust.

While nations readjust the global trend is on retaining focus on management of conflicts, national and regional security, and economic progress. Added to the security calculus is the

universal nature of terrorism threatening to overshadow all else. The world is attempting to grapple with the phenomena in cooperative ways.

South Asia too has absorbed many of the emerging global political trends of alignments and re-alignments. What is unfortunate though is that while South Asia attempts to remain in step with the changing global trends politically, and integrated economically, and despite being aware of the fact that the region needs extraordinary efforts to develop economically, and politically, in order to fight the massive threats of poverty, weak health, education and other social indicators, and terrorism, it remains oblivious to what I would like to call the obvious.

The obvious is not sinking in, in our regional calculations. And what is this obvious? The obvious is the elephant in the room, i.e. the prerequisite of creating and enabling an environment for peace and strategic stability in order to focus on sustained socioeconomic development of the region.

The obvious is that the enabling environment for peace and strategic stability will only come through mature conflict management, leading to conflict resolution. This obvious has been brushed under the carpet for decades in a fallen hope that somehow it might go away. How can sustained socioeconomic progress come about if the threat of outstanding conflict, tension and recrimination hangs permanently in the air when eyeball to eyeball stance with nuclear weapons in the background?

Unfortunately, those who say that conflict resolution alone will lead to true peace and stability, leading to economic development are dismissed as revisionists. As they're seeking resolution to conflict was unnatural, a nation should learn to live with conflicts and status quo. In this unstable regional environment one nuclear power trying to teach lessons to another nuclear power through the medium of small arms and mortar shells on the Kashmir line of control and bluster, I'll leave it to your judgment.

In South Asia, sadly, we remain prisoners to the past, frozen in time, unable to break the shackles of history. Then we expect, naively, that by some miracle we shall become part of the global economic trends, and benefit from these.

Ladies and gentlemen, if we recognize that to develop socioeconomically, extended periods of peace and stability are fundamental, my submission is that these will not come through miracles, bluster and zero sum games. The regional leadership will have to rise to the highest levels of statesmanship, recognize what I call the obvious, stare this reality in the face and courageously work towards the attainment of peace and stability through the only surefooted method known to history. That is conflict management leading to conflict resolution.

There is no running away from this stark reality, conflict management leading to conflict resolution. It is not revisionism, it is common sense, it is common interest, it is self-interest. If South Asia and its leadership does not, or does not want to, or is unable to recognize this reality, well I'm afraid that we could carry on as we have done for the past 60, 80 years for the next 60, 80 years, and bluster, and blunder our way through future generations, condemning our 1.5 billion people in perpetuity to hunger, filth and squalor.

Having said this, however, I would like to remain optimistic, and therefore I draw your attention to an opportunity, fleeting perhaps in terms of time, for a way forward towards the attainment of the objective of permanent peace, and strategic stability in South Asia. This opportunity, in my judgment, exists today. It has emerged paradoxically because of two independent developments, or realities which need to be recognized for their linkage, and grasped by the democratically elected leaderships of India and Pakistan.

If only there is what President Clinton had called, the vision thing. Let me flag these first, and then I'll dwell on these. The two realities of today's South Asian strategic situation are one, notwithstanding the growing conversional asymmetries, the development and position of sufficient numbers, and varieties of nuclear weapons by both India and Pakistan, has made war as an instrument of policy near redundant. The tried and tested concept of MAD has ensured that.

Two, the historic coincidence of the near simultaneous emergence of two strong democratically elected governments in India and Pakistan, with the advantages of comfortable majorities, and the factor of reasonable time at their disposal to address the longstanding issues with a sense and understanding of history. This has never happened before.

These then are the two self-evident realities or givens of the South Asian situation today. When we look at the linkages of the two realities, the vision thing would make it seem that this just might be the historic opportunity of a lifetime. Waiting for the two leaderships to grasp, sit together, explore the possibilities of conflict resolution, and in a supreme statesman act go for it in a manner that all parties to the conflict end up on the winning side. No zero sum games, no one-upmanship, history and circumstance beckon.

Whether history can be grasped remains to be seen, an opportunity exists. It needs vision, statesmanship, and guts. Vision of Nixon and Chou En Lai, and perhaps of Anwar Sadaat and Menachim Begin.

Ladies and gentlemen, there was a time in the aftermath of the nuclear test of 1998, when some people unwisely experimented with the idea that despite the nuclear overhang in South Asia there was space for limited conversional war, and therefore one nuclear power might be able to overwhelm another nuclear power. It could be attributed to an inability to grasp the change strategic environments of a nuclearized South Asia, a learning curve perhaps.

Besides being dangerous thinking, it was also naïve as the experience of the last 17 years has shown. The idea didn't work in the escalation of 2001, 2002, not during the tensions of 2008, nor is it likely to work in the future. The naivety of finding space for limited conversional war, despite the nuclear capabilities of both sides, went so far as to translate the thinking into an offensive doctrine, the Cold Start Doctrine. Equal and to a pre-programd, predetermined, shooting from the hip posture, in quick time, commencing at the tactical level, graduating rapidly to the operational strategic level. Strangely oblivious of the nuclear Armageddon it might, could unleash in the process. It was clearly not thought through.

Of course, Pakistan took the doctrine seriously, because it had a direct bearing on our security, as well as to prevent destabilization in an environment of conventional asymmetry. We were the affect party. The doctrine was meant to be unleashed against us. We could not ignore the effects being generated by the offensive doctrine. Therefore in order to deter the unfolding of operations under the doctrine Pakistan opted to develop a variety of short range, low yield nuclear weapons, also dubbed tactical nuclear weapons.

This was a Pakistani defensive, deterrence response to an offensive doctrine. But, in an attempt to do one better on the escalatory run, some people responded via massive retaliation bluster, without thinking through the consequences in a nuclear parity situation. We think it's time to get real.

For 15 years I, and my colleagues, at the Strategic Plans Division in Pakistan, and worked for deterrence to be strengthened in South Asia comprehensively, so as to prevent war, to deter aggression, and thereby for peace, howsoever uneasy to prevail. We have worked to create

roadblocks in the path of those who thought that there was space for conventional war, despite the nuclear weapons of Pakistan.

I strongly believe that by introducing the variety of tactical nuclear weapons in Pakistan's inventory, and in the strategic stability debate, we have blocked the avenues for serious military operations by the other side. That the debate has been hi-jacked towards the lesser issues of command and control, and the possibility of their falling into wrong hands is unfortunate, because it has distracted and diverted attention from the real purpose of the DNWs. That of reinforcing deterrence, preventing war in South Asia, ensuring peace, thereby creating an enabling environment for politics and politicians to reassert, lead the way towards conflict resolution, and give South Asia and its people a chance. A peace of the brave that they deserve.

I suggest the debate be refocused to the objectives. And now, therefore, when we juxtapose the situation of a near military stalemate, if I may, with the political results thrown up by the elections of 2013 in Pakistan, and of 2014 in India, that two political parties with strong electoral mandates have emerged. One sees the opportunity for statesmanship and vision to trump petty, short-sighted objectives. No weak coalitions, strong nationalistic credentials, and credibility on both sides. And to top it, availability of time to work things out in their remaining respective terms before the respective next elections.

Will the vision thing prevail? The initiative does not lie with Pakistan, there are people who need to climb down from a high horse and get real. Well-meaning nudges from well-meaning friends will be most helpful in the larger interest of international peace, and stability, in a region dubbed as a nuclear flashpoint. A hands-off approach will be neither here nor there. And, of course, the fleeting opportunity of history would have slipped. And my submission to friends who want to be helpful, please note the inadvisability of aggravating the existing delicate strategic balance in a troubled South Asia by one sided, and discriminatory overtures.

Even-handed and non-discriminatory approach to South Asia alone will contribute towards peace and stability. Discriminatory approach on issues like NSG exemption, and NSG membership is already proving to be counterproductive. It will never be acceptable to Pakistan. And will, in no way, contribute towards peace and stability. Let us desist from taking short-sighted measures today that will be regretted later.

I would like to conclude by holding out an assurance to this audience on something I know worries the international community all the time: the safety and security of Pakistani nuclear weapons in the disturbed security environment of our region. For the last 15 years Pakistan has taken its nuclear security obligations seriously. We understand the consequences of complacency, there is no complacency. We have invested heavily in terms of money, manpower, equipment, weapons, training, preparedness and smart site security solutions.

I say with full responsibility that nuclear security in Pakistan is a non-issue. You have all your national tactical means to verify, but you might also take my solemn word for it. Our nuclear weapons are safe, secure and under complete institutional and professional control. I thank you.

PETER LAVOY

Well, General Kidwai, thank you for those opening remarks. I'm sure that will stimulate a lot of questions, and excitement in the audience. But before we turn this over to the audience for questions, I have the distinct honor to have a conversation with you, and ask you a few questions myself.

Now, of course, we've had these conversations going back many, many years, but generally in a slightly more discrete setting than this, so this is going to be new for us.

But, want to start by just making a comment that when you look at the history of your country's nuclear weapons program, which really probably dates back to the very early 1970s, the initial idea, and the desire to have nuclear weapons as a deterrent. Many people are associated with this program, you have Zulfikar Ali Bhutto maybe initially, General Zia, many other figures. But probably the shape and character of the nuclear weapons program today probably has more to do with your decisions, and your work with the people that you work for as well, than any other individual.

And as you look back at your decade plus experience in guiding the development, and modernization of your country's nuclear weapons program, I'd like to ask you, personally, if you have... what is your greatest sense of accomplishment? What is your greatest achievement in your own mind? And as you reflect back on this long period, is there any single regret that still keeps you up at night?

KHALID KIDWAI

Not a regret, first of all. I think I'm a very satisfied soldier. It was a responsibility given to me post May 1998, under circumstances which were absolutely new to me. I had no idea whatsoever as to what the nuclear program of Pakistan looked like. I was very much a straightforward, mainstream soldier.

But then came May '98, and there was a series, and a set of circumstances through which I landed in the spot of being the first DGSPD. I think the greatest achievement if you would, if I was to recollect, in a sense, it's more comprehensive, it's not one particular item, or one particular area that I can really put my finger on. It's a comprehensive satisfaction of having taken the Pakistani capability which had been proven by the scientists, at a scientific level, by exploring the devices in May '98 in response to India's tests. And having taken those devices, which were scientific experiments, into an area of complete operationalization, into a vision which has consolidated Pakistan's nuclear capability in a manner that it today possesses a variety of nuclear weapons, in different categories. At the strategic level, at the operational level, and the tactical level.

And the total comprehensiveness of the program is the effects that it is generating of deterrence, and keeping war away. So, in a sense if you were to, if I was to put one, in one sentence, then the development of the entire capability has ensured peace in South Asia. And I am fond of calling these weapons as weapons of peace, because they have deterred the urge of aggression, and like I said in my opening remarks, it has closed the door to war being used as an instrument of policy. And therefore, if war as an instrument of policy is out, then there is an opportunity for strong politicians to wane.

So the total sum of, of an achievement of 15 years, perhaps is the complete development almost, we're almost 90, 95% there in terms of the goals that we had set out to achieve. And those goals have been achieved, and that is where I would say there is a sense of satisfaction.

PETER LAVOY

That's very interesting, and I think no one would doubt that Pakistan has made tremendous progress in operationalizing what was initially a scientific capability, as you said earlier on. Now, you were – as you mentioned – you were part of the conventional military, in the artillery, if I'm not mistaken. You had to take an idea of a nuclear deterrent, and then integrate that into a system among all of your colleagues who are conventional war fighters.

Now you say that war is no longer an option, how do your colleagues in the Pakistan military, and the navy, and the air force, how do they relate to that? Do they still think about fighting and winning wars, despite what you and your colleagues have done at SPD to create a robust nuclear deterrent?

KHALID KIDWAI

Look, SPD is not an island. SPD is very much part of the large military of Pakistan. And, what, when I say that war as an option is, perhaps, foreclosed, I think I reflect the opinion of the military in Pakistan, specifically on the air force, navy and the SPD. So these four branches of the military in Pakistan together, I think it's a considered view that because of the nuclear capability, one, and the operationalization of the nuclear capability, and the availability, and the raising, and the training of the strategic forces that are the end users of this capability, so to say, I think all four branches of the military... And, I will go a step further, the entire authority of the national command authority, headed by the Prime Minister, and the Federal Minister, and so on and so forth, I think there is a general understanding that the strategic capability of Pakistan has foreclosed these options.

But, having said that, war fighting, military is trained to fight wars, they can't just sit back and relax, and say that, okay, war is no longer an option so off you go. There has to be a complete professionally trained conventional force in addition to this strike back force.

PETER LAVOY

I think you've pointed to a tension that exists with every nuclear weapons state. Every nuclear weapons state has conventional military forces, the objective of which is to fight and win wars. To deter wars if possible, but to fight and win if necessary. And yet you have nuclear weapons, probably designed to deter war at a higher level of violence.

I know, I've worked in the Department of Defence for nearly two decades, and I think we've struggled with that tension to see nuclear weapons, whether they're an extension of war fighting doctrines, and plans, and capabilities, or are they something different. How would you regard nuclear weapons? Are they an extension of the conventional forces of your country, or are they something that stands apart? And how is that appreciated by your other former colleagues in the Pakistan operations?

KHALID KIDWAI

No, I don't think they're seen as separate weapons, they're not seen as separate weapons. They reinforce the deterrence, there is a deterrence value within the conventional forces, the combine of the army, air force, navy has a certain deterrence value, notwithstanding the conventional asymmetries that we keep talking about. There is a healthy balance between the conventional forces on either side.

The nuclear forces are very much integrated as a backup force in some kind of situations, which we would like to call the larger nuclear strategy. If we, because in terms of our planning, we talk of, of course, the national strategies, and we talk of the nuclear strategy, and the military strategy, the operational strategy at the three or four tiers.

Nuclear strategy integrates the land operations of the conventional forces, and of the, at a point in time when the nuclear forces might also come into play. So it is one integrated whole.

PETER LAVOY

I've had the opportunity, as many people, some people in this audience have had, of visiting you in your office that you formally inhabited in Rawalpindi, at Chaklala. And I recall my first visit there were a few photographs on the wall of some of the missiles that your country had tested. I think my last visit all the walls were full, and maybe that was a signal to...

KHALID KIDWAI

Two walls are full, two are still...

PETER LAVOY

Oh, you still have some space, interesting. Maybe we can come back to that point. But two walls were very full, and if I recall the last photograph I saw was of the Nasr, which is a short-range system. Can you describe the logic of having such a short-range system that I don't think any other country in the world possesses today, a missile, or a capability to launch nuclear weapons at such a short range? And what is the logic behind this short-range system as, I think as you've described, as part of the full, or multi-full spectrum deterrent capability.

KHALID KIDWAI

No, but why do you say that no country demonstrates a short-range weapons? I think the US certainly does, and there are some other countries also who have short-range weapons. So Pakistan is not unique in developing the Nasr.

But Nasr, specifically, was born out of a compulsion of this thing that I mentioned about some people on the other side toying with the idea of finding space for conventional war, despite Pakistan nuclear weapons. In my judgment, and by extension by the judgment of the National Command Authority, I think we figured out that what was driving this particular concept on the other side was that they were looking at certain gaps in the, on the nuclear weapon inventory of Pakistan.

What they were seeing, as the adversary on the other side, they were seeing Pakistan strategic weapons, meaning the ballistic missiles. They were perhaps looking at the operational level in terms of ranges, the lesser ballistic missiles. What they were finding attractive, and what was probably encouraging them to find the space for conventional war, below this gap, was the absence of a complete spectrum of deterrence, if I may. That is what we have been calling the full spectrum deterrence.

That there was some kind of a gap in their realization at their tactical level, and therefore it was leading to this encouragement, or this idea of the concept on the other side that there was space for conventional war. Because there was also talk of calling the, the term being used, calling the Pakistani nuclear bluff, as if they could go in with conventional war, conventional forces against Pakistan in a sort of limited time and space matrix. And Pakistan would not pick up the courage, in that kind of a scenario, to use its strategic weapons, or the operational level nuclear weapons.

So it was this particular gap that we felt needed to be plugged at the lowest rung. Because war was being brought down under the Cold Start Doctrine to the tactical level. If you know the Cold Start Doctrine, as I'm sure this very educated audience would know what Cold Start Doctrine, the essentials, or the elements are. War is being brought down to a tactical level starting war, like I said, pre-programmed, predetermined, shooting from the hip posture within 48 to 96 hours with independent integral battle groups, of about armored brigade size. That is tactical level.

And when you are trying to hit Pakistan within 48 to 96 hours with tactical formations, eight to nine of them simultaneously, you are obviously looking at gaps on our side on the tactical nuclear weapons. Therefore, the idea of Nasr was born, that we need to plug this particular gap, which is encouraging, or driving this particular doctrine. And so Nasr was created, and by the grace of God it has been a great success, as all leaders have confirmed. And we hope, therefore, that the complete spectrum that we say, the full spectrum, strategic, operational, tactical, all three levels of nuclear weapons have been covered, and therefore we have now deterred – in our thinking – the tactical level operations under the Cold Start Doctrine as well. And when that happens, then as I say repeatedly, that we have ensured that peace will prevail.

PETER LAVOY

Thank you for that complete description, I'm sure that was very educational to the audience. And you did indicate that, of course, the United States, and other countries have had short-range, or tactical systems in our arsenal. In fact, the US innovated many...

KHALID KIDWAI

Lance. Lance.

PETER LAVOY

Yes, lance, yes, many other systems. But we moved away from them ultimately because, I think, because of concerns about the intermingling of conventional forces and nuclear weapons in a battlefield theatre. Which was very difficult, and I don't think the US ever sorted this out from a doctrinal point of view, certainly not from how you'd think about the actual operations would be conducted.

And one of the concerns that I think the people that have been involved in the US tactical nuclear weapons program, going back decades, one of the concerns they've had is that this actually makes nuclear war more likely, rather than less likely, having these capabilities. Because these capabilities are not traditionally associated with the doctrine, or the condition you identified earlier, mutually assured destruction.

Is there a risk, do you have some concern that the introduction of short-range tactical systems actually makes nuclear war more likely?

KHALID KIDWAI

I think it makes it less likely. It's how you look at it. Because, to the point of repetition I would say, that if tactical nuclear weapons of Pakistan makes India think twice, if not ten times, about unleashing the, this doctrine within 48 to 96 hours, predetermined, pre-programd kind of a doctrine, I think it ensures that thinking twice, thinking ten times the war will be deterred. However, if war is not deterred, then obviously some kind of a mad doctrine will come into play.

Because right now what is being said, like I said, bluster and blunder, and they are talking about bluster from the other side, that a tactical nuclear weapon will call for a massive retaliation kind of response. Which I think is a very unrealistic, it's not been thought through. What it is not looking at is the Armageddon kind of a situation that this kind of a threat is creating. It is not looking at the complete inventory of Pakistan's nuclear weapons, which many people, friends like you have described it as the fastest growing nuclear arsenal, or something which is in the works still.

So, when you have that kind of an inventory on the Pakistani side, and there is the other side which is talking of massive retaliation in response to an all tactical nuclear weapon, I think it has not been thought through. Because they are not taking into account the balance of nuclear weapons of Pakistan, which hopefully not, but has the potential to go back and give the same kind of dose to the other side. And this is the kind of mutually assured destruction which must ensure that sanity prevails.

So, starting from the tactical nuclear weapons, if sanity prevails, and I hope that sanity will prevail, because after all on the other side also there are sane people, therefore the concept of peace must be reinforced. And if the concept of peace is reinforced, then these weapons served the objectives for which they were designed. And like I said, the debate has been hi-jacked towards the lesser issues of command and control, and falling into wrong hands, which is a lesser issue.

There are steps, and there are ways and means of taking care of that, and we have tried to do that, so that that doesn't happen, these kind of fears that prevail. But the main purpose of the DNWs, the Nasrs etc. is to ensure that war will not break out.

PETER LAVOY

Thank you for that. I'd like to ask you a question about another weapons system on the other side of the spectrum. And this probably, the poster, the photograph has probably been placed on the wall under your successor's time most recently. Your country recently tested the Shaheen-III, which is a much longer range, intermediate range ballistic missile.

Can you tell us what the range of that missile is, and what is the logic for developing something with such a long range, that would extend well beyond the mainland of India?

KHALID KIDWAI

The announced range is the actual range, and that is 2,750 kilometers. There is nothing less, and it has nothing more beyond that. I recall some people calling it, saying that it might be 4,000 kilometers etc, which is not correct.

2,750 kilometers, as of today, is the range of Shaheen-III. And it has a logic. The logic is that, you say that it goes beyond the territory of India, it does not go beyond the territory of India, because what we are counting on also is not just the main Indian landmass, the peninsula, the eastern dimension, the southern dimension. There is, of late, there have been reports of the Nicobar, and the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal, being developed as bases, potentially as strategic bases. And if those bases are not covered by Pakistan, and Shaheen-III does that, with 2,750 kilometers, if those bases are not covered then inadvertently Pakistan will be allowing, so to say, a second strike capability to India within its land borders.

The Nicobar, and the Andaman Islands are very much part of India, not in main landmass, but their islands. I'm sure you know where they are, but they are being developed as strategic bases, and therefore Pakistan cannot afford to let any landmass, whether it's an island, or it's a mainland, to be out of its range. And therefore, 2,750 is a very well calculated range. And I don't particularly expect us to go beyond that, because it is now a comprehensive coverage of any particular land area that India might think of putting its weapons.

PETER LAVOY

You just said at the end, you don't expect your country to develop a capability with longer range in the future.

KHALID KIDWAI

There's no need.

PETER LAVOY

I think that the military logic of ranging all of your adversaries' potential strategic capabilities is probably understandable, certainly to the military people in the audience. But there's a political dimension with the Shaheen-III that I think is troubling to the US government, and to many other governments of representatives here in the audience, that now you'll have the ability to reach many other countries, in the Middle East, for example, that Pakistan didn't have that capacity in the past.

That's troubling, because in international relations, from a defense perspective, you need to look at other countries in terms of the capabilities they have, not just their professed intentions. I wonder if maybe this is a situation where the military logic dominated, and drove the decision to test, and ultimately deploy the Shaheen-III, but that there are other political considerations that perhaps were not taken into account. Or those trade-offs perhaps did not get adequate attention, and that maybe this is going to create more political difficulty for Pakistan in the future.

KHALID KIDWAI

I do not know, frankly. Why should create political difficult for Pakistan in the future? Because the logic is very straightforward, that I have explained. It is, the program itself is India specific, India has a certain landmass, we need that reach to cover India's landmass. 2,570 is barely sufficient to cover the areas of India. I do not know what are you really hinting at, why should this particular range be troublesome for anybody else?

Why is India's 5,000 kilometers not troublesome? Why is India's 10,000 and 12,000 kilometers program not troublesome? Why is India's space program with the ICBM potential capability not troublesome? Why is 2,750 troublesome? I mean, India's [inaudible 00:39:24] 5,000 kilometers which purportedly is supposed to be covering China, but then in the same way you change its direction, it covers so much else. And then they are not stopping at 5,000 kilometers, they are going up to 10,000 and 12,000 kilometers in ICBM etc. They are all in the works.

Why are those then just not troubling the rest of the world? Why is 2,750 kilometers bothering?

PETER LAVOY

Well, why don't we open this discussion up to the audience, and I would ask you to, we have people with microphones, I think, in each of the aisles. I'll start, but please identify yourself and ask a brief question, and we'll start right here. This woman right here, and then we'll turn over here, and we'll keep alternating around.

RABIA AKHTAR

Thank you so much. It's a pleasure listening to you. My name is Rabia Akhtar, and I'm from Kansas State University. My question is, you've referred to international reports about Pakistan's nuclear weapons program being the fastest growing nuclear weapons program. With respect to Pakistan's strategy, I wanted to ask you, is there an end in sight, is there a particular

number of nuclear weapons that Pakistan is looking at? Will Pakistan stop at some point? Or, is it open ended, dictated by the strategic dynamics of the region? Thank you.

KHALID KIDWAI

Rabia, the program is not open ended. It started with a concept of credible minimum deterrence, and certain numbers were identified, and those numbers, of course, were achieved not too far away in time. Then we translated it, like I said, to the concept of full spectrum deterrence, which was the response to plugging those gaps which were bothering, or driving the Cold Start Doctrine in identifying those gaps etc. Therefore, a certain degree of dynamism came into the program.

And to cover the different additions, if I may say of, that demanded of full spectrum deterrence the numbers were modified. Now those numbers, as of today, and if I can look ahead for at least ten to 15 more years, I think they are going to be more or less okay, and we will be comfortable with that. Because, beyond a certain number you lose the logic, it's not an open ended race. I can assure you on the lighter side, the remaining two walls probably will remain vacant.

PETER LAVOY

Can you say how many nuclear weapons your country possesses today? Ballpark.

KHALID KIDWAI

Take a guess.

PETER LAVOY

I've got a few guesses. But, let me turn it over here.

MARK FITZPATRICK

Mark Fitzpatrick, from IISS in London. Like Peter I've had the pleasure of more intimate discussions with you, General Kidwai. You're familiar, I assume, with the statements by members of the Saudi royal family, that if a deal with Iran legitimizes an enrichment program, that the Saudi's would want the same capabilities. This raises the question of how they would acquire enrichment capabilities. No member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group should be providing any such technology, but Pakistan is often mentioned as a potential source.

There's a certain fairness to such a suggestion, given the presumption that the Saudis helped to fund Pakistan's program, and also given that Iran's enrichment program has its origins in Pakistan's centrifuges, maybe it would be fair for the Saudi's to have the same technology. The question is, can you imagine any, can you envision any circumstances where the Saudis might acquire enrichment technology from Pakistan?

KHALID KIDWAI

I think 90% of your question should be dedicated to the Saudis.

PETER LAVOY

Well maybe you could just answer the 10%.

KHALID KIDWAI

I can answer for the 10% that you are insinuating about, perhaps, Pakistan being a potential source for the Saudis. I don't think Pakistan will ever be a potential source for any country. Never. We have got our own logic, we have got our own program, and Pakistan will not be proliferating in any way. I can answer, that is the 10% portion that I can answer for Pakistan.

PETER LAVOY

Thank you, general. Over here.

JOHN GOWER

General, Admiral John Gower, recently, very recently retired from the UK Ministry of Defence. Now you made a very eloquent clarion call for supreme statesmanship in the region, and I think no one here would have anything but very positive reaction to that. And you cited a very tight opportunity for that statesmanship.

A similar statesmanship between the US and the Soviet Union was enabled by a growing culture of transparency and openness on the nuclear weapons which led to a series of reduction, and sustained [inaudible 00:44:37] on the part of US colleagues will forgive me the INF compliance hiccup recently, that has sustained itself. So my question really is, what wiggle room, what maneuver space does your successor have to offer such transparency and openness going into the future? You said that you have set the bar where it needs to be to deter, so where is that wiggle room, where is that maneuver space to give the transparency that will enable such statesmanship? Thank you.

KHALID KIDWAI

I'm not sure whether I've got your question correctly. Transparency of what kind, and to whom?

MALE PARTICIPANT: Well the [inaudible 00:45:18].

KHALID KIDWAI: I mean that, that is very straightforward, it's not a question of my successor of myself, or of any future head of the nuclear program. The, Pakistan follows a policy of ambiguity, and ambiguity in a very well deliberated, and well thought out manner. And to be, if you, like Peter asked, or you're asking whether there will be transparency in giving out the kind of numbers, no, there will never be that kind of transparency, because it will be against the policy of ambiguity that we are forming. So, I don't think any government of Pakistan, and DGSPD is a part of the government of Pakistan, and I don't think any government of Pakistan will want to abandon the policy of ambiguity and provide transparency. I don't foresee that. If you're talking in terms of letting the numbers be known.

PETER LAVOY

Thank you, General. Yes.

ALEXEI ARBATOV

I'm Alexei Arbatov from Russian Academy of Sciences and Moscow Carnegie Center. Thank you, General, for your presentation. You mentioned that you call Pakistani nuclear weapons, weapons of peace, and let me assure that you are not alone. Every nuclear weapons state of the nine nuclear states which exist now consider their own nuclear weapons, weapons of peace. So if that is the case, should we worry about nuclear weapons, nuclear arms race, the threat of

nuclear war and escalation, nuclear proliferation at all? Or Pakistan is more fair in its position than other nuclear weapons states?

KHALID KIDWAI

I don't think I have got this question.

PETER LAVOY

Well, I think the gentleman asked, noted that as you referred to Pakistan's nuclear weapons as weapons of peace, so too do other nuclear weapons states refer to their weapons, their arsenals that way. And yet, I think the reason for this conference, one of the reasons is that there still is a great deal of concern about the existing nuclear weapons, and the safety, security and the prospects of nuclear weapons use among nuclear weapons states, and concerns about other countries that would seek to get nuclear weapons because they feel, maybe, similar threats. And there is a nuclear danger, it's known worldwide, every country in the world is concerned about it.

I think the question is, is what is unique about Pakistan that we should rest assured, and not have the concerns that we might have about other country's stockpiles?

KHALID KIDWAI

Very frankly I would not be, of course, like the rest of this, the participants of this conference, and the people at large, we are all concerned very much about proliferation of nuclear weapons, and there must not be proliferation of nuclear weapons.

But these seven, or eight countries who have deliberately opted for nuclear weapons, these are responses to their respective regional threat, or in cases of the super powers, the global threat assessments. And Pakistani possession, decision to have nuclear weapons is very much part of that threat assessment, going back to the 70s, like Peter said. These weapons will continue to form the bedrock, and the cornerstone of Pakistan's security policy, and provide security in a certain threat spectrum, in a certain threat environment that prevails in South Asia. While hoping, of course, that there will not be proliferation of nuclear weapons beyond these seven or eight countries who possess nuclear weapons. That is the best, perhaps, I could say.

PETER LAVOY

Thank you. Over here.

MUHAMMAD UMAR

Sir, Muhammad Umar from the National Defence University, Pakistan. You have clearly identified that there were gaps that India was trying to exploit, General V K Singh, former Indian army chief also said Pakistan's only deterred India's nuclear weapons, but not conventional war. And Nasr and Shaheen were the short-range and long-range response to that. And you said Pakistan has only met 95% of its goals. Do we see Pakistan wanting to develop nuclear submarines as part of that full spectrum deterrence, will we see that as part of the next 5%?

KHALID KIDWAI

I won't say specifically nuclear submarines, but if you're talking of the possibility of Pakistan developing a second strike capability, which is a larger definition, a submarine is just a platform,

but beyond the submarine you'd need a number of other things. Communications with the weapon itself, and so on and so forth.

A second strike capability helps in stabilizing the first strike capability, in my judgment. Therefore, at some point in time Pakistan should be looking at a second strike capability, particularly in a scenario where India is already well on its way. So we can't allow balances, and imbalances to be disturbed. Balances must be maintained. So if there is, I might want to link it with the question that Xabia had asked, whether there's an apparent limit to what might be happening.

If the threat, or the other side is driving a certain, I won't call it a race, a competition, or something which is being developed as a destabilizing element, the Pakistan has to come up with its minimum safeguards. And those minimum safeguards, in our situation today where there is a drive for a second strike capability on the other side, Pakistan cannot be oblivious to it. Therefore, without calling it a specific nuclear submarine, or something, broadly speaking a second strike capability, a limited second strike capability, a modern second strike capability for Pakistan, I think will be helpful.

PETER LAVOY

So, General, if I could just continue. So in that regard you would expect a sea leg of your nuclear deterrent at some point in the near future?

KHALID KIDWAI

Perhaps, yes. Perhaps, yes. Because a second strike can again take the form of something which is based on land as well, if there's a survivability. But that is not assured. The assured second strike capability comes from being sea based.

PETER LAVOY

Okay, thank you. Over here.

SALMA SHAHEEN

Hi, I'm Salma Shaheen from King's College, London. I'm a PSD student, so my questions are related to the nuclear command and control. You know we had a discussion earlier on it as well, but there are some issues that are still, I'm looking forward. So, can you just elaborate about the communication and transportation channels from top to bottom during the intense time of crisis, regarding use, or non-use of nuclear weapons in the region?

Can you also elaborate, if possible, about the possible coordination between the three strategic force commands, army, navy and air force during the crisis time? What sort of coordination they are, there is in plans, if, is it possible you could...

KHALID KIDWAI

Look, I said that there is the SPD at the focal point for all kinds of coordination, which is working within the order nuclear strategy, and the military strategy, which has been worked out between the three services, and the SPD, or the NCA. So coordination is not an issue at all between the three strategic forces of Pakistan. The SPD is the coordinating authority, and on behalf of the National Command Authority.

If you have studied the division of responsibility, or the delegation of responsibility within the NCA setup you would know that operational control, which means a hell of a lot, lies with the NCA and the SPD. It is only day to day administrative control, some kind of technical control which has been delegated to the three services. So overall operational control, then operational coordination is very much part of operational control rests with the SPD on behalf of the National Command Authority, so there is no issue at all.

About communications, etc., that you... the first part of your question, and transportation, that again comes from within the, that is in the domain of the operational plans of the three services. The communications which are elaborate communications based on the overall concept of the C4 right to SR [unclear 00:53:52], and transportation, logistics, etc., all that is built into operational plans. And all that is developed, controlled, moderated on behalf of the National Command Authority by the SPD.

PETER LAVOY

Thank you. This gentleman here.

TONG ZHAO

Thank you very much. My name is Tong Zhao, from Carnegie Tsinghua Center for Global Policy. I just have a quick follow up question about the submarine matter. It might be relatively easy to put nuclear weapons on submarines, but it is very difficult to develop a very quiet, and survivable submarine fleet. So I was wondering, before Pakistan can develop a really quiet, and survivable submarine fleet, how could a sea based nuclear deterrent capability add to the existing second strike capability of Pakistan? Thank you.

KHALID KIDWAI

I would say it's a work in progress. It's a work in progress where different elements, and different segments will come, are coming in stages. And there will be a time when there will be a platform as well. There will be a time when there will be a weapon. There will be a time where there will communications part of it coming into place. I can say with confidence that we are not too far away from it. So, comprehensively speaking I think this capability will come into play in the next few years.

PETER LAVOY

I'd like to ask a follow up. With the expansion of the nuclear weapons program in the manner that we've been discussing, can your country afford it? Pakistan faces acute budgetary problems, its economy is in very poor shape, there's massive unemployment, very scarce electricity and energy resources. A lot of suffering in the Pakistan population. Is so much expense dedicated to this program justified in light of the misery, and the suffering of a lot of the Pakistani people?

KHALID KIDWAI

I think the question is very valid, absolutely the question is valid. But I would like to also clarify a kind of misconception that goes into the calculations, and figures are floated around by, in a very irresponsible way. Pakistan's nuclear capability has a fraction of the overall defense capability. And as a percentage of the overall national budget has been very much affordable. Notwithstanding the fantastic figures that are quoted in various, by people in irresponsible writings, I do not know where do they get their figures from.

But, the amounts that have been spent in the last four decades plus on Pakistan nuclear capability, I assure you, I don't have the figures right now, but it's a fraction of what is spent on the conventional forces, which itself is within the range of about three, now today, it is probably 3 or 3.5% of the GDP overall. So, I think, I mean philosophically speaking, yes, the money spent on defense is always something that for poor countries is very difficult. It's very difficult for them, but then when you're faced with a real life situation, and a survival situation, then nations have to spend money on their defense wisely, sensibly.

I think the expenditure that has gone onto the nuclear capabilities, besides the numbers that I'm saying are fractions, I think it is well spent in the sense that it has overall, the effect has, the end result of the effects that have been created are that since 1971 war has not come to Pakistan. Or conventional war has not come to Pakistan. Aggression has not come to Pakistan. I think it is money well spent.

PETER LAVOY

Thank you. We have about seven minutes left, and I'll go back over here.

ANITA NILSSON

Thank you very much. My name is Anita Nilsson, and I would like to raise a question on the other side of the nuclear program of Pakistan, namely the peaceful side. Doing that in recognition of the bridging function of SPD earlier, and you, yourself in particular perhaps, when it comes to the peaceful program, energy generation. And the advances that has been made in the management of that with the Regulatory Authority, the educational staff, and the various technical measures that have been put in place.

At the same time we had a process now discussed in the conference here on the continuation of the nuclear security summit, and the priorities of that. So, if you would share with us a little bit of your thinking on the stages of the amendment of the convention to the physical protection of nuclear material in Pakistan, that is an important legal instrument for moving ahead with the global aspects of, perhaps the more simple, but still important part of nuclear programs. Thank you.

KHALID KIDWAI

Again, there's...

PETER LAVOY

Can you just restate your question very...

KHALID KIDWAI

What is the specific question?

ANITA NILSSON

The specific question is the status for the moment of the process of ratifying the amendment to the convention on the physical protection of nuclear material in Pakistan.

KHALID KIDWAI

Pakistan has been considering this now for many years, if you are aware of this. There are reasons for not, not... signing these two, there are two instruments actually. And those are being, one I know is the last, when I left I know, there was still an inter-agency process which was on. And that inter-agency process, there were certain things that needed to be ironed out. Plus the interest, but I think Pakistan does not have too much against those two protocols, and I see that in the next, I do not know, I can't put a timeline on it, but I think in principle Pakistan at some point should be signing those, there's nothing tremendously wrong with those instruments that Pakistan considers. It's only a matter of inter-agency process that is still on.

PETER LAVOY

Good, thank you. Over here.

Haidu San [unclear]

Thanks for your interesting speech. My name is Haidu San [unclear], I am from [inaudible 01:00:46] School of International Affairs, I have a brief question about, as you said that Pakistan's whole defense program is to deter Indian capacity. And we know that India is investing heavily in the fourth dimension, which is a space. So I would like to know Pakistan is doing to deter India in this space, because Indian space program is so extended, and is going to be more expanded in the coming years. So I would like to know what Pakistan is doing to balance that strategic stability?

Khalid Kidwai

In terms of their space program?

Haidu San

Yes.

Khalid Kidwai

In terms of the space program?

Haidu San

Exactly, the space program.

Khalid Kidwai

Well unfortunately the space program of Pakistan has lagged behind. Not in any kind of a competition with India, there's no need for a competitive... The Indian space program is not a threatening program, unlike the nuclear program, so there is no competition between India and Pakistan. We wish India well with their wishes to go to Mars, or whatever. But Pakistani space program, in as much as the SPD is concerned, it must meet the essentials of our C4ISR needs. Which means, basically, communications and surveillance. Communication and surveillance.

If Pakistan space program can meet the C4ISR needs of the SPD of the nuclear program, I think SPD will be comfortable with it. Beyond that, if our scientists can take us to the moon, perhaps, I'll be quite fine with that.

PETER LAVOY

Yes, question, this gentleman.

ELIVA

Hi. I'm Eliva [inaudible] from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey. Two quick questions. One is that, my interactions with people in America, I have found out that the reason why Pakistan is not getting any favor from the NSG is that the international community's perception about Pakistan has not changed that drastically. Especially because of the AQ Khan affair. But I see that Pakistan is investing heavily internally to try to dispel those concerns. But I don't see any movement outside Pakistan. Is there any diplomatic movement strategy done by Pakistan to counter those two, especially towards the members of the NSG?

And my second question is, you talked about that you have a figure in mind regarding the warheads. Considering the strategic modernizations happening in South Asia, like BMD, and like India's submarine launching nuclear program, would that figure also increase with India's technological modernization?

KHALID KIDWAI

Your second question first. To an extent, yes. Whenever you go into a new program, there are elements of that program and certain X numbers will be required, so to that extent. But I would qualify it by saying that that initial number would also be qualified by the needs for a credible minimum deterrence, minimum numbers, not open ended. That much for that.

Your first question about our interaction with the NSG in the first diplomatic efforts being made, I think Pakistan is making every possible, every conceivable... engagement that is possible to convince the international communities, the powers that matter, that NSG exemption has not been a stabilizing factor for South Asia. NSG membership will be a further destabilizing step. I mentioned it in my opening remarks also, that friends who matter, who have the good of South Asia instead of instability in mind, they must be helpful, not destabilize our delicate situation.

So, diplomatic efforts are being made internationally, in the out [inaudible 01:04:49] capitals, and there is a dialogue going on with the NSG Troika, I'm aware of that. But there is up to a point that Pakistan has its limitations that you can make your case, but of course the decision to accept that case or not is not ours. As far as making the case is concerned I think Pakistan is making the best case that it can. Of course this is not something that comes in newspapers everyday, so you, one has to not be aware of it, but on the diplomatic circles, at the diplomatic level I think all efforts are being made to try and tell the world that this is going to be destabilizing. There is this famous phrase that has been coined, criteria based approach. You set a set of criteria, and India meets that criteria, Pakistan meets that criteria, the members should be open to it.

PETER LAVOY

I think, [overtalking], we're coming close to our...

KHALID KIDWAI

She's been wanting to ask that question for a long time.

PETER LAVOY

Okay, so this young woman up here, please. Can you give her the microphone please?

GENIE NGUYEN

Thank you, General Kidwai. My name is Genie Nguyen with the Vietnamese Voice of America. At the opening you said that, you talked about this distant relationship between India and Pakistan, and you also said that the nuclear power that Pakistan is holding has great achievement for the fact that you think it's peaceful, it's aiming to peaceful resolution. So I understand that Pakistan is the only ally that China has, and given that China has a very well developed space program, well developed... nuclear program, and well developed submarine naval program are under way, where do you think the leadership of Pakistan, especially you, can advise the Pakistani leadership to use your ally with China to promote peace and security in Asia? Given the connection between Pakistan, China and North Korea. Thank you.

PETER LAVOY

Thank you. An interesting nuclear alliance.

KHALID KIDWAI

I think it's more in the domain of diplomacy than in, they are on the SPD really. But, Pakistan and China, of course, have been old allies since the '60s. It's a source of strength of peace in the region, particularly in South Asia. It is not an alliance against any other country. It is an alliance that has helped both countries achieve their respective objectives. It must go further, but your observation that China is the only ally of Pakistan, I think is not entirely accurate.

[Background talking]

Pakistan is the only ally of China? Again I would disagree with that, I think China has plenty of allies. China is not, is almost heading towards a super power state, yes, it has many, many allies, Pakistan is not of the... maybe if you can beg to differ. But, I mean it's a compliment if you say that Pakistan is the only ally of China, I take it as a compliment, but in my perception China has many friends, many, many friends. They are playing their role at the global level, in a most positive way, and a constructive way, and they are already finding their place under the sun in their global affairs, and I think they will find in due course also. But I can assure you that as far as their space capability is concerned, their nuclear capability, etc, is concerned, some other capability that you mentioned.

On the peaceful side, on the peaceful side nuclear energy particularly, space, yes, we are taking help, it is not a secret, they are providing us with nuclear reactors for energy. Energy is a big issue in Pakistan, energy deficiency. So, I think it's mutual benefit that is going on between Pakistan and China, and I think, so it's a positive for the region of South Asia, particularly, and for Asia generally.

PETER LAVOY

Thank you, General. I think this raises an interesting issue, and I think it's been a theme through a number of the questions. Countries are often judged not only on what they do, and what they say, but on the friends they keep, and the relations they have. And I think that's why there was so much mistrust about the Pakistan nuclear effort when A.Q. Khan did have relations with North Korea, Iraq, Libya and Iran, and you've done a great deal to consolidate, to gain full control over the weapons program, and there's no evidence in, that I'm aware of, of other connections with other states subsequent.

But I think the still troubling is the connection that the Pakistan state has with militant groups. I'm not suggesting that Pakistan would ever aid militants with, provide nuclear capabilities to

militant groups, but a country to pursue mutually assured destruction presumably would not have the need of engaging with militant groups as proxies for other foreign policy objectives.

I just ask this final question to you, have you been able to prevail upon your colleagues in the military to cease the connections with other militant groups? Because that will, or has the prospect of triggering a war that your weapons are designed to prevent?

KHALID KIDWAI

Well, I don't have to pursue my friends in the military to do, or not to do something, this is in the domain of national policies, and I would... In fact, I would question the basis of the question that you have asked. Whether it is, whether the question is accurate in the first place or not. Because these are remnants of history that Pakistan has inherited because of super power games in Asia. Pakistan weren't involved, if you want to go back in history, Pakistan got involved, it was dragged into this situation because of two broadly duo strategic situations that were thrust on Pakistan.

1947, the absence of self-determination for Kashmir, it has its consequences until today. We don't want to give self-determination to Kashmir, you would encourage terrorism, you encouraged the militant groups, which, it's somebody else's business, because Pakistan is not denying self-determination to Kashmir, somebody else is. Consequences are being faced by the region, including Pakistan.

Second date line, 1979. Pakistan did not invite the Soviet Union to come and disturb a tranquil Afghanistan. A tranquil Afghanistan, Pakistan. Pakistan did not ask the US in the West to come and counter, and make Afghanistan the graveyard of the Soviet Union. Pakistan got dragged into it. Terrorism, militancy are consequences, in my judgment, of these two date lines, 1947 and 1979. We are bearing the brunt of it, we are doing the best that we can with our limited resources. But to say that Pakistan, I should tell my colleagues not to get involved, well that's very simplistic, it's much too simplistic. And if I may, very naïve, it's divorced from the historical realities of why this particular phenomena is in place today in South Asia.

PETER LAVOY

Thank you, General Kidwai. I think we've reached our allotted time, maybe we've exceeded that briefly, but I do appreciate having this conversation again. Strange for us to do this in such a public forum. But I want to thank you for providing so much information, so much insight. I think it's given people a lot more grounds to contemplate how they regard the Pakistan nuclear program, and the global nuclear danger. I do not know if you've satisfied everybody's concerns, I expect one could not do that, but hopefully we'll be able to continue this conversation with myself, and with others in the future. And hopefully you'll come back to future Carnegie Endowment conferences.

KHALID KIDWAI

I'm sure.

PETER LAVOY

Thank you.

KHALID KIDWAI

Thank you very much.