



# Twenty Years of Transformation in South Asia India and the Balance of Power in Asia

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[00:00:20]

MILAN VAISHNAV: Okay, everybody. I think we're going to get started.

I am not George Perkovich, which will come as a surprise to all of you. George is caught up on his way, so – but we'll go ahead and get started. So it's my pleasure to fill in for him on this panel on India and the balance of power in Asia.

Let me just – briefly just say, you know, this is sort of billed as the launch of the South Asia program here at Carnegie, which is sort of a misnomer; it's actually the relaunch of the South Asia program, a program which has been guided and led by George and Ashley Tellis, who have done, as all of you know, you don't need me to tell you, sort of the best work around on security issues as they relate to the region, U.S.-India relations and Pakistan, Afghanistan and the – and the region. And so I'd like to think that we're building on the foundation that Ashley has put together as well as Frédéric, who has been here before as a – as a Carnegie visiting scholar, and we're lucky to have him now as the director of our South Asia program, and also very lucky to have a very good friend of the program, Jack Gill, from the Near East and South Asia Center, who's going to talk about India, Pakistan today.

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So I think – why don't we maybe take it in the order that's listed on the program and start with Ashley, who is going to talk to us about India's response to China's military modernization? Thanks.

ASHLEY TELLIS: Thank you, Milan. It's great to be back here in a different role.

I'm going to speak today about the way India's challenges with respect to Chinese military modernization present themselves. And probably the best way to start is to start by emphasizing the fact that the military modernization problems that China present really at the outgrowth of 30 successful years of economic growth, which have – in China, which have resulted in a progressively – a greater set of capabilities that the PLA has acquired over this period. And that transformation, which is taking place in the PLA for reasons that have nothing to do with India, obviously have an impact on India, just as it does on every one of China's – of China's neighbors.

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Now, the Sino-Indian challenge is a very peculiar one, and it's not one that is commonly understood. When most people think of the Sino-Indian military balance in the broadest sense, the general impression that people have is one of Indian weakness relative to China's strengths. And it's not unreasonable that this is, in a sense, the received wisdom because when you compare India and China as macroentities, China is the larger of the two in everything, from geography to economics to military capabilities broadly understood.

But when you look closely at the Sino-Indian military balance in the theater, which is essentially the greater Tibetan region, which is where China and India about each other, the untold fact is that at least since the late 1970s India has had operation superiority vis-à-vis China in this part of the world. This is something that, as I said, has always escaped attention because people compare

macromilitary indices in terms of size of inventories and, you know, the broad swath of capabilities. But when you look at the character of force deployments, when you look at the numbers of troops that both countries have, the kinds of air power that both countries bring to bear along the common border, since the late 1970s India has had a substantial quantitative as well as qualitative superiority.

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And so the challenge for India in the next decade and the decade after that is to actually find ways of protecting the superiority that it has assiduously put in place since the late 1970s. And the strategic problem for India is that that superiority, the traditional superiority, which is – it has enjoyed for the last 30 or so years is going to be harder and harder to maintain. And it's going to be harder and harder to maintain because the transformations that are now taking place in the PLA are truly – are truly quite dramatic and are occurring, as I said, for reasons that have nothing to do with India.

So I'm going to briefly look at the three major operational arenas – land, air and sea spaces – and give you some sense of what the nature of the challenges in each are.

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When one starts by looking at the land balances, there are three specific subtheaters that one has to pay attention to. There is the Western subtheater, which is essentially Kashmir, looking eastwards, the area of Aksai Chin, which is the disputed area between China and India. There is a middle theater, which I think, you know, can be crudely called the central theater, which has to do with parts of the Indian states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal. And there is the eastern theater, which has to do with the Indian northeast.

Now, when one looks at these three theaters from the Chinese side, the Kashmir theater and the central theater come opposite the Lanzhou military district, and the northeastern part of the Indian landmass faces the Chengdu military district. So when you look at the force balances, you have to look at two different military regions at the Chinese end in contrast to the three specific subtheaters at the Indian end.

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Now, what India did after its defeat in the 1962 war was it drew the conclusions, for political reasons, that the outcome of that conflict was something never to be repeated again. And so what India essentially focused on building was very, very strong military forces in extremely close proximity to the international border. And the idea was very simple: If you can pack the international border with very robust military formations, then what you end up doing is having the capacity to mount, you know, what military scholars would call a forward defense.

The Chinese, in contrast, took exactly the opposite tack. They decided that they were going to defend the border on a – in normal times primarily through the use of paramilitary forces, which are essentially border regiments, supplemented by reserve elements, which are either the militia or elements of the People's Armed Police. And the People's Armed Police become relevant only because there are substantial what are called PAP deployments in Tibet because of the internal

security problems that China faces – that is, the core of China’s war-fighting capabilities are actually deep in the rear.

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So if one actually looks at the formations and the numbers, within, say, a hundred miles of the international border, it is very clear that when numbers are concerned, the Indian military has straightforward numerical advantages in any numerical calculation within a hundred-mile distance of the border. And when one looks for the back, beyond a hundred-mile line, the Indians still have substantial advantages simply as a function of geography.

Now, traditionally, this balance was very reassuring to India because it meant that if you had a dustup that resembled a replay of ’62, the Indians would actually be able to defend their territories without the fear of being pushed back as they were in ’62.

Now, what has changed? What has changed in the last 20 years is that the PLA has been steadily modernizing as a result of China’s larger economic growth. And this modernization has taken very specific forms, which, although not intended or directed explicitly against India in the first instance, have very important consequences for India.

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The first thing that has happened is that as part of China’s economic growth, there has been a quite dramatic modernization of infrastructure in parts of Tibet that traditionally did not have substantial transportation networks. Now, this is a normal consequence of growth, because as you grow, you want to deepen state penetrativity; you want to deepen the reach of the state in all the areas that you control. And Tibet and the westward areas have in the last decade in particular become increasingly part of this Chinese effort at investing in greater penetration and greater presence.

Now, the fact that infrastructure in Tibet has dramatically grown in the last 10 years changes the balance not because the numbers of troops have changed but because it means that the Chinese military today can bring to bear potentially greater forces from outside the region than has ever been the case historically. So when one thinks in terms of balances, for the first time now India has to look at not simply numerical balances, which are static – that is, Indian troop level relative to Chinese troop levels in the two regions – but for the first time look at dynamic balances – that is, the ability of the Chinese state to bring troops from outside the two MRs that I identified, Lanzhou and Chengdu, and thereby potentially change the balance of the conflict.

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There’s a second transformation that has taken place at the Chinese end which poses challenges to India. And that is, for the first time since the beginning of the PLA’s creation as a force in 1949, China is moving towards a national logistic system and a joint logistic system. In the old days the PLA was essentially like a Napoleonic army: It lived off the land. And therefore, Chinese logistics were all localized logistics. When the logistics revolution began to unfold about 10 years ago, the Indians had to reckon with the prospect that for the first time Chinese formations that were deployed in the areas that they were could actually now access logistics that lay beyond the

physical areas where these group armies were located. Now this, in turn, has the implication that China, in theory, could sustain much larger forces in a conflict than they historically could.

And the third transformation that has taken place in the PLA is that command and control, which traditionally was focused very much within the MR, is now slowly to – evolving towards arrangements where the Chinese military can now control much larger kinds of forces from across the military regions. All of this means that if you are an Indian land forces planner, you have to reckon with the possibility that you will face much larger Chinese forces in a conflict than you had originally anticipated for. And this is the challenge that India has to cope with.

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It has responded in two or three ways. It has responded by attempting to build up its own infrastructure along the borders. But that progress has been very spotty at best. It has attempted by building up its own conventional forces, and that is a process that has begun seriously only very recently, about two to three years ago, and conservatively speaking is at least five years away from being complete. And given the delays and the slack in the Indian modernization program, there is every likelihood that it'll take much longer.

And the third effort, of course, that the Indians have made is to simply throw money at the problem. But unfortunately for India, the flexibility that the Indian state has in terms of resources is actually thinner than people often realize. And so it is entirely possible that although the ambitions are great, with respect to throwing money, when it comes time for actually appropriating those resources, the Indian state may simply not have the financial resources to do this. So there is an issue that has to be dealt with, you know, which we have not seen the last word stated.

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I'm going to say few words on the air balance. I'm not going to talk about the naval, for a very simple reason, that the two theaters of operation of the Indian Navy and the Chinese navy are so different that unless one posits some major intersection of the two interests in the Indian Ocean – which is likely to happen, but not anytime soon – the naval dimensions of the balance can be left aside for discussion, at least at the moment. But I want to talk about the air balance because the air balance is going to be critical because it does affect the way both China and India think about the standoff in the Himalayas.

Historically, the Indian Air Force, just like the Indian Army, had tremendous advantages vis-à-vis China. In fact, not too very long ago the size of the Indian Air Force where its late generation aircraft were concerned were larger than the comparable component of late generation aircraft in the PLAAF. So if you compared late-generation Indian forces and late-generation Chinese forces, the Indians actually had a numerical advantage.

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Because of the transformations that have taken place within the Chinese military in the last decade, we are now reaching a point where the Chinese the late-generation contingent in the PLAAF will be larger than the entire size of the Indian Air Force itself. This is a transformation that will be seen quite clearly within the next decade, that there will come a point where the numbers are

going to be radically different that China's late-generation aircraft is simply going to be larger in size than the entire IAF.

The second advantage that India had was that it had a much larger number of air bases along the Chinese border than Chinese comparably had on its side of the line. As a result of modernization that has occurred in the last decade, that, too, is slowly changing.

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Now, the Chinese still have one major problem, particularly in the – on the Tibetan Plateau. And that is, even the new Chinese air bases that are being developed are air bases that exist at relatively high altitudes. And as people who fly airplanes will tell you, the moment you have air bases at high altitudes, it reduces the efficiency of the aviation platform dramatically. The air is very thin at high altitudes. You do not get lift. And if you do not get lift, it means you cannot load up your airplanes with the maximum amount of ordinance that you would otherwise be able to load. So you can operate from high altitude air bases, but essentially, the efficiency of your armament loads reduces very dramatically.

Now, the Chinese are compensating for this, of course, through the use of air-to-air refueling and other such capabilities, but there are still some limitations that China simply cannot abstract because of the nature of the geography.

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And the last advantage that India traditionally had was that it – the combat proficiency of its pilots was always much better than that of the pilots in the – in the – in the Indian – in the Chinese air force. In the last several years that, too, has slowly begun to change.

So when one looks at the nature of the air balances from an Indian point of view, there are clearly a set of transformations that India simply could not anticipate if you were thinking of the long-term future of air power as recently as, say, 10 years ago. That is, the numbers are now beginning to work to India's disadvantage. China, because of its superior resource base, will find ways of circumventing the limitations of high-altitude operations. And the third is that China will, as it acquires new combat airplanes, will slowly develop the air-to-air combat proficiency that it historically never had.

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There is a fourth element which, to my mind, is actually far more serious and which India has not paid as much attention as it probably ought to. The Indian Air Force has always prided itself on being able to fight and win air wars in the classic sense that occurred in World War I and World War II, which is to generate the largest number of sorties, find the adversary in the air, do what fighter pilots like to do, which is, you know, the white silk shawl kind of dogfight, and blow the other guy before, you know, the air engagement ends. That's the way the Indian Air Force planned for its operations traditionally and continues to do so to this day.

The Chinese military, in contrast, appears to be gravitating towards a model that is somewhat different. Recognizing China's limitations in air-to-air combat, Chinese military strategy

focuses very much not on meeting and defeating the adversary in the air but preventing the adversary from getting into the air in the first place. And this is to the use of a variety of what crudely might be called “asymmetric technologies,” ranging from the use of ballistic missiles for air base suppression through the use of cybertechnologies to shut down command-and-control systems all the way to the use of advanced electronic warfare capabilities so that even if you meet in the air, you don’t meet on equal terms. It is the nature of this conflict that the Indian Air Force still has to work its way through as it thinks about long-range competition with China.

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So where does all this leave us? This leaves us with a challenge that is new to India, a challenge that it has not faced since 1962, which is, what do you do in the face of Chinese capabilities that are going to be increasingly more and more sophisticated and increasingly the products of a(n) organic domestic base? I mean, this cannot be underemphasized enough, that in contrast to Indian failures with respect to defense industrialization, the Chinese may not have, you know, the Cadillacs which can be deployed in the battlefield, but they’ve got some good enough Camrys. And if they can do that in relative terms, India has to rethink the nature of how it deals with what look like unsettling trends in the balance.

Now, there is one strong suit, one ace in the hole that India still has as it begins to think of these long-term issues, and that is India’s partnership with other Asian countries, including the United States. This more than any other provides India with a certain advantage that China does not comfortably enjoy today. The limits, of course, of this tool in terms of India’s ability to sustain its position will depend entirely on the choices India makes. To the degree that India decides to invest in these strategic partnerships with other Asian powers, including the United States, it stands a fighting chance of being able to maintain an equilibrium in its favor.

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But as all of you heard in the session before and will hear in the sessions to come, Indian politics and its preferences often turn out to be greater impediments to the kind of outcomes that India itself seeks than simply some technical factors, you know, which can be redressed in some shape or form.

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So the long-term prognosis is still open, but India has to make some hard decisions with respect to both the kind of posture it adopts and the kinds of alliances it wants to build if it wants to recover the golden age of Indian superiority that it had essentially from the late 1970s to the beginning of the century.

Thank you. (Applause.)

MR. VAISHNAV: Thank you, Ashley.

We’ll turn next to Frederic Grare, who, as I mentioned before, is the director of our South Asia program here. And as – Vikram in the previous panel had mentioned that he was unsuccessful in sort of finding out more hard details about India’s “Look East” policy, and luckily for us, this is

something that Frederic has been working on and will continue to work on, working on a new major project on that and is going to speak to us about right now.

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FREDERIC GRARE: Thank you, Milan. Unfortunately, I don't think I'll be able to give you data in more precision, and I will simply satisfy myself by including some of the remarks which have been done before.

But what I want to – like to for the next 10 minutes or so which have been allotted to me is simply insist on the “Look East” policy as a strategic dimension. What started in the '90s as essentially a way to attract foreign direct investment and increase trade with Southeast Asia has evolved towards something much larger, like full-spectrum engagement with a number of powers, not only in Southeast Asia but far beyond in East Asia itself.

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And I of course have in mind the reservation that our colleague Vikram expressed just before.

The – second, I would like to examine briefly its evolution and also its limits and the limits, potentially, of three kinds. There is the question of India's capabilities. I mean, economic capacities have been mentioned. Ashley just mentioned the question of military capabilities and the hard questions that India will have to face. I would add to that also the question of political capabilities. I would also discuss the question of perception of India by its potential partners in Asia as the discussion of India as a strategic actor, and finally the difference of perceptions on regional security. Instead I would like to briefly open a discussion of this question of alliance in a way and articulate the “Look East” policy with the larger question of India's strategic thinking, in particular one specific aspect, which is the question of strategic autonomy.

So everybody knows the “Look East” policy as this economic policy towards Southeast Asia. And Vikram underlined the fact that perhaps there is not much in the “Look East” policy which explained the actual growth of trade between the – between India and Southeast Asia, but perhaps there are reasons for that. Perhaps the economic aspects were not the only dimension of this economic policy.

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I mean, it is – the “Look East” policy, from the beginning, although there were different priorities, of course, over time, was a comprehensive strategy with a political, of course, but also economic and strategic dimension, which aimed not only at, you know, getting the objectives that I just mentioned before, getting FDI, getting growth of trade, but also preventing in Asia from being dominated by one single major power. And from the very beginning what we see is the insistence of institutionalization of the linkage, including the economic linkage, between Southeast Asia and India. And this marked not just the willingness to give a framework to the economic dimension but also to assert India's presence through these economic means.

And you know, this disconnect between the objective – which we can see in fact between the objective of each or almost each of the FTAs and the actual economic content – this disconnect can also be explained partly by this economic reason.

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Now let me consider the most strategic dimension of it. I mean, the strategic considerations, although they were not the prime objective, were always present. I mean, the “Look East” policy also start from the fear, the early ’90s, of a strategic vacuum in the Indian Ocean and the fear that China may be willing to fill in. And that was present from the very beginning.

So again, I mentioned the institutionalization of the economic links. I mean, this was also an institutionalization of all links beyond that, and what we see is India becoming a full Dialogue Partner of ASEAN in ’95, becoming a member of the ARF in 1996 and starting annual bilateral summits in 2002. So India gradually become more present in Southeast Asia. India asserts itself in the region.

But all these steps were only the phase one of the “Look East” policy and what we see emerging quite late in the process – and it’s only in 2003 that Yashwant Sinha, then the foreign minister of India, start talking of the phase two of the “Look East” policy.

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And the phase two is essentially two things. It is the extension of the domain covered by “Look East” to the strategic field, and this is also the assertion that India would look to East Asia and not just to Southeast Asia anymore. Again, there is also of course the question of gap between the intention and the actual policies, but this stated officially in 2003. India looks at Japan. India looks at South Korea. India looks at Australia. It’s only later than this relation materialized, but this is definitely an intention. I mean, this is confirmed in 2004 by the prime minister, and in 2006 we have Manmohan Singh again saying that the “Look East” policy is not merely an economic policy but a strategic shift in Indian vision.

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So this is not just talks. I mean, there are some incremental steps taken. I mean, I’m not going to mention any – everything, but I mean, let’s speak of the joint military exercise with Singapore, for example, that existed before. They are being intensified. There is the 2003 defense cooperation agreement, which makes India in fact the most important regional partner of Singapore in this way. And there is a willingness to transform the political alliance with Vietnam into a much more broad-based and security-oriented relation.

This is the beginning of the relationship with Indonesia, which we can still describe – nascent and very limited, so far, with only joint patrol along the maritime border. I mean, we have similar exercises with Thailand. You have a number of exercises of that kind. You do have the training of the pilots, (inaudible), and so on and so forth.

What’s interesting in the process is that it looks like India is developing ties with a country on the peripheries of China, but this is also at the same time that India is also normalizing its

relations with China in 2003, and it's in 2006 – that is, at the same time that there is this assertion of a willingness, deliberate willingness, to develop the strategic dimension of the “Look East” policy – it's at the same time that the two countries agree to conduct joint military exercises.

So this is, in a way, something interesting because it does show that the “Look East” policy has a China dimension but theoretically at least is not China-specific, which in practice allows much greater flexibility for India and a much subtle and nuanced policy vis-à-vis – vis-à-vis China.

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This is also in a way a condition for the very existence of the “Look East,” because no more than India do the countries of Southeast Asia or East Asia want to openly antagonize China, and everybody's quite comfortable in something which looks like – slightly more moderate and ambitious.

So what are the limits of this exercise? A, as we have seen in the brief description, this is not something which so far has gone extremely far. And this is something which has large scope of development in front of it.

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The first interrogation, of course, regarding limits is a question of capability. Ashley has mentioned the evolution of the military capability. Vikram has spoken about the economic limitation. I would like to speak also about an increasingly important factor in this limitation. If we see the “Look East” as a comprehensive strategy, then we have to take into account the political dimension. And this is very – to take a very specific example, for example, if speak of Burma as a key component of the future of the “Look East,” then it's quite clear that what has happened at the time of the rapprochement with Bangladesh and the impossibility for India for essentially into no reason to get the transit ties through Bangladesh means very clearly the impossibility to develop as much as it would like to the northeast, with potential consequences on the insurgency, but also to develop and make it meaningful for an actual developmental cooperation with Burma.

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What we have along the Burma – the India-Burma frontier – on both sides we're speaking of the two poorest province. It's difficult in those conditions to really start a greater cooperation. And therefore this is an impediment for a larger relation with Southeast Asia, but this is something which had its roots in India itself, in many ways.

The second set of interrogation are linked to the first one of course, relate to the perception of India as a – as a strategic actor. India has no dispute with its Asian partners, but India has also difficulty or added difficulty in recently – and this is one of the paradox that I'd like to insist – to define common security interests with its Asian partners.

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I mean – and if you look at the perception of all its partners, there are there interrogation regarding India’s defense role in the region. Relations with Japan are in many ways a good example of that.

If we – potentially, at least, India can offer Japan – and it’s a “potentially” – security edge against China, particularly given the common interest in maritime trade and so on – an economic edge against overdependence on the Chinese markets, and we see that Japan is investing massively in Indian infrastructure, and an alliance edge against perhaps overdependence on the United States for security. But all these propositions, as nice as they look on paper, still have to be tested. And as far as Japan is concerned, it remains unclear whether India is capable – and I would argue that today it’s not, but even if India will become capable and willing to assume such responsibilities.

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And the third set of India interrogation to persistent difference in the perception to the – sorry, the – yeah, the difference in perception of regional security. I mean, the relation very often remain quite ambivalent. Engaging India based on a common understanding of China is not something which is always to everyone in Southeast Asia or even East Asia or all – not so much in East Asia but at least in the Pacific, if we speak to Australia. I mean, if we speak of Vietnam, the link – the procession is quite obvious. But if we speak of a country like Malaysia, for example, this is quite unclear. Are the two countries really developing a real strategic convergence beyond the pragmatic cooperation on training pilot and assistance for the Malaysian air force? Well, this is quite unclear.

Again, what’s interesting is the relation with Australia. Despite the recent rapprochement with Delhi, despite Canberra – own political evolution vis-à-vis China, it is very doubtful that Australia and India see China in similar threatening terms. I mean, in any case, China is probably – no, Australia – sorry – is probably as unwilling to be dragged into any kind of zero-sum game between China and India than in China – than India is willing to be dragged into a zero-sum game between the U.S. and China, for example.

Sp there we do have serious differences which plead for probably more dialogue, more strategic dialogue, but which we’ll perhaps find, with practical translation, with some difficulty.

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In other words, the “Look East” policy in strategic terms is definitely an ambition. It’s also a question mark or, if you are optimistic, this is a question mark, and this definitely an ambition, but I mean, the two factor are definitely there.

Now the last question is a question of strategic autonomy, and that will be my last point. I mean, this question of strategic autonomy has sometimes and probably still sometimes is an irritant, and what I’m opening up here is essentially discussion. I’m not trying to preach any gospel or anything of that kind.

It is clear, for example, that the “Look East” policy, the dynamic with Australia, Japan has also positive impact on direct U.S.-India relation. But I mean, there is still – despite all this, this quest for strategic autonomy. No, the notion reflects, of course, traditional Indian views that is a

foreign policy that may reflect some aspiration (inaudible). You find that in Indian literature. I don't think that this is definitely central. I think it reflects also a persistent degree of mistrust, which has probably less to do with the actual state of the relation, that the nature of international relation – I mean, this is not – I mean, the improvement of the India-U.S. relation is definitely something which is in actual term quite new.

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But it also reflects in many ways a change in India's attitude vis-à-vis the world, because the concept itself, at least in my mind, has considerably evolved. This is definitely – strategic autonomy does definitely not mean strategic isolation for India. But one can argue that even in the past it was not totally strategic isolation.

It is not just maintaining adequate or perceived equidistance with the U.S. This is something else. And I would submit to you that Indian decision-makers today understand strategic autonomy more as a leveraging of the forces of a partner country in a situation of strategic convergence while retaining, to the extent possible, the autonomy of decision.

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And I think that it make quite a difference because you insist on the question of autonomy of decision while at the same time being able to partner with somebody. So the whole “Look East” policy is an evidence of that. This is no longer isolated India and in the situation it found itself in the early '90s – I mean, the Indian decision-maker definitely recognizes there is no other way that being more integrated with India – with Asia – sorry – and look for regional cooperation. Similarly, they definitely no longer exclude any cooperation with the U.S.

But at the same time, it is quite clear that their concept of strategic autonomy supposes the existence of strong counterbalance to China. I mean, what they actually do is evolve in one given space, which is likely to persist as the cost of a potential or the potential cost of a conflict of whatever kind between China and India is likely to increase over time. And therefore, I mean, we can imagine a situation where both sides will be increasingly reluctant to engage each other in conventional terms.

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So in that space, it makes a lot of sense to keep a degree of autonomy. At the same time – and this is a consequence of that – India cannot align itself too closely, too closely with any power. So you know, the “Look East” in a way cannot exist, at least a leverage, in a situation of total polarization between China and the U.S. So this is not just a delusion of grandeur that is being manifested through this question of strategic autonomy. This is the condition for existence of the “Look East” policy.

So to conclude, I don't think that it should be seen as a problem for the U.S., and I don't see why it's a such a problem. Neither it is something which is – simply be considered as a fact of life which anyone has to accommodate. It does also give flexibility, because in a country like India, it's perfectly able to manage its day-to-day relationship with difficulty, with many flaws, with whatever you can imagine, but it's perfectly capable of managing its direct, bilateral problem with China. And

there is no contradiction in saying that at the same time it does need the presence of a stronger thing.

So where, really, is the problem? I think that the advantage, the value of the “Look East” policy is that it’s a nonconfrontational way of – you know, of managing China in many ways, you know. It’s not just that, but it’s also a nonconfrontational way and a flexible one to manage with relations with India. As such, it has – it has value.

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I would finish by saying that as the polarization in Asia is likely to grow, so will in many ways the relevance of the “Look East” policy, but the question is really, will the capacity follow? And I think this is still a question mark. (Applause.)

MR. VAISHNAV: Thank you, Frederic.

Last but certainly not least, we have Jack Gill, professor at NDU, the National Defense University, and also an associate professor at the Near East-South Asia Center, who is a very good friend of the program. In fact, I think this week alone – and you’ve been here for three days out of four – (laughter) – and we haven’t gotten to Friday, for various Carnegie activities. So thank you for putting up with us.

And Jack is going to speak about India and Pakistan. Thanks.

JACK GILL: Well, thank you. It’s certainly not a question of putting up with but rather enjoying both my colleagues here at Carnegie and all of you who come to attend these events.

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I have to start, of course, with the standard disclaimer that I am a government employee and what I have to say is entirely my own opinion. Please do not attribute government stance, position or anything else to my remarks. They’re entirely mine

And certainly the second caveat that’s owed here is that in 10 minutes or so, so as not to irritate my friend Frederic, I can barely begin to cover such a broad topic as the India-Pakistan situation looking into the future. But let me – let me start with a couple of comments on the current situation and near-term prospects, then overlay on top of that some persistent concerns regarding this bilateral relationship and then try to highlight some salient implications for the near term and the midterm, my theme here being crisis management, as you will see, and then conclude with some brief observations.

[00:41:48]

Again, I’ll try to be very brief here, so as to leave time for discussion and to not incur Frederic’s wrath.

Starting with the current situation and the short-term outlook, I will, with due apologies to Sergio Leone, look at the good, the bad and the ugly. Starting with the good, it’s important to

recognize that the 2003 cease-fire that India and Pakistan agreed to has held for nearly a decade. This is by no means a small achievement, especially if we consider that the Line of Control in Kashmir used to be the venue for very routine – something we in the States, if you weren't following this stuff routinely – these were exchanges of everything from machine gun fire to heavy artillery duels involving sometimes dozens of tens of artillery shells going back and forth – in other words, a situation that would have been classed as a war almost any other place in the world.

[00:42:40]

So the fact that the two countries have managed to maintain this cease-fire since 2003 is quite notable.

It's also good that the current – or the cross-border and Line of – cross-Line of Control trade and bus services that were interrupted by the recent spate of firings, raids and accusations earlier this month have resumed. So that too is a good sign.

But there are also a number of bad signs, and in the first place, the – this spate of firings, raids and accusations highlights the fragility of the situation along the Line of Control, as well as the fragility of the larger India-Pakistan bilateral relationship, in my view. I think there are two dimensions of this fragility worth putting into prominence: in the first place, that the generally favorable trajectory of the India-Pakistan dynamic that we've seen over the past several years has suffered, I think, a rather serious setback, especially in an atmosphere that's been rather badly poisoned by virulent media rhetoric.

[00:43:38]

Although some of the activities have restarted, as I just mentioned, disruptions in sports and cultural exchanges have left a very bitter flavor – in other words, have been damaging to the atmospherics that had been actually quite positive.

Moreover, the key concrete measures that had been proposed are now in limbo. Those include a new visa regime, the Pakistani granting of most favored nation status to India and the prospect of the first Indian visit by a prime minister to Pakistan in about 10 years.

Second, the prospects, in my view, for improvement in the near term – that is, at least until the beginning of 2015 – are rather dim. Pakistan, as we all know, is about to enter an election season under a caretaker government. That new government, whatever form it happens to take, is unlikely to settle in until sometime in the fall of this year, so September, October, thereabouts, of 2013, and other changes in Pakistan are coming at about the same time, with the projected retirement of the current chief of army staff and the current chief justice. Those also might militate against significant resummptions in the thorny India-Pakistan relationship.

[00:44:42]

And just as Pakistan is getting its government organized, India will be in election overdrive. Of course, because they're parliamentary systems, elections could come at different times, but certainly by the end of 2013, India will be very heavily focused on the coming elections that would take place sometime in the spring of 2014, and some analysts would argue that India is already

overshadowed – its policies are overshadowed by the elections of early 2014, all of which pushes off serious change on the Indian side at least until the autumn of 2014, when its new government gets into position.

And that, of course, brings the region up to the – whatever kind of changes are about to take place as the manifold transitions occur in Afghanistan, where both New Delhi and Islamabad have crucial national interests at play.

So much for the good and the bad, to leave me with the ugly -- to conclude the first part of my talk -- that the region thus seems to be entering a period of dangerous stasis, with potentially destabilizing variables, especially Afghanistan, but also the status of militancy inside Pakistan and the possibility, of course, always in the offing of future Line of Control incidents that receive heavy publicity and therefore require serious government responses.

[00:46:04]

Let me turn, then, to some of the persistent problems. I think there's cause for concern that grows if we overlay on these topical issues some of the challenges that have plagued India-Pakistan dynamics for many years, several of which suggest the possibility of increased instability. The first of these, of course, is terrorism. And we're very fortunate that there's been no major Pakistan-sourced terrorist incident in India since the 2008 Mumbai attacks. Thank God for that. But that attack and its aftermath remain unresolved. And another outrage could, of course, occur at almost any time, leaving the bilateral relationship, therefore, to some degree, at least, as a function of the behavior of very vicious nonstate actors who are working to their own nihilistic agendas.

Second, there are changes taking place in the nuclear postures on both sides. We'll have the – this will be the topic of a panel after lunch, so I don't want to talk about that in detail. Allow me to just mention here that the regional strategic environment is not static. Instead, it is becoming more complex and more dangerous, with doctrinal and technical changes in the offing, such as Pakistan's evident interest in tactical nuclear weapons, the dynamic between this Pakistani interest in tactical nuclear weapons and Indian conventional options, interest on both sides in expanding the nuclear arsenals to sea, the real or perceived – in some cases I think the perceived issues are perhaps more powerful than the real ones – concerning ballistic missile defense, not to mention, of course, accidents, misperceptions, miscalculations, errors in command and control, and the exceptionally grave consequences of any deterrence failure – all of which, as a side note, kind of leads me into the deterrence pessimist camp when people talk about such things.

[00:47:40]

Third, the domestic political dynamics on both sides. We're likely to see coalition governments of some sort on both sides of the border at the end of 2014. These could be weak and most certainly be under constant stress from opposition voices and, thus, probably unable to muster much consensus for dramatic or very long-term diplomatic advances in their relationship. That, combined with a tendency towards worst-case analysis of the adversary, and the volatile media atmosphere to which I referred somewhat earlier, these things do not, in my mind, conduce toward a very favorable atmosphere for normalization or rapprochement in this near term.

Fourth is international attention. A lot will depend on the outcome of what's taking place in Afghanistan, but there's a likelihood that the region will feature less prominently in international capitals post-2014. As international actors have often been a key factor in calming India-Pakistan tensions, the lack of attention prior to crisis could mean that preventable crises arise or that outside players are less effective in quelling crises than they have been in the past. This is by no means necessarily the case, but I think it's worth keeping in the backs of our minds.

[00:48:51]

Allow me, then, to turn to some salient implications. If these points are, at least in some general sense, accurate descriptors of the near- to medium-term future, then I, in my opinion, at least, conclude that the two countries, with help from the international community as appropriate, will be faced with a very acute challenge of managing – not resolving, but managing – their frictions at least through the near term. This, of course, is not new, but it's not, perhaps, inappropriate to highlight how fragile the situation remains and how little insulation there is between spark and fire in the current situation.

Some measures that might increase the odds of more stable outcomes or add to the insulation, if you will, could include such things as, at the very largest level, contact at all levels and all arenas of interaction; that is, to go beyond, however, the formal and often sterile formal diplomacy, and specifically consider such things as maintaining and expanding the existing economic initiatives and people-to-people interactions. Those have been quite productive in creating audiences on both sides that are willing to listen to different narratives.

Creating, if such a dialogue is not already in place, some kind of a senior-level backchannel for discussion between the two capitals, a sustained one that is not just for emergencies but has continuing contact. Maintaining and expanding the existing military confidence-building measures. Sadly, confidence-building measures – and I don't think Michael Krepon is in the audience. He could certainly give you chapter and verse on this. Sadly, all too often these have been the first, or if we take Stalin's dictum, the second, at least, casualty of any friction between India and Pakistan. They are too often seen as a concession or a favor to the other side, rather than as something of mutual interest to minimize and contain frictions.

The current CBMs are a good starting point. I would argue they need a lot more work. And this month's incidents certainly suggest that another – see themselves or suggest themselves as another example of the two sides relying on very vague agreements that are easily misinterpreted or where one side or the other decides, well, we don't really need to pay attention to that because it didn't specifically say I couldn't do what I'm about to do.

[00:51:00]

Going beyond CBMs, however, I think there's a possibility to investigate arms control measures, a side benefit of which would be to bring serving military officers together to talk to one another and for both sides to kind of learn and understand each other's deterrence vocabularies.

The creation of this idea of a military-to-military dialogue, in my view, is absolutely key, where you'd bring serving officers together to talk to each other. And there are various ways that could be done. It doesn't have to be joint staff talks. You could have all sorts of topics that are not

necessarily impossible for the two to discuss. But where you'd have people who are actually in uniform meeting with each other on a routine basis.

There's also the possibility of creating opportunities, through bilateral or trilateral dialogue, on Afghanistan, to minimize misperceptions, limit frictions, leading up to and going beyond 2014. Those are just a few ideas. There are certainly many other prospects that the imaginative people in both capitals could put forward, but I would just offer those as a few starting points.

[52:10:00]

So what can we say here to wrap up a very broad overview of a very difficult and historically labored, burdened topic? First, the region, in my view, is in for a very bumpy ride over at least the next two years. There will be a lot of potholes, and those members of the international community with an interest in South Asia will be hard-pressed to craft policies that respond to these challenges, let alone trying to shape favorable or stable outcomes. Management, as I mentioned at the outset, will – the rivalry will be key to a safe transit of this period, but that's not going to be easy.

Second, successful transit will require – will require leadership on both sides. That's including top-down direction and oversight of the – if you will, the strategic constables. We often talk about, in military operations, counterinsurgency, the strategic corporal, the strategic sergeant, whose actions at some village level have repercussions at the national level. Well, the same applies, of course, in a situation like this, where the constable who meets the visiting delegate from the other side and treats him rudely, that immediately reverberates much more broadly than what that constable is thinking of or that bureaucrat is thinking of. And so those kind – that kind of leadership that soaks down to the very bottom levels, I think, will be important. And just getting ahead on both sides of the potential for very jingoistic media that feeds on itself and then limits policy options because of what's been out in the public, in the ever-expanding television channels, in particular, and other media venues in both countries.

Third, in my view, most of the action and initiative will have to come from New Delhi and Islamabad. Outside actors, including my own country, can and should encourage both sides, but the ability of outsiders to influence, especially in crises, will be contingent upon acceptance from both sides, and it will need time to deploy whatever influence we have to wield. I think this – the ability of outsiders to influence these things has declined over time and that sudden or unexpected crisis may not permit us either the time or the acceptance to deploy whatever influence we might bring to the table.

[00:54:09]

On that cautionary note, I will turn things back to Mr. Milan, and thank you for your attention. (Applause.)

MR. GILL: Thank you.

MR. VAISHNAV: Thanks.

So it's 12:35. We have about 20 to 25 minutes for questions before there's a mutiny and everyone wants to go downstairs for lunch. So why don't we start here, with this gentleman here. If you could just wait for the mic and please identify yourself.

Q: Thank you. My name is Kwame (sp). I'm with the Sindhi American Political Action Committee. My question is, with the recent – well, fairly recent announcement that the Obama administration supports India in their election to the U.N. Security Council, how will that affect their relationship with Pakistan?

MR. VAISHNAV: What lucky soul wants to answer that? (Laughter.)

MR. GRARE: (Inaudible.) No, it's certainly not that new. B – A, this is not done. B, this is something that Pakistan will not like. C, this is something Pakistan cannot do anything about. And D, this is something Pakistan can live with. So the situation is basically unchanged.

[00:55:30]

MR. : Q: (Off mic) (Laughter.)

MR. VAISHNAV: OK. Succinct and to the point.

Please.

Q: Wolf Gurrus (sp)once again. This is addressed to Ashley, whose very fine and comprehensive description of the military balance between China and India at the moment – a couple points perhaps missed. One, the injunction that every military planner has to decide the strength of his response on the basis of capabilities, not intent. Nobody knows what the intent is going to be, so you build toward capabilities. And in that respect, one very immutable point I'd like to bring to your attention, get your comments on, is geography. The Chinese, if they should choose to do something, fight downhill. The Indians fight uphill. And there are a lot of people, some of my friends in India, who are still smarting from what happened in 1962, which was evidentiary of that truth.

And the other thing is Indian planners looking at a two-front war, one of the classic plains warfare, with lots of tanks, and the other where tanks are useless, which is on the Chinese front.

MR. VAISHNAV: Do you want to answer that now, Ashley? Shall we take another question?

MR. TELLIS: It's up to you, because you – (inaudible).

MR. VAISHNAV: Yeah. In the back. Josh?

Q: Josh White, Department of Defense. This sort of follows on that last question for Ashley.

[00:57:22]

You suggested that India retains some kind of advantage over China by virtue of its partnerships or the capabilities that other countries might bring to bear. And I wanted to ask you to tease that out a little bit. First, simply with respect to capabilities, setting politics aside, what are the capabilities that other countries could bring to bear? And then second, bringing politics into it, what are the capabilities other countries might actually have incentives to bring to bear in the event of some kind of conflict?

MR. VAISHNAV: Right. Shall we take one more? Yes, over here, to the left.

Q: Stanley Kober (sp). On the issue of Indian-Chinese relations, I can't help noticing that India is very eager to be a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a full member. I'm looking at a statement by the external affairs minister, Mr. Krishna, from last year: I am very optimistic that India will find an affirmative response from the SCO.

Why is India so interested in being a full member of the SCO?

MR. VAISHNAV: All right. Ashley, you want to get it started, and then –

MR. TELLIS: Yeah. On the basic distinction between fighting uphill and downhill, I think that's generally true, but it varies quite dramatically and depending on which sectors of the front you look at. And one would need to do a fine-grained analysis of the sector-by-sector differences before one can draw universal conclusion.

[00:59:10]

But the bottom line is this. The Indians appreciate where they have disadvantages, and they have been very conscious about circumventing those disadvantages either through firepower solutions, some mobility solutions and so on and so forth. So it's not as if the problem is not understood. The question is whether they can maintain investments at a robust enough level to keep the advantages that they already have in place or to circumvent the disadvantages that are coming down the pike. And my view is that this would be less an issue of geography and more an issue of resources.

On the question of the two-front war, it's a very interesting and actually very difficult question because until very recently, Indian planning, although they mouthed the importance of dealing with the two-front war problem, Indian planning never seriously took a two-front war contingency into account. Because I think most Indian politicians and strategic managers have drawn the conclusion that the most the Chinese were willing to do in the context of a conflict with Pakistan was essentially unnerve the Indians or rattle the Indians diplomatically rather than actually joining a conflict.

[01:00:30]

In recent years there has been some discussion that the Indian military is looking seriously at a two-front war problem. Now, if they – if that becomes truly a planning factor and this is a serious contingency that they have to face up to, then I think the magnitude of the demands on the Indian military increase dramatically. And I'm not sure as yet that for all the rhetoric on the subject, they actually believe they will face this kind of conflict.

Now, the Indian army, you know, because it believes it will face the brunt of any such contingency, has already begun to start thinking about what would be required, and so they are beginning to identify formations that are dual-task, beginning to identify theater reserves that can be swung from one direction to the other. But believe me, they are just at the very early stages of this process. And if this is a contingency they plan for, they'll have to do some – they'll have to do order-of-magnitude greater investments than they've done so far.

MR. VAISHNAV: And on the Shanghai Cooperation –

MR. TELLIS: I was going to address the question that Josh asked about partnership and capabilities. I think the partnership question is really an advantage that India has, particularly vis-à-vis China, because for various reasons – and Frederic alluded to those – many other countries on the Asian periphery of China believe that they have a vested interest in deepening ties with India, and the United States is, again, part of that – part of that calculation.

[01:02:12]

What partnership does, at the very least, is that it allows the Indian military to exercise with truly world-class compatriots. And you see, for example, the dramatic change that have taken place in India as a result of its openness to exercises with the United States, with Japan, with Australia, with Singapore. The Chinese don't have comparable access. So if it increases Indian operational proficiency, I see that as being a terrific advantage.

Now, in terms of what are the capabilities and what are the incentives, I think the incentives on the part of the other Asian states are very obvious. As Frederic put it plainly, no one has an interest in seeing an Asia dominated by China. And so everyone is interested in building relations with India and others to enmesh China in a region where conflict becomes less and less probable. So the incentives question, to my mind, is in the category of self-evident truths. Everyone has an incentive to build a set of relationships across Asia that, in a sense, bind the Chinese in the best possible way, right?

[01:03:21]

What are the – I mean, what are the issues with respect to capabilities? I think you have to answer that question on a country-by-country basis. But if you look at the United States, for example, I think the U.S., particularly in the last four years of this administration, has made some dramatic, dramatic improvements in the kinds of access that the United States is willing to offer India in terms of capabilities. I see the real limitations now less at the U.S. end – I mean, the – it's not as if the limitations have disappeared. (Chuckles.) And Wolf (ph) knows this better than most, that when it comes to issuing licenses and when it comes to giving permissions, it's an arduous process, you know, at the – at the U.S. end.

But at least conceptually, I think the United States has made the transformation and believes that it is in U.S. interests to build a world-class or to support building a world-class Indian military. Whether India can, in a sense, take that at face value and run with it, I think, is an issue that is not yet settled, and it goes back to some of the issues of strategic autonomy, to some of the issues of anxieties about supply reliability and so on and so forth. But I think we have made considerable

progress, and if India finds opportunities to respond, I expect that that progress will continue even more.

[01:04:33]

MR. GRARE: Well, on the question of the SCO, I don't have a specific answer. I don't know what the Indian official would say about that. I see a number of reasons. First of all, it's a form of engagement which is very similar to the logic which prevailed, for example, in "Look East" that I talked about: engage, cooperate wherever you can cooperate, and especially an organization where China is present and you can then show some form of cooperation on topics which – on which there is some convergence, in particular the question of terrorism. There is also the question of Pakistan's presence, and I don't think this is totally an insignificant factor.

And there is a growing issue of the management of Afghanistan. And the SCO – I don't know what they'd be able to do, nor if they will play a big role, but this is certainly a big motivation for any regional country to be part of that because this will – the SCO, one way or the other, positively or negatively, will have to play a role, even if minimal, but it will have to play a role in the management of Afghanistan in the future. That's the reason I would give.

[01:05:47]

MR. GILL: One could add that this can also be seen as an expression of strategic autonomy, as Frederic mentioned, and certainly India shares common interests, in at least narrow channels, but certainly some common interest with other members of the SCO. Being a member allows them to kind of keep an eye on the other members and to have a voice in whatever statements or proceedings occur in the SCO meetings. So there are a number of meetings why New Delhi would be – would be quite keen to be a full participant.

MR. PERKOVICH: Yes, you, sir, here on the aisle.

[01:06:22]

Q: Marvin Weinbaum, the Middle East Institute. This is for Ashley but perhaps also Jack. Ashley, if you had been talking about conventional forces and the subject were India-Pakistan, your second sentence would have something about red lines. Now, in the course of your remarks, there was no suggestion of that at all. Does that mean that the threshold here is so high that one can contemplate the kind of extensive ground war that you're talking about, and then therefore, nuclear weapons are not a factor at all?

MR. PERKOVICH: Take one more. You had your hand up.

Q: Bill Tucker (sp). I want to thank the panel for their comments. Ashley, this comment is directed at you. I was intrigued by your comment about the Indian forces being trained on the border and the Chinese having less trained forces on the border – and ask your comment about how that works. You know, it didn't work very well for us in Korea when that's what the Chinese did. They threw these untrained forces at us to sort of probe to what you're going to do, and then they sent in these trained PLA forces, which of course surrounded our Army, and they had to retreat from Korea. And it seemed like that's the Chinese strategy, sort of probe with untrained forces or

not as well-trained forces and then to send the PLA trained forces in en masses – and have you comment on that.

[01:08:22]

MR. PERKOVICH: There's one more. Please, sir.

Q: Hi, Scott Hembrough from the National Intelligence Council. To Jack's comments, the role of the Indian election in Indo-Pak – I look back to 2003-2004, when many of us thought the BJP wouldn't take a bold step towards Pakistan because there was an election coming up, and in fact, they did. I wonder if the situation is so different today that that's not a useful precedent or if perhaps we need to be more cautious when looking at the role of Indian domestic politics and India-Pakistan relations. Thank you.

MR. PERKOVICH: All right.

[01:09:02]

MR. TELLIS: I think nuclear weapons play a role in the Sino-Indian conflict as well, but they don't have a palpable role in a way that they have in the Indo-Pakistan case. And that is because, in my view, from a Chinese point of view, most of the territories that they are disputing with India really have marginal value. They're very important to India, and India controls the territories that it values, which are particularly in the east.

So what you have is you have a kind of a nice equilibrium. China controls the territories that it values in the west. India controls the territories that it values in the east. Both sides recognize that to wrest control of the territories that the other side has is going to be an extremely long and very painful operation and therefore not worth the costs. So in a sense, the asymmetry in the objectives leaves you in a position where no one has to make an effort at getting what the other side has. You only have to make an effort protecting what you already control. That's point number one.

[01:10:09]

Point number two, I don't see the Sino-Indian relationship, at least for now and for the foreseeable future, as reaching the point where nuclear weapons get actually integrated into conventional military operations, in part because both China and India have a remarkable complementarity in how they think about nuclear weapons, that is, they think of nuclear weapons as essentially symbolic assets which have great political utility for purposes of deterring blackmail, but they don't think of them as war-fighting weapons that can actually be employed on the battlefield. And that is some degrees removed from at least the direction that, say, Pakistan is going. So when one thinks of the India-Pakistan competition, I think nuclear weapons come front and center very, very quickly in a way that they simply do not in the Sino-Indian case.

[01:11:02]

The third point I want to make is that, particularly at the Chinese end, the distances from China's core to the disputed areas is so large that even if China were to suffer reversals, right, in a

conventional campaign, the likelihood that they would actually think about using nuclear weapons to recover that is extremely small, whereas in the Pakistani case, the proximity to areas which are disputed to the Pakistani core is relatively so short that if they were to lose control of those areas, it immediately raises questions of, you know, will the adversary come closer to really the core assets. And so that makes nuclear weapons even more pronounced.

On the question of the Chinese style, it could well be that, you know, the Chinese might attempt to do what they did in Korea. My own sense is that probably not anymore. If you look, for example, at the campaign that the Chinese waged against Vietnam in 1979, what they essentially did was what I imagined they would do in the context of a future Sino-Indian conflict, which is they took an enormous period of preparation, withdrew all the border regiments to rear areas, replaced those with front-line PLA combat formations and then started the war when the PLA combat formations were ready to go. The Indians are anticipating that the Chinese would do the same.

Now, if the Chinese, of course, don't oblige, then what you end up doing is essentially sacrificing a lot of your paramilitary forces without denuding Indian combat effectiveness to a point where you're follow-on forces have some great advantage. So I mean, if you are setting out to simply write off large numbers of paramilitary troops in an initial phase of war, that would be a sound strategy, but I just don't see the benefits that accrue to the PLA if they were to do that.

[01:13:00]

MR. GILL: The – you raise a very good question. And certainly in the impact of elections – impending elections on any country's policy, any democratic country's policy, is not something one should take for granted. We want to be open to the possibilities of sort of surprise or a less likely outcome becoming, indeed, a fact in the wake of elections or even in the lead-up.

But I think in this case, to me, the – if we were measuring likelihoods, the likelihood of some surprise diplomatic dramatic activity, breakthrough, whatever characterization one wishes to use, are much lower than the likelihood of steady as she goes, don't take any chances and be cautious. I think there are some differences in the situation now vis-à-vis 10 years ago that reinforce the tendency towards caution, that – in particular, that the main opposition party in this current situation, at least in the past month, has staked out a – what could be characterized as a very hard-line position vis-à-vis Pakistan, and the situation was reversed in the previous example.

[01:14:20]

And of course, it's not just a two-way – it's not just a one-way road; it's a two-way road. And Pakistan also has to be prepared to accept – if the Indians made some offer or if the Pakistanis make an offer, the Indians have to accept, likewise, the Pakistanis, which have to be prepared to do so. Some markers for this might be the visa regime question, when do the two sides decide they're ready to implement that, the granting of the MFN status from Pakistan's side to India, where are senior-level visits, and are the senior-level visits accompanied by more or less acceptable atmospherics or even favorable atmospherics, or do they become the kind of senior-level visits where the two foreign ministers end up seeming to snipe at each other at the concluding press conference. So those will be some of the things we can – we can look at for trying to identify some trends or where things might go.

[01:15:07]

MR. PERKOVICH: Frederic, do you want to say anything, or –

MR. GRARE: Not on that.

MR. PERKOVICH: We have time for one last question. Yes, here in the front.

Q: Thank you. I'm Genie Nguyen from Voice of Vietnamese Americans. Let's tie everything back to economy, sharing resources. And Dr. Tellis said he wouldn't talk about naval, but to the theme of economy, sharing resources, and the freedom of navigation somehow all tie together. So I'd like to ask all the panelists to suggest something that India can actively do from now until – to project a safer, more stable – with positive improvement for India itself and at the same time maintain the stability in the whole region in the economy point of view. To that, I want to ask, do you think the geopolitical positions of Taiwan, of Vietnam and of Japan in the East Asia and the Southeast Asia have any concern to India in the "Look East" strategy – autonomy – strategic autonomy you're talking about, in all three points, economy, self-defense, maintain its current control and expanding itself in all aspects? To that, where do you see the U.S. can help?

[01:16:50]

MR. PERKOVICH: OK, that's a very large question for two minutes. (Laughter.) So does any one of you want to try to tackle that?

MR. GRARE: I think that in many – in many ways, the question had been answered. And I know that the answer was frustrating because there is, so far, no real answer to that. If you speak of the economy, we can look at the set of economic relations that India started with all those countries, but if you just – if you – since you mentioned Japan, I mean, you look at the trade relations between Japan and India, the second and the fourth economy in Asia, right, then it's only 1 percent of Japan's total trade. So this is part of the answer. This is not the complete answer, but this is part of the answer.

[01:17:34]

And self-defense – again, I mean, what do we – I mean, or on defense, I mean, what do we have between Taiwan and India? To my knowledge, we don't have much, if anything. Between Japan and India, we do have joint exercises, with Singapore, with the U.S. and so on. This is, as Ashley indicated, perhaps the best contribution because this is bringing the Indian navy to international standard, and clearly in our own navy I've seen quite an improvement in the level of this exercise. But beyond that, this is a question mark for all Asia – India's partners.

And I don't know what the other aspect were, but I mean, again, relation with India are something of a paradox because everybody's signaling China something through its better relation with India. Everybody hopes, but everybody is uncertain as to what it will become. This is not to say that nothing will happen. This is not to say that no major step have been done. But we are neither really here nor there yet.

And just as for the question of organization in Tibet, there are choices will have to be made, and we're not there yet.

[01:18:58]

MR. PERKOVICH: Please join me in thanking all of the panelists for a great discussion. (Applause.) We're going to break for lunch. I believe there's lunch downstairs, is that –

MS. : (Off mic.)

MR. PERKOVICH: Oh, outside, right outside. And we'll resume the program at 2:00 with a panel on deterrence stability. Thank you.

MR. : Thank you very much.

(END)