THE INDIA-PAKISTAN DYAD: A CHALLENGE TO THE REST OR TO THEMSELVES?

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No narrative on India and Pakistan relations, as post-colonial states, is complete without taking into account the ineptitude with which the colonial power (Britain) scuttled its responsibilities almost overnight and left in its wake two countries united only by their hatred for each other and divided by every other known variable. They continue to conduct their relations with each other through the narrow prisms of suspicion, hostility, hatred, and "otherness." It could be argued that since their very coming into being was a violent event, their existence as independent entities would involve continued violence within "manageable" levels that does not succeed in breaking up the "other." Apart from three and a half wars with each other, the India-Pakistan dyad is notorious for generating "near-war" scenarios repeatedly and for a vituperative relationship characterized by a perennial streak of crisis management. Adding a new dimension is the respective internal security problems faced by the dyad that threaten to undermine the legitimacy of both.

Key words: India, Pakistan, nuclear weapons, terrorism, Kashmir, army, institution

Theoretical Approach

Contemporary international relations theory is not able to capture the vicissitudes that typify India-Pakistan relations. Territorial disputes, nuclear rivalry, disagreements over resource sharing, nonconventional security threats, internal security stresses, lack of development, abysmal social indicators, and a constant state of fluidity in their domestic politics are some of the salient issues that demarcate the glaring faultlines of this bilateral relationship. It should be a classic textbook study, but is not.

The inimitability of the India-Pakistan rivalry necessitates the construction of theoretical approaches to study them as a "dyad." It could be argued that neorealism comes closest to deciphering the inherent morphology characterizing India-Pakistan relations, yet it falls short in interpreting the domestic discourse prevalent in both the countries on almost every aspect of their relationship. Dominant discourses on the dyad focus more on the incongruous and hence leave out the micro-factors that led to such anomalies in the first place.[1] India-Pakistan relations cannot be categorized as mere "state-to-state relations" or "unit to unit relations," since this categorization subsumes other powerful independent variables. In the words of Peter Suedfeld and Rajiv Jhangiani, the India-Pakistan dyad is typified by an "integrative complexity" that incorporates two components: "*differentiation*, the recognition

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1. A comprehensive literature exists on India-Pakistan relations, including a number of studies that focus on the nuclear weapons aspect. See, for instance, Michael Krepon and Chris Gagne, eds., *The Stability-Instability Paradox: Nuclear Weapons and Brinkmanship in South Asia* (Washington, D.C.: Henry L. Stimson Center, 2001); R. Harrison Wagner, "India and Pakistan: Bargaining in the Shadow of Nuclear War," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 27, No. 3 (September, 2004), pp. 479-507; Sumit Ganguly and Devin Hagerty, *Fearful Symmetry: India-Pakistan Crises in the Shadow of Nuclear Weapons* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005); Peter Lavoy, *Pakistan's Nuclear Posture: Security and Survivability* (Washington, D.C.: Nonproliferation Education Center, 2007); and George Perkovitch, *India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1999).

of more than one dimension or legitimate viewpoint related to the topic of communication, and *integration*, the recognition of relationships among those differentiated dimensions or viewpoints."[2] Both countries are "rational actors," they do not seek an "anarchic order," and they are not trying to "maximize their power." Rather, they are caught in an orbit (entirely their making) of trying to outdo the "other" and seeking to balance each other through their external engagements and alliances, formal and informal.[3]

By way of categorization or classification, the "security dilemma"[4] approach to describe India-Pakistan relations captures something of the relationship. The "dilemma" exists insofar as Pakistan's decision-making class was and remains convinced that India does not want a "unified" Pakistan.[5]

In India, the decision-making class is less worried about Pakistan seeking to undermine its integrity than about its abilities in waging a covert war that ties down Indian paramilitary forces in internal security operations that inevitably end up alien-

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2. Peter Suedfeld and Rajiv Jhangiani, "Cognitive Management in an Enduring International Rivalry: The Case of India and Pakistan," *Political Psychology*, vol. 30, No. 6 (2009), p. 937. Emphasis in the original.

3. Ironically, the influences of domestic politics, culture, religion, and a state-sponsored agenda of "otherness" gives a "lived reality" to India-Pakistan relations as opposed to the somewhat anodyne state-centric characterization that exemplifies other dyad relations. See Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema and Imtiaz H. Bokhari, eds., *Arms Race and Nuclear Developments in South Asia* (Islamabad: Policy Research Institute/Hanns Siedel Foundation, 2004); Alex Stolar, *To the Brink: Indian Decision-Making and the 2001-2002 Standoff* (Washington, D.C.: Henry L. Stimson Center, 2008); and Kanti P. Bajpai, P. R. Chari, Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, Stephen P. Cohen, and Sumit Ganguly, *Brasstacks and Beyond: Perception and Management of Crisis in South Asia* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1987).

4. See Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 58-113.

5. See Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, The Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 262; Hussain Haqqani, "Pakistan's Endgame in Kashmir," *India Review*, vol. 2, No. 3 (July, 2003), pp. 34-54; George Tanham, "Indian Strategic Culture," *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 15, No. 1 (Winter, 1992), pp. 129-42; Stephen P. Cohen, "India, Pakistan and Kashmir," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 25, No. 4 (December, 2002), pp. 32-60.

ating the local people.[6] This aspect is most visible in Kashmir where for more than two decades Indian security forces have ensured a tenuous peace on a population that does not consider itself Indian or Pakistani but Kashmiri.[7] A drawback of the security-dilemma approach is that it suffers from a deterministic perspective that negates its very construct. A dyadic study of India-Pakistan relations needs to incorporate many variables—history, culture, society, political culture, government structures, and religion among others—and not be abridged by the term "units." At its very root, interpreting the security apprehensions of India and Pakistan reveals a wider complex of causal mechanisms that constructs the very basis of their cognitive and motivational efficacy toward each other.

An approach that could be adopted to interpret India-Pakistan relations is a framework that simultaneously operates at two levels: the *first level* comprising the two states as "actors," with the vigorous attributes both the countries constantly advertise of being nation-states; and the *second level* comprising a set of comprehensive variables that determine their motivations, perceptions, capabilities, limitations, behavior, ideologies, internal

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6. The Indian state has been fighting insurgencies since its early years of independence, primarily in its northeastern regions. One of the draconian measures adopted to maintain "peace" and enforce control of the region has been the application of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) since 1958. The AFSPA ignores an individual's fundamental rights as enshrined in the Indian constitution and provides legal immunity to the enforcers. This act was extended to include Kashmir in 1990 and has become an arena of triangular contestation between people who face daily depredations under this act, civil society groups that oppose the act and call for its withdrawal, and the Indian state that believes it serves its purpose and is loathe to having it rescinded.

7. The dispute over Kashmir has generated a wealth of literature representing a diverse range of opinion. See, for example, Sugata Bose, *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003); Sumit Ganguly, *Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions Since 1947* (New York: Columbia University Press and Woodrow Wilson Press, 2001); Verghese Koithara, *Crafting Peace in Kashmir: Through a Realist Lens* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2004); and T. V. Paul, *The India-Pakistan Conflict: An Enduring Rivalry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

politics, and so on. Put simply, a multi-causal approach[8] with strong elements of strategic cultural analysis[9] and critical discourse analysis[10] could prove to be more comprehensive, seamlessly oscillating between the two levels.

A critical stance running through this article hinges upon the links that emerge from a reading of contemporary literature on the India-Pakistan dyad that bring to the fore the genres and orders of discourse prevalent in most analyses on India-Pakistan relations. This approach attempts to synthesize the empirical and the conceptual. Since the inherent complexities woven into any analysis on India-Pakistan relations have a multi-textured and multi-layered perspective to it, this article makes an effort not to restrict itself to just one aspect of the dyad relationship that India and Pakistan share. Rather, it is to be seen as an attempt at teasing out the inconsistencies that make this relationship fatally flawed. The entire narrative oscillates between the "rational" displayed by the two states and the multifarious causalities that influence the former.

Deciphering an Impossible Relationship

For all the rationality that exists between India and Pakistan

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8. A multi-causal approach incorporates elements that straddle many fields (including politics, economy, society, history, and religion) to understand the behavior and motivation of an actor.
9. The strategic cultures of India and Pakistan are motivated by competing and mutually reinforcing perceptions that are articulated at different levels-institutions, decision makers, political elite, societal, and individual. Strong shades of realism and culture make for a heady concoction that informs perspectives and eventual behavior. See Peter R. Lavoy, *Pakistan's Strategic Culture*, Report for Defense Threat Reduction Agency, U.S. Department of Defense Advanced Systems and Concepts Office, October 31, 2006 at: www.fas.org/irp/agency/dod/dtra/pakistan.pdf.
10. Critical discourse analysis as a theoretical and methodological framework permits the examination of the constitutive role discourses play in contemporary society. See Albert J. Mills, Gabrielle Durepos, and Elden Wiebe, eds., *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, vol. 1 (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2010), pp. 244-45.

at the first level as actors, an inherent lacuna bedevils their respective internal structures of governance. "The Partition" in 1947, according to Tahir Hasnain Naqvi, "initiated the era of decolonization but mired the independence of India and Pakistan in the ether of communal genocide and mass displacement"[11]—an evocative and inflammatory episode that contributed to the construction of political discourses of hatred in both the countries. After gaining independence and effectively becoming post-colonial states, the ruling elites in both the nations have shown a reluctance to construct new power structures. What passes for institutions are in actuality continuations of the colonial administration, albeit with a difference—comprised of local administrators. To quote historian Javeed Alam, "The state chose to rely entirely on the inherited bureaucracy that in the first place was constructed in a manner to insulate them from popular pressure or accountability."[12]

Adding to this lacuna has been the process of post-colonial state formation, which has been influenced—to a greater extent in Pakistan and a lesser extent in India—by the role played by refugees on either side who were victims of the displacement and carnage brought about by the partition.[13] An anomaly that has led to several wars between the two countries has been the manner in which they were divided. The political boundary between India and Pakistan is an arbitrary one and not a historically evolved contour.[14] What passes for the border between the two sides ignores the reality of geography and ethnicity—powerful causal factors. The dyad of India-Pakistan is held hostage by a complex welter of issues that include territorial claims,

11. Tahir Hasnain Naqvi, "The Politics of Commensuration: The Violence of Partition and the Making of the Pakistani State," *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 20, Nos. 1-2 (March-June, 2007), p. 44.
12. Javeed Alam, *India: Living with Modernity* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 153.
13. See Cabeiri Debergh Robinson, "Partition, Its Refugees, and Postcolonial State-Making in South Asia," *India Review*, vol. 9, No. 1 (January-March, 2010), pp. 68-86.
14. Gowher Rizvi, *South Asia in a Changing International Order* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993), p. 149.

competing resource claims, nonconventional security issues, and nuclear weapons. Issues of territorial import include Kashmir, Siachen glacier,[15] and Sir Creek.[16] Resource issues exclusively include disputes over the sharing of river waters and glaciers;[17] nonconventional security issues focus on terrorism and drug trafficking.[18]

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15. The world's highest battleground at more than 6,000 meters, the 70-kilometer long Siachen glacier's dominant heights and high passes are controlled by India while the lower glacial valleys are controlled by Pakistan. In a lightning operation codenamed "Meghadoot" (Divine Cloud Messenger) in 1984, Indian troops secured the glacier, which is located in an extremely hostile climatic environment of the high Himalayas that cannot support any human habitation. See Varun Sahni and Samina Ahmed, "Freezing the Fighting: Military Disengagement on the Siachen Glacier," *Cooperative Monitoring Center Occasional Paper No. 1* (March, 1998), Sandia National Laboratories, Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Siachen dispute hinges around authenticating positions. Pakistan is loathe to do so as it will mean acknowledging India's current positions, an unfavorable issue for it domestically.

16. The Sir Creek is a 96-kilometer long strip of land that comprises water channels that flow into a marshy terrain. The creek flows into the Arabian Sea, and divides the marshy Kutch region of Gujarat state, India from Sindh province in Pakistan. Pakistan claims the whole creek up to its eastern extremity while India is willing to share the creek based on the internationally recognized Thalweg principle based on the mid-point. See Ashutosh Misra, "The Sir Creek Boundary Dispute: A Victim of India-Pakistan Linkage Politics," *IBRU Boundary and Security Bulletin*, University of Durham (Winter, 2000/2001) at www.dur.ac.uk/ibru/publications/download/?id=177. The Sir Creek dispute basically revolves around where a boundary should be pegged, at the mid-point or the eastern bank.

17. Khaleeq Kiani, "Pakistan to Move Arbitration Court on Kishanganga Project," *The Dawn* (Karachi), May 3, 2010 at www.dawn.com/wps/wcm/connect/dawn-content-library/dawn/the-newspaper/front-page/19-construction-of-kishanganga-project-by-india-pakistan-to-move-arbitration-court-350-hh-01. For an Indian perspective, see Ramaswamy R. Iyer, "'Water' in India-Pakistan Talks," *The Hindu*, March 3, 2010 at www.hindu.com/2010/03/03/stories/2010030354351000.htm.

18. It is beyond the scope of this article to deal with each of these issues at length. The focus here will be on understanding the security perceptions each country has toward the other. For a comprehensive extrapolation of India-Pakistan relations, see Ashutosh Misra, "An Audit of the India-Pakistan Peace Process," *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 61,

Official discourses in both countries project an "antagonistic vision of the other."[19] Consequently, there has been a projection of national identities: India announces its credentials as being secular, inclusive, multicultural, multiethnic, and a beacon of democracy in the developing world, whereas Pakistan takes pride in labeling itself, its polity, and its society as having an Islamic core crucial to its very existence. For Muhammad Ali Jinnah's Muslim League, which had adopted the creation of Pakistan as its goal in 1940,[20] the emergence of India in a post-war setting was to be seen in exclusively strict categories of religion. The idea of Pakistan conveyed to the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent in the years preceding the partition was one of a Pakistan "sustained by an enduring, and deeply felt, religious loyalty."[21] For Jinnah, to quote Akbar S. Ahmed, "Pakistan meant more than just territory, more than a defined area with boundaries; Pakistan meant a culmination of a Muslim movement rooted in history, the quest for a mystical homeland, a Pakistan, a land of the pure."[22] Jinnah's argument that India was at best a "geographical unity and not political" revolved around the belief that sovereignty was divisible and negotiable.[23] Pakistan was also held out to be the exemplar of a nation-state, reflecting the twin features of possessing a Muslim identity and having a

No. 4 (December, 2007), pp. 506-28.

19. Marie Lall, "Educate to Hate: the Use of Education in the Creation of Antagonistic National Identities in India and Pakistan," *Compare*, vol. 38, No. 1 (January, 2008), p. 104. Also see S. Akbar Zaidi, "A Conspicuous Absence: Teaching and Research on India in Pakistan," *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 44, No. 38 (September 19, 2009), pp. 57-68.

20. The Lahore Declaration was a political statement issued by the Muslim League on March 23, 1940 that called for greater Muslim autonomy in British India, a declaration that legitimized the aspirations of Muslims in the subcontinent to have their own sovereign space.

21. Barbara D. Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of India* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 211.

22. Akbar S. Ahmed, *Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity: The Search for Saladin* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. xviii-xix.

23. Ayesha Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia: A Comparative and Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 14.

political order in which Islam was to be the norm—a state where "an Islamic life would be fused with the state's ritual identity."[24]

Over the decades this streak of identity seeking thorough the invocation of religion led to the "Islamization" of society begun by General Zia-ul-Haq—an essay in progress that seeks to make the country part of a larger Muslim brotherhood. The grafting of a fundamentalist streak, as opposed to the moderate aspects of an Islamic identity, into the very ethos of Pakistan has permanently fissured its body politic and encouraged forces that seek to overthrow the established political order with one that seeks sanction only from a theocratic angle.[25] To quote Hussain Haqqani, Pakistan's current ambassador to the United States, "the disproportionate influence wielded by fundamentalist groups in Pakistan is the result of the state sponsorship of such groups."[26] This continued Islamization of Pakistan's polity has ensured the total absence of "strong and legitimate centers of moderation and modernity" in a country that is still ruled by a feudal oligarchy.[27]

As a counter pose in India, the initial decades of Nehruvian secularism gave way to new political forces. The "saffron agenda" of Hindu fundamentalists to look at the state as an expression of religious identity was an experiment that gained momentum in the last two decades of the last century with the political success of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Its spiritual mentors, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Vishwa Hindu

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24. According to Metcalf and Metcalf, *A Concise History of India* (p. 205), a different interpretation of what the term "Pakistan" meant to Jinnah has been given by Jalal in *The Sole Spokesman*, namely, that Pakistan was not initially envisaged as a separate state but as a useful bargaining card to play in a post-war settlement.
25. For an in-depth analysis of the sectarian divides haunting Pakistan, see Ashok K. Behuria, "Sunni-Shia Relations in Pakistan: The Widening Divide," *Strategic Analysis*, vol. 28, No. 1 (January-March, 2004), pp. 157-76.
26. Hussain Haqqani, "Extremism Still Thrives in Pakistan," *New York Times*, July 20, 2005, online ed.
27. Ashley J. Tellis, "The Merits of Dehyphenation: Explaining U.S. Success in Engaging India and Pakistan," *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 31, No. 4 (Autumn, 2008), p. 37.

Parishad (VHP), were right-wing organizations that sought to replace the secular space created by the Congress since independence with a program that appealed to the "religious consciousness" of the Hindu majority.[28] After six years of power (1998-2004), the coalitional demands on the BJP saw a dilution of its core ideologies that propelled it into power; its viewpoint instead embraced the practical necessities of political survival and the tempered realism of handling relations with neighbors. In totality, the accommodations and compromises inherent in a democratic framework sapped the sharp rhetoric of religious fundamentalists and forced them to acquiesce to a reality they had not countenanced.

During the term of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), relations with Pakistan went through several phases of "crises instability": the nuclear-weapons tests of 1998, the Lahore Declaration of 1999, the Kargil "half war" of 1999, the coup in Pakistan that overthrew Nawaz Sharif in October 1999, the failure of the Agra talks with General Pervez Musharraf in 2001, the attack on the Indian parliament in December 2001, mobilization of troops by India against Pakistan (called Operation Parakram), and lastly, renewal of a composite dialogue process in early 2004. These indeed suggest that the wheel had turned a full circle.

Terrorism and the Dyad

With the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) replacing the NDA in 2004, the forward momentum achieved by the composite dialogue process with Pakistan was maintained. Despite repeated terror strikes in India inspired by Pakistan-

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28. For a comprehensive understanding of the rise of Hindu nationalism in the political sphere, see Christophe Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics: 1925 to the 1990s* (London: C. Hurst, 1996). Also see Chetan Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies and Modern Myths* (Oxford: Berg, 2001) and Thomas Blom Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999).

based groups (the Delhi blasts of October 2005 and the Mumbai suburban rail attacks of July 2006), the dialogue process held until the Mumbai attacks of 2008.

November 26, 2008 witnessed the repulsive and prescient spectacle of a group of highly trained terrorists holding the city of Mumbai to ransom for three days. This single act of wanton terror changed the rules of the game as regards engagement with Pakistan for India. The proven links of institutional complicity on the part of Pakistan in facilitating this sorry episode has had the effect of hardening India's resolve in its approach to Pakistan.[29] Terrorism for Pakistan has a Janus-faced reality to it—first, as a highly effective asymmetric option against India that constrains India's retaliatory potential, and second, as an enabler for Pakistan to remain in denial about the independent life *jihadi* organizations have taken on and which violently threatens to supplant the Pakistani state itself.[30]

The consequences of the Mumbai attacks of November 2008 on Indian policy making have been clear. A repeat occurrence of such an attack on Mumbai or any other part of the country, and proof of Pakistan's involvement (either the army, the intelligence service, or the *jihadi* groups), will force India's hand. India might adopt any of four alternative courses of action: first, initiate a limited war under the "Cold Start" doctrine,[31] which will see the targeting and elimination of terrorist camps in Pakistan; second, impose an economic blockade of Pakistan, by interdicting

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29. Despite the confession of the sole surviving terrorist who was apprehended and spoke of the role of various state and non-state agencies in orchestrating the Mumbai attacks, Pakistan—much to the consternation of India—has been found wanting in taking decisive action against the perpetrators who are based on its soil. See Nirupama Subramanian, "Two Courtrooms and Peace Process," *The Hindu*, May 23, 2009, at www.thehindu.com/2009/05/23/stories/2009052356241100.htm.

30. See Sumit Ganguly and S. Paul Kapur, "The Sorcerers Apprentice: Islamist Militancy in South Asia," *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 33, No. 1 (January, 2010), pp. 47-59.

31. See Walter C. Ladwig III, "A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army's New Limited War Doctrine," *International Security*, vol. 32, No. 3 (Winter, 2007-2008), pp. 158-90.

its sea lanes and blocking Karachi's port; third, provide overt support to minority groups in Baluchistan and Balawaristan[32] that are fighting the Pakistani state and seeking independence; or fourth, lobby the international community to impose sanctions on Pakistan and label it a terrorist state.

Terrorism is more of an internal threat for India and Pakistan, and the failure of the two countries to put institutional mechanisms in place to deal with this threat reveals the callous nature of their respective polities toward their people.[33] The climate of fear that has been generated by this omnipresent threat has not been quantified, and unless the finger-pointing stops and a comprehensive security dialogue is initiated between the two countries, the threat of terror is going to negatively influence the future trajectory of their relationship.

The Dyad and Security-Centric Relations

The relentless emphasis on security and mutual threat perception by both states has had the unfortunate consequence of stunting Pakistan's credentials as a democracy several times over. Since its first decade of existence as a nation, the authoritarian mould of Pakistan's polity has undergone several permutations and combinations.[34] The most striking feature has undoubtedly

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32. The Balawaristan National Front is an organization that represents the interests of the Shia- and Ismaili-dominated regions of Pakistan's Northern Areas, now called Gilgit-Baltistan. The population in these parts of Pakistan resents being treated as second-class citizens in their own land and accuses the Pakistani state of having illegally occupied it in 1947. To many in these parts the Pakistani state is an interloper that has stripped people of basic civil rights and dignity and the freedom to practice their religion. See www.balawaristan.net/.

33. In September 2006, India and Pakistan set up a Joint Anti-Terror Mechanism (JATM) following a meeting between President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at the Havana Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement. The JATM was a diplomatic-institutional arrangement that met three times and was suspended following the Mumbai attacks of November 2008.

34. Zoltan Barany, "Authoritarianism in Pakistan," *Policy Review*, No. 156

been that of power being transferred from authoritarian individuals to authoritarian institutions. The need for ballast in Pakistan's political landscape paved the way for non-elected institutions to assume the mantle of being the main power center, and the largest, most cohesive instance of this travesty was the army. As the only professional, competent, and disciplined institution in Pakistan—with the added feature of being largely ethnocentric in its recruitment—the army stepped into the political vacuum in the interest of guiding Pakistan to its "manifest destiny." The Pakistani army as a parallel system of authority is the final arbiter on matters pertaining to India and claims the space for being the sole protector of the nation and hence the very ideal of "Pakistan, land of the pure."[35] As Ayesha Jalal has written, "The institutional coherence of the Pakistan army together with the overall organizational structure of the defence establishment has safeguarded against breaches in the ranks."[36]

The following sections explain in brief the core issues motivating the dyadic construct of India-Pakistan relations.

Kashmir

Kashmir is the most glaring instance and template for all the negative values in India-Pakistan relations.[37] A final settlement on Kashmir rests on two caveats: It must find favor with the Pakistan military at its headquarters in Rawalpindi, and for India, it must be on terms that do not exacerbate domestic political space.[38] Any

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(August-September, 2009), p. 42.

35. See Ayesha Siddiqa, *Military Inc.: Inside Pakistan's Military Economy* (London: Pluto Press, 2007) for a thorough examination of the role the Pakistan army plays in its governance and economy.

36. Jalal, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia*, p. 115.

37. Discussion of the complex history, multiple interpretations, and plausible arguments concerning this dispute from the perspectives of both the countries is beyond the scope of this article. However, for an understanding of the dispute and its complications, see Sisir Gupta, *Kashmir: A Study in India-Pakistan Relations* (London: Asia Printing House, 1966) and Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy.*

38. For an article that examines no less than forty-six proposals made

slip or failure in communicating details to the domestic con-
stituency, especially the militant fundamentalists in Pakistan and
the opposition parties in India, will lead to the undoing of any set-
tlement and a routing at the hustings for the party or political
alignment that initiates it. It is this predicament, added to the fact
that coalitional politics in India does not give any political party a
two-thirds majority in Parliament (and hence the lack of a leeway
to arrive at a settlement over Kashmir), that prevents the political
class in New Delhi from taking a decision on Kashmir.

Decision makers in Islamabad need to acknowledge that as
Indian democracy flourishes and elects coalition governments,
three broad trends emerge: *first*, the increasing influence of
domestic factors that influence India's external policy choices;
second, the intractability of bilateral issues, since it is only a mat-
ter of time before each political party in India becomes confident
enough to put forth its views on conducting foreign policy;[39]
and *third*, the growing power of interest groups and lobbies,
which are beginning to influence India's foreign-policy choices.
In sum, the simultaneous processes of coalition politics, orderly
leadership transitions, and a constantly growing economy are
generating new internal dynamics that are beginning to exercise
their influences on India's behavior on the international stage.[40]

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between 1947 and 2008 for resolving the India-Pakistan dispute over
Kashmir, see Moeed Yusuf and Adil Najam, "Kashmir: Ripe for Resolu-
tion?" *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 30, No. 8 (2009), pp. 1503-28.

39. The July 22, 2008 vote in the Indian parliament over the India-U.S. nuclear
deal was perhaps the first instance in India when a serving government
was nearly voted out following widespread opposition to the signing of
the deal with the United States. The UPA coalition led by Prime Minister
Manmohan Singh survived the vote, but its image was dented seriously
by allegations of backroom dealing and money changing hands to ensure
the vote would go through in favor of the government.

40. Teresita C. Schaffer, "A Changing India," in Michael R. Chambers, ed.,
South Asia in 2020: Future Strategic Balances and Alliances (Carlisle, Penna.:
U.S. Army War College, 2002), pp. 37-38.

Afghanistan

Adding to the existing tensions between the India-Pakistan dyad is the emergence of Afghanistan as a zone of contestation between the two.[41] India has excellent relations with the Afghan political elite and since 2001 has emerged as one of the largest contributors of development aid. Since the Taliban melted away from Kabul in 2001, India has contributed more than $1.2 billion to rebuild public infrastructure in Afghanistan.[42] Most of India's largesse in Afghanistan has been spent in the reconstruction of roads, medical clinics, and schools. At the community level, "India has also been involved in the construction of power transmission lines, running sanitation projects and setting up solar power energy to light up villages."[43] India's interests in Afghanistan are motivated by the twin desires of preventing a return of the Taliban to power in any form—an increasingly losing proposition these days—and denying Pakistan the "strategic depth" such a development might afford.

Pakistan sees Afghanistan not only as a realm providing strategic depth, but also as a springboard and land bridge in its growing interest in furthering relations with the resource-rich countries of Central Asia. Pakistan's interests are served best with a landlocked Afghanistan dependent upon Pakistan's two main ports of Karachi and Gwadar for supply of materiel. However, the construction of a 218-kilometer road by India linking Zaranj and Delaram in western Afghanistan with Iran provides an alternative link to Chahbahar port in Iran.[44] For Pakistan, the

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41. Anit Mukherjee, "A Brand New Day or Back to the Future? The Dynamics of India-Pakistan Relations," *India Review*, vol. 8, No. 4 (October-December, 2009), p. 404.

42. "Indian Aid to Afghanistan Irking Pakistan," *Times of India*, August 19, 2009 at http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Indian-aid-to-Afghanistan-irking-Pakistan/articleshow/4909123.cms.

43. Sumit Ganguly and Nicholas Howenstein, "India-Pakistan Rivalry in Afghanistan," *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 63, No. 1 (Fall-Winter, 2009), p. 131.

44. "India Hands Over Strategic Highway to Afghanistan," *The Hindu*, January 23, 2009 at www.hindu.com/2009/01/23/stories/2009012355311200.htm.

Zaranj-Delaram road is a provocation, and India's material support to Afghanistan comes at the expense of its traditional influence. Pakistan is also worried about the expansion of Indian diplomatic presence in various parts of Afghanistan, especially the consulates in Jalalabad and Kandahar that it feels are being used to foment trouble in its restive province of Baluchistan.

The Nuclear Question

A subject of much speculation and analysis has been the question of nuclear weapons and the dyad. The nuclear tests of 1998 by both countries introduced a new dimension to India-Pakistan relations: the prospect of a nuclear arms race. In brief, while India's nuclear capabilities are determined by a wider set of objectives (such as the China factor, great-power status, the need for strategic autonomy), Pakistan's nuclear posture is driven entirely by its security fears emanating from India.[45] There are two broad lines of reasoning on how the possession of nuclear-weapon capabilities is going to influence decision making processes of the dyad. The first line of reasoning holds that the possibilities of a full-scale conflict have reduced since the nuclear tests of 1998 and have hence brought about strategic stability.[46] The second line of reasoning advanced is that as the weaker power (and hence revisionist), Pakistan has no choice but to adopt a "credible first-use nuclear posture" to deter its more powerful opponent, India.[47] As

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45. Naeem Salik, *The Genesis of South Asian Nuclear Deterrence: Pakistan's Perspective* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 230.

46. Sumit Ganguly, "Nuclear Stability in South Asia," *International Security*, vol. 33, No. 2 (Fall, 2008), p. 46. Also see Ganguly and Hagerty, *Fearful Symmetry*, and Rajesh M. Basrur, *Minimum Deterrence and Indian Nuclear Security* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006); Rajesh Rajagopalan, "The Threat of Unintended Use of Nuclear Weapons in South Asia," *India Review*, vol. 4, No. 2 (April, 2005), pp. 214-32; Bharat Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security: The Realist Foundations of Strategy* (New Delhi: Macmillan India, 2002); and Itty Abraham, *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb: Science, Secrecy and the Post-Colonial State* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1999).

47. Vipin Narang, "Posturing for Peace? Pakistan's Nuclear Postures and

the weaker conventional power, Pakistan, to influence the outcome of a battle scenario, may examine the feasibility of deploying its nuclear assets to challenge the "territorial status quo" under the assumption that there is "less fear of an all-out Indian military response."[48] What Pakistan has not factored in is this question: What if its central assumption is proven wrong?

While nuclear weapon command and control mechanisms in India are firmly in civilian hands, in Pakistan the reverse situation applies. The control of nuclear assets in Pakistan by the army is to Timothy Hoyt an "efficient division of labour," inferring no doubt that as long as the army remains the most cohesive organization in Pakistan, its retention or control over nuclear assets will ensure safety.[49] A larger question that needs clarification is this: Since nuclear command and control are the domain of the military in Pakistan, are there any mechanisms by which the civilian leadership is in the loop when a decision has to be taken? The fragility of civilian institutions in Pakistan and the overwhelming power and resources of the armed forces suggest that behind a veneer of civilian leadership, the state in Pakistan is run by a praetorian guard.

The reality remains that the dyad is going through a phase of nuclear parity. For Indian security planners this situation has emboldened Islamabad in its continued prodding of India by adopting an asymmetric approach of instigating and sponsoring terrorist attacks on targets in India. The increasing trend of attacks and massacres in India, including that on the Indian parliament

South Asian Stability," *International Security*, vol. 34, No. 3 (Winter, 2009-2010), p. 39.

48. S. Paul Kapur, "Ten Years of Instability in a Nuclear South Asia," *International Security*, vol. 33, No. 2 (Fall, 2008), p. 93. Also see Kapur, *Dangerous Deterrent: Nuclear Weapons Proliferation and Conflict in South Asia* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007) and Mario E. Carranza, "Avoiding a Nuclear Catastrophe: Arms Control after the 2002 India-Pakistan Crisis," *International Politics*, vol. 40, No. 3 (September, 2003), pp. 313-39.

49. Timothy D. Hoyt, "Pakistani Nuclear Doctrine and the Dangers of Strategic Myopia," *Asian Survey*, vol. 41, No. 6 (November-December, 2001), p. 976.

in 2001, are designed with the cynical objective of escalating ten-
sions that once initiated will be difficult to check. For Pakistan,
the Indian countermeasure of adopting the Cold Start war doc-
trine is an erosion of the "firebreak between conventional and
nuclear conflict on the subcontinent."[50]

The Alternative Tracks: Slow Motion Failures?

Confidence-Building Measures

Any process that brings about a comprehensive transforma-
tion in the beliefs policy makers have toward each other is called
a confidence-building measure (CBM).[51] Apart from the loud
rhetoric from both sides, there have been processes at work to
ensure a basic continuity in relations. For India, the pursuit of
better relations with Pakistan complements its stated objective of
maintaining rapid economic growth. Justifying this argument has
been the Composite Dialogue Process (CDP). The CDP between
India and Pakistan, though it has had its own ups and downs
since 2004, is a widely reported mechanism at the bureaucratic-
institutional level with the distant objective of arriving at a rap-
prochement. It builds on the process initiated by India's former
prime minister, I. K. Gujral, in 1997 to engage Pakistan on "all
outstanding issues."

Another track that exists is a back channel between the two
countries that reports to the respective premiers.[52] This channel
is an informal mechanism that barely finds mention in the
media. It entails discussion of policy solutions to existing dis-
putes; however, the process is constrained by a lack of accep-
tance from the Pakistan army.[53] Hence, whatever proposals are

50. S. Paul Kapur, "Ten Years of Instability in a Nuclear South Asia," p. 91.
51. Tariq Rauf, "Confidence-building and Security-building Measures in
    the Nuclear Era with Relevance for South Asia," *Contemporary South
    Asia*, vol. 14, No. 2 (June, 2005), pp. 179-80.
52. Steve Coll, "The Back Channel," *The New Yorker*, March 2, 2009, p. 38.
53. See Tellis, "The Merits of Dehyphenation," pp. 21-42.

aired and discussed by the interlocutors, the veto in Pakistan rests with the army. The back-channel process is said to hinge on two key issues: first, conversion of the Line of Control (LoC) between the two countries into an international border after minor adjustments; and second, "softening" of the border in Kashmir, with Kashmiris allowed unfettered movement on either side.[54]

The India-Pakistan CDP is not without its weaknesses. CBMs between the India-Pakistan dyad, involve a large number of causal variables that have varying shades of influence on the relationship and create the requisite need for an overwhelming domestic political consensus or endorsement over that of the policy makers. The current CDP process is limited to the politico-bureaucratic sphere, making it liable to manipulation by powerful actors not involved in the process. A progressive weakness in India-Pakistan relations has been that bureaucratic-institutional processes have worked overtime to restrain civilian initiatives. The consequent lack of civilian initiatives has empowered the politico-bureaucratic class to prevaricate on furthering people-to-people contacts that in other settings have been a very powerful kind of CBM. Another obstacle has been that with different political cultures—a praetorian political culture in Pakistan versus a civilian-dominated political culture in India—inconsistencies have been woven into the very fabric of CBMs between India and Pakistan. No initiative from Pakistan can succeed without the acquiescence of the army, and every positive step initiated by both the sides comes unstuck whenever India has faced a terror attack traced back to Pakistan.

South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

The SAARC came into being on August 2, 1983 and was launched on December 8, 1985 in Dhaka. Unlike other multilateral institutions such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

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54. Bruce Riedel, "The Mumbai Massacre and Its Implications for America and South Asia," *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 63, No. 1 (Fall-Winter, 2009), p. 116.

(ASEAN) or the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the SAARC has yet to find its feet.

Regional cooperation in South Asia is hindered largely by the apprehensions smaller countries have toward India's dominance in every sphere.[55] It is no surprise that in economic and security terms the asymmetry between India and others in SAARC, including Pakistan, is vast enough for other neighbors to feel insecure. India on its part has failed to convince other members of SAARC of its benign objectives. It is this mismatch that scuttles any initiatives on the part of SAARC to emerge as a functional multilateral organization for the region. Nuclear rivalry between India and Pakistan, the involvement of one into the domestic politics of the other (India's influence in the domestic politics of Nepal and Pakistan's support for the secession of Kashmir from India) are issues that have rendered the SAARC a non-starter in many areas. The failure of the SAARC is primarily owing to its limitation in decision making as every decision to be taken needs the consent of the other members. This has bestowed a functioning system of unanimity over objectivity to SAARC.

A critique of the SAARC has been that it has become ineffectual. For instance, all the member countries of the region face some form of terrorism or secessionist violence and the SAARC has failed to generate mechanisms that provide basic security to its own people. Despite agreement to an Additional Protocol to the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism (2004),[56] the countries of the region have not taken any credible action to prevent terrorism or clamp down on sponsors of terrorist activity. Deeds have not kept up with words and the SAARC is increasingly becoming the first multilateral organization whose members are keen to be part of other extra-regional initiatives and not intra-regional initiatives.[57]

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55. See Eric Gonsalves and Nancy Jetly, eds., *The Dynamics of South Asia Regional Cooperation and SAARC* (New Delhi: Sage, 1999).

56. See "SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism and its Additional Protocol" at www.saarc-sec.org/areaofcooperation/detail .php?activity_id=21.

57. The emergence of subregional groupings such as the Bay of Bengal Initia-

Interpreting the Hard Reality

For Pakistan, India is a hegemon that will not stop at merely dominating South Asia and the smaller countries surrounding it but will intrude upon their domestic political processes, seeking to shape events to suit India's interests. The size of the Indian armed forces and their doctrine of Cold Start is a red rag to military planners in Rawalpindi. For Pakistan's policy makers, India's global aspirations and economic growth of the last decade are inherently destabilizing for the region. Over time, it is thought, India's rise would have the effect of making the rest of the region quiescent and complicit in India's quest for global-power status. Pakistan's ruling elites cannot permit such a potential development.[58] This competition to "beggar thy neighbor" is indeed a far cry from what the founding fathers of Pakistan had visualized in relations with India.[59] It appears that strategic planners in the highest decision-making circles of Pakistan support a policy whereby low-intensity conflict with India is an acceptable cost to pay, especially in Kashmir. As Victoria Schofiel puts it, for Pakistan "the idea of conducting a proxy war capitalizing on indigenous dissent was a low-cost, potentially higher yielding alternative."[60]

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tive for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) in 1997, comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, and the Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar (BCIM) in 1999, are to be seen as multilateral initiatives that are succeeding. The main reasons are the failure of SAARC to establish a custom of dialogue, the absence of Pakistan from these initiatives, and the need to establish cross-regional trade and investment flows without political baggage.

58. Maleeha Lodhi, "Security Challenges in South Asia," *The Nonproliferation Review*, vol. 8, No. 2 (Summer, 2001), pp. 118-24.

59. It is interesting to note that a perception that prevailed among important personages involved in the creation of Pakistan (Jinnah and Mohamad Iqbal) was that its role would be to protect India from foreign invasion! See Hasan-Askari Rizvi, "Pakistan's Strategic Culture," in Michael R. Chambers, ed., *South Asia in 2020: Future Strategic Balances and Alliances* (Carlisle, Penna.: U.S. Army War College, 2002), p. 309.

60. Victoria Schofield, "Kashmiri Separatism and Pakistan in the Current Global Environment," *Contemporary South Asia*, vol. 16, No. 1 (March,

Non-state actors from Pakistan, with the abetment of its army, are playing a dangerous game of seeking to "Islamize" the Kashmir issue and eliminate the possibility of a middle ground that has always sought further autonomy for the region. This radical posturing of a *jihadi* agenda is "calibrated to advance Islamist political objectives without leading India and Pakistan to war"[61] and eliminate the secular space for moderation and accommodation within existing political structures. The military and political support extended to *jihadi* organizations in Kashmir by institutions embedded in Pakistan's polity is fast reaching the equilibrium point as regards the gains that accrue for Pakistan. The low-cost, covert, tactical insurgency sponsored by Pakistan in Kashmir has not dented India's resolve and most importantly has failed to win complete acceptance from the Kashmiris themselves. Attaching theocratic ideologies to the Kashmir struggle discomfits Kashmiris most. The average Kashmiri's disillusionment with India is therefore not to be interpreted as an endorsement of Pakistan.[62]

As the dyad enters its sixth decade of independent existence, the state—as a category and a construct—in India and Pakistan is loathe to accept any challengers to its legitimacy, yet must tolerate the emergence of organized groupings (the Maoists in India and the Pakistani Taliban in Pakistan) that seek to undermine and overthrow the state through an internal process of consolidation and transformation of power relations. Large parts of both the countries exist in a situation where the writ of the state does not find favor anymore. In its place are new ideologies that legitimize themselves on the debris of an earlier failed ideology.

Institutional sclerosis, weak civil society, and withdrawal of the state from the daily lives of the hundreds of millions who

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2008), p. 83.

61. Praveen Swami, "The Well-Tempered Jihad: The Politics and Practice of Post-2002 Islamist Terrorism in India," *Contemporary South Asia*, vol. 16, No. 3 (September, 2008), p. 304.

62. Rodrigo Tavares, "Resolving the Kashmir Conflict: Pakistan, India, Kashmiris and Religious Militants," *Asian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 16, No. 3 (December, 2008), p. 278.

populate the very domain the state aggressively claims as its own characterize a relationship that appeals to the emotional over the institutional. This is contrary to how rational actors ought to behave. The failure of the political elites in both the countries to achieve a *modus vivendi* on outstanding issues speaks of the failure in their abilities to convince their domestic audience of the necessity of addressing extant problems in their entirety and converting a hostile relationship to one where both might stand to gain. Lost in the competing rhetoric and atmospherics are issues that cannot be ignored, such as the impact of climate change on the subcontinent—an issue that is going to impact transboundary river water sharing.[63] Structural features of the state in India and Pakistan have evolved in a manner whereby efforts of civil society to bridge differences need the acquiescence of the all-powerful state. Independent initiatives are smothered by the bureaucratic shenanigans and suffer from the harsh scrutiny of agencies beyond the scope of any kind of accountability. Hence, CBMs are almost always initiated by the state to maintain a facade of normality to a relationship that neither side wants.

There is a strand of thought in Pakistan that by resolving its conflicts with India, it could unlock its economic potential and emerge as a geophysical hub for Afghanistan and Central Asia.[64] The energy resources of Central Asia and Iran need a land bridge in the form of Pakistan to reach India. However, the geopolitics of this region are such that it is witness to various competing stakeholders in the pursuit of their own interests that undermine any residual notions the countries of the region might have

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63. See Ben Crow and Nirvikar Singh, "The Management of International Rivers as Demands Grow and Supplies Tighten: India, China, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh," *India Review*, vol. 8, No. 3 (July-September, 2009), pp. 306-39. Also see "Arbitration and Kishanganga Project," *The Hindu*, June 25, 2010, at www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/article 485555.ece.
64. Brigadier Feroz Hassan Khan, "Pakistan's Security Perspectives," *Force*, April 27, 2005 at www.sassu.org.uk/pdfs/Article%20for%20Force%20 magazine%20India.pdf.

about cooperating with each other. The presence of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troops in Afghanistan, increasingly louder drums of war against Iran, and growing Chinese influence in the region are a few of the factors that are brewing a whole range of new dynamics that are going to influence the region in the coming years.

India and Pakistan (of late) may pride themselves on being democracies, but the challenge they face is in ensuring that the vibrancy a democracy inspires is evident at the grassroots. Beyond the dyad, it appears democracy in South Asia is moving in the direction of becoming an elite preserve, retreating from its egalitarian goals to becoming the self-adulatory theater of a few families with the venal objective of retaining power through every possible means. With "Talibanization" in parts of Pakistan and the growing influence of the Maoists in certain parts of India beginning to impact on the political discourse,[65] the choice before the polity is to ensure that established democratic processes of governance are not sidestepped. Authoritarianism of either the institutions of governance or the polity will have the effect of eroding the legitimacy of the state and equating it with the illegitimate political violence adopted by domestic non-state actors.[66] The greater challenge the dyad faces does not lie across the border; rather, it is the growing clamor and strife from within that challenges the very foundations of Pakistan's and India's legitimacy. These are causal variables that cannot be ignored.

To conclude, it appears tempting to categorize the dyadic relationship of India and Pakistan as being so inherently flawed that it will in the long run evolve into a Derridian process of "autoimmunization" for the weaker power. To quote J. Hillis Miller:

> Any community, such as a nation-state, has a built-in, "unconscious," and incurable tendency to destroy itself, in a suicidal act that Derrida

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65. Ambrose Pinto, "Manmohan Singh and Naxal-Maoist Upsurge," *Mainstream*, vol. 47, No. 37 (August 29, 2009), at www.mainstreamweekly .net/article1596.html.

66. Rizvi, *South Asia in a Changing International Order*, p. 38.

calls "auto-co-immunity." Just as the body may turn its immune system against its own organs, so any community or state, in its attempt at protecting its borders, to achieve its homeland security, and to make itself safe and sound inevitably turns its self-protective mechanisms against itself. This makes things worse rather than better. It can lead to the auto-destruction of the community or state.[67]

Is the dyad listening?

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67. J. Hillis Miller, *For Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), p. 328.

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