

**The Atlantic Council of the United States
and
The Institute of National Strategic Studies,
National Defense University**

Rethinking Indian Policies Towards Pakistan

**Welcome and Moderator:
Shuja Nawaz,
Director, South Asia Center,
The Atlantic Council**

**Introduction of Speaker:
Thomas Lynch
Distinguished Research Fellow,
National Defense University**

**Speaker:
Bharat Karnad,
Senior Fellow,
National Security Studies at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi**

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SHUJA NAWAZ: Good morning, everyone. Thank you all for coming.

I'm Shuja Nawaz. I'm the director of the South Asia Center. And on behalf of my colleagues and our president, Fred Kempe, I want to welcome all of you. And a special warm welcome to Bharat Karnad for having taken this time to come and spend with us. I know he's a busy man; he's got other events later on today, but we thought it would be important to have him here to discuss a very important relationship in the region that my center and my colleagues cover. And from just looking at the audience here, I think you all agree with that.

So this is an event that we've arranged, as we sometimes do, with the National Defense University and I'm delighted to introduce Tom Lynch – or as he's now known, as Dr. Tom Lynch, because he's in academia and no longer at DOD – with my friend, who has partnered with us before and is supporting this activity. So I will request Tom to do the introduction and then we'll get into hearing Bharat.

And this is on the record. There'll be questions and answers also. And just an administrative word about that: Please wait for the microphone to reach you. State who you are so we can capture it for our purposes and then ask a question or if you have a comment, please make a comment.

So Tom.

THOMAS LYNCH: Shuja, thank you so much. And thanks to all of you for being here today.

Let me add to the welcome of the Atlantic Council, the welcome here as the co-host of this event with Shuja and the South Asia Center at the Atlantic Council, my welcome on behalf of the Center for Strategic Research at the Institute for National Security Studies over at National Defense University.

I'm privileged to work there, primarily on issues related to South Asia but also the Near East. And I'm proud today to have several colleagues from INSS, to include the director of research at the Center for Strategic Research, Dr. Nick Rostow – who I'd ask to raise his hand here – present in the audience today as well.

Thanks to each of you for taking time from your busy schedules today. I'm proud to say I know most of you here and know how ambitious the things that you do each and every day are. And so it's quite befitting of the importance of this event that you've taken time to come here today and I thank you very much.

Many in the room here will be familiar with Mr. Bharat Karnad, who is at the Center for Policy Research in New Delhi, India. And I just wanted to offer a few comments, for those that are not familiar with him. You will know about his experience in the government of India, in South Asia security, about his excellent resume in terms of having worked security and policy-related issues for a long time. And then his media

pedigree having come here, spending some time in other distinguished institutions here in America.

So as most of you know, Mr. Karnad has written any number of books, but is most formally known for his time as a member of the National Security Advisory Board on the National Security Council, specifically as a member of the nuclear doctrine drafting group, and then also working on the external security and technology groups for the strategic review for India. He's also a former adviser to the Defense Expenditures Finance Commission in India, in addition to many, many other works on behalf of the government of India focused on security.

A prominent member of think tanks and academia, he has published widely and is read widely on issues that go from defense procurement to the conduct of training to the manner of procurement and involvement of the different military institutions. If you look at his published bio, you'll see that there's hardly a military institution in India that he has not lectured at or been requested by name to participate in the development of strategy and doctrine at. So, he comes to us very highly commended.

His books and literature are widely known. And as a noted graduate of both California institutions, to include UC Santa Barbara for his bachelor's and University of California Los Angeles, UCLA, for his master's, has published widely in English to include most recently, I might add, his titles from the middle of the last decade first entitled, "Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security: The Realist Foundations of Strategy," which was published initially in 2002 and was a second edition in 2005; and then, "India's Nuclear Policy" from Praeger in 2008.

So it is indeed our pleasure to have him here today. He is fresh from having spent a weekend jousting on similar issues up at Princeton in a conference that was held up there and has other stops today where he will continue to offer his insights and his thoughts.

And so with that – and with due thanks for him taking the time to be with us today – let me introduce to you Bharat Karnad to talk about rethinking India's policies towards Pakistan.

BHARAT KARNAD: Thank you very much.

What I'll do is really quickly in about 20 minutes' time put out some salient points. And then I shan't go through the – I suppose you all know everything about the basic information vis-à-vis the Indian and Pakistani foreign policies, their postures and so on. So I shan't waste time there. The departures I have suggested in the Indian policy is what I'll get into in bullet-point terms. And then we can elaborate on it if any of you is interested.

It's been my firm belief – and even when in government whenever I've had the ear of the political powers that be, I've said that I think it is simply inappropriate for

India, as the largest country in South Asia, given its strategic location and all the other attributes, for it to be so fixated on Pakistan. It's a fixation, I've suggested, that we need to really get out of both in military terms and in political terms and begin to really treat Pakistan and address Pakistan's fears – threat perceptions of India – on Pakistani terms, because it does no good for anybody for us to keep pretending that what we say about our peaceful intent is going to be accepted whole in Islamabad.

And the idea then is to see if we can't in some way translate it into gestures that are meaningful and substantive and cannot be misinterpreted by Pakistani parties that are involved in making decisions – primarily the Pakistan army.

One of the things I've suggested – incidentally, in my first book, which was not mentioned, which was many years back – I'd said I was under the impression then that Chinese had given the Pakistan state a dirty bomb. I got that from somewhere. And what I suggested was that we actually give (our clean implosion trigger) fission weapon technology to Pakistan as a way of eroding the mistrust. So you know where I'm coming from; that's by way of laying the context. Meaning that if you have to address Pakistani security, let's do it, because as far as I'm concerned, Pakistan has never posed a threat to India, credible threat to India, is not now a threat to India, cannot ever be a threat to India. And I'll not get into the asymmetric aspect of the threat from terrorism; that's a separate issue. I'll deal with it as a final bullet point.

Some of the things I've suggested – and by the way, when I suggested that we should actually transfer nuclear weapon technology that's clean, and I believed that our design was clean – the position was endorsed by General K. Sundarji. His endorsement is in my book I edited called "Future Imperiled," published by Viking in 1994. So you have it there, in a sense that he had gotten over the institutional fixation, as I have said, with Pakistan that prevails in India. And now the kind of gestures that I've suggested that India take, in a sense, to let Pakistan know that we don't mean ill. Then they would have to deal with whatever response they have on their terms.

First of all, I said – and this was when I was in government, in the National Security Council – that we really ought to withdraw all nuclearized short-range ballistic missiles that are liquid fueled, which are a major liability anyway – their being liquid fueled – completely from the western border, unilaterally, demanding nothing of Pakistan.

Since then, I've suggested that we really ought to begin to consolidate the three strike corps establishments that we have, which is really the major thing that Pakistani army's spooked by, into a consolidated corps – a single corps with a number of independent armored brigades. Now, the problem there is many in the army see the point but then there's the vested interest, which all of you understand. Armor and mechanized forces are now in the Indian army hierarchy a major vested interest. I mean, a force with 3,300-3,500 tanks – many of them mothballed, actually, up on bricks. But you have enormous investment; and therefore, a bureaucratic and political investment by the military in the armor and mechanized forces. And the result is Pakistan fears this massive

mobile element; after all, India is not going trundle three-strike corps against China even through the Sikkim plain and Demchok triangle. You can't do it.

So you talk to reasonable cavalry generals in India, armor generals and they say, yeah, but things stop there. The reason being, after the last pay commission and the hike in ranks, at every turn in Delhi in the defense industry, you run into a Major General at every turn. Meaning so many flag-rank officers – Brigadier, Major General, and Lieutenant General rank officers have been created – many in the armor and mechanized forces, because it's a major combat arm – that they will not allow a diminution of their position and the kind of power and clout they wield within the military. That's bureaucratic politics and it is understandable.

And therefore, we are at an impasse, as it were. I mean I think many people even in this government, which I don't find particularly clued in in military and strategic terms, agree and concede that something needs to be done. But something this drastic – and they consider this rather radical – is, I think, beyond the pale as far as they're concerned – beyond the pale because of bureaucratic interests that oppose such consolidation and loss of flag rank billets.

But I think gestures of this kind would really begin to see change on the Pakistani army's part. I mean, what are the Pakistani army people responsible going to make of these gestures that are unilateral, that demand nothing in terms of what Pakistan should do? They can do what they want; they can build up their armored, mechanized corps even further if they want to.

The reason I think – if you look at the Pakistan economy – why they cannot sustain any kind of war of their own initiative is that the GDP of Pakistan is – and this is just one little index of disparity, sheer disparity that's growing and widening – is that the GDP of Pakistan is one quarter of the market capitalization of the Mumbai stock exchange. Now, this is the kind of disparity I think that really in a way makes it very much more difficult for Pakistanis to make reciprocal gestures and why India has to go it alone in many ways. At least, until a point is reached where, you know, you have seeded trust and then the Pakistanis can react at their own pace as they see fit. It's really immaterial to India, because Pakistan is no threat to India.

Recently, I think there have been very welcome changes in the mind of the Pakistan government as far as MFN and other things are concerned. You are perhaps aware of the little incident of an Indian army helicopter a few weeks back that mistakenly strayed into what we call Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. And without much ado and much fuss, it was returned and the officers were treated marvelously well and so on and so forth. There was no problem, which leads me to sort of just anecdotally, you see, this is what the air chief told me just two weeks back when I first met him after he had taken over command. He said, you know, a few years back an Indian army helicopter – a Cheetah, which is a small helicopter – got lost somewhere and nearly landed in Lahore, taking off from Amritsar, which is just 15 miles away. And just as he was landing – in a dust storm so he couldn't see very little – he espied a C-130 on the tarmac. Suddenly he

realized his mistake and whizzed off without any of the Pakistani radar being aware of his presence, because he was flying low level.

Physical proximity is a problem but also present opportunities galore of making something of natural amity that exists between the two peoples and countries— as Shuja will endorse and anyone from South Asia will be able to confirm. And I think one ought to capitalize on it. This is not some utopian kind of thing; it's a do-able if the Indian government were to take initiatives. These initiatives are not going to be taken by the Pakistan government for obvious reasons.

A few years back, Pakistan was on the verge of bankruptcy. It had at the time, newspaper reports said about 10 days worth of hard currency or something like that. In a conversation with a secretary in one of the economic ministries, I wondered if, with our bulging hard currency reserves, India couldn't make a grant to Pakistan of \$5 billion – that was the figure that Pakistan needed. And his response was to ask if I had gone mad! There's a political component, even assuming there's something by way in policy terms to favor such gestures, there is a political OK that needs to be given by the government.

Now, this is a government where the prime minister has gone public with a statement saying he'd love very much to have breakfast in Amritsar, lunch in Lahore, dinner in Kabul. Well, you're not going to have either lunch or dinner anywhere in Lahore or Kabul if you don't take the first steps. And you cannot negotiate it in terms of the confidence building and so on – these things that are mucked around by the MEA on our part and perhaps the foreign ministry on the Pakistani part. After all, they're paid to just hinder things rather than help – by and large – unless they are given a clear directive by the government. And a clear directive by the government will not be obtained by the Congress party government anyway, because they are afraid of being sandbagged by the rightwing BJP. So there are all kinds of considerations that are hampering movement, even though there's considerable consensus for moving ahead and doing something that really can get the rapprochement process going.

I can't resist but to put across to you one last thing, because we can get into the interactive stage, which I'm looking forward to enormously. In 2007, I was invited by ostensibly the Jamia Millia University, actually a Pakistan military army-organized symposium in Bahawalpur -- the headquarters of their Multan strike corps. The high point of it was a presentation by Major General Ausaf Ali, Director of strategy and plans, at the Strategic Plans Division (SPD). It was obviously nuclear signaling that was going on and I was supposed to be the medium. Of course, I play this part. I'm debriefed whenever I go to Pakistan by our intelligence, Special Branch, and so on.

But the point I think is the important thing that General Ali wanted to convey by way of the Pakistan nuclear weapons program information he wanted to get across to the Indian government. One of the things he said is – and this is perhaps germane to the American audience as well – after he'd gone through a fairly detailed briefing on the SPD and its workings, etc., he said, that SPD was aware that the Indian, the Israeli and the American intelligence services are doing all they can to try and map Pakistani nuclear

assets. They have succeeded, he said, to the extent of 70 percent. Thirty percent of the weapons, he said – looking straight at me – you'll never find.

Now, obviously, that's not wrong, because in liaising with people in all three countries – I was in Israel not a couple of months ago and so on – I think 30 percent is about right. That 30 percent is what I think Pakistan means to enlarge to the extent it can without giving away the location by their very fast-paced, accelerated fissile material production and so on and so forth. That's fine. And I said, it doesn't bother me very much. If it makes the Pakistanis feel secure; that's great. They can have as many nuclear weapons as they want.

At that same Bahawalpur meet – and this is what I have proposed by way of -- I hate to call it collective security, let's say joint security architecture – for whatever it's worth, realizable maybe not now but 50 years hence, 100 years hence. I brought up the basic template offered by Mohammed Ali Jinnah in 1946. Now, as soon as you mention Mohammed Ali Jinnah to a Pakistani audience, they sit up, because he is irrefutable. I mean, he is the last authority. And you know, everybody sat up. And I said, look, the Quaid in September 1946 – Quaid-e-Azam as the Pakistanis call him – in 1946 in September had said in Karachi – and this is how he defined what he envisioned as security architecture. He said, Muslim India – and I'm paraphrasing it – will be the guardian of the western marches. Hindu India, he said – his phrase exactly – he said will be responsible for all the other security concerns of the subcontinent.

Now, I said to the audience that if you think that maybe India has got too large a share of security responsibility per Jinnah's design, we can negotiate it. Not a problem at all. Even your nuclear weapons – they are India-centric; that's perfectly fine, because we can, you know, mesh them in with our own medium to long-range weaponry that we are acquiring.

Now, you'll permit me to say one last little bit – India has not fought a genuine war since 1947. Neither do I think Pakistan has – but I cannot speak for Pakistan. What I am saying is India has not fought a genuine war with anybody. Let's deal with the Chinese in 1962 – less than one-and-a-half army divisions, were involved. That's not war; that's a skirmish. The so-called India-Pakistan wars we had -- '47-'48 in Kashmir, in '65, and then in '71. In 1971 I think Pakistanis themselves now concede that a very bad military strategy was wedded to a hideous politics in dealing with the Bangladeshis. So if you're going to offer somebody something on a platter, he's going to take it.

But that apart, I think the apt-est description of India-Pakistan wars – and it's a wonderful description – was given by the late Major General D.K. Palit, who was the DMO – director of military operations '62 war – and perhaps the finest scholar/soldier the Indian army or the Indian military has produced. He described India-Pakistan wars as communal riots with tanks.

Incidentally, I used that as a template for an analysis of India-Pakistan wars; it was published in the 'Round Table' in London in 1996. And sure enough, India-Pakistan

wars fit the parameters of riot to a tee in terms of these being time constrained, space constrained, in terms of intensity constraints, localized counterforce engagements, tank on tank, hardware is destroyed. In fact, Ruth Sevard used to publish interesting data. According to her – and I go by her statistics in her last compendium of such data, it said that if you totaled all the casualties in India-Pakistan's so-called wars – I call them always “so-called” or in quotation marks, the total casualties in India and Pakistan wars combined were less than casualties in police action in both these countries in almost any given year!

The reason for this is the organic links between India and Pakistan. These are organic links that cannot be wished away by Pakistanis any more than Indians can wish it away. These are facts of life. Subcontinental Islam – at least until Taliban came to Pakistan – in its practices is syncretic in that it has been influenced by Hinduism and, likewise, many Hindu practices are imported from Islam. Anybody who knows about how Islam is practiced at the ground level in South Asia will readily concede that. So to talk about the sort of confrontation between entirely disparate peoples who have nothing to do with each other and so on so forth – this is complete nonsense, really; it doesn't fit reality.

And therefore, I think it's the organic links, ultimately, the kith and kinship links that India and Pakistan have. There's not a member of the Pakistani elite I know that doesn't have an immediate family member in India. I usually joke with the Pakistanis that you'll have a hard time of nuclear targeting, because you will be targeting which cities – two cities? Bombay and Delhi. They're also the cities with the largest Muslim populations with most of the relatives of all the Pakistani elite residing in these areas, meaning there are mutual constraints built into the system. It's a system of restraint – enormous restraint. And please don't go by the bluff and bluster, because often I think Western audiences and analysts are swayed by the bluff and bluster on both sides. Look at what happens when the so-called wars start and when they end and how they are actually prosecuted and you'll get a very different picture.

I've been pleading with American analysts – of course, it's a cottage industry here in Washington and in the American academia to not accept this, but that is reality. You can go on and talk about flashpoint and this, that and the other and get research monies, but it will not fit reality. The reality is something very, very different. I think more and more the Pakistani intelligentsia is beginning to accept it. As I think are members of the Pakistan military whom I've been in contact with – I've been in contact with for 25-odd years.

I end on that very upside note, you see, because I think that things are far better than they seem, but that India has to make the kind of gestures that are substantive for Pakistan to begin to react –for normalization to begin and then for both countries to build on that.

Thank you.

MR. NAWAZ: Thank you, Bharat, for that most interesting perspective. And I should say that particularly for us at the South Asia Center, where one of our remits is to wage peace in the Subcontinent, it's a good message to hear.

I should remind the audience that you wrote a piece roughly on the same topic of rethinking Pakistan for the newspaper a few months ago. And one of the interesting arguments that you presented in that, which may be worth elaborating, perhaps, was the economic argument that India is on a very fast economic track. And in order to manage its defense budget, it must look at its expenditures. And I think, if I remember correctly, your calculation was that the three strike corps that are arrayed against the eastern border of Pakistan account for 36 percent of India's defense budget, which is a very disproportionate amount of defense spending. So it might be useful to get your thoughts on what are the economics behind ending what a Pakistani general described to me as no war, no peace situation.

MR. KARNAD: Yeah. These are proportions that I calculated in my classified study for the Finance Commission, which perhaps some of you are aware is a constitutional body in India. It's not a government body; it's a constitutional body, Finance Commission, India, is constituted quinquennially, which is every five years, to distribute the prospective revenue pool between the center and the states and at the center between the ministries in the following five-year period. So I was looking at the defense ministry and its allocations. It's not really the finance ministry, actually, that does the allocations. People don't understand that. It's the Finance Commission that does it every five years. In a broad-brush kind of a thing, the annual defense ministry allocations then deal with the nitty-gritty, budgetary, details.

So I did – had done a timeline analysis over the years of our budgetary spend on various combat arms. Our budget – budgetary process, I think, no different from Pakistan's – do not show the actual monies spent on any particular combat arm or mission role. And I've been pleading that this is what we need to do, both because the taxpayer needs to know what exactly is being acquired for the monies that are being spent. It's a reasonable demand, I think, but it has fallen on deaf ears – at least in the finance ministry.

The simple breakdown goes something like this: Between 29 percent and 36 percent of the defense budget – and this is payroll included – is spent on armor and mechanized forces, which means the three strike corps establishments I'm talking about. Therefore, the generals are not going to give up such a vast sum that they have a lien on. You see the problem with my solution, because it's not acceptable to the armor generals and the mechanized forces generals for this reason: Enormous money goes into the up-keeping of this combat arm, and without an adequate *raison d'être* – the Pakistan threat – such spending would be considered plainly wasteful.

Between 16 (percent) and 19 percent is spent on plains infantry divisions; between 13 (percent) and 17 percent goes into mountain warfare divisions – mountain divisions. There's, moreover, such a disparity between the senior service, the army, and

its mission roles and the air force and the navy it is remarkable. But these numbers are almost 15 years old. This report was submitted by me to the Finance Commission and the Finance Commission to the government by 1995, so it's not really current at all, but it's indicative of the trend in spending.

Even so, at that time – and things have changed since then – the entire investment in air defense – air force's air defense mission, including surface-to-air missiles – was something like 6-7 percent. The entire spend on sea denial – submarines, was, if I remember right – 1 percent to 3 percent of the defense budget. And the whole point of my recommendations was that this is a skewed kind of funding. I mean, when you see this pattern of defense expenditure and look at India in the Indian Ocean – jutting out into the Indian Ocean, like a prow of an aircraft carrier, is it not, and sitting astride the Eight Degree, Nine Degree Channels. The navy, therefore, deserved much higher spending. My report had suggested that the naval spend go up to 20 percent by the Year 2000. The naval budget has, in fact, increased to currently the 18 percent level. In India, everything happens a bit late. So the recommendation is kicking in a decade late, but it's happening. By next year, it'll be 20-21 percent where it'll stabilize. So we're getting there to a more equitable allocation of resources between the services, but not quite there. But the latest acquisitions favor the navy and the air force, as you're all aware.

MR. NAWAZ: I want to ask one more question and then open it up. And this will take you back to the point you made in your opening remarks about your recommendation that the nuclear-capable old missiles should be retired.

MR. KARNAD: Why say retired? Withdrawn.

MR. NAWAZ: Withdrawn.

MR. KARNAD: Yeah.

MR. NAWAZ: Coming out of some of the deliberations of another track II that I've been involved in with the Ottawa Dialogue between India and Pakistan on nuclear CBMs. In our latest meeting, a suggestion was made that not only should the older missiles be withdrawn because they are in fact a threat, rather than adding to defense and security on both sides of the India-Pakistan border, but that the current testing that is going on for so-called tactical nuclear weapons and short-range missiles – even if the testing is done – that it should stop there; that there should not be any deployment of these weapons, that this would be a good start for the two. What's your view on that?

MR. KARNAD: Well, look, I always argued in all my writings that in the Subcontinental context – India-Pakistan context – there is no such thing as tactical use; of nuclear weapons. Tactical is strategic in the India-Pakistan context. So to the extent that the Pakistanis or Pakistan military or the strategists in the SPD are trying to make a distinction – and in sense perhaps create some space for maneuver – I think it's going to fail, simply because the Indian military and Indian government's doctrine, nuclear doctrine, stresses massive retaliation. Whether or not it'll actually work out this way –

this is the doctrine. And Cold Start and the rest of it is premised on the fact that if Pakistan goes nuclear at any time for any reason against any Indian target whatsoever, even Indian aggressor units inside Pakistan in the Cholistan Desert or somewhere and being blown up by a tactical nuke, it'll be taken as a nuclear attack on India.

So you know, you can either believe it or disbelieve it, but that's what the Indian military – that's the operational premise. But I don't know – in any case, what is tactical? I'm entirely uncertain. What weapon yield is tactical? The point is, in the NATO context, if you get into it, you had a range from 0.4 kiloton to something like 20 kiloton as tactical. And you had Little John, Big John, etc. as tactical weapon systems.

Now, if Pakistan is getting the Hatf-IX or Nasr 60 km range tactical nuclear missile and on our side, whatever it is that they're building, to me the whole notion – I think it complicates the situation rather than clarifying it, because when you talk about trip wires – trip wires necessarily have to be very clear. Otherwise, it's not a trip wire. But when you have these kinds of weapons that are ambiguous as far as yield is concerned – not so much the range – it defeats the purpose of stability, if that's what you want by way of outcome.

MR. NAWAZ: Thank you.

Well, we'll open it up to questions. Just a reminder: Please wait to be recognized so we have the first question here. And please identify yourself when the mike reaches you.

Q: Thank you. I'm Hassan Abbas. I'm a professor at the College of International Security Affairs at National Defense University.

Thank you very much for your great insights. And I must add, as I am of Pakistani origin, I am pleasantly surprised by many of your suggestions and ideas. And if I may add, a credit to a great goes to former Pakistani President Nawaz Sharif, who had started all on this direction where Pakistani and Indian strategist had started thinking about these ideas.

Also to add as a brief comment, within Pakistan, the leading politicians from all parties have thinking on these lines – whether Nawaz Sharif, the present political leadership, and also the rising new political star Imran Khan, when he was talking yesterday on NDTV, he also gave something to the – something to the extent that, yes, this is the only way forward.

My question is about how much of or some of these ideas are rooted in reality, if I may say that?

MR. KARNAD: Sure.

Q: Especially, we know about the political leadership intelligentsia, journalists as well, but the elephant in the room: Pakistan military. And they had also actually come up with a positive worldview in this regard when Musharraf had opted for a peace process. And the view in Pakistan – I believe I can represent that in some way – was that there was a white paper; they were very close to some kind of an understanding and India walked out of it.

So what do you think is the understanding of that falling away or failing of that peace process – 2004 to 2007? How is that understood in India? Are they – what are the lessons learned for from that process? Thank you.

MR. KARNAD: Yeah. I think that 2006 is when the crunch point happened. You see, where it's not clear who drew back. If you go and talk in Delhi, it's the Pakistanis who drew back. If you go to Islamabad, it was Manmohan Singh who drew back. It's the, you know, what's the phenomenon? The Kurosawa film and different notions of exactly the same incident or event.

MR. NAWAZ: Rashomon effect.

MR. KARNAD: Was it Rashomon event?

MR. NAWAZ: Rashomon effect.

MR. KARNAD: Yeah, Rashomon effect. You know, I mean, so depending on who it is you talk to, you get a very different version of what exactly happened. And I've talked to people who were close from the MEA, NSA. I've talked to people in India itself and there are different sorts of opinion even within the Indian ranks, leave alone with Pakistan. The consensus on the Indian side is that Musharraf at the very last moment pulled back. Now, there's no resolution to this or really getting down to who exactly did what or why and who was responsible.

But that said, I think the Musharraf-Manmohan Singh accord, had it been signed, is still the basic template for resolving Kashmir. It offered a joint mechanism that would have, in a sense, you know, satisfied – apparently did satisfy Musharraf and the Pakistan army, because you had now a say in the affairs of the whole of Jammu & Kashmir, a joint mechanism to oversee affairs of Kashmir – something like that. I'm not quite entirely certain of what it was meant to do and how it was meant to do it, the instrumentality, but that was the template. If it has to be resolved. And my point is, if all the other things are done and Kashmir comes up somewhere in the middle, rather than as a top-order issue, you may have more success and a greater possibility of resolution, rather than it being put up as the first thing that needs to be solved, in which case you'll have – like in the past – an impasse.

MR. NAWAZ: Thank you.

Q: Thank you. Tim Lenderking from the State Department.

I too found your remarks rather hopeful, which I very, very much appreciate since working more on the Pakistan side, as I do, sometimes that's more difficult. So – but I wondered if we could develop your first point a little bit, which is that – you know, that the two sides might – or that India in particular might address Pakistan's concerns on Pakistani terms and how you actually see operationalizing that.

You did mention that it might be appropriate for India to take, you know, certain unilateral first steps. And I think that would – that would be well appreciated. But beyond that – and of course, there are mechanisms, track II mechanisms as Shuja has referred to, but there's also a public diplomacy, I think, piece where the two publics – who in some ways, I think, are farther along than the leaderships of the two country – two countries and more receptive and more thirsty, certainly on the Pakistani side, to see things move forward.

But if you could elaborate a little bit more on how you would see operationalizing that piece – your first point.

MR. KARNAD: I think – when you said “hopeful,” I thought that was a way of a left-handed compliment, but then you know, hopeful is also something that's not realizable.

The point is, I think, this is realizable, because I think the cutting edge has to be what is now happening -- the movement in the economic field, the opening up of the trading regime, the pruning of the negative trading list. And that's a wonderful thing to happen, because many of the sort of impediments that were previously – that went in lockstep with these kinds of negotiations between the commerce ministries of the two countries and so on are now gone. Indian government, our commerce minister, Anand Sharma has come out and said, we'll prune the negative list even further; it's not a problem. I think it's good thing; it's a very catholic attitude – catholic with a small “c” – attitude to take in terms of opening up the trade regime for all South Asian countries, not just Pakistan. India is a big enough market, we now have enough resources not to insist on strict reciprocity. We're not the India of the 1950s or the '60s where there was really a scarcity of resources. We have tremendous vitality and vigor in our economy that can easily sustain the economies of all the neighboring states, not just Pakistan.

And I think, again, if you see the problem, Manmohan Singh is an economist, but his government is stymied for political reasons. He's unable to do much of anything and the government, Delhi, is paralyzed. It's a lame duck government. For the next two years, therefore, don't expect anything. There'll be a change of government, as I see it, and then you might see some movement forward, assuming the BJP-ruled government comes in. You will see some movement forward in any case should the Congress Party return to power, because the entire bureaucratic system has ground to a halt pending or awaiting the new elections.

But I think that has not stopped, however, the point I'm making. And despite the whole thing coming to a stop in Delhi, the MFN is moving very nicely. They have set a very close timetable to realize things and get moving – removing barriers. Earlier, whenever these barriers were removed it was, you know, basically the Punjab traders and merchants who gained. Punjabis on both sides. In one sense, basically the India-Pakistan problem can be thought of as a problem of Punjabis – Punjabi Hindu, and Punjabi Sikhs in India and Punjabi Muslims in Pakistan. These are the guys who are quarreling and squabbling. I'm from safe place, near Goa. I have nothing to do with these guys, except I'm married to a Punjabi, so I am!

The point I think is that this is a Punjabi problem in many ways. The Pakistan army is a Punjabi-Muslim army. This is really a problem, because you have to understand the Punjabi-Muslim mindset. And I think Shuja would be far better at analyzing this than I could ever do, so I will not get into it, but to suggest that I think they take to anger very quickly. But equally, they are quick to respond well and in a very large-hearted way, as Punjabis tend to be, to gestures of the kind that say India can make. Therefore, I do not see at anything that's not eminently realizable. These are not airy-fairy views.

I think I am sufficiently in contact with the Pakistani members of the elite and the military to know that this can be done. But then the government of India has to take the first steps.

MR. NAWAZ: Maybe it'll be a Nixon going to China kind of moment so somebody from the Pakistan side – from the –

MR. KARNAD: No. I think –

MR. NAWAZ: -- Punjabi army that you describe will have to take the step.

MR. KARNAD: No, just one little thing. I think it is Atal Bihari Vajpayee who cut the ice. He is from BJP. So it'll be a BJP government, incidentally. Congress is not going to do it, because they're frightened to death of BJP beating them up on this issue. Even though they may want the same thing, lambasting at the polls saying, ah, you know, you're giving into Pakistan. But that's normal politics.

MR. NAWAZ: Yes.

MR. KARNAD: And therefore, it's not going to be a Congress party government; it's going to be a BJP government that's going to really cut the ice and get the process moving.

Q: I have a question at the end, Shuja.

Q: Hi. I'm Sajit Ghandi from the House Foreign Affairs committee.

MR. KARNAD: I'm sorry, I –

Q: Sajit Ghandi from the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

MR. KARNAD: Yes.

Q: My question is – thank you very much for your presentation. I think some of the ideas that you presented are very logical, great if we can move forward. But I wonder if you could talk about some of the challenges that have not allowed these types of concepts to work in the last, I would say, 10 years and then some of the challenges you see moving forward that might affect potential for progress.

MR. KARNAD: OK. The main thing, of course, is the terrorism, which I failed to address. That is a major problem.

In the past I maintained that instead of mobilizing field armies as we did in 2002 to no great effect, in response to some terrorist provocation, I said do a tit-for-tat kind of intelligence response to Pakistan. Well, Pakistanis claim already more tat than tit, you see, in terms of Baluchistan and this that and the other. I don't know about that. But let's just say that there is something there.

The point is, and I think Steve Cohen said this about Pakistan that it was like holding a gun cocked to its own head. To say, if you don't do this or the other, I'm going to blow myself up, you know, that's the situation.

In that sense, terrorism – the terrorist instrumentality that the Pakistan army has, perhaps, cultivated over the years is an excellent asymmetric tool, except that it's become something like the Frankensteinian monster. And I don't know how much the Pakistani army now controls it – maybe it does control it, which makes things far worse, actually. If not, then let's say there are certain elements -- the Taliban and the various Lashkars and all the radical Islamist elements in Pakistani society have taken wings. They have established their own networks; they have set up their funding streams and so on.

If India were to take – do a tit-for-tat, let's say, to weaken the Pakistani state further, it'd make things even graver as far as problems are concerned for India, because – you know, I always argued that if Pakistan had not existed, we'd have had to invent it. I've argued that Pakistan is really a buffer state for India in terms of the extremist Islamist virus moving into the area from wherever. And as far as I'm concerned, Pakistan is the buffer state for India – Pakistan has to deal with radical Islam first, the sort of Islam that's alien to the region Sub-continental, South Asian, Islam is syncretic Islam, Sufistic Islam. It's vastly different to the desert Islam of the Wahhabbi kind, whose excesses Pakistan is today suffering from, far more than is India.

So what do you do about it? If India were to react – as I used to earlier say we should react with, you know, a targeted intelligence counter op and so on – it weakens the Pakistani state even further, makes them less capable of dealing with Taliban threat. So,

India's in a no-win position. And yet, as a democracy with a democratically-elected government, the government feels compelled to do something when there's a 26/11 (Mumbai) or God forbid there's another such repeat somewhere else. Because a government that is seen to be doing nothing – and that's precisely the charge that is thrown at Manmohan Singh that he does nothing, then the Indian government will be compelled by pressure of public opinion, to order punitive action, which will be detrimental. If it doesn't take it, the Indian government's political position gets weakened. And as politicians they'd rather take the first option than the second one – for obvious reasons. They're going to face the electors. The next time around they'll say you're useless; you're weak. You are spineless. And I've been saying all these things again Manmohan Singh. And so you have a problem.

Therefore, I think it's much, much more difficult. And terrorism is the basic, basic problem. I don't know if anybody in India has given it thought, developed a solution or suggested how this can be tackled without weakening Pakistan.

MR. NAWAZ: Go ahead. Can you wait for the mike, Sajit? It's behind you.

Q: Sajit Ghandi – continued (Off mic) ...in the domestic political space in the next year or two for this sort of large initiative to occur or do you think it has to wait until the next election?

MR. KARNAD: I thought I said you would have to wait until the next election. I mean, we are making advances in the economic sphere and commerce and trade and so on. It's a good start. The gestures I'm talking about are far too significant for this government to make at this time.

Q: Thank you. I'm Nicholas Rostow from INSS.

I have two unrelated questions. First – and it's really a couple of questions related to the same topic. I'm an international lawyer so to a lawyer, the dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir strikes one as eminently suitable for the International Court of Justice, which neither side, as I've understood, has been interested in pursuing.

To what extent is that still true? Have you given it some thought? Would resolving a border help achieve your goal of seeing India less preoccupied with Pakistan? That's number one.

The second question is how does China's policy fit into your view of the future of India-Pakistan relations?

MR. KARNAD: The last issue first: I think China is the real mischief maker as far as India is concerned. And one of the reasons I argue that we need to have a different approach to Pakistan – quite apart from all the other reasons – is really to begin distancing Pakistan from China. Because otherwise, I think it's not just South Asia, but

more specifically Indian security and Indian and prospects for the future that will be deeply undermined or at least certainly hurt and weakened.

And I think that should be the larger objective, in some ways, to distance Islamabad from Beijing. Incentives of all kinds that India can offer Pakistan, which would be far more attractive than anything China can offer them. I know what the Pakistani military, a lot of them, think of China. No matter what they may say publicly about the Chinese being their all weather friends and so on, the reality on the ground is neither the Chinese believe it nor actually do the Pakistanis. So it's more practical kind of friendship, which is to say that Pakistan does not benefit from the Chinese link, with all the help and assistance, in terms of military hardware, a bit of political cover, offered by Beijing. But such help is remarkably well orchestrated to serve essentially China's interests, not Pakistan's.

So Pakistanis are not unaware of it; they're not stupid. They know what's happening, but they say what the heck. You know, we'll try to maximize our gains anyway as far as China is concerned — perfectly reasonable. So I think China is the real problem.

As far as the first one: No. There's no possibility whatsoever of the International Court of Justice coming into the picture.

Q: Sir, I am Brigadier Shafqat Asghar. And I am at the faculty of the College of International Security Affairs at National Defense University.

Basically, I was pleasantly surprised seeing the topic that rethinking India politics toward – policy towards Pakistan. I thought you were talking about Pakistan more than India and I was pleasantly happy and surprised on your emphasis and focus on Pakistan.

Anyway, just to further the question asked earlier about operationalizing the unilateral steps, which you have suggested which India should be taking, do you think the steps – the steps which I could gather – removing the Prithvis – the liquid-fuel Prithvis from the border, as well as reducing the strike corps from three to one. Do you think these steps – putting yourself in the Pakistani strategist's shoes – would be steps that are meaningful? Because as a student of strategy, I feel that maybe these can be lumped by the Pakistanis as a major of the effectiveness of Pakistan's nuclear deterrents. So how do you think – will it be meaningful?

MR. KARNAD: As I said, I really would allow Pakistan to build up to whatever they want. Keep all you want; not a problem at all. If you feel threatened, build up some more. This really is not a problem, because you don't pose any threat to us. Honestly, you can't sustain a war; you can't do anything. Honestly, that's the fact of life. We can go down and reason out why that's the case, but you know it as well as we do.

In the event, the question is: Do you want to maintain this confrontational posture or not? From your point of view, India's withdrawing its liquid-fuel Prithvis or

consolidating its strike corps into one corps establishment with a number of independent armored brigades, because that's the most our generals will allow under government pressure. Anything more – if you drastically want to reduce it actually to just one corps – you know, a two-corps establishment give up will be too much, they'll oppose it tooth and nail revolt. I mean, it's not going to happen.

When I say consolidated, you can maybe push them into saying, well, you know, give up your establishment strength. All the generals and colonels and brigadiers – all the staff positions that you've created – just give them up, you know? But you'll retain your operational edge in terms of tanks and your ICV/APC fleet and whatever. You'll have a more modern fleet, cut down on the mothballed fleet of tanks you have everywhere for no good purpose.

I'm under no illusion that that's going to immediately gain Pakistan's confidence. I don't expect it to. I thought I made it very clear. The point here is that you in your own time may wish to decide how much of your monies you want to spend on your armor or augmented armor and mechanized, that's your business.

The other thing –

Q: Brigadier Shafqat Asghar – continued: Basically, I would have said that Pakistanis would straight away consider the Pakistani – (off mic) – as a measure of whatever concessions you are suggesting. And that may – (off mic) – of the nuclear deterrent.

MR. KARNAD: Ah, OK. My problem with that is very simply, really. And it has nothing to do with Pakistan acquiring nuclear weapons. I wrote this before Pakistan formally acquired nuclear weapons, so I'm consistent. It's not something that I have said ex-post facto.

The point is if India did not – did not dismantle or does anything to territorially majorly hurt Pakistan – you might say in '71, yes. You broke up Pakistan; there's no argument there. But in terms of west Pakistan, which is – mainland Pakistan – you always considered East Pakistan was there but not quite Pakistan, India did nothing in all its so-called wars to dismantle – as many in Pakistan believe that India's intent on doing – because if some bloody-minded government in Delhi had actually decided, well, enough is enough. Let's really, whatever the cost, do away with Pakistan, honestly, couldn't it have been done? No, maybe not. But the point is, this is an arguable thing.

If you didn't use conventional military in the maximum terms, why do you think India would need nuclear weapons to destroy Pakistan? Where's the relevance of nuclear weapons as far as India is concerned? From the Pakistani point of view, fine, and that's it. I have no quarrel at all. But India, I don't think, ever needed nuclear weapons if the idea was to in some way destroy and finish off Pakistan. But that was never the case.

If you look at the – even 1971: The operational orders given by Manekshaw – please have a look at what operational orders were before you realize how restrained – I don't know the militaries – the government has been in terms of imposing restraints on the military. The government – Indira Gandhi's orders, direct battle orders – war orders to Manekshaw were to go into East Pakistan just enough to carve out a small piece of territory to install the government of free Bangladesh, wherein all the leaders who were in Calcutta from Bangladesh – East Pakistani leaders – and then have these people negotiate with Islamabad for a solution. That was the initial order, until “Tiger” Niazi did what he did, which was stretch out his forces thinly around the border, which you know, meant that breaching it was such an easy thing to do. It happened from so many points that the way to Dhaka opened up.

So if you consider the history of it you will discover – again, I don't mean to quarrel about this at all – and you can – you can rest assured that your views and the Pakistani views – I respect it in the sense that's what you believe. I don't mean to change your belief, but what I'm suggesting to you is nuclear weapons, as far as India's concerned in dealing with Pakistan, was not relevant. For Pakistan it may not be so. That's all.

MR. NAWAZ: Question there?

Q: Thank you very much. I am Iman Malik from INSS.

I wanted to have your take on the recent Strategic Partnership Agreement between India and Pakistan and how the policy of encirclement - the notion of encircling Pakistan - comes into play while pursuing the peace process with Pakistan.

MR. KARNAD: You want a strategic partnership with Pakistan?

Q: No, no. Strategic Partnership Agreement between India and Afghanistan.

MR. KARNAD: Afghanistan. Sorry. (Laughs.) I thought you had jumped the gun; that was wonderful.

Yeah. The Afghanistan thing – again, look, we have always had a presence in Afghanistan through the Northern Alliance. We have an outpost in Central Asia which we are going to build up in Anyi in Tajikistan. We are going to build it up; we are going to send a squadron of Su-30s out there. It's going to be there; they're going to build up. We may have an army contingent there as well.

The point I think is more China. And honestly, this is the China-Pakistan nexus. The fear of China-Pakistan nexus that's in a sense compelling us to revive the Ayni outpost and seek other access into, you know, in Central Asia.

So the strategic partnership with Afghanistan, then, in a sense is really putting a formal shape – giving a formal shape to the Karzai regime. And here I think the question

is what do you do with the regime in place in Kabul? Karzai has been a friend of India's. Equally, if you look at his rhetoric, he's a friend of Pakistan too. He said he'd come to Pakistan's help if Pakistan's attacked by the United States. I don't know whether that'll do it much good, but the point then is rhetorically it helps. It expresses his intent that he means well by Pakistan.

We have a tremendous development, funding effort going on. We are not convinced that leaving Afghanistan to itself would not bring in the Pakistanis to fill in the vacuum once Americans leave. And the majoritarian view – as I understand it – in the Indian government is that the strategic depth notion that Pakistanis are so fond of, for whatever it's worth, I think it's overstated. But nevertheless, India's presence in Afghanistan is mainly in terms of a possible operational military link-up between China and Pakistan in that part of the world, which is why we are taking these steps.

Of course, the other is we have to have stake and a role in Afghanistan. That's what the Indian government believes. We have to have a role in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is part of South Asia; India is part of South Asia as is Pakistan. A strategic partnership may suggest an enhanced role. It may be because we'll be training there; that's what the Karzai government's asked for it. And we have said – I was in a meeting where the foreign minister, S.M. Krishna, said that whatever is being offered by way of military assistance and help will be whatever it is that Kabul asks for, not in terms of what we want to give. It's up to Kabul to ask for assistance and the kind of assistance they want – whether it's training or anything else.

Q: Hi. Deborah Cagan from NDU.

You kind of stole my question, because I was going to ask about the concept of Afghanistan as a cordon sanitaire, you know, between India and Pakistan, because it's sort of – with a commitment that India made to pick up the training of the forces in 2014. And having talked to some of my Pakistani colleagues about that, that raised a lot of red flags.

But I'm going to change this slightly and go back to the nuclear piece for a second. I don't think there's been a single country that legitimately has had a serious nuclear doctrine since the '60s that involved tactical nuclear weapons. They're designed to make threats against your neighbors. I mean, the Russians put them back in Kaliningrad so that they can make the Baltic countries uncomfortable, because they have very short range and, you know, they're all part of this.

But – and Shuja, I mean, this is for you as well with this trackII process. Since short-range ballistic missiles are inherently destabilizing, because they're usually triple capable – you can put chemical or biological warheads on them; they're mobile, you can move them from place to place and that sort of thing – has or do you think the track-two process will deal with them specifically, not because they're liquid fuel, I think that's a different kind of destabilization, but will deal with them in a different way, just because

of the nature of the best – and take that part out of it? Because I think they're more of a – it's a terrorist weapon, if you will.

MR. KARNAD: I think you're right. I think in all my writings I've said that tactical nuclears are really redundant to India's security requirements. They're not necessary. But the point here is that the Pakistan doctrine, or at least in the SPD and those speaking on behalf of the Pakistani nuclear position, seem to be stressing the tactical nuclears, which then forces the Indian military and the Indian system to take them seriously, to take their protestations seriously, what they say seriously in terms of, yes, we have the tactical nukes and we're going to use them.

And whether or not it's used, that's not the point. The point is when, you know, as quasi-adversary – I really don't see Pakistan anything other than that at best – when you talk so much of tactical this, tactical that, then I think you create virtually a slipstream in which the Indian decision makers are fall into it and they have to react. Then the military says, well, what about tactical nuclears for us? They don't realize that 20 kiloton is at one end of tactical nuclear weapons range.

Q: Debra Cagan – continued: But I guess – and I'm on a different path that other people have heard me talk about, which is if Pakistan were to move in a direction of starting to unilaterally reduce those weapons, do you think there could be a quid-pro-quo from the United States on moving forward with some sort of nuclear arrangement with Pakistan over a long term that would bring more equality with India in terms of the nuclear supplier group and all those sorts of things that India has now gotten without being a member of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty?

MR. KARNAD: I think you should answer that in terms of America –

DR. LYNCH: Bharat - Shuja, Deborah and I have had this conversation a little bit. But I think, if can turn back to your point, your point about India being the ones to advance the agenda in helping Pakistan modernize, but modernize in a context – although not a new idea for your writings, I think is something that many of us in the room have not explored much, certainly not recently. And as we think about India and Pakistan dialogue modalities, I think this is a very refreshing way to think about it.

I mean, clearly, we Americans when you look at our policy approach from 2009 to 2010, attempted in the framework of a U.S.-Pakistan strategic dialogue to discuss this, but discuss how the U.S. might help advance Pakistan's nuclear programs in the context of U.S.-Pakistan, not in the context of equalizing what America had done with India. And I think in many ways that was unsatisfying to Pakistan. Unsatisfying and seeming to still perpetuate inequality.

But thinking about how the United States might quietly and with some effect help assist the idea of what India can do in this area I think is an alternative way of thinking about the problem. And perhaps one, Deborah, that you know, we should factor into our conversations going forward.

MR. NAWAZ: Deborah, you addressed the question to me too. And the discussions we've been having in the other track II on CBMs on nuclear issues actually addressed exactly the point you raised that short-range missiles are inherently destabilizing and can be used for other – delivery of other stuff other than just so-called tactical nuclear weapons.

There I do agree with Bharat that there is no such thing as a tactical nuclear weapon, especially for India-Pakistan where the proximity issue – you know, you don't have the U.S.-Soviet model where you had 20 minutes or more advanced warning. Between India and Pakistan you're talking of two to five minutes – not even enough time to pray. And the question is, the perception at least – and one doesn't know what goes on inside the minds of the thinkers on either side – but on the Pakistani side, quite clearly this was seen some kind of a checkmate to Cold Start, which was seen as an ability on India's part to put into effect a very rapid deployment from the border, capturing territory and making Pakistan sue for peace.

Bharat should probably take credit for launching that idea with his "Sialkot Grab" plan, which gained him a lot of notoriety and friends on the Pakistan side of the border. But it was seen as a checkmate to that, that you know, if you do come in with 3,500 tanks, we will use a tactical nuclear device. But this is like being half-pregnant. Once you've used a nuclear device, you've used a nuclear device.

Yes. So then the question is, you know, will the other side say, oh, that's just a tactical nuclear weapon?

DR. LYNCH: Having said that, though, I think it's important to not apply too much of the kind of logic of counterforce to the logic of the South Asia dynamic here. When one looks objectively at what's going on with the Pakistani nuclear arsenal in the last five to six years, one can only conclude that the march is towards a usable tactical weapon. And as Stephen Cohen and others have said, when one looks at the dynamic on the South Asia continent, there's frustration both in Delhi and in Islamabad about the interactions going back to the four crises and a peace process, right? That somehow Pakistan has never been able to get a decisive blow in against India, whether it be on Siachen Glacier or against other mass formations before this whole dynamic of outside intervention and diplomacy, U.S.-led, normally kind of arrests things. How delicious for those trying to build a credible threat, despite the instabilities involved, to be able to actually have something that could threaten massed Indian formations on the glacier or other areas?

And indeed, when looks and listens and then sees what's being built right now in terms of delivery systems, plutonium-based weapons, circular error probable accuracy increases and shorter-range missiles it's hard to not conclude that that's where the dynamic is being driven right now, irrespective of the instabilities.

MR. NAWAZ: OK. We have time for two quick questions. And I'll ask both of you to please give your question, and then we'll have one answer. So right next to each other here – Don.

Q: Thank you. Ambassador Don Bandler.

So we're looking here – I mean, it started as one or two small steps. I mean very important and good ones. And I appreciate all the work that you've put into this and I think it made a lot of sense.

So now – but we've talked now about India; we've talked about Pakistan, obviously. We've talked about Afghanistan. Are we going into the Middle East? I don't think so. But it does look like there's some – or let me put it this way, let me put it as a question: Is there the prospect of a group of countries who are willing – ready, willing and able to talk and to have conferences and to turn it into a new project?

MR. NAWAZ: Thank you.

Q: Thank you, sir. I'm – Lieutenant Colonel Amer Kayani from the Pakistan army. And I was not interested in asking a question, but because of the direction the discussion has already taken, probably it's always wise to seek some more information.

My question pertains to probably – maybe in addition to the same. But my question is that from 2001 to 2011, the last 10 years, whatever you have said about Indian policy, Pakistan has always reciprocated in a very big way. And if we actually go into the South Asian history, which you are very well aware than me, India has the role of an elder brother, which probably people over here in the Western Hemisphere do not understand. That once the elder shows some magnanimity, the younger one goes a step ahead. And that's what the actual South Asian context is. So whenever India has shown some good step, Pakistan has always reciprocated and I can prove and the house knows it.

My question is that whenever it is some brinksmanship between India and Pakistan, it is always the U.S., Russia – I would say it very candidly – that basically ensures that safety wall. Do you think there is a regional approach, supported by the third-party mediation, which the U.S. in the present scenario as an honest broker can do something with it?

MR. KARNAD: Yeah. No, I think a third-party rule is virtually ruled out. I don't think there's any possibility, remotely realizable, for a third party to step into any other South Asian conflicts – and not just India-Pakistan. So I don't see any possibility there.

About the elder brother stuff and so on, I think it was – I remember – (inaudible).

Q: (Off mic.)

MR. KARNAD: No. Anyway, he's the one who wrote, when he was head of the IRS or something in – (inaudible) – regional studies.

Q: (Off mic.)

MR. KARNAD: Well, no. You know, I'm blanking out. You know, one of those brain freezes that Governor Perry had the other day. (Laughter.)

MR. NAWAZ: Count to three. (Laughter.)

MR. KARNAD: Count to three. It's a memory freeze. But he wrote a monograph about this elder brother business. And I sort of – when he came to Delhi, I told him, General, you don't – you shouldn't always stress this.

MR. NAWAZ: Are you talking of Durrani?

MR. KARNAD: No. (Laughter.) The tall, balding, very tall Lieutenant General. It'll come to me.

I told the general, don't stress the familial aspect. It's the fact; it's the reality, but don't stress it, because if you turn the thing around a bit and India can use it to your disadvantage, I said, to Pakistan's disadvantage, how? If you accord that responsibility to the elder brother, and he had this kind of thing, then India can, within this context – familial context – say that you are disciplining the younger brother. See the problem? You get into – not into state-to-state relations. You get into a familial problem where you deal – how you deal with your younger brother at home is your business. It's not something that I would like the India-Pakistan relations to get into. I'd rather it be on very dispassionate, interstate, level because that's where it would be rooted more, shall we say, strongly, than if you harp on familial connections, because you get into emotion and sentiment and elder brother's responsibility, etc. Because, the elder brother can say, well, you're not behaving so I'm going to punch you in the ear. What do you say to that? This is what – and the General, very kindly conceded that I was right. Pakistanis shouldn't say that.

So I think it's just a matter of, you know, being sensitive while we're entirely aware of the social reality. And then to use this kind of illustration of a familial thing would be, I think, to the detriment of Pakistan. It doesn't matter to us; we are happy to play the elder brother, which many of you, you know, our neighbors claim we do anyway. So you are now putting a familial context. And this is an old thing; this is not something that you have thought of – all due respect to you. But this has been –

Q: I said even – (off mic).

MR. KARNAD: (Laughter.) No, yeah, yeah. But the point –

Q: (Off mic.)

MR. KARNAD: The point is I think these are two states. I'm post-partition. I know nothing about partition pathologies. I'm not infected by it; I'm not. One of my parents-in-law is from East Pakistan. My mother-in-law is from Dera Ghazi Khan. So you know, for them it's a suppurating wound even now. She's 92 years old, both of them, but I hear it all the time.

So I find it a little disconcerting. And they still think of Dera Ghazi Khan and Mianwali as their hometown and so on.

Q: (Off mic.)

MR. KARNAD: Yeah, but this is the problem. So I think we need to distance ourselves in the familial sense.

We are close as brothers; no question about it and no one doubts it. There are the social contacts and links that are continuing and vital and vigorous and existing. That said, I don't think then we should reduce it to familial terms for Pakistan's own interests.

MR. NAWAZ: The question about –

MR. KARNAD: Yeah.

MR. NAWAZ: Don's question about group. Is there a possibility of a group of countries reaching the same kind of understanding on –

MR. KARNAD: Ambassador, I did not understand the thrust of your question. I'm sorry.

Q: Ambassador Don Bandler - continued: The thrust was, you know, we started out here as India and Pakistan and it's broadened a bit. And in part, I mean, I think it would be interesting to see whether it is good or bad or indifferent about a band of groups. That's probably not the right way to put it, but India – China. I mean, China is huge – as we all know – and we haven't said much about it. I think it would be interesting around the table to see how China factors into, you know, are they trying to be into the region of the world that you're in? Where do they want to stop? Does China want to be a major player? If not, why not?

And Afghanistan – because Afghanistan, I mean, we've got – we've still got a running war with U.S. soldiers on the ground and so on and so forth – and Europe. So that's – so I'm trying to look at it now as a broader, rather than India-Pakistan. But you know, it can get itself very broad. I wonder if that's –

And the interesting thing to immediately broaden it to Iran and Saudi Arabia, when you look at reducing proliferation and the need for flow of commerce through Iran,

it immediately – to only talk about Pakistan’s western border, I think would be a bit shortsighted.

MR. KARNAD: Yeah. Ambassador, I think to broaden it to such a huge canvas, I’m not so sure how helpful it would be to resolve or set the India-Pakistan differences, and the peace process in this context, because then I think in a sense it dissipates the energy, because there are so many conflicts in the arc – West Asia-China is such a wide thing and there are so many conflicts and so many unresolved disputes to somehow – it’s like in physics, there’s one integrated theory. So that’s the thing that Abdus Salam actually his Nobel Prize for – unified theory. Now, if there is such a unified theory and there’s an analogy to peacemaking – I’m sure there is, but it is, you know, to my limited wisdom, I don’t see how it’s going to actually work – I’ve not given it thought, honestly, because I think there are far too many issues to tackle on such a broad canvas involving too many countries, too many disputes with each other and then, you know, then to solve any particular dispute in this canvas would perhaps be difficult. I don’t know; that’s my thought.

Q: My name’s Chad Swallow. I’m at the National Defense University. I would just say one short question, point: The Oslo Accords, when we look back – (off mic) – where we had a broad number of – (off mic) – you know, Russia behind and the U.S. – (off mic).

MR. KARNAD: Yeah, but Oslo – correct me if I’m wrong – but Oslo was basically a NATO-Warsaw Pact, an intra-European accord with Americans as a NATO – shall we say, chief NATO patron overseeing this thing? I mean, it’s not the same thing as that. There was certain block cohesion when you brought in Russia and the states dependent on it. You had the United States and the states dependent on it. That’s not the case in the extended region you are referring to.

It’s not the same thing as very disparate states are involved without an overarching organizing council like a NATO council or a Warsaw Pact council or something mediating, and able then to tackle each other’s problems at that level.

Q: Yeah. I take that point. But I think if you go back to – (off mic) – what you’re really talking about is Afghanistan-Pakistan now. And then bit by bit in this conversation, we talked about some other countries.

MR. KARNAD: I – OK, right. I take your point.

MR. NAWAZ: There may well be an opportunity to discuss the regional aspects of the India-Pakistan relationship. I think that’s what you’re referring to.

I’m sorry that we’ve run out of time, but I’m very grateful to all of you that have stayed beyond the appointed hour. And I’m especially grateful to Tom and his

colleagues for having supported this effort. And most grateful to Bharat for having agreed to come and speak on this extremely interesting topic and share his very provocative thoughts with us. And more power to him if he can convince people in Delhi

—

MR. KARNAD: With your help.

MR. NAWAZ: With our help – (laughter) – we will wage –

MR. KARNAD: I need all the help.

MR. NAWAZ: -- peace in the Subcontinent.

MR. KARNAD: Wonderful. Yes.

MR. NAWAZ: Thank you.

(END)