

Abstract 5. N. A. Salik- LNCV Workshop on South Asia,
September 26, 2005
Como, Italy

India-Pakistan Dialogue: Problems & Prospects

Brig Naeem Ahmad Salik, Arms Control & Disarmament Affairs Directorate,
Strategic Plan Division, Joint Staff Headquarters, Pakistan Army,
Rawalpindi, Pakistan

The long stalled India-Pakistan composite dialogue process, which resumed as a follow up to the Islamabad Declaration, issued after the summit meeting between President Musharraf and Prime Minister Vajpayee in January 2004, has completed two cycles and the third cycle is about to be completed. One of the segments of the dialogue pertaining to 'Peace and Security' has a direct relevance to the objective of achieving nuclear stability in the region since it involves deliberations between experts from the two countries to put in place requisite confidence building measures. These measures include CBMs related to nuclear and missile issues as well as CBMs related to conventional forces.

There have been three rounds of expert level talks since June 2004, the last one having concluded in August 2005. The pace has been rather slow and no major breakthroughs have been made but nevertheless some substantive and concrete results have been achieved. Both sides have yet to overcome the deep-seated suspicions of each other's intentions and are therefore more inclined to take small tentative steps rather than taking major initiatives. Another important factor, which has had some impact and will ultimately determine the pace of progress on various items included in the composite dialogue basket is the Kashmir dispute. Pending any movement towards the resolution of this issue the progress in other areas cannot continue indefinitely and will inevitably be overshadowed by it. The important thing however, is that despite these initial hiccups the process is moving forward and has not been derailed or distracted.

Given the time constraint it would only be possible to highlight the salients of the three rounds of expert level talks and glean through the Joint Statements issued at the end of each of these rounds. We could then be in a position to evaluate the importance of the agreements arrived at so far and their significance.

- The First Round - New Delhi - June 2004.
- The Second Round - Islamabad - December 2004.
- The Third Round - New Delhi - August 2005.

- Missile Flight Test Pre-notification Agreement.
- Establishment/Upgradation of Hotlines.
- Conventional CBMs.
- Future Prospects.