

massive. Cultural exchanges were numerous and events related to them well attended. The idea of a Latin American commonwealth, long in being, was gaining importance. And most importantly, a feeling that one could no longer go it alone in today's world provided a positive context for a rapid evolution of press and public opinion on the bilateral relationship.

Few actual events occurred to sustain this assertion. But it is a visible fact of the time that ideas of a common people with a common future were gaining ground enormously at the cost of previous geopolitical and nationalist opinion. It may be worth mentioning that the recent Peru-Ecuador settlement of 1995 was doubtless favoured by this same sort of element. A feeling of a common future ruined by the mind-set of nationalism was vital for moving the two countries to settlement of their centuries-old dispute. And in that context, press seminars bringing together journalists and showing them how in the past jingoistic stances had cost their countries dear were highly successful at bringing down temperatures and improving journalism in both countries. At the same time, meetings of historians of Peru and Ecuador to work on *common* themes, showing how one had done impressive things in the past together, took their toll as well on obscurantist nationalist views.

Given the entrenched positions of the parties involved, people-to-people contacts and cooperation may, in the final analysis, offer more hope of long-term progress than government-to-government activities. With the ruling elites in both New Delhi and Islamabad reluctant to take risks in order to break the diplomatic "log-jam", grass-roots movements may offer the greatest chance of success.<sup>22</sup> But patience would be the key here. As in Latin America, economic integration, if seen as a route to real economic progress, can not be excluded as a tool here, even if the road to doing so is bumpier.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is clear from all that has preceded that we are talking of two hugely different contexts and that the difficulties in drawing parallels between the nuclear situation in the Southern Cone of South America in the 1980s and early nineties and that of South Asia in the beginning of the new millennium are legion. Be that as it may, we have also seen many similarities as well and some thoughts have emerged.

It is not easy to reach any other conclusion than one that suggests that one state in each context has tended to be the crucial one in terms of what actually happens. The key state where South Asian nuclear proliferation is concerned is India. Pakistan's moves towards nuclear weapons have been squarely reactive to actions by India. The same, with *nuance*, can be said of Argentina in South America. That country had to take steps to move back from making effective its nuclear

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<sup>22</sup> Iftikhar Malik, book review, "Mending Fences: Confidence and Security-Building Measures in South Asia", in *Contemporary South Asia* 7(3), pp. 354-55.