



**STRATEGIC VISION**  
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VISIONARY INSIGHTS INTO THE STRATEGIC INQUESTS OF NATIONS

## SVI FORESIGHT

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 2  
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**Strategic Vision Institute**  
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**Strategic Vision Institute (SVI)**

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# Strategic Vision Institute (SVI)

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SVI aims to project strategic foresight on issues of national and international import through dispassionate, impartial and independent research, analyses and studies. The current spotlight of the SVI is on the national security, regional and international peace and stability, strategic studies, nuclear non- proliferation, arms control, and strategic stability, nuclear safety and security and energy studies.

## SVI Foresight

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*SVI Foresight* is a monthly electronic journal. It has a multi-disciplinary perspective highlighting on the contemporary strategic and security studies. The Journal is envisioned to be a collection of policy-oriented articles written by its Research Associates, Visiting Faculty and professional experts. The objective is to provide the readership with a concise all-round and real-time policy oriented discourse on contemporary strategic regional and international developments, highlighting their relevance to Pakistan.

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## *Editor's Note*

The SVI Foresight issue for the month of February brings to you all a compilation of analysis specifically related to the Nuclear Security Summit, Middle Eastern politics, Nuclear Threat Initiative report, Energy Security, and China's One Belt One Road Initiative.

The readers can find a unique narrative about the upcoming, fourth and final Nuclear Security Summit that has been analyzed in detail in one of the opinions in this volume where the high expectations from PM Nawaz Sharif representing Pakistan and possibility of gaining nuclear provisions have been weighed out. This prevailing hope in Pakistan owes to the satisfaction expressed by President Obama regarding the security and safety measures of Pakistan's nuclear assets. However it also gives an impression of a déjà vu where the same frenzy and excitement was witnessed before the previous Nuclear Security Summits without having achieved much out of those. It is suggested by the author that this time the Pakistani representation should be better prepared on the issues of "possible" Civil nuclear deal and should also take up the task of negotiations on "NSG membership".

Closely linked to this debate is another important dimension that has been addressed in another article which specifically talks about recently published Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) report. The report places Pakistan below India on the ranking chart. The author criticizes the report's findings by establishing concrete arguments regarding the clear track record of safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear assets. On the contrary, the facts show that Indian regulations for nuclear sites are written only as guidance rather than as binding requirements. India also lacks an independent regulatory agency even if it has vowed to establish one. Thus the report has clearly shown biases against Pakistan while India has been taken softly. Other than pointing out these biases, the author also suggests that internationally, there is an urgent need to develop a mechanism that can provide a process for sustained review and improvement of the nuclear security regime beyond 2016. This is crucial in an environment where the quantitative escalation of nuclear material and the threat of terrorism is on the rise.

A very interesting take on the growing asymmetric relationship in Nuclear South Asia has been analyzed in detail in a separate article. It talks about the distress in the regional environment caused by the recent launch of Indian nuclear capable ballistic missile – Prithvi II. Even though the test was reported to be a failed one but it added to the already tense environment of the region as it is believed that it has given India the ability to make its own mobile nuclear-capable ballistic missiles with enough range to hit major cities in Pakistan from within Indian territory.

Iran is another important story. After it has been found complying with the July 2015 accord and with the subsequent uplifting of the sanctions, its economic isolation has come to an end.

The US, Russia and China, all view Iran as an important instrument in furthering their economic and global aspirations, hence are actively engaging with Iran and its “un-utilized” economic resources. The evident normalization of relations with the West, owing to the signing of nuclear deal has also led to a number of Western corporations investing in Iranian market while seeking direct access to its oil and gas resources. Now whether the Russian-Iranian alignment of interest in Syria will face a setback in view of Iran’s re-engagement with the West is an important area which one of the opinions in this volume looks into. At the same time China is undertaking vigorous economic joint ventures with Iran as can be seen from the recent trade agreement worth 600 billion US dollars between the two. All these developments and the subsequent re-emergence of Iran on the global scene, shows Iran as an important actor in the international community of the states. Another article sheds light on how Iran’s re-entry into international politics is being taken by the other states especially the regional contenders (KSA) and the global aspirants (USA).

The ever growing tension between KSA and Iran is also an important issue that cannot be overlooked. An exclusive analysis has been presented in this volume about the potential for a possible mediating role that China could play to mitigate the friction between the two regional states. If China plays its cards wisely it may be able to keep the peace in Middle East intact as it has equally good relations with KSA. An excellent analysis of Pakistan’s possible line of action in the wake of Arab-Iranian tension can also be found in this volume. The KSA-led 32 nation coalition and the recently started North Thunder military exercises make it difficult for Pakistan to keep up with its previously adopted neutral approach towards Middle East, especially because Iran, Iraq and Syria are not part of these regional arrangements. After weighing all the pros and cons, the article suggests that Pakistan should continue to adopt impartial posture and avoid delving deeper into the highly murky Middle Eastern politics.

The energy security/politics is another important factor that is actively governing state’s policies today. Securing the alternate and cheaper energy resources is what KSA is aiming at, hence seeking nuclear energy option. An article in this volume closely looks at its quest to acquire nuclear energy resources and what possible repercussions KSA’s nuclear ambitions may have for the region.

One can also find a very useful debate about China’s One Belt One Road initiative and the number of geostrategic opportunities that China is eyeing through this strategy. The article suggests that OBOR is not just important for China but provides an excellent opportunity to the landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asian states to access the easiest trade route and claim their due share of economic benefits by exporting their goods to the international markets.

It is hoped that the issue will help readers in staying updated with the current political environment and will find the analyses useful. The SVI Foresight team invites and highly

encourages the contributions from the security and strategic community in form of opinion based short commentaries on contemporary political, security and strategic issues. Any suggestions for further improvement are welcome at our [contact address](#). Please see [here](#) the copy of SVI Foresight electronic journal. You can find us on [Face book](#) and can also access the SVI [website](#).

Senior Research Associate  
Syedah Sadia Kazmi

## ***West's Re-engagement with Iran: Will Russia be Sidelined?***

***Sidra Khan***

There exist a number of speculations regarding the lifting of sanctions and re-engagement of many western corporations investing in Iran creating a significant impact on Iran's relations with Russia. Different perspectives suggest that a resurgent Iran would contend with Russia as a significant exporter of oil and gas, which would compel Moscow to thwart Iran building up its oil and gas potential.

Be that as it may, any projection of Tehran-Moscow relations should be considered in larger canvas, particularly the role Iran is playing in Moscow's foreign strategy to concentrate all the more strongly on Asia. Moreover, taking into account that Russia has been one of the dynamic actors from the six other world powers' debating the nuclear terms with Tehran, it is therefore logical to accept that Moscow has been ensuring its interests in Iran and the Middle Eastern region.

It is a fact that Moscow has had a multifaceted strategic approach toward Iran's nuclear deal. Proceeding to the rise of President Hassan Rouhani's arrangement of engagement, Moscow utilized the Iranian card to secure special considerations from USA and its allies. However, Tehran's more appeasing approach towards West on many events has remarkably altered the strategic statement. The ensuing changes can likewise also clarify the remarkable state to state meetings between Tehran and Moscow during the past decade.

Russia's military presence in Syria which is astonishing to most experts as it shows Russia's geopolitical aspirations. Interestingly, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Moscow in many years chose to participate militarily outside of its alleged Near Abroad.

In any case, Russian air strikes were conceived a long time before, for no less than three months since the time that Qassem Soleimani, Iran's most effective officer and head of Quds Force who is in direct contact with Ayatollah Khamenei, was accounted to visit Moscow in July 2015. By reports, Soleimani's visits to Moscow and meeting with President Vladimir Putin was the initial step that prompted the vast Russian military presence in Syria.

To everyone's disbelief, Russia purposefully dishonored UN sanctions by organizing such questionable visit. It may be a case that Tehran demanded that only Soleimani should visit and meet Putin in person to talk about the Russian outlay in the Syria battle. Yet, what constrained the Russian president to acknowledge these dangerous terms from Iran?



Russia unmistakably has a great deal to lose if Iran recovers from its political and financial part in Eurasia once there are no confining measures set up. The Russian-Iranian marriage of comfort is liable to end once the two will begin to oppose each other on European and Asian energy markets. Iran is prepared to invest huge number of extra barrels of oil into the business sector, likely applying much more prominent descending pressure on the cost of oil.

Many Russian corporations have consented to various arrangements with Iranian firms from flight to farming over the previous year are liable to be sidelined by European and American organizations with more modern technology.

During various gatherings between Russian and Iranian authorities, including the ones happening along the sidelines of nuclear debate, Tehran was noticeably negotiating from relatively higher position. Iranians likely understood the apprehension of losing a geopolitical accomplice that was inching over Russian authorities and exploited it.

By sources in Russia, Soleimani's visit to Moscow was the final nail in progression of a number of meetings conducted before where Tehran proposed an arrangement that Moscow could not risk to refuse. The Iranian administration may have requested Moscow to participate in Syria in return for the progression of the Russia-Iran union in the occasion as sanctions were to be removed. As it was Putin who required assurances from Iran at a critical time for the Russian economy, he essentially couldn't refuse such a proposition.

While authorities present Russia's air movement in Syria as a cautious computation, it could only be an exchange, which is important to secure the nation's political and financial interest along the Middle East. Tehran's impact over Moscow whether to deliver its presence in the Syria crusade likewise clarifies why Iran rushed to give flyover rights to Russian Syria-bound payload planes when European nations shut its air space for Russians'.

But the question is still intact as to, why Russians took more than two months to dispatch its air campaign in Syria. The answer is the domestic political element in the United States. Russia was keeping its existence in Syria on low level as Iran nuclear deal was under rigorous scrutiny from the Republicans in the U.S. Senate.

Russia and Iran have intense history loaded with clashes that are established in both nations' aspirations of being a regional force. Many in Moscow trust that, once both states are not entwined by a common adversary, Iran without a doubt will begin its inclination toward the West and possibly a collaboration with United States against Russia. The belief in Moscow is that, if this truth be told happens, Russia might begin to lose its impact not only in the Middle East but also in the world.

<http://www.voiceofjournalists.com/wests-re-engagement-with-iran-will-russia-be-sidelined/>

## *Sino-Iran Growing Propinquity: Who Should Feel the Ripples?*

*S. Sadia Kazmi*

The recent trade agreement between Iran and China worth 600 billion US dollars has, on the one hand, given impetus to their bilateral relations but on the other it seems to have raised some concerns among the regional and global aspirants, chief among them are the US and KSA. It is only valid to probe into the question as to whether the West and the regional rival KSA feel threatened by the Sino-Iranian increasing closeness. If yes, is that even necessary and what possibly could be the reasons?

Some are speculating that the Chinese partnership over the next decade is going to give a massive economic boost to Iran in socio-political development and uplifting of Iranian infrastructure. It is believed that in a longer run the money will be used for the development of nuclear programme which may not be appreciated by both the West and KSA alike hence the partnership has a potential to shake the status quo in the Middle Eastern region.

However, the uplifting of sanctions and the Iranian nuclear deal itself points to the fact that the West doesn't perceive any concrete threats from Iran anymore as far as the nuclear ambitions of Iran are concerned. In fact, looking back in time, one may be able to recall that the US was the one to provide nuclear fuel and technology to Iran in 1970s with an aim to advance Dwight Eisenhower's "atom for peace" initiative, which in 1950s marked the beginning of Iranian nuclear programme. The fact is that under the key parameters of JCPA Iran has been barred from uranium enrichment for the next 15 years which may prolong its breakout threshold to one year or more from the present capacity of two to three months.

Simultaneously, the collectively imposed sanctions by UN, US and EU on Iran have been lifted only after IAEA found it satisfactorily abiding by the set conditions. Hence the influx of money cannot be readily used for the development of nuclear weapon; it may be put away or stored to be used later after 15 years, although will not be a very wise move by Iran but in which case there clearly is not any immediate threat to the West. One also cannot ignore the fact that Sino-Iranian bilateral relations have mostly remained steady most of the time and especially since past one decade where they both have been pursuing political, economic and defence linkages despite the sanctions. China has even been quoting Iran as its important strategic partner long before the sanctions were lifted. Iran is an important pivot in China's One Belt One Road strategy owing to its massive oil and gas resources.

As far as the West, specifically the US is concerned, none of this was ever a hidden secret. The US had well anticipated the implications of sanctions' relief and could very well

foresee Russia and China embracing Iran ever more warmly than before. Hence the Iranian nuclear deal and the subsequent developments are all part of a very well calculated and carefully thought out plan by the US policymakers. Interestingly enough it is not just China and Russia opening up to Iran but the European companies such as Shell and Peugeot etc are also seeking investment opportunities there. Germany has formally sent trade delegation to Tehran for this very purpose. So money was always the most expected future for Iran and the West may not necessarily be too worried by this since under IAEA rules, all the Iranian facilities are under the regular scrutiny.

However, this is not to suggest that there is nothing for the US to worry about. The signing of 17 accords between China and Iran on cooperation in nuclear energy and revival of ancient Silk Road route cannot go unnoticed by the West. The US has been able to forestall progress on Iranian nuclear programme but breaking away China and Iran was always recognised as the most daunting task and is not something easily achievable. To counter this kind of challenge the US has already been aggressively pursuing pivot to Asia policy with a sole aim of keeping a close check on China. In this policy India figures as an important fulcrum while in the Middle East the US' long time close ally KSA and its affiliates in the region provide an effective base. Another side to this picture is the possibility of China's robust attempt at Iranian military modernisation, much of which it has already contributed to. Nonetheless this puts a big question mark on the effectiveness of US pivot to Asia policy because by providing Iran with an anti access/area denial capabilities (A2/AD), China will indirectly be able to keep the US at bay. However, it is yet to be seen.

Talking strictly about regional dynamics and the concerns of KSA, one can safely assume with some level of certainty that military engagement between KSA and Iran was never quite a possibility even if Iran had continued with its nuclear programme. Now that the nuclear deal has opened regional and global opportunities for Iran where its resources will find global outreach, this fact could very well become a reason for KSA to feel alarmed since its prime objective of Iranian diplomatic isolation is being replaced by Iranian reemergence on the regional and global scene with much greater influence and relevance. This may incite the quest for regional hegemony but if China plays its card wisely, it may use the opportunity to act as a mediator since it has good ties with KSA as well and can keep the peace in Middle East intact. This could still be possible because in China's economic aspirations, KSA is not excluded. Ultimately a powerful and stable Iran is in the interest of the region. It may be a source of major threat to the status quo; however, it will not necessarily be a military one.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2016/02/14/comment/sino-iran-growing-proximity/>

## *The Arab-Iran Tensions and China's Efforts for a Political Solution*

*Nasurullah Mirza*

The current political crisis instigated through a violent mob storming into the Saudi Embassy and Consulate in Tehran and Mashad. Shortly, the diplomatic relations were cutoff between the two states and other Saudi allies in the region like UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait also disconnected their diplomatic interactions with Iran. The two sides approach demonstrates the less realization of the fact that any further escalation and the increased tension could seriously hamper the efforts for bringing resolutions to the venerable regional security issues including the civil war in the Yemen and Syria. Any further apprehension between the two sides would also involve a number of other countries that would support the agenda of their respective allies. Since, the two oil producing giants have apparently come up with strongly diverse views and policies where each side proclaiming to be actual leader and real representative and safeguards the interest of the faithful in the world. The efforts of the both sides to contain each portray the Cold War styled political and ideological containment of one another, particularly, the ambitions where each side trying to promote its respective ideological views and increase its influence in the region.

The constructive role by the partners and allies of the both sides including the international organizations and the United Nations is the need of the hour. Particularly, the political and economic rise of China empowers it eagerly play a greater role in the global political discourse particularly in the Middle East. Following the crises, China is struggling to dissuade the grounds of the tension and asks the two sides to exercise calm and defuse the tension between the two countries. China's relations with the Arab world and the Iran put it in a unique position to broker the peace process and bring up the constructive changes in the region, however, the United States and the Western powers need to assist China for assuming the responsibilities of defusing the tension and seek a political solution of the conflicts in the region.

China is mainly dependent on Saudi Arabia and Iran for its oil and energy needs, whereas, a conflict in the region is not in the interest of China. The growing uprising in China's Xinjiang region concern China about the intensification in the course of any regional sectarian clashes and the extremist ideologies. The communal violence and the growing radicalization cause unease to almost all including China, Central Asia and the Gulf region. However, China

has been a key security partner of many Arab countries but the partnership has unique characteristics that significantly distinguishes it from the partnership of the U.S. with the Arab world as China resolutely supports the establishment of the independent state of Palestine, its territories based on the 1967 borders whereas, the U.S. policies on the issue are contradictory to the interests of the Arab world. China is also the major source of foreign investment and trade with Iran, the ongoing civil war in Yemen and Syria and the growing threat of ISIL seriously affect the interests of both sides. The United States and the Russia are also critically concerned about the ongoing diplomatic crisis because such a situation would seriously deteriorate the international efforts to collectively strive against the growing threat of ISIL.

China's neutral approach and the bilateral relationship with each side does not allow it to form ties with on the expense of other side whereas, the United States has been deeply involved in terms of its associations with the Gulf Cooperation Council states. Despite, China is also engaged with Arab countries for its free trade negotiations that are underway between the China and the Gulf Cooperation Council that includes Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain. The political, economic and strategic alignment of China with Iran and the Arab world further increases the complexities of the current situation auxiliary the recent crises demands China to significantly play the role as close and trust partner of both sides by soothing the diplomatic crises and improving the political and economic environment along with the security and stability of the region.

<http://www.nepal24hours.com/the-arab-iran-tension-and-chinas-efforts-for-a-political-solution/>

## *The Middle Eastern Quagmire: How to Deal With it?*

*S. Sadia Kazmi*

Lately, the Middle Eastern region has been able to garner a lot of world attention where the KSA-Iran rivalry has become more obvious than ever before. It has always been considered important by the major powers owing to its abundant oil and gas resources. But the recent chain of events since last year has not only evoked worldwide responses, specifically from Russia and the US, but has also brought along direct implications for Pakistan.

For instance, the ongoing Yemen conflict presented Pakistan with some tough policy choices where it eventually decided to stay neutral. By opting impartiality, it had almost risked ruining its decades long understanding and trust that it shares with KSA. Nonetheless, with time it turned out to be the soundest diplomatic decision as it not only allowed Pakistan to pursue a balanced approach towards Iran and KSA but also helped it in safeguarding its own national security interests. However, in December last year, Pakistan had to deal with yet another surprise when a coalition of 34 Muslim states was formed by KSA to combat terrorism, with Pakistan's name already on the list. This time after a brief period of deliberations and some initial reluctance, Pakistan finally conceded to the arrangement.

For Pakistan the story doesn't just end here yet as January marked the hanging of Shiite religious scholar Sheikh Al Nimr in KSA, further making the Iranian-KSA relations to hit an all-time low. In a bid to keep the regional peace intact, Pakistani leadership played an instrumental role of a mediator by paying timely visits to both the states. Even though the tensions between KSA and Iran kept on mounting, Pakistan's conciliatory efforts have been widely acknowledged and appreciated. Similarly, last Sunday witnessed the gathering of 20 Arab and Muslim countries along with the Peninsula Shield (military wing of GCC) in the King Khalid military city of Hafr Al Batin, where the exercises are expected to continue till March 10. Once again Pakistan is participating.

These drills are creating a lot of hype for being the largest military exercises in the region's history, engaging the triad of military, air and naval forces. The main aim behind this mega display of power and strength is to collectively deter a potential enemy action. However, in an interesting turn of events, only two days ago the Pakistani Adviser on Foreign Affairs Mr Sartaj Aziz has been reported as saying that no formal agreement has yet been signed with the KSA regarding the previously formulated Saudi led 34-nation anti-terror coalition as the agenda behind the coalition still awaits clarification from KSA. Pakistan is also hoping to discuss Iran,

Iraq and Syria in the upcoming ministerial meeting with the Saudi counterparts as these states have clearly been missing in any of the aforementioned alliances.

Iran, on its part, has been quite vocal about resorting to aggressive retaliation against KSA if it sends anti-Assad forces to fight in Syria. Here one can notice that while KSA has been trying to loop Pakistan into regional politics by making it part of anti-terror coalition, the consequent security concerns of Iran provide a sufficient rationale for Pakistan to avoid an active involvement. At the same time, it clearly hints at the significance Pakistan carries for the regional players; however, the present political dynamics of the Middle Eastern region demand Pakistan to exercise utmost caution before it agrees to commit itself to any new engagement, especially when KSA's intended purpose to send troops to Syria could aggravate into violent clash with Iran.

Concurrently, the Iranian nuclear deal has made it reemerge as a major regional player with massive attraction for global actors. While the deal opened up diplomatic and economic opportunities for Iran, it also helps one understand as to why KSA is bent upon displaying its military strength through coalitions and military drills. The ongoing fight against Iran-backed Yemeni Houthis and now the likely ground troops in Syria are the steps aimed at maintaining and exerting its influence in the region. Ultimately it has started to look like an extension of ongoing proxies between KSA and Iran against each other with only a slightly different war theatre.

As far as Pakistan is concerned, by refusing to be part of Yemen conflict last year, it was able to send out a clear message to both KSA and Iran that it doesn't want to be dragged unnecessarily into the conflict that has sectarian undertones and could be a potential source of unrest back at home. The same policy needs to be continued today. While coalitions, military drills and exercises are indeed important to increase combat readiness and to identify weaknesses in the training and logistics framework but the provision of expertise, advice and training should not come at the cost of putting one's own security to jeopardy.

Presently, the military stance of Pakistan is quite clear and is endorsed by the civil leadership too. It has time and again reiterated that Pakistan stands with KSA in case of any threat to its territorial integrity, which presently is not at stake. Otherwise, Pakistan may spare its troops only for peaceful purposes under the UN auspices.

Jumping into the Middle Eastern fray could very well be suicidal as Pakistan is already neck deep into its struggle against domestic terrorist elements. Pakistan can't possibly fight a war on someone else's behalf when it really needs to first set its own house right. It is also interesting to note that the war on terror is being single handedly fought by Pakistan for over a decade now and no Muslim state offered to from coalition or extended help. No doubt they

assist Pakistan financially but this has also ended up into making Pakistan a proxy war theatre where more than 50,000 innocent people have been killed.

It is high time that Pakistan should learn some lessons from its past. The brunt of Afghan war, fought on behalf of the US back in late 1970s and 1980s are still being felt today in the form of extremism and militancy. Just for the sake of keeping good relations, Pakistan should not allow anyone to drag it into their personal troubles. Fixing others' problems while allowing our domestic issues grow out of control will render any type of efforts against terrorism fruitless.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2016/02/21/comment/the-middle-eastern-quagmire/>



## *KSA's Quest to Acquire Nuclear Energy and Implications for the Region*

### *Shahzadi Tooba*

Saudi Arabia officially started looking into nuclear power in 2006. Along with the other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) – Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman – the oil-rich nation led an investigation into the possibility of a nuclear power and desalination program.

Saudi Arabia is the world's largest producer of desalinated water, pumping out more than 3 million cubic meters of potable water each day. According to a report by MIT Technology Review, the country uses 1.5 million barrels of oil per day on water desalination. According to the World Nuclear Association, Saudi Arabia plans on building 16 nuclear power reactors over the next 20 years, with the first scheduled to come on line in 2022. The rapidly-industrializing desert country's rising population is creating an "insatiable demand for energy because all the water comes from desalination, and the desalination plants are huge consumers of electricity."

United Nations officials and nuclear arms analysts said the Saudi review reflected profound insecurities generated by the volatility in the Middle East, Riyadh's estrangement with Washington and the weakening of its reliance on the US nuclear umbrella.

Three options are considered why Saudi Arabia wanted to acquire the nuclear technology or how to tackle the situation in Middle East:

- To acquire a nuclear capability as a deterrent.
- To maintain or enter into an alliance with an existing nuclear power that would offer protection.
- To try to reach a regional agreement on having a nuclear-free Middle East.

The Saudis have a problem with energy security. Electricity needs have skyrocketed because of a combination of rising consumer and industrial demand and the country's increasing need for energy-guzzling water desalination.

Energy-intensive industrial development puts another strain on energy resources. Part of the country's growth—GDP rose by more than 4 percent in 2014—has come from the expansion of manufacturing activities. The Kingdom had more than 32 times as many factories in 2013 as in 1974, and its industrial spending over the same time period increased by 750 percent.

Another push of increasing demand is fresh water, which comes from desalination plants that require their own power stations. Desalination is more common in Saudi Arabia than in any other country in the region, providing 70 percent of the water used by Saudi cities. It is the country's only large-scale option: There are no permanent bodies of water in the country's interior and very little rain.

Although Saudi Arabia has a vast stock of hydrocarbons, the Saudis cannot simply satiate their energy demand with them, at least not for long. In theory, Saudi Arabia could burn its supplies and hope more are found. To a certain extent, this is the status quo; the country uses more than one fourth of its crude oil production domestically each year. But that strategy doesn't make economic sense.

Saudi Arabia relies on energy exports for 90 percent of its government revenue. Because Riyadh can get more for its oil abroad than at home, it shouldn't, and is trying not to, use fossil fuels domestically. With rising energy demand, energy diversity has become an ever-greater national priority.

There are challenges to have nuclear energy but Saudis have also worked it out.

It's expensive (costing \$4 billion to \$10 billion per reactor) but Saudi Arabia isn't just oil rich, it's cash rich.

Nuclear waste poses a technical challenge, but Saudi Arabia has tentatively identified suitable sites for disposal.

There is also the risk of meltdowns or terrorism, but the Saudis have staffed the King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy, an entire city dedicated to the cause, with qualified scientists and researchers working to reduce risks.

The key question stands: would Saudi Arabia use this nuclear energy technology to build nuclear weapons technology?

First and foremost Saudi worries about an Iranian program and to the absence of any international pressure on Israel, which has an estimated 200 nuclear devices. But the fact that it is prepared to contemplate the nuclear option.

Despite some chest-thumping, there is reason to believe Saudi Arabia wouldn't acquire the weapons. Saudi Arabia has signed a memorandum of understanding with the United States and committed to nonproliferation projects including the Proliferation Security Initiative, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. There is no hard evidence that the country is setting itself up for a military nuclear program.

Saudi Arabia doesn't even plan to have its full fleet of reactors operational until 2040, and its first reactor won't be online until 2022. That timeline leaves it decidedly behind Iran and makes a severe dent in any intentions the country might have to capitalize on the dual-use nature of nuclear energy technology. If the Saudis really want to go nuclear, they ought to speed up their first stages.

Essentially, Saudi Arabia is looking to diversify its energy mix so that it can devote more oil to exports. In fact, the Kingdom is so keen on saving its oil for export purposes that its goal is to generate almost half of its energy from renewable fuels by 2020. To maintain or enter into an alliance with an existing nuclear power that would offer protection is another option to come under nuclear umbrella of USA or Pakistan. To counter the deteriorated situation in Middle East, Arab countries urged the International Atomic Energy Authority, the UN nuclear watchdog, to get tough with Israel to let inspectors assess its nuclear program in line with similar pressure on Iran. So the sole purpose of Saudi Arabia to acquire the nuclear energy technology is just for the sake of nuclear energy and for instance it must be.

<http://foreignpolicynews.org/2016/02/21/ksas-quest-to-acquire-nuclear-energy-and-implications-for-the-region/>

## *China Steeping in Middle East Tsunami*

*Sidra Khan*

At beginning of 2016, Chinese President Xi Jinping, visited Middle East at a time when the relations between Saudi Arabian led Sunni states and Shiite Iran were touching a low point in recent history. The execution of the influential Shiite minister Sheik Nimr al-Nimr, who was the leading voice of Shiite minority in Saudi Arabia, and the consequent worsening relations between few Middle Eastern Sunni nations and Shiite Iran came especially at a bad time for Xi. His visit to Middle East had many stops at various Sunni states like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Meeting with Sunni heads of states at a time when there was an open rift between Sunnis with Shiite Iran risked creating a feeling that China gave importance to one branch of Islam leaving the other in dismay. Such a gesture can greatly undermine Beijing's policy of non-interference and staunch lack of bias in the Middle East. A similar visit again in a year could be detrimental to China's neutral image.

Ever since President Xi has taken the presidency he has visited every continent of the world leaving only Middle East. The same fact applied to Premier Li Keqiang. In spring 2015, China canceled a similar visit due to Saudi-driven military crusade in Yemen against the Houthis. Another postponement would have flagged regional spoilers as they can undoubtedly meddle with China's Middle East strategy. Rather, Xi chose to utilize this crisis of the Muslim world as a chance to project the China's new Middle East policy, one that also includes China not just playing outside but rather diving right in the Middle East's tsunami.

It has been a bustling couple of weeks for Beijing's Middle Eastern strategy. Before al-Nimr execution, Xi, looked for courses for China to infuse itself into the Syrian civil war, welcoming both the Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem and also the leader of the rebels, the Syrian National Coalition (SNC), in Beijing with an end goal to advance peaceful and diplomatic solution. This considerably implies Chinese takeoff from the already set notion of supporting Bashar al-Assad as the legitimate head of Syria.

Beijing on 13 January announced its Arab Policy Paper, an ambiguous yet fundamental manuscript articulating Chinese interest in the Middle Eastern region. President Xi, sent off his Deputy Foreign Minister Zhang Ming after the scouring of the Saudi embassy in Tehran to meet the Iranian and Saudi counterparts, encouraging them to practice restraint and clam. Xi likewise

revised his travel agenda, supplementing his arranged visit to the UAE with a sudden stop in Tehran. This way he was the first pioneer to set foot in Iran since the lifting of long sanctions.

For equalization, he brought the Saudis a relief by announcing to back Yemen's administration to power, which the Saudis support in the war against Iran's intermediary.

Such a hyperactive diplomatic gesture might shock those acclimated to Chinese inclination to maintain a strategic distance from interventionism. Skeptics might say that these are all strategic moves intended to secure prime chances of trade and commerce for China on both sides. There might be little truth to this. Be that as it may, it would be wrong to ignore Chinese most recent moves in Middle East to be immaculate for monetary advantage.

Understanding that the Middle East is too essential to be ignored and dumped for other powers, China today is no more to sit on the periphery and let Middle East plummet into mayhem. China for a while has been doubtful regarding USA where elections are to be held along with the low supply of household oil and gas, will not be inspired to save Middle East as it has been for the past half century. In fact, USA relations with Iran and KSA are excessively prickly, making it impossible for USA to become a legit deal broker.

More significantly, Russia has set out the banner of Middle East impartiality that it conveyed for the major portion of the post-Soviet period. Moscow once enchanted and had great relations with Tehran and Riyadh. Nevertheless, diving into civil war of Syria, Russia in spite of the fact that a large portion of its Muslim populace is Sunni, trapped itself with the Shiite camp, and can never again be trusted by the Sunnis. With both USA and Russia not ready to keep regional harmony and bring balance along Iran and Saudi Arabia, China, which has strong relations with both, is progressively enticed to fill the growing vacuum.

There are a few reasons why the Sunni-Shiite partition is of specific worry to China. As the Middle East is home to a substantial part of the world's biggest oil reserves, the Persian Gulf area is imperative to the Chinese economy. While the world at present is getting exceptionally low cost oil, this could undoubtedly change if the contention between Sunnis and Shiites kept on rising.

Shiites might be a minority in the Muslim world overall, however in the oil-rich Persian Gulf they contain a dominant part. In the event that Iran and Saudi Arabia and its Sunni associates get to be entangled in a territorial war including physical harm to oil companies infrastructure, the crude oil price would touch the roof which is not only harmful for China but also for world economy. However, with half of China's unrefined imports originating from the Persian Gulf, such an emergency would cost China much more than any other state economy.

Winston Churchill stated, “The cost of greatness is responsibility.” As the Chinese are walking towards greatness it also needs to prepare to pay that cost in the Middle East which, will soon be tested.

[www.voiceofjournalists.com/china-steeping-in-middle-easts-tsunami/](http://www.voiceofjournalists.com/china-steeping-in-middle-easts-tsunami/)

## ***NTI's 2016 Nuclear Security Index Report***

***Beenish Altaf***

After encountering the frenzy and blazing debates on the repercussions of 2012 and 2014 NTI reports, the year is again open to the same heated arguments once again. Being a national of the South Asian country where the matter of nuclear security always remained an important issue, this article is an attempt to analyse the 2016 NTI Nuclear Security Index.

Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) founded by US Senator Sam Nunn and CNN Founder, Ted Turner, works to strengthen global security by reducing the unauthorized and accidental use of nuclear weapons, preventing the spread of biological, chemical, radiological, and nuclear weapons. In addition, the NTI also assesses and evaluates the safety at nuclear facilities worldwide.

### **Worldwide Theft/Sabotage Ranking**

The NTI 2016 Nuclear Security Index ranks 25 countries that possess “one kilogram or more of weapons-usable nuclear materials.” Both India and Pakistan fall into this category. In Asia, while China is ranked 20<sup>th</sup>, India and Pakistan are placed 23rd and 22nd in the index out of the 24 states with weapons-usable nuclear materials. Japan occupies the 13th position but has moved up 6 places from 2012 NTI ranking. The top position has been retained by Australia. Among the nuclear weapons states, France is placed at the 7th position, United Kingdom and United States occupy the 11th position.

The third edition of the NTI Report released in January 2016 is prepared in collaboration with the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). This year's report has a new addition to the index that is the sabotage ranking, which reviews the nuclear security environment in 45 countries based on potential sabotage risks. The theft ranking and sabotage ranking scores assesses the contribution of 24 states across five broad categories (1) Quantities and Sites, (2) Security and Control Measures, (3) Global Norms, (4) Domestic Commitments and Capacity, and (5) Risk Environment.

The table below depicts the country-wise ranking in the 2016 NTI reports and the change from the 2012 NTI Report.



## The Nuclear Security Summit Process

The fourth and final gathering of the world leaders for Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) is planned for March 31 – April 1, 2016 in Washington D.C. The 2016 Washington NSS will culminate the series of three summits held in Washington, DC (2010), Seoul (2012), and at The Hague (2014). All the three summits tried to draw attention to the threat of nuclear sabotage, security of facilities and sites, safety of fissile materials including while in transportation and nuclear terrorism and establish a mechanism to enforce the countries to take stronger measures to prevent nuclear terrorism.

Speaking about the NSS process, NTI Co-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Sam Nunn stated, “President Obama launched the summit process and he and his team as well as a host of committed world leaders, deserve credit for their achievements so far ... and the work is not complete, however, and a plan to sustain high-level political attention on nuclear security must be a top priority at the Summit in Washington DC.” This statement creates an impression that the process of NSS has to go beyond the Obama Administration. However, there is no authentic information in the public domain as of yet whether the NSS process is likely to continue.



Likewise the NTI President Joan Rohlfing said “The current global nuclear security system has dangerous gaps that prevent it from being truly comprehensive and effective ... Until those gaps are closed, terrorists will seek to exploit them. Leaders must commit to a path forward when they meet this spring. The consequences of inaction in the face of new and evolving threats are simply too great.” Rohlfing’s statement too reflects the desire to continue the NSS process beyond the 2016 NSS Summit.

It is pertinent to mention here that even though nuclear security is solely the sovereign right of a state, many countries should take the collective and mutually agreed steps to guarantee safety and security against the existing global threats. By and large, the NSS outcomes cannot be expected as a binding legal instrument and its operating mechanism are political in nature unless the states have signed the conventions. This situation creates an imperative to continue the NSS process beyond 2016 Washington DC summit .

### **Spotting Pakistan**

Although Pakistan is one rank ahead of India in the NTI 2016 rankings, it still falls in the bottom of ranking for theft of nuclear weapon use-able material. The current NTI Index admits that Pakistan passed new cyber security regulations but it argues that the process of progress was too diminutive to upgrade its score. This is of course a subjective assessment that ignores their own statistics as given in the table. Pakistan is taking steps to update its nuclear security regulations and to implement nuclear security best practices.

The NTI Report mentions that Pakistan’s improvement is primarily due to an “increased score for on-site physical protection resulting from new laws and regulations requiring licensees to provide physical protection to nuclear sites and on-site reviews of security.” Regarding the on-site physical protection the report mentions that “Pakistan, improved its score by three points compared with 2012, and demonstrated the largest improvement by any nuclear-armed state.” It is also pertinent to mention here that Pakistan has well-designed, skilled and committed nuclear security force approx 30,000 in number, which is geared to provide security, control and physical protection of its nuclear facilities and materials during transportation.

Despite deteriorating law and order situation in Pakistan not a single event of nuclear facility or radiological material’s theft has been reported so far which is commendable indeed. However, there is always a room for improvement and Pakistan needs to be vigilant to take measures to further improve the safety and security of its sensitive facilities to further improve its ranking in future.

<http://isssp.in/ntis-2016-nuclear-security-index-report/>

## *Nuclearized déjà vu*

*Maimuna Ashraf*

Any communication activity between two states hints towards significant developments, although such activities are usually complex and multifaceted than it appears. Accordingly, despite the international presence of the state in a particular country, through its embassies and diplomatic connections, working meetings between states representatives or official visits between premiers can be observed regularly. Notwithstanding technicalities involved, negotiations on bilateral level are usually exhibited as an expression of diplomatic relations or to incorporate specific terms and conditions. Therefore, the spectrum of two countries relations largely depends on the agenda and quality of such talks. This context hints towards a number of such meetings took place between Pakistan and US, while few more are slated.

At the end of last year, Pakistan's PM visit followed by the visit of Army Chief Gen. Raheel Sharif generated an impression that something is afoot because the media houses were already buzzing with debates surrounding the Western proposals for Pakistan's nuclear mainstreaming. Various reports asserted that the US will be exploring a nuclear deal with Pakistan in order to put limits on its nuclear program. However the all time prevailing tragedy of US-Pakistan relations is that despite Islamabad has stepped up counter terrorism actions and safety-security measures for its nuclear program, as suggested by US, but the perception in Washington has in reality not changed. Earlier this year, Peter Lavoy, a veteran intelligence and Pakistan expert who is reported to be leading the talks on the American side, bluntly catalogued the American concerns. Moderating a discussion in the US with Khalid Kidwai, the founding director of the Strategic Plans Division, Lavoy said of the Nasr, the so-called battlefield nuke: "We (the US) moved away from them (short-range nuclear-armed missiles) ultimately because of concerns about the intermingling of conventional forces and nuclear weapons in a battlefield theatre. And one of the concerns is that this actually makes nuclear war more likely, rather than less likely, having these capabilities." After this the idea to normalize nuclear Pakistan in international nuclear order, after restricting its nuclear program to weapons and delivery systems, came into the limelight more strongly by David Ignatius. An initial Pakistani rejoinder to the American overtures came via a National Command Authority meeting in September, 2015, ten days after US Secretary of State Susan Rice visited Pakistan to formally invite Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to the White House and firm up an agenda for the talks. The response conveyed 'Yes, we're interested in a deal, but forget about your terms'. The reiteration in the ISPR press release of "the national resolve to maintain 'Full Spectrum Deterrence Capability'" was an explicit rejection of the so-called brackets, limits on extremely

short range and very long range missiles, the American proposals are based on. The events revealed that although matters are calm at surface but agitated underneath.

Yet again the current-affairs platforms are thrilled with the announcement that Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will represent Pakistan at a nuclear summit in March this year when the outgoing Obama administration would try to reach some understanding with recognized and unrecognized nuclear states to control proliferation. The NSS process has been President Obama's flagship initiative since his first term when he underlined security of nuclear materials as a priority of his administration. Since then Nuclear Security Summits have taken place in 2010, 2012 and 2014. This will be the fourth and final summit as President Obama completes his final term this year. The summit meeting will discuss the future of the nuclear security summit process and will determine pathways to secure and build on the achievements of the whole process.

Earlier this week, Pakistan attended a preparatory meeting for the summit in San Francisco. Foreign Secretary Aizaz Chaudhry and Ambassador Jalil Abbas Jilani represented Pakistan at the meeting. The United States, yet again, has been very appreciative of Pakistan's participation in these meetings and has periodically recognized Pakistan's active engagement with global community on the issue of nuclear security. It is not the first time that US has officially shown satisfaction over security of Pakistan's nuclear program. Previously, Pakistan's Former Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani attended 2010 and 2012 summits (Nawaz Sharif attended the last summit in The Hague in 2014). The Prime Minister Gilani also held bilateral meetings with President Barack Obama and other world leaders on the sidelines of the Nuclear Security Summit. Ahead of that summit, President Obama had voiced confidence in the safety of Pakistani strategic assets, yet later the various concerns appeared with stressed relations between both states.

Evidently, it has become an oft repeated cliché that before visits or summits, an official statement to appreciate Pakistan's nuclear program flashes in media but later concerns with proposals surfaces after covert get-together. Consequently, eyebrows have been raised by the many over the recent announcement of PM's visit to attend NSS as it hints at the possibility of dialogue over Pakistan's nuclear program during the visit. The question thus arises are we expecting someone from US before NSS to negotiate on terms related to any possible civil nuclear deal or Pakistan's membership to NSG? Are we ready to represent our stance besides our representation on NSS?

<http://epaper.pakobserver.net/201602/19/comments-2.php>

## *Renewable Energy in Pakistan: In Assistance with Sun and China*

### *Shahazdi Tooba*

Pakistan's parliament is now the first parliament in the world to be completely powered by solar energy. Chinese government provided the assistance in supporting the solar project. The solar panels in the house generate 80 MW of electricity, 62 MW of which are consumed by the National Assembly and 18 MW are contributed to the national grid.

The first 'Net Metering' license in the country was also issued to the National Assembly by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority. A Net Metering system helps in delivering and adding surplus production of energy to the national grid. The project is also environment friendly because it reduces emissions of hazardous gases.

The solar project was launched by Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif during the former's visit to Pakistan last year. Even though the Israeli parliament also generates its own solar power but only 10 pc of its energy needs are met through solar electricity.

Another big project was The Quaid-e -Azam Solar Park. The first 100 MW project was owned 100% by the Quaid e Azam Solar Power Pvt. Ltd, 100% owned by the Government of Punjab. The project was purely in IPP mode and the financing was obtained from a local bank the Bank of Punjab. The turnkey contractor for the project is TBEA Xinjiang Sun Oasis Co. Ltd. The installation of the plant was completed within a record time of 3 months (Nov 2014 to Jan 2015), and it is currently under testing and commissioning.

The 100 MW solar power plant consists of the PV area and a 100 MVA substation. The electrical output is being connected to a 132kV transmission line that runs through the Solar Park. Currently the transmission line has a capacity of up to 400 MW and the utility company is in the process of upgrading its capacity to 1,000 MW.

The project started generating 100 MW of power in April 2015 and 1,000 MW by the end of 2016. The project comprises 400,000 solar panels and was built for a cost of about \$131 million. Once completed, the project will generate more than the current 550 MW installed capacity in the Topaz Solar Farm and the Desert Sunlight Solar Farm in California. The project's expected completion in 2016 would make it the largest photovoltaic power station.

The government has invited investors to invest here for the balance 900 megawatts, in which several local and international companies will establish projects. Several domestic and international investors have been granted LOIs to start the process of establishment of solar plants on IPP (independent power producer) basis.

The Government of Pakistan announced a new upfront feed in tariff for solar power plants in January 2015, where the investors will be able to sell electricity to the national grid at between 14 to 15 US cents per kWh. The announcement of this tariff and the completion of the first 100 MW at Bahawalpur has caused a great interest on the part of investors.

Pakistan aims to reduce its reliance on hydrocarbons, especially imported coal, oil and gas, to around 60 per cent by 2025 from the present 87pc. The country has a target to produce 10pc of its total energy mix from renewable sources (excluding hydro-power, which already constitutes 15pc of the total energy mix). The current generation from renewable energy is around 1-2pc.

While Pakistan contributes less than 1pc to global Green House Gas (GHG) output, the country's carbon emissions are growing by 3.9pc a year. Climatologist Qamar-uz-Zaman Chaudhry, the UN secretary general's special advisor for Asia with the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) said that "by 2020 it will spew out 650 million tonnes of Co2e (carbon dioxide equivalent) if the current trend continues.

Meanwhile an energy conservation bill has been presented in parliament day before yesterday, and that bill got severe criticism. One of the reasonable view was "On the face of it, it's a good initiative, but, it seems the government is only interested in the passage of the bill rather than its actual objective."

<http://foreignpolicynews.org/2016/02/27/renewable-energy-in-pakistan-in-assistance-with-sun-and-china/>

## *Forthcoming Nuclear Security Summit and Pakistan*

*Maimuna Ashraf*

The fourth and most likely the final Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) has been slated for March 31-April 1, 2016 in Washington, D.C. The NSS process has been President Obama's flagship initiative since his first term when he underlined security of nuclear materials as a priority of his administration in Prague speech of April 5, 2009. He initiated an international effort to secure all vulnerable nuclear material around the globe within four years. This ambitious goal was not fully achieved by March 2014; however, the NSS process has observed few successes. Since Prague speech, three Nuclear Security Summits have taken place so far- Washington in 2010, Seoul 2012 and The Hague in 2014. This will be fourth and concluding summit as President Obama completes his final term this year. The NSS process has survived two presidential terms and will become part of President Obama's legacy.

The forthcoming summit meeting will discuss future of nuclear security summit process and will determine pathways to secure and build on achievements of whole process. It will continue discussions on the evolving (nuclear terrorism) threats and highlight steps that can be taken together to minimize the use of highly-enriched uranium, secure vulnerable materials, counter nuclear smuggling and deter, detect, and disrupt attempts at nuclear terrorism. Albeit, terrorism is an international phenomenon and the prevailing global security landscape is characterized by instability, volatility, and the reshaping of geopolitical and geostrategic order due to both traditional and other emerging challenges and threats. Terrorism that has long been evolved and recognized as a serious domestic and international security threat, is capable of instigating a systematic crisis at the global level. The contemporary trend in terrorism is towards loosely organized, self-financed, international networks of terrorists that are usually religiously or ideologically motivated. Notwithstanding several threats to international security, looming over the entire issue of international terrorism is the specter of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

The concluding NSS is likely to take place in a differently characterized international strategic environment. The emergent global nuclear order being shaped is focusing on a greater role for India's nuclear weapon status, transfer of nuclear technology and materials especially uranium, and behind the door hectic diplomatic pressure by the United States to convert India's NSG waiver into a full-fledged membership. Government of Pakistan is being subjected to the renewed pressure to freeze its nuclear weapon and ballistic missile capabilities in an internationally shifting political and geostrategic alignment dividing the West and India on one side of the global polarization while Russia and China on the other. The unstated rationale for

Pakistan's discrimination is due to its unique position in the Muslim world facing the increasing specter of terrorism.

Correspondingly, in the recent Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) report, Pakistan has been placed at the bottom in ranking for nuclear weapon usable material. To put the records straight, this criterion ignores Pakistan's stellar role in for on-site physical protection, control and accounting procedure, and physical security during transportation. Interestingly, it is difficult to empirically measure how effective material control is unless theft, pilferage or sabotage is reported. Not a single such incident has ever been reported in Pakistan. Contrary, Indian regulations for nuclear sites are written as guidance rather than as binding requirements. Additionally, India lacks an independent regulatory agency even if it has vowed to establish one. Thus the report has clearly shown biases against Pakistan while India has been taken softly.

Conversely, Pakistan has played an active role in international nuclear security summits. Islamabad has accepted US president Barack Obama's proposal for securing all vulnerable materials within four years (i.e. by 2014). Several safety and security measures have been put in place as part of this commitment. Pakistan acceded to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. But it has refused to endorse the Convention's 2005 amendments because the original articles covered nuclear material in international transport; the amendments sought to extend it to nuclear facilities and to material in peaceful domestic use and storage. The recent statement of NCA, that carried a reference of deep satisfaction to our national nuclear safety and security measures and another regarding the NSS process for which NCA members were briefed, hints toward Pakistan's commitment to nuclear security. The statement reads; 'NCA noted with satisfaction that Pakistan has the requisite credentials that entitle it to become part of all multi-lateral export control regimes, including the NSG, for which Pakistan seeks adoption of a non-discriminatory approach. Pakistan was considering ratification of the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (Amended), for which NCA gave approval in principle for its ratification'. That is a pitch repeated in 2014 and has echoed in the NCA most recent meeting.

In the same vein, Pakistan has repeatedly reiterated its stance that we have revisited our safety parameters, emergency preparedness and response, and operators' training and yet again these measures should be recounted in the upcoming international platforms. However, Pakistan maintains, which it should, that nuclear security within a state is a national responsibility because then the fundamental responsibility lies at the state. It is difficult that third party can be asked to come and access them, irrespective of their national or international obligation. Nonetheless Pakistan has lost nothing by joining these summits but gained, thus as a responsible nuclear state, Pakistan will continue to contribute meaningfully towards the global

efforts to improve nuclear security and nuclear non-proliferation measures. However, internationally, there is an urgent need to develop a mechanism that can provide a process for sustained review and improvement of the nuclear security regime beyond 2016. This is crucial in an environment where an increasing amount of nuclear material and the terrorism threat is escalating.

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/29022016-forthcoming-nuclear-security-summit-and-pakistan-oped/>



## *One Belt One Road: A Ride through the Well Connected Region*

*Nasurullah Brohi*

The One-Belt One-Road initiative has significantly comes up with the manifold opportunities enabling China to connect with the rest of the region through the railway and road networks. Particularly, in the aftermath of lifting sanctions from Iran, the cargo train started the ride transporting the business good from the Yiwu town of eastern China to Bandar Abbas in Iran and arrived on the 15 February 2016.

China's One Road, One Belt policy is the firm commitment towards creating better opportunities for the economic progress and the development in the region. The project effectively connects more than 60 countries and furthermore, the project prospectively includes the construction of the road network that connects the Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar through the BCIM-Economic Corridor and eventually links with the Silk Road, and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Moreover, the projects like Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road aim to employ the augmented efforts for the development strategies and link the Asia with Europe and the African countries intimately and endorse the objectives of mutual economic gains through the beneficial cooperation.

Similarly, the vigorous Pakistan-China joint venture of building road and railway network aims at connecting the Pakistani port city of Gwadar with China's Xinjiang province through the mega project of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The purpose here is the better utilization of the trade and investment opportunities in the course of the improved mechanism of regional connectivity. This project efficiently hooks up the entire region by virtually shaping the trend for mammoth affluence of and significantly, making possible a closer interaction opportunity between the people of the region. As frequently anticipated, the CPEC project is going to become one of the most essential land routes for world's emerging economy. In addition, the Gwadar endows China with an impending naval pedestal in the vicinity of the oil supplies of the Gulf. Recently, during the regulators' summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), it was asserted that besides China's economic restructuring phase some emerging markets witness a retard in terms of trade. The fundamentals of the global economy remain strong predominantly due to the factors of new global trade initiatives such as China's Belt and Road initiative that significantly open new avenues for the regional investment.

The all-embracing gamut of the cooperation often foreseen through the CPEC would profoundly contribute in the fields of energy, transportation and the infrastructure developments of Pakistan. The transformation of the previously sluggishly moving economy of Pakistan will involuntarily bring insightful prosperity to the lives of common people. The

economic importance of the CPEC has also colossal intimidations and despite the looming campaigns against the CPEC, Pakistan and China have strongly been vowing with the firmness to meet any challenge and bring the long cherished dream into the reality. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is precisely being termed as a game changer for the whole region. The trade and transportation route from Kashgar to Gwadar is the benign opportunity for the landlocked Afghanistan and other Central Asian countries to access the easiest trade route and claim their due share of economic benefits by exporting their goods to the international markets.

<http://foreignpolicynews.org/2016/02/29/one-belt-one-road-a-ride-through-the-well-connected-region/>

## *Indian Ballistic Missile: Indicator of Distress*

*Beenish Altaf*

The growing asymmetric relationship in nuclear South Asia is once again distressed by the recent launch of Indian nuclear capable ballistic missile. On February 15th 2016, India's military had fired an indigenous Prithvi-II missile from a mobile launcher.

Fundamentally just to remain in a state of conflict and tense environment India continues to exercise its proactive strategy of pre-emption in or the other way. The recent test although reported to be a failed one, was just an adding factor to it rather being a new modification in its ballistic missile factory. Assertively the missile was just a randomly chosen missile from the production stockpile of Indian missiles.

Paradoxically narrating, this is not the first test of the Prithvi-II missile that has a range of over 200 miles according to Economic Times and over 150 miles according to the Arms Control Association. Contrarily, the missile entered service in the Indian military in 2003 whose was first test-launched was in 1996. It has experienced test failures in the 2011 missile test-launch, while the missile used in this recent test also did not hit its intended target even though it reached its intended distance and altitude.

The fact the Indian military has had even mixed success in firing an apparently randomly selected Prithvi-II from a mobile launcher suggests that the country really has developed a semi-reliable nuclear delivery system that it can indigenously produce.

It is believed by the Indian lobby that Prithvi II has given India the ability to make its own mobile nuclear-capable ballistic missiles with a far-enough range to hit major city in Pakistan from inside Indian territory.

There is also an international distress and apprehensions over Indian development of Prithvi class of missiles. The US discouraged India reportedly, many times, against the mounting aspirations of Prithvi missile build up, throughout the 1990s. Washington is understandably nervous about the appearance of encouraging strategic weapons proliferation, and one of the rationales of the 2008 nuclear treaty was to give the US additional leverage over the development of India's program.

The Prithvi II takes in the tensions of India's nuclear weapons program. On the one hand, Delhi seeks to a position of global leadership that a markedly irresponsible nuclear weapons program would arguably undermine. At the same time, India needs to keep up its

deterrent capability against its primary strategic opponents China and Pakistan, for which it remains in the state of enhancing and improving its nuclear capabilities all the time.

Since India is diplomatically less isolated owing to fact that India's nuclear program has been semi-recognized through its landmark 2008 nuclear treaty with the United States and the fact that the country has developed nuclear weapons outside of the NPT makes it highly unlikely that an outside country would provide Delhi with a strategic delivery system nonetheless it got the capability of producing road-mobile missiles capable of hitting its neighboring adversaries.

In the recent NCA meeting it has been said the world's focus has been on Pakistan's reaction instead of Indian provocations. Actually, "the developments exacerbate Pakistan's security dilemma, compelling it to make desirable improvements to achieve a balance and minimal developments in its conventional and strategic force posture." The NCA reiterated its policy of maintaining Full Spectrum Deterrence for covering the entire spectrum of threat, including Cold Start Doctrine and land-based standoff capability in Andaman and Nicobar Isles.

Pakistani nuclear establishment proclaims that the developing regional dynamics inflict Pakistan to convert credible minimum deterrence into full spectrum credible minimum deterrence. While India is developing its short range ballistic missiles, inter-continental ballistic missiles and anti-missile program, Pakistan is focusing on its short-range and medium-range ballistic missiles with improved payloads, range, and reliability. The previous versions of Shaheen III could not reach India's eastern front but latest launch test has ended this limitation and consequently, the launch of Shaheen III is of prominent significance because it consolidates Pakistan's strategic deterrence in evolving regional scenario.

These Indian ballistic missile defense capabilities and its nuclear doctrinal transformations that are at its full pace of development, has indulged Pakistan in miniaturization of warheads. Lately the sea-based nuclear developments and evolving prospects of India building the top secret thermonuclear weapons, that could upgrade India as a nuclear power and unsettle Pakistan, will persuade Pakistan to maintain its full spectrum credible minimum deterrence capability to deter all forms of belligerence.

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/29022016-indian-ballistic-missile-indicator-of-distress-oped/>