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Strategic Vision Institute (SVI)

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Strategic Vision Institute (SVI)

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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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Decoupling of Its Nuclear Doctrine Reveals How India's Ambitions Are Destabilizing South Asia

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Editor's Note

Recently the true nature of India's no-first-use (NFU) nuclear policy has been exposed by an established Indian scholar Vipin Narang. The NFU posture was critically questioned and credible source was quoted to establish the fact that India has all the intentions to resort to the first use against Pakistan in order to completely disarm it of its nuclear weapons. This disclosure made in a statement issued by him at the conference on Nuclear Policy hosted by Washington's Carnegie Endowment, cannot be taken lightly. Not only does it reflect on the rethinking of nuclear policy on part of the Indian strategists but also shows how non-credible the long espoused so called political rhetoric by the Indian government could actually be. The provocative element in the Indian approach has come to the fore. It is ironic that this very NFU stance made India won accolades by the West despite the now proven valid apprehensions of Pakistan. The fact that the policy has been exposed as sham by an Indian himself only confirms Pakistan's prudent awareness of future possibilities and warrants a closer scrutiny of the implications of such a development. While Pakistan should now be exonerated for its declared and justified first-use policy, there is also a need to have a more rigorous narrative development by the Pakistani strategists on the rationale of its nuclear policy. Hence most of the opinions included in this volume attempt to evaluate, analyze, and unveil the limitations specifically in the Indian NFU standpoint and in the Indian nuclear policy in general, by highlighting Vipin Narang disclosure.

A very insightful analytical commentary talks about India's doctrinal duplicity and maintains that the unrestrained behavior of India has always prompted a reaction from Pakistan. It is for the same reason that recently Pakistan headed for the sea-base deterrent. The deviousness is apparent wherein India is revisiting its approach towards Pakistan but maintaining the no first use vis a vis China. Now that India ambitions to disarm Pakistan, it only means that India intends to build more nuclear weapons, with enhanced and more sophisticated technologies, ballistic missile defense, a shift away from recessed and de-mated deterrent postures, multiple independently-targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs), and expansion of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities. Another article while

addressing the same issue brings in a new assessment about the viability of this approach, maintaining that banishing the no first use policy is not a coherent outlook as practically it is not possible for India to eliminate all the nuclear arsenals of Pakistan. This is especially due to lack of sufficient capability to locate the hidden, mobile and dispersed delivery systems of Pakistan across the landmass and at the sea. Moreover; nuclear first use make no sense for India as deterrence stability in South Asia is combination of three nuclear weapon states; India, Pakistan and China. Hence despite revising nuclear doctrine it would not be possible for India to launch a preemptive counterforce strike against Pakistan. In yet another analytical commentary included in this volume it has been suggested that the first strike makes little sense, especially when the opponents have already acquired the second strike capability. Nonetheless if it does become a reality then it would be necessary for Pakistan to quantitatively and qualitatively develop the nuclear arsenals like ballistic missiles and MIRVs to maintain credible deterrence and ensure the survivability of its nuclear capabilities. The readers are bound to come across an incisive and intelligent debate on this subject.

The ever increasing cooperation between Israel and India is another serious matter that has been discussed at length in this volume. The latest defence deal between the two states has opened prospects of more defence cooperation between them. The \$ 2.5 billion deal caters to building the missiles and regiments. For India, Israel has always been a major provider of high technology. Recently, India has taken various initiatives to further improve its strategic relations with US, Israel and Japan. By improving these ties, it is aiming to aggressively pursue its ambitions in broader Asia, South Asia and Indian Ocean regions generally and particularly, against its two neighbors China and Pakistan. The author in the article while highlighting various reasons behind the close cooperation between the two states mentions that India aims to maintain qualitative and quantitative defence superiority and wants to play a dominant role in South Asia. The aspect of further widening of conventional and non-conventional irregularities between Pakistan and India has also been discussed. Another article exclusively looks at the emanating threat to peace in the Indian Ocean mainly due to its nuclearization initiated by India. The writer aptly identifies the challenges as: militarization, increased missile capabilities, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and power projection by foreign militaries, in

addition to piracy, illegal fishing, human, drugs and arms smuggling, maritime pollution and climate change. In wake of such developments, it is imperative to keep an eye on Indian hegemonic designs while the international community should recognize it as their collective responsibility to maintain the security of the region.

The month of March has been of great importance for Pakistan since it elevated its status at the global level owing to the 13th ECO Summit that was held in Islamabad. Attended by ten different countries, despite the recent wave of terrorism, is in itself is a great achievement. Additionally the outcome of the Summit in the form of “Islamabad Declaration and Vision 2025” shows a unanimous understanding on part of all the participant states to expand trade and prosperity among them. The theme coincides with the aims and objectives of CPEC and hence one of the articles looks at the ECO summit within the context of CPEC as the Chinese representation ensures that the regional connectivity is quite a tangible proposal which will be further supplemented and made plausible through the CPEC. Another article critically analyzes the areas which were glaringly overlooked during the summit and suggests measures how to address them effectively.

Other themes included in this volume highlights significant issues of peace prospects in Afghanistan, the escalation of missile rivalry between Pakistan and India, geo-economic importance of Central Asian states, Pakistan-Russia alliance, and North Korea’s ICBMs as a source of trouble for Trump administration.

It is hoped that the issue will help readers in staying updated with the current political environment and they 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 improvements 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](#).

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Syedah Sadia Kazmi

Nuclearization of Indian Ocean: Pakistan's Perspective

Beenish Altaf

The emanating threat to peace of Indian Ocean is mainly due to the nuclearization initiated by Indians. Out of which, the chief elements or the challenges to peace in the ocean that could be counted among are listed as its militarization, increased missile capabilities, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and power projection by foreign militaries, in addition to piracy, illegal fishing, human, drugs and arms smuggling, maritime pollution and climate change.

The Indian Ocean, geo-strategically is present at the world's most fundamental part. It is the third largest oceanic division of the world and commands strategically important sea lanes of communication (SLOCs) that link the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia with Europe, East Asia, and the US. Around 80 percent of the world's energy trade passes through the choke points of this region.

Pakistan is concerned with the alarming modernization of India's exasperated capabilities with regards to its missile and nuclear weapons. It would be pertinent to mention here that with the demonstration of the test launch of the K-4 submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) on March 31, 2016, India's movement towards fielding an undersea deterrent is well taken. It was an indigenously built nuclear-powered submarine, the INS Arihant.

Due to the India's 'unrestrained behavior', it became necessary for Pakistan to take a step forward towards a sea-based deterrent. Therefore, for this reason, Pakistan decided over an equivalent measure and successfully test-fired a nuclear-capable submarine-launched cruise missile, Babur-III on January 9, 2017, that is considered a compelled step.

Foreign Affairs Adviser Sartaj Aziz while speaking at an international forum in Pakistan said that this trend is likely to intensify in the coming years. And that "we are aware of our national interests and every effort will be made to strengthen our capacity to ensure that we remain ready to meet the emerging maritime security challenges. For us, to remain oblivious of the developments taking place in the Indian Ocean region is not an option."

A statement issued by the Foreign Office states, "The reported Indian tests of a submarine-launched ballistic missile and development of a nuclear submarine fleet are serious developments, which impact the delicate strategic balance in the region. It has resulted in the nuclearization of the Indian Ocean." India wants to exercise its supremacy in the whole region by its nuclearization of Indian Ocean. It will certainly exacerbate the already fragile strategic balance in South Asia.

There is another concern gaining hype nowadays regarding the un-demarcated borders in the Sir Creek. Pakistan has to be more careful about defending its borders, land or sea routes because if the communication link with the vessel is disrupted, it could prove to be extremely risky. Consequently, a good amount of naval pressure is necessary to keep our sea lanes open and safe. Nevertheless, the Sir Creek border issue has a potential to cast a shadow on the maritime security.

Projection of military and nuclear power into the seas will grip the region into an arms race and inevitably place it at the risk of a nuclear showdown. Mr. Aziz said that the Indian navy's substantial expansion was a cause for concern for Pakistan and that Pakistan has a strategic stake in the peaceful navigation and security of the Indian Ocean region.

The Indian Ocean region is being taken with a sense of war whereas it is not all about war it has a potential of economic growth as well. It is a catalyst for peace and prosperity, cooperation, collaboration, connectivity, regional stability, and security. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Zakaullah emphasized the substantial role being played by the Pakistan Navy in the sustenance of peace and stability in the Indian Ocean region that operationalization of the CPEC and the Gwadar Port would lead to an exponential increase in maritime activities of the country's coast. "Consequently, responsibilities of Pakistan Navy for maintaining a secure maritime environment will also increase manifold. The Recent establishment of the Task Force-88 is also a step forward in this regard."

Ironically, India is heading day by day towards boosting massively its missile, conventional and unconventional capabilities. Pakistan has declared its intention of highlighting the dangerous implications of India's plans to nuclearize the Indian Ocean at all relevant international for a through a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Last but not the least; India is playing a dangerous game in pursuit of achieving the status of a great power and regional hegemony. As a result, it is the collective responsibility of all the involving states to share the burden to maintain security in the region keeping and acknowledging it as a common goal.

<http://www.indrastra.com/2017/03/OPINION-Nuclearization-of-Indian-Ocean-A-Pakistan-s-Perspective-003-03-2017-0017.html>

ECO Summit: Lost Opportunities?

Babar Khan Bozdar

The 13th ECO summit was held in March 2017 in Islamabad, wherein six heads of state, one prime minister and two deputy prime ministers and an ambassador attended the summit under the theme of “connectivity for regional prosperity” to maximize trade and partnership among member states and promote peace, prosperity and development.

In the opening session PM Nawaz Sharif said that ECO’s Platform will be beneficial in major areas of trade, transport and energy, all areas where Pakistan would benefit from an uptick. It will strengthen Pakistan position and importance in Global politics.

ECO was set up by ten member states a decade ago to promote regional trade and cooperation among the Muslim countries. The member countries include Pakistan, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Afghanistan. Member states agreed to increase trade and cooperation but it failed to bring meaningful gains. The reason behind this is that, the trade among the member states in 2001 was \$750 million dollars, but it largely decreased to \$536 million in 2002. Apart from that, ECO is the leading organization of 16 percent world population, but it only generates two percent of global trade, while a number of developments occurred in this summit including trade and commerce, strengthen relations and support to their cause on different forums.

The major share holders were Iran, Afghanistan and Turkey but, Afghanistan once again has shown hostility toward Pakistan as Pakistan is holding an important summit and Afghan president refused to attend. The possible reason might be red-signal from India. Apart from that border grievances with Pakistan and recent wave of terrorism in neighboring country were the part of agenda. Thus it was very difficult for Afghanistan to justify its position and assure full cooperation. Therefore, Kabul diplomacy thought his presence unpleasant, while they are more comfortable with India.

The main focus of ECO is to promote peace and trade among the block but the fact is that the footprints of terrorism in Pakistan are to be found in Afghanistan. More over Pak-Afghan relations are on the verge of fluctuation. In this regard, ECO summit couldn’t be more significant on global level. It is also reported that the trade draft of ECO is still not ratified by member countries which has yet to be signed after ratification. Without ratification of trade agreement and till its successful implementation, there would be no such meaningful progress in trade and commerce, while number of fields has been identified to increase trade but they failed to develop interest on the platform of ECO.

The organizational structure is not well. The ECO Summit takes place once every five years; annual meetings are to be required for this emerging trading bloc to bear any significant influence but there is no such proper arrangement. Despite US pressure, TAPI and Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline have not yet materialized because member states lost their interest. Similarly there is trust deficit among Kabul, Islamabad and recently nuclear resurgent Tehran. Thus, it is very important to fill this gap for the achievement of organizational goals.

The sad and sour reality is that Afghanistan lost a historic opportunity of diplomatic dialogue and bridge-building while without Afghanistan assurance it would be difficult to maintain peace and stability, because it an important player and strategically more significant. Moreover, regional connectivity and peace on the platform of CPEC and ECO would be challenging without Afghanistan's cooperation. Similarly, Ashraf Ghani's absence is not in the favor of ECO and the region, it will undermine the credibility of organization.

Islamabad understands that 21st century is the era of peace, prosperity and economic development and there is shift in policies. The real promise and potential for our 21st century lies in an economically resurgent Asia as earlier EU was?

The theme of summit was "Connectivity for regional prosperity" because CPEC is opening a new market for central Asian countries, which create a plethora of opportunities and regional stability as a whole can only be enhanced by facilitation of trade route and economic cooperation. Hence, ECO is the platform to share mutual benefits and maintain regional stability.

The recent summit will strengthen Pakistan's position on regional and extra-regional level. Islamabad showed the world that neither it would be contained nor isolated. The summit has breached Delhi's dream of containment. The ECO Vision 2025 and the Islamabad Declaration grandly talk about unhindered economic zones, coordinated manageability, information sharing and connectivity. These are remarkable ambitions which need strong commitment and interest from member states.

As long as peace is concerned, opposition expressed their concerns over the exclusion of Kashmir in just concluded ECO summit. The joint discussion mentioned other regional conflicts such as 'Nagorno' and yet it didn't mention Kashmir a core regional dispute. Moreover, Government failed to convince ECO members to support Pakistan's instance over Kashmir in United Nation in near future.

The cultivation of ECO's vision by member states looks fabulous on paper, but the time is ripe to turn paper declarations into living breathing socio-economic regional realities. This is an outstanding opportunity to move from words to exercises and from shape to substance.

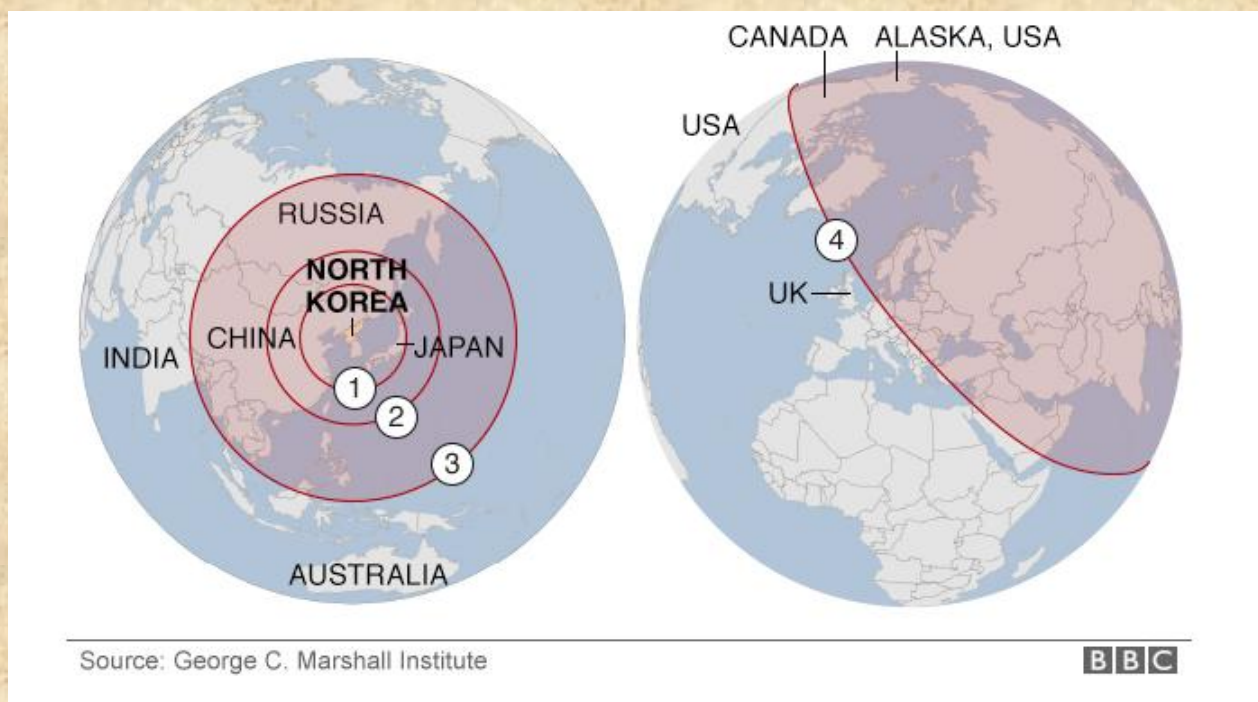
<http://www.eurasiareview.com/13032017-eco-summit-lost-opportunities-oped/>

North Korea's ICBMs: A Challenge to Trump Administration

Saima Ali

Nukes of North Korea are a matter of concern for South Korea, Japan and the US. Pyongyang has been testing ballistic missiles for the past few years, stepping up its frequency recently. In 2016, North Korea carried out two nuclear tests and several missile launches prompted international outrage. Many arms control experts believe that, by 2020, North Korea could have the capability to launch a miniaturized nuclear device on an ICBM, with the range to strike at least the West Coast.

It might even have that capability now as North Korea fired, according to South Korean and Japanese officials, four ballistic missiles on 6th March, 2017, into the sea off Japan's northwest days after it promised retaliation over US-South Korea military drills it sees as a preparation for war.



North Korea's nuclear issue is the Trump's first and foremost foreign policy challenge. A nuclear North Korea presents a direct threat to the United States and could punch a hole in the U.S. nuclear umbrella in Asia: Japan and South Korea. According to South Korea's military, Pyongyang's missiles can reach the United States.

Just as North Korea tested Barack Obama administration after he took office by undertaking missile and nuclear tests in 2009, Kim tested the new administration in Washington for a second time by simultaneously launching four ballistic missiles, which Pyongyang claims can be mounted with nuclear warheads. The missiles flew on average 1,000 km and reached a height of 260 km.

Subsequently, tensions on the Korean peninsula have heightened especially after Pyongyang carried out a series of ballistic missile tests soon after US President Donald Trump took office. In a New Year's Day speech, Mr. Kim said his country had reached a "final stage" in preparing to conduct its first test of an ICBM. That drew a Twitter post the next day from Mr. Trump that said, "It won't happen!" he rejected Pyongyang's capability to hit the US mainland with a missile mounted on a nuclear warhead. North Korea has since warned that it could test-launch an ICBM "anytime and anywhere," in its first challenge to the new American president.

Adding fuel to the fire, the US and South Korea instead to negotiate with North Korea, conduct large-scale joint military exercises every year. This is also the reason why North Korea feels insecure and acts in a provocative manner. According to the Yonhap News Agency, the US-South Korea annual joint drill, codenamed "Foal Eagle," (which has been condemned by the North as a "rehearsal for invasion") consist of 10,000 US troops, US aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson and 290,000 South Korean troops, and will continue until the end of April. In 2016 and 2015, North Korea also launched several missiles and rockets to retaliate for the "Foal Eagle" annual drills.

As expected North Korea's ICBMs are strongly condemned by the UN Security Council along Japan, South Korea and US. The UN Security Council has imposed a number of tough sanctions, but North Korea remains undeterred by international rebukes. Every time new sanctions are imposed, Pyongyang has responded by accelerating its weapons development programs through testing numerous land-based and submarine-launched ballistic missiles.

Even China threatened suspending coal imports from North Korea for the rest of the year in response to the test. Even if Beijing did enforce comprehensive sanctions, Kim would respond by doubling down on his nuclear weapons program. Targeted sanctions can slow proliferation somewhat, but wholesale sanctions designed to change North Korea's calculus have never worked and never will.

From Kim's stand point, possession of nuclear weapons is the only deterrence to its security, and this survival strategy is unlikely to change. One can hope that sooner or later, the US would have to acknowledge North Korea's nuclear status and abandon pursuits of other options, such as regime change; as such a course would involve huge financial costs to China, Japan, Russia, South Korea, and the US.

Trump would find his hand clipped, giving a leeway to Pyongyang to continue its nuclear program, if he seeks more sanctions on North Korea. If Washington acts now by imposing harsh new economic sanctions or undertaking preemptive military strikes are not the right approach to deal with the dangerous situation. But neither option would end well.

The option of imposing sanctions will further insecure Kim's administration leading to towards the completion of a nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missile. If the United States unilaterally bombed North Korea, its alliance with the South might be the first casualty. None of the alternatives to a deal—doing nothing (waiting for North Korea to collapse), doing too little (relying on China to impose sanctions), or doing too much (starting a second Korean War)—holds any promise for success.

It is now right time that Trump has to seek means to engage in serious diplomatic negotiations with it. Otherwise Trump presidency, North Korea's nuclear and missile development would remain a critical issue. In order to convince Kim to freeze or at least slowdown the development of North Korea's nuclear weapons and the missiles that carry them, Washington will need to design a package of security guarantees and political incentives, along with the practical means to verify Kim's compliance.

Trump could offer to scale back or suspend U.S.–South Korean military exercises and delay the deployment of new U.S. military assets to the Korean Peninsula. As long as the diplomacy moved forward, the United States should safely postpone these military moves.

Looking back the pages of recent history, in January 2016, a few days after North Korea's fourth nuclear test, Trump said of Kim: "This guy doesn't play games, and we can't play games with him, because he really does have missiles, and he really does have nukes." Trump was right. Like it or not, North Korea's nukes are a reality. The United States needs a new strategy for dealing with Kim—and Trump is well placed to deliver it.

<https://www.voj.news/north-koreas-icbms-a-challenge-to-trump-administration/>

Apprehensions About Iran's Ballistic Missile Program

Asma Khalid

The mere possibility of new contender for world leadership in the form of China, maybe in the distant future, has exacerbated geopolitical realignments in the international system. These alignments are primarily from regional to international. International politics has never been and will never be on linear progression at any given time. There always have been and will be countries dissatisfied with the dominant order. During the Cold War, the opposing world orders were structured on an ideological basis. These ideological divisions held sway on relations among the states in the last decade of the 20th century. The ideology that will primarily drive relations among states in the 21st century is none other but that related to economics.

Pakistan and the Russian Federation started rapprochement in the 21st century towards establishing meaningful bilateral relations after decades of troubled relations. Pakistan and the former Soviet Union — to that of Russia as a successor state — were poles apart with respect to international and regional politics during the Cold War. Factors like 9/11, the economic rise of China, the American presence in Afghanistan and terrorism resulted in bringing both states together and narrowing the gaps about regional outlooks that both states followed. Though Russia initially welcomed the American-led attack on Afghanistan, but over period grew wary about prolonged presence of Western forces.

Pakistan and Russia after conducting naval exercises for the curbing of drug trafficking moved to joint counterterrorism exercises between ground forces. Both these exercises sent strong political tremors, rather than just marking the dawn of an era for military collaboration. The reaction from India about Pakistan-Russia counterterrorism exercises showed the hypocrisy that India attaches to regional counterterrorism collaboration. Instead of welcoming such cooperation, India showed reservations.

Pakistan-USA relations remained a strong base when Pakistan and Russia were on opposing sides and now that same bilateral relation has been bringing both countries together. Regional instability will enhance the areas of convergence between the two countries along with presence of China as a positive enabler. Pakistan and Russia now seem to be having a convergence of interest when it comes to peace in Afghanistan. For Pakistan, the Afghan-led reconciliation process for enduring peace and political stability by bringing all political forces, including Afghan Taliban, on term with each other is a primary objective. Russia is concerned about possibility of ISIS having ranks and safe havens in Afghanistan. The fear of fighters who have gone from Central Asian states to fight under the banner of the terrorist organization ISIS gaining an advantage to destabilize Afghanistan has made Russia to show an increased interest in South Asia.

The dynamics of the onslaught of irregular warfare by terrorist organizations tests the limits of power that state actors wield. Often despite amassing massive power, states have been unable to convert power into influence when it comes to influencing negative non-state actors. America has been inhibited despite being the sole super power in the international system to influence the Afghan Taliban

for a political reconciliation and accepting the US established political structure by becoming part of the system on its terms.

The US military establishment believes that the drawdown implemented during Barack Obama's tenure in White House hamstrung the US and Coalition Forces in Afghanistan for effectively manufacturing the strategic objective of forcing Taliban for political reconciliation by effectively defeating them in the battlefield. Donald Trump's position on fighting 'Islamic Militancy' and the Republican Party-led US Congress mean that budgetary constraints that forced the draw down and a relative disengagement through force restructuring in Afghanistan will be reversed and potentially break the stalemate. Though no general is ever satisfied with the availability of resources at his disposal, the grievance of a shortage of men and money will be addressed for US counter terrorism efforts in the Afghanistan theatre.

For Pakistan, Russia could be an alternative to China, in meeting its security needs through the procurement of advanced weapons systems. Both Pakistan and Russia can play productive roles for regional security, especially with reference to terrorism and fighting drug trafficking via the Shanghai Cooperation Organization platform. Any regional connectivity initiative linking South Asia with Central Asia cannot be successful without strong Russian support.

The effective utilization of the geographic advantage of Pakistan for providing sea access to Central Asian Republics will become a reality after taking Russia on board. The possibility of Russia eventually joining the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) cannot be ruled out as growth in Russia is linked with that of the Chinese economy. With the rise of China as strong economic power, and regional connectivity initiatives, foreign policy realignments will be the obvious consequence.

Pakistan is facing an energy shortage and Russia has abundant energy resources, but substantial ground work has not been done for structuring relations on a sound economic basis. Expecting a highest level political visit from Russian leadership without doing the necessary ground work for commercial projects — including the proposed North-South pipeline for pumping Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) from Karachi to Lahore — will not be realistic. Pakistan should explore and seek Russian assistance for investment in constructing electricity lines and gas supply pipelines from Central Asian countries to Pakistan. The policy makers in Pakistan have a tendency to put all their eggs in one basket. Pakistan needs to play a balancing act when it comes to establishing strong long-term relations with Russia without estranging America.

<http://foreignpolicynews.org/2017/03/16/apprehensions-irans-ballistic-missile-programme/>

New Emerging Axis of Russia, China, and Pakistan: Regional Implications

Zainab Aziz

The international political structure is at the apex of transformation. Previously, an improbable combination of Pakistan, Russia and China is now changing into a powerful realignment either intended to bring a greater bipolarity in the world affairs or to challenge the hegemonic power of the US in the world. Strategic dimensions of the geopolitical world change at an astonishing speed, sometimes without the states knowing the repercussions it brings in the coming years. The same situation now seems to be taking place between the Cold War rivals Pakistan and Russia. Russia, being a traditional ally of India, which reassured India's stance on Kashmir every time, is now showing evident indications of getting into closer relationships with Pakistan.

Just when the China declined the international tribunal's verdict over its claim on the South China Sea, Russia declared to support China along with holding the joint naval exercises in the disputed sea. Moreover, Russia is boosting its military ties with Pakistan by carrying out joint military drills in September 2016 in Pakistan which were joined by some 200 soldiers of the Russian army. China and Russia have been a long time strategic partners mainly because of their ideological clashes with the United States, which became a common enemy to both the countries. For this reason, Russia and China try to dwindle the US influence in their corresponding regions. The ingression of Pakistan in this matrix is sending out clear signs of fledgling friendship.

The apparent strategic interest of Russia behind the Russia-Pakistan-China axis seems to be in Moscow's interest in getting more room for the advancement of its pivotal role than only re-balancing the region. Assessing the current political environment suggests that Moscow is not only hankering to counter the US supremacy in the region but also wants to dislodge the China's status as the major countervailing force in the region. This Russian grand strategy is to devise a game plan involving the conglomeration of passive engagement (Pakistan and Iran), direct intervention (Syria and Ukraine) and crisis profiteering (Islamic State, South China Sea, Turkey), as the instruments of increasing influence of Russia in the Eurasia region.

As the Moscow manifested many times its interest in strengthening its ties with Beijing and Islamabad, a theory about the super power triangle of China, Pakistan and Russia is becoming more discernible. The reason that the China-Russia-Pakistan superpower triangle is becoming a reality (along with Russia's status as the chief weapon supplier to India) would not only result in helping these countries to fight the menace of radicalism and terrorism but also to defy the United States' increasing influence in the region. As a matter of fact, this alliance of Pakistan, China and Russia appears to be a more intimidating force as all the three states are nuclear powers. According to the official figures provided by the SIPRI, around 7,620 nuclear warheads are possessed by the three states combined. This

superpower triangle would possess a prodigious lead in the war against any of its enemy, be it a US or India.

Contrary to the Americans, who always preach morals to the Eastern allies on almost everything from religious freedom to the democratic norms, Russia keeps aside the morality and its perception in the international politics while focusing on achieving its strategic interests. This became apparent in Russia's recent military drills with Pakistan despite India's requests to stop the exercises following the Uri terror attacks for which Pakistan was blamed.

As India took its traditional ally Russia for granted for a longer period of time, Moscow observed the growing ties of India with the US patiently. Although Russia supported the US struggle to get India into the non-proliferation mainstream through the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) waiver and in the nuclear energy expansion (Haripur nuclear project), the balance started to change apparently when Russia was hit continuously by the burgeoning India-US relations. Moscow has been India's most reliable friend and the largest defence partner for more than four decades since the 1971 Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty was signed in 1971. Though the Indian army faced difficulties after the disintegration of Soviet Union in terms of obsolete arsenals, India kept on receiving military equipment from its all-weather friend, despite Israel's entry into it now.

On the other side, India is likely to get more involved in the US strategic ambit on various domains, i.e. sophisticated space technology, defence and nuclear technology. India has moved ahead by transcending the critical juncture of signing the strategic agreement of Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA). For China, this agreement means an implicit military alliance of India and US against China in which India is specifically playing the hedging role. This situation convinced Moscow to review its time-tested friendship with the India.

In order to avoid international isolation, Pakistan has invited Russia to participate in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to promote the expanding interaction within the axis. The Pakistan-Russia Rapprochement and their common bonding with China, in many ways, reiterate the Liaquat Ali Khan's time and again repeated the statement of 1949 that "Pakistan cannot afford to wait. She must take her friends where she finds them." This statement at that time was intended to appease Moscow when Pakistan was dissatisfied with Washington's favorable inclinations towards Jawaharlal Nehru. The circumstances seem to have changed wholly as Pakistan confronts a similar strategic condition now.

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/blog/18-Mar-17/new-emerging-axis-of-russia-china-and-pakistan-regional-implications>

India-Israel Defence Cooperation

Maimuna Ashraf

Israel, followed by Russia and US, is India's third largest defense supplier and the bilateral defense cooperation between two states is continuing to be strong. Both states are also celebrating the twenty-five years of establishment of their diplomatic relations this year, whereas at the end of last year the Israeli President Reuven Rivlin visited India, which was first after two decades.

India's foreign policy has undergone through watershed change over past two decades. Until 1992, India abstained in establishing close relations with Israel and even Indian passports prohibited travel to Israel. However after the Gulf War and Kargil War these relations were revived. The relations are supported by Congress and India's current establishment. The estimated arms trade between India and Israel has been more than \$12 billion in last decade which makes India the largest Israel's customer. Israel has lately carved its niche in India by delivering the most sophisticated weapons systems and annually Israeli weapons sales to India amounts to \$1 billion.

Previously, Israel has been importing India the most sought-after drone technology, early warning systems to detect adversary's warplanes, state-of-the-art missile defense systems, Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC) for surveillance on missile sites and aircraft, missile defense system (Arrow II) to neutralize enemy's ballistic missiles and anti-missile system to protect Indian Navy ships from hostile missiles. DRDO and Israel are cooperating on producing technologies related to sensors, battlefield management, mobile observation system and command and control.

In the words of Israel's Ambassador to India, Daniel Carmon, "Israel is one of the first countries to implement the 'Make in India' vision. There are already plans for joint ventures for making 'for India' by Israeli companies, with the support of the Israeli government." While lately both states are cooperating for missile projects. Resultantly, these technologies have improved India's air defense capabilities. It was in 2013 when India expressed a desire for precision-guided munitions and missile cooperation.

The latest deal has opened prospects of more defense cooperation of both states. The deal to build the missiles, reported to have a range of 50-70 kilometers. Five regiments, which consist of 40 units and 200 missiles, are to be developed under the deal. Israel and India will co-develop and produce a medium-range surface-to-air missile for the Indian Army. Contracts for the deal are expected to be awarded later this month with the value of the project estimated at over \$2.5 billion. Known as the MRSAM, development of the missile will be undertaken jointly by India's DRDO, Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), and will be produced by state-owned Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) in partnership with other state-owned and private defense companies.

Israel is in a good position to help develop more effective and cost efficient missile defenses after becoming member of MTCR. According to media reports, India is negotiating for Israeli missile technology to perfect the launching and guidance systems of the Prithvi, an indigenously developed

surface-to-surface missile and also seeking Israeli help in electronics for its submarine launched Sagarika missile. India has also sought certain technical assistance from Israel to develop Akash, the country's indigenous missile system. These missiles can counter the threat posed by M-11 acquired by Pakistan. Israel is also helping India in developing state-of-the-art air to air missiles.

India believes that defense relations between two states should flourish because it has limited political implications unlike US which keeps trying to tap in Indian defense market but the reservations to transfer technology remains a deadlock. Moreover, both states are observed as common enemy against Pakistan which presents another striking reason to their defense ties, this is why Pakistan also perceive this connection as threat to its security.

India is looking forward to further strengthen its relations with Israel not only to maintain qualitative and quantitative defense superiority but also to play a dominant role in South Asia. A significant cooperation area between India and Israel is in space field and Indian Ocean which further widens the conventional and non-conventional irregularities between Pakistan and India. The bilateral relations between two countries would also endorse India's significant role in West and Central Asian region. Whereas in South Asian context, further strengthen ties of India and Israel can alter geopolitical realities and strategic equilibrium in favor of India. Thus, two states find the bilateral relations mutually beneficial.

Recently, India has taken various initiatives to further improve its strategic relations with US, Israel and Japan. Analyst believe that by improving these ties, India is aiming to aggressively pursue its ambitions in broader Asia, South Asia and Indian Ocean regions generally and particularly, respectively, against its two neighbors China and Pakistan. In essence, Indo-Israel relations have grown in importance because it is based on very practical considerations. For India, Israel is a source of high technology in many including military related industries.

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/20032017-india-israel-defense-cooperation-oped/>

ECO and CPEC: A Multidimensional Cooperation

Sadia Kazmi

The 13th ECO Summit recently held in Pakistan provides one with a number of hopes regarding the Summit's adopted theme of "Connectivity for Regional Prosperity". To begin with, this fact in itself is a major achievement that despite the new wave of terrorism in Pakistan the major event of this magnitude was successfully held in Islamabad. The ten states namely Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan along with the founding members Pakistan, Iran and Turkey is reflective of important representation from Central, South and West Asia. Not just that but the participation by all the member states was another positive sign which shows the eagerness on part of the member countries to contribute and benefit from the prospects of regional connectivity. Chinese representation in the Summit makes it all the more conspicuous and weighty, ensuring that regional connectivity is quite a tangible proposal which will be further supplemented and made plausible through the CPEC. Presently as both Afghanistan and Pakistan are struggling to improve their bilateral ties, the presence of Afghan representative Ambassador Omar Zakhilwal was a sign of hope. This representation despite the closer ties between Afghanistan and India and the latter's ever growing diplomatic, financial and military influence in Afghanistan should be viewed as encouraging, for it did not keep Afghanistan to stay back. In the future there is a hope that President Ghani will be able to exhibit some diplomatic maturity and the ability to act independent of Indian dictation, solely for the well being of people of Afghanistan and for the much larger benefit of the whole region. The states may have differences or may be going through a bad phase in their bilateral relations owing to various factors, but the reality of a prosperous future through regional connectivity can simply not be ignored.

Furthermore the outcome of the Summit in the form of "Islamabad Declaration and Vision 2025" shows a unanimous understanding on part of all the participant states to expand trade and prosperity among them. The ECO region, which occupies the centre of Eurasia, naturally presents a geographical landscape that provides a link for East-West connectivity. Hence this idea of East-West connectivity supplements the plan of concatenation through CPEC. Therefore the presence of Chinese Executive Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui, in an ECO summit has been especially consequential. It also reveals the convergence of economic interests between the ECO states and China, which will ultimately augur well for China's OBOR initiative, having dividends for all the participant states. This welcoming disposition of ECO countries towards China and vice versa, reflects the reshuffling of alignment patterns among the various regions, wherein the constructive engagement has already been evident through fruitful dialogue process. However for these deliberations to manifest successfully and materialize into concrete outcome, it is important to devise a framework mechanism that will ensure the adoption/implementation of Islamabad declaration and Vision 2025. Now all the participant states need to vigorously pursue the aim of prosperity through regional connectivity and own the project as well.

The states also agreed to work towards the prospects of cooperation and integration over the next ten years by promoting multidimensional connectivity. This multidimensional cooperation not just covers the economic aspect but equally stresses upon the intra and inter-regional peace and security.

Commitment towards employing dedicated efforts in order to collectively fight against the menace of terrorism and unlawfulness were also displayed. Addressing the challenge of militancy through collective response mechanism will be the most effective way to deal with the situation. The states also agreed to stay committed to strengthen themselves against other problems such as extremism and drug trafficking and collaborate in addressing the challenges of climate change and food security. Most of all the understanding that peace in Afghanistan is the basic pre requisite for the peace and subsequent progress on the objectives of ECO was expressed unanimously by all the states. It is in the same context that China earlier agreed to allocate 480 million yens to the Afghan Security Forces. Not only will it give boot to the Sino-Afghan bilateral relations, but will also allow for the emergence of a relatively new player in Afghanistan. Russia also has on more than one occasion hinted at joining the CPEC through Eurasian Economic Union. This means that the region as whole is experiencing transition as well as diffusion of power. The US and India on one hand may have to brace themselves up for a Sino-Russian alliance in the region. The possibility of new alliance and power triangles can most certainly not be ruled out.

Another much appreciated and widely touted outcome of the ECO summit is the fact that Pakistan's relevance within the international community has been recognized once again. Despite the strong efforts by India to isolate Pakistan, the full attendance by Head of the States and by the Chinese representative, emphasized Pakistan's central position in the regional strategic calculus, in which Pakistan is just unavoidable. The Summit took place after a gap of five years and there is no doubt that the CPEC has infused a new life into the potentials of ECO as one of Asia's emerging markets. The significance of energy rich Central Asian states and the strategic importance of Pakistan along with all the ECO member states in terms of regional connectivity is going to increase further in times to come. The reaffirmation shown by all the states to make ECO a successful organization is commendable and should be continued through more rigorous public and private partnerships. Also the Summit should now take place more regularly and on time. Not just that but in future more important issues such as Kashmir problem can also be taken up at its forum, which was somehow omitted this time. The prevalent conflicts within and among the member states need to be resolved in order to achieve the required outcome. Last but not the least, now is the time to come up with a practical geo-economic institutional framework and make the Islamabad declaration into a reality.

<http://foreignpolicynews.org/2017/03/23/eco-cpec-multidimensional-cooperation/>

India and Pakistan Escalate Missile Rivalry

Babar Khan Bozdar

The world's most dangerous arms race is not to be found in Moscow and Washington, or in East Asia, where pressures are high in the Western Pacific between Beijing and the United States. Nor it is to be found in the Middle East, a region in turmoil where the two powers of Iran and Saudi Arabia are occupied with intermediary fighting in a few hotspots. The world's most dangerous arms race lies in South Asia and the progressing contention between India and Pakistan.

The Indian-Pakistani challenge is a worldwide issue well on the way to delivering a huge scale war between two major, powerful countries and the result in the deployment of nuclear weapons while the rate of new developments in this arms race is an alarming situation for regional peace and prosperity.

The dominant factor in the continuity of Indo-Pakistan rivalry lies in the support that the US, Russia, and China along with other arms exporter have extended the regional challenges involved in regional disputes. India was supported by Former the Soviet Union while China continuously helped Pakistan. The US has played double policy in this regard. Sometimes it has supported Pakistan and sometimes imposed sanctions. In the meantime, India has benefited from Russia. So, the arms race history of South Asia is not so prolonged, but it has made the rivalry prolonged.

In recent developments, both countries have tested missiles and redefined systems for deployments. The Indian aggressive posture is to kill two birds with one stone. On one side it deters China and on another it is threatening Pakistan. Moreover, India as it considers China as the enemy, thus it deploys new ballistic missiles. Pakistan is developing a new delivery system in the light of developments in India. As a result, there is a continuous rise in the arms race.

Pakistan launched a sea-based cruise missile Babur-3 capable of nuclear warheads in the response of India's sea-based nuclear deterrent and advance ballistic missile defense system. It is the variant of a ground-launched Babur-2 cruise missile with an estimated range of 450 km. It gives Islamabad a credible second strike capability.

The K-4 is an intermediate-range ballistic missile assessed to have a range of approximately 3,500 kilometers, as opposed to the K-15, which has a range of approximately 750 kilometers. The K-15 reportedly was tested twice in March 2016 and is now in production. In the response, Pakistan tested Babur-3 to counter Indian missile hegemony.

Recently, India completed its nuclear triad with the commissioning of INS Arihant Submarine as part of Indian Navy, which is believed to be operational and capable of launching nuclear warheads. This can carry India's nuclear capable K-4 or K-15 ballistic missiles. Simultaneously India claiming no first uses policy while it is strengthening military muscles too by successful testing of missile like Agni series.

India also added nuclear capable aircraft including Dassault Mirage 2000H and Dassault Rafale etc. Mirage 2000H is the part of Indian Air force since 1985 and their number grew time to time, while Rafale deal was materialized in 2016. It signifies Indian military capability and growing interest toward armament, which pose a serious threat to the peace and prosperity in the region.

This has made Pakistan thoroughly consider her nuclear arms stockpile and retaliatory potential in such unverifiable terms with India, because of Pakistan's India-Specific Nuclear tenet. Pakistan has officially developed Naval Strategic Force Command (NSFC) in later past. However, Pakistan has not yet set up her entire, solid sea-based missile setup.

Moreover, Pakistan does not have an active nuclear triad but Pakistan have several missiles to maintain sovereignty in case of any Indian offense and I think it is necessary for its survival and to maintain the balance of power with India.

In fact, both states are trying to enjoy leverage over one another, thus there is serious competition between two rivals.

Meanwhile, it is believed that both countries have separated their warheads from missiles. Until when will such an unattractive scenario not be developed? If any terrorist group developed a scenario either in Pakistan or India, both countries would not let them deploy missiles. As it is now, this rivalry runs counter to creating a peaceful environment.

Insecurity is at the heart of every rivalry and the element of insecurity is heightened day by day between the two. They claim to follow no-first-use doctrine, but at the same time, both are aggressive enough to deny no-first-use policy with a cause of each other's existence as rivals, with some external gamers playing their efficient role in escalating this rivalry in pursuit of their own regional interests and retaining their strategic influence.

The region of third world countries is surrounded by numerous social issues. Defense is being given more priority instead of nontraditional security threats. These Nontraditional threats are more dangerous than traditional threats and have server implications in future. More than 41 percent of Population is living below the new international poverty line in India and near of it in Pakistan. This shows bad governance and mismanagement in both countries.

It is a fact that, wherever arms flow, violence follows. Missiles replace ballots as the solution to political dispute. Therefore it is our prime responsibility to raise our voice for complete disarmament in the region and resolve our all issues by other means.

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/26032017-india-and-pakistan-escalate-missile-rivalry-oped/>

India's Doctrinal Duplicity: No-First-Use Nuclear Policy for China, but Not for Pakistan?

Beenish Altaf

It is not the first time that India's No First Use policy has become a topic of controversy. Ironically, March 2017 Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference pledged a new wave of tense debate on the preemptive nuclear strike, decapitation strike and counter strike in South Asia. Vipin Narang, a nuclear strategist from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, managed to grab the attention of the conference attendees by inkling that:

“...there is increasing evidence that India will not allow Pakistan to go first”

He added that:

“India's opening salvo may not be conventional strikes trying to pick off just Nasr batteries (launch vehicles for Pakistan's tactical battlefield nuclear warheads) in the theatre, but a full 'comprehensive counterforce strike' that attempts to completely disarm Pakistan of its nuclear weapons so that India does not have to engage in iterative tit-for-tat exchanges and expose its own cities to nuclear destruction.”

Comprehensive counterforce here is used as an informal phrase that describes counterattack on a nuclear arsenal.

It is impossible to completely disarm a nuclear weapons state. If a nuclear weapon state is on the other side, one has to face not only massive retaliation but a nuclear counter attack, in response. Well, analytically, it could be assessed, as a consequence to the ambitions of completely disarming Pakistan that India intends to build more nuclear weapons, with enhanced and more sophisticated technologies, ballistic missile defense, a shift away from recessed and de-mated deterrent postures, multiple independently-targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs), and expansion of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities.

It would be pertinent to mention here a well-known fact that India is the largest arms importer, and is engaged in several nuclear deals worldwide for which US is the biggest helper. An evidence estimated that for the US it would be desirable if a friendly Asian power beat Communist China to the punch by detonating a nuclear device first, for which the very likely country was no other than India. So, the US assisted by helping India acquire nuclear explosive, for balancing communist China that is evident from the recently declassified Sept 1961, top secret memorandum from State Dept official George McGhee to Secretary of State Dean Rusk.

Coming back to the point, there is another way of looking into Vipin's above quoted comments; they is a direct indication of Indian inclination towards the doctrinal duplicity. Meaning, thereby, varying in case of Pakistan and China. On one hand, Indian nuclear strategists are on their verge of launching

preemptive nuclear strike on Pakistan by flushing off its No-First-Use (NFU) policy and on the other hand they're keeping the same doctrine for China. It is a clear double standard of its nuclear doctrinal policy of NFU. Ironically, the revolving continuing speculation on the transformation of NFU policy of Indian Nuclear doctrine is very much proved in the recent statement of Indian nuclear expert. The strategy might be to keep all options open by putting ambiguity in its nuclear doctrine. Diplomatically, Indian doctrine is only to show the international community that India has maintained a responsible use of its nuclear weapons by declaring a written doctrine, paradoxically which was never credible enough.

Operationally it is not possible to go for decapitation strike. Indian current nuclear developments such as submarine-launched ballistic missiles and an ambitious ballistic missile defense program, reflect its aggressive nuclear posture. But, no matter how much Indian political elite wants to signal aggressively, it is standing in the international community quite diplomatically at the same time. India actually aspires to alter regional and global order by its day-by-day hardline revelation. It was India's 'unrestrained behavior', after which it became necessary for Pakistan to take a step forward towards a sea-based deterrent. India is extending the range of its missiles (Brahmos supersonic cruise missiles) right after the MTCR membership just within days – what will India do if its dream comes true of getting NSG membership? It would, for sure, lead the way for enhancing its uranium reserves for military usage or a thermonuclear weapons test.

Finally, the conventional wisdom of South Asia's strategic stability problem is challenged by the Indian expert's delivered remarks. India may be demonstrating a 'seismic shift' in its nuclear strategy from 'no first use' to a preemptive nuclear counterforce allowing for escalation dominance or a 'splendid first strike' against Pakistan. Islamabad must be prepared for New Delhi opting to nuclear first-use and ever more so with hardliners like Manohar Parrikar, Ajit Davol, Shivshankar Menon and Sushma Sawraj at the helm. Last but not the least, India still does not have the means to carry out a "splendid" preemptive strike against Pakistan's nuclear forces. It would be worth noting here that it requires Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets, which are not within India's reach for decades.

<http://nation.com.pk/blogs/29-Mar-2017/india-s-doctrinal-duplicity-no-first-use-nuclear-policy-for-china-but-not-for-pakistan>

Afghanistan Quandary

Muhammad Adil Sivia

Afghanistan has become quagmire rendering responsible conflict conclusion and exit of the US forces from the country very difficult. The vertical ordering of states in international system, like pyramid, can help explain the destabilizing effects that the preponderant power at the top of pyramid has on different regions of the world.

The position and post-WWII organization of the international political and economic system by the Western states spearheaded by the US was done for ensuring the top position for the United States of America in pyramid of states. Liberal economic model aimed at expanding international trade and flow of capital under globalization ensured accumulation of wealth at the top of the pyramid. Squandering of wealth through waging open ended intrusive wars has seriously weakened the economic power that the US used for buying political capital for structuring legitimacy of the US as the leader of the world.

The international system hegemon holds the capacity for intervening and influencing the politics of different regions of the world. It's the wastage of wealth through unwise wars not globalization that lead to rise of other states and relative decline of the US. The continued Afghan War, undoubtedly the longest war that America has ever waged around the world and has spent billions of dollars for manufacturing the desired outcome, brought destabilization effects on states bordering Afghanistan, especially Pakistan.

The inability of the US for responsibly concluding the Afghan War increases the imperatives for Pakistan for bringing broader reconciliation among different competing factions within Afghanistan through negotiations and diplomatic efforts. The primary objective of the continued US counter terrorism mission in Afghanistan after drawdown is weakening the ability of Afghan Taliban to dislodge the political system installed through regime change. NATO is conducting Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan for training, advising, and assisting Afghan forces for bringing security and stability to the country.

General John W. Nicholson, Commander of the US forces in Afghanistan in recent testimony before the US Senate Armed Services Committee stated the focus of the US forces in Afghanistan was protecting the main population centers not the territory. He essentially downplayed the importance of large swathes of Afghanistan that Taliban control because majority of that area is sparsely populated. American led diplomatic initiatives for making Afghan Taliban part of political process have failed to deliver results because of absence of strong commitment on part of the US for continued dialogue involving main stakeholders.

The problem starts with the US terming Afghan Taliban as enemy and sanctioning their leaders. The tactical objective that the US is trying to achieve in Afghanistan is weakening Afghan Taliban in battlefield to the extent that they dare not to bargain the terms of reconciliation. Keeping in view the

nature of irregular warfare and the advantage Taliban have for being the people of the land, realization of such a military objective seems very unrealistic. Reassessment of the US military objectives in Afghanistan is necessary for charting achievable political purposes.

Pakistan has suffered the most because of destablity in Afghanistan. Being neighbor, Pakistan has crucial stakes for bringing peace and stability in Afghanistan through supporting Afghan reconciliation process. Pakistan has maintained that reconciliation process should be owned and led by Afghanistan. Targeting of highest Afghan Taliban leadership by the US derailed the diplomatic initiatives that Pakistan worked hard for making them meaningful engagement for eventual resolution of the issue. Pakistan has influence over some factions of Afghan Taliban but such influence is often overrated and huge expectations are made by the US from Pakistan for bringing Taliban to negotiations table. The US often blames Pakistan for its military and political failures in Afghanistan.

Even the nominal presence of fighters in Afghanistan who have pledged allegiance to so called Islamic State (IS) is very serious threat to countries of this region. The possibility of terrorists who went from Central Asian Republics to fight under the banner of IS returning to their countries is serious security concern for Russia. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani is on official visit to Russia. Russian president Vladimir Putin and Hassan Rouhani are expected to exchange views on situation in Middle East. While supporting Bashar al-Assad both countries are fighting against IS and other extremist groups in Syria.

Pakistan has been making sincere efforts for convincing Afghan Taliban leaders to participate in 12 nation talks in April about peace and stability in Afghanistan to be hosted by Russia. Increased diplomatic efforts for bringing peace to Afghanistan by Russia shows the focus it has now on South Asia. Absence of the US from these talks raises serious questions about prospects of Moscow led peace process delivering results. For meaningful result oriented talks, Afghan Taliban should be accepted as political stakeholders and the names of their leaders should be removed from UN Sanctions list.

While the current US administration is embroiled in self created domestic controversies, the military leadership of the US will continue to implement not successful military strategy in Afghanistan. Importance of regional diplomatic initiatives increases manifold but eventual resolution of conflict in Afghanistan will require strong diplomatic support by the US for any such initiative. Though Pakistan and Iran have historically supported different factions that battled for control over different areas of Afghanistan, the presence of common enemy makes convergence of interest on Afghanistan more probable. Such convergence will enhance the possibility of forming shared positions for brining peace and stability to Afghanistan by regional states. The concerns of those states sharing borders with Afghanistan must be recognized and addressed.

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/29032017-afghanistan-quandary-oped/>

Possibility of New Armageddon in South Asia

Zainab Aziz

The region of Pakistan-India border in Kashmir has certainly been the most volatile region for almost two decades. Given the apparent military doctrines of the neighbor nuclear states, the plausible effects of cross-border skirmishes with the exchange of rockets or artillery can lead to an inevitable all-out nuclear war. The conflagration spread through it would be catastrophic. This will have devastating effects on the whole earth bringing “nuclear winter” beyond our apprehensions, resulting in the death of millions of Pakistanis and Indians.

The nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan is turning into a terrifying state. This insecurity has emerged from the decision of Islamabad of deterring the credible aggression initiated from the tank-led invading Indian Armed Force by deploying low-yield tactical nuclear weapons (thus, lowering the threshold of nuclear first use) on the entire region surrounding India at its forward military bases designed for carrying out tactical operations. Deployment of tactical nukes is for the purpose of creating deterrence against the Cold Start Doctrine of India which is “Exclusively Offensive, Blitzkrieg inspired” military strategy, developed by the Indian Military Command (IMC), precisely for Pakistan to replace the obsolete ‘Sundarji Doctrine’ which miserably failed during 2001-2002 impasse with Pakistan.

The year 2017 was started off by Pakistan by launching two significant test of proliferating programme which includes: Ababeel medium-range ballistic missile with a claimed multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle (MIRV) and Babur-3 Submarine Launched Cruise Missile.

Pakistan and India are also involved in the conventional arms race and it is perceived that if Pakistan kept on with developing MIRV-ready strategic deterrent, India may reassess its no-first-use nuclear doctrine due to the growing political pressure. India’s nuclear pursuits are also meant for maintaining a suitable deterrent to China. Just recently at the 2017 Carnegie Nuclear Policy Conference, Professor Vipin Narang, an expert on South Asia Nuclear Security gave remarks that India may abandon its “no first use” nuclear policy, if it assessed that Pakistan is likely to resort to the nuclear weapons first, has raised a question about the traditional prudence of South Asia’s strategic stability situation.

Still there can be the ways of reducing nuclear dangers in South Asia. To lessen the antagonism between the two rival neighbors, some concrete measures can be taken which can bring an increased nuclear stability in South Asia. According to the Nuclear Security Index and National Threat Initiative, New Delhi and Islamabad have taken propitious course of action as Pakistan ratified the 2005 amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of the Nuclear Material in the final Nuclear Security Submit in Pakistan. While Delhi vowed to prevent the issues regarding nuclear smuggling.

Nevertheless, Pakistan and India tried to eliminate the threat emerging from the nuclear security within their own territories. These kinds of risks can be managed by the bilateral negotiations based on cooperation which would be in the best interest of Pakistan and India. The two countries must share an intelligence report to do away with the suspicions along with the holding of joint military drills.

The current underlying structure for nuclear confidence building measures must be composed as bilateral cooperation framework in order to bring positive effects on the nuclear security situation in South Asia. The terrorist attack in either of the two countries halts the negotiation process.

It is now crucial for New Delhi to dissociate the terrorism from the nuclear security. Otherwise, attaining success in nuclear security would be hard.

Secondly, the nuclear installations of both the countries would remain vulnerable until the cyber security infrastructure is upgraded and enhanced according to the posed threats. National Cyber Security Policy introduced by India in 2013 could not incorporate the mechanism ensuring robust cyber security program as it lacked the comprehensive stratagem that is essential for combating cyber security threats. Pakistan, on the other hand, proposed a cyber security law in August 2016. It has its own lacunas as it mainly deals with eradicating the extremist ideology than safeguarding the nuclear sites.

The cooperation of India and Pakistan on issue of cyber security seems unlikely at present. The reliable cyber security infrastructure also involves heavy investments which neither of the two countries have enough capacities to do it right now. The cyber security of the South Asian nuclear facilities can be ensured by the efforts made by the international community lead by the United States to prevent the Stuxnet Style attack carried out by terrorists or hackers.

After the Indian subcontinent was tremored by the 11 nuclear explosions until May, 1998, Pakistan and India did not conduct any nuclear test. Concurrently, both the countries are non-signatory to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). In 2016, Pakistan offered India to formulate a bilateral test ban treaty that would legalize the current moratoria on nuclear tests but the India had shown little interest in it. India embracing this opportunity would help bringing strategic stability in the South Asian region.

Since the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki around 70 years ago, the world has not witnessed the use of nuclear weapons in wartime. Also in 1998, when the two nuclear states, China and Russia were involved in conventional dispute along the Ussuri River, the strife did not reach to the extent of nuclear war despite of their common long border and the bitter relations; same can be expected from India and Pakistan.

Although the Indian subcontinent is influenced by the nuclear rivals with history of hostilities between the two, one can hope for the amelioration of relations. Yet the probability of a nuclear threat cannot be ruled out completely.

<http://www.eurasiareview.com/29032017-possibility-of-nuclear-armageddon-in-south-asia-oped/>

Debate on Assessment Over India's NFU

Asma Khalid

Vipin Narang an expert on South Asian Nuclear strategy presented Indian case for abandoning the No First Use Policy. During the 2017 Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference, he generated a discourse on India's No First Use Policy on the bases of India's former National Security Advisor Shivshankar Menon's writings, *Choices Inside making the Indian Foreign policy*. India's former National Security Advisor in his book writes:

"There is a potential grey area as to when India would use nuclear weapons first against another NWS (nuclear weapons state). Circumstances are conceivable in which India might find it useful to strike first, for instance, against an NWS that had declared it would certainly use its weapons, and if India were certain that adversary's launch was imminent".

On the above mentioned statement Narang has made assessment that India's nuclear doctrine has ambiguous and not credible. Under such ambiguous nuclear policy India will not allow Pakistan to go for first use of nuclear capability during crisis but it may launch a preemptive counterforce strike against Pakistan to avoid tit-for-tat exchanges with Pakistan. Considering the revision of nuclear policy is not alarming as it is perceived by Indian aggressive lobbies since the debate on India's First Use policy is not new.

No First Use Policy simply presents that India's nuclear resort would be 'retaliation only' and it will not be the first to use the nuclear weapon during conflict. However, it also states that India will retaliate with nuclear weapon to counter chemical or biological attack on its forces. Such fundamentals highlight the military, political and economic dimensions of Indian nuclear doctrine. Whereas first strike capability, simply states, a nuclear strike to eliminate the adversary's nuclear weapon, with the aim to limit the own damage that adversary can inflict on its opponents.

On the bases of Vipin Narang assessment, now considering a hypothetical scenario that India abandoning the No First Use. Such scenario gives the impression that, India's First Use doctrine would be highly destabilizing in two aspects: Firstly, misperception and miscalculation may cause escalation; secondly, first strike provides an incentive to pre-empt and preemption need not prove effective. It is not a coherent approach because practically it is not possible for India to eliminate all the nuclear adrenals of Pakistan due to the lack of capabilities to locate the hidden, mobile and dispersed delivery systems of Pakistan across the landmass and- at the sea. Moreover; nuclear First use make no sense for India as deterrence stability in South Asia is combination of three nuclear weapon states; India, Pakistan and China. On the basis of these factors, international analysts argue that despite revising nuclear doctrine it would not be possible for India to launch a preemptive counterforce strike against Pakistan.

Consequences, statements regarding the revision of nuclear doctrine by Indian government leaders are considered as the deliberate attempts for further exploitation of regional states and to create complications in the region. These developments will force the regional powers to review their

options. Additionally, it will provide an excuse to the India to undertake a massive nuclear build-up as numbers of nuclear weapons will make the first strike effective. It could produce more aggressive nuclear arms race and instability during conflict. These fundamentals prove disproportional responses of India that it only makes verbal noises about arms control and disarmament.

It is imperative to note that first strike makes little sense, especially when the opponents have already acquired second strike capability levels of nuclear equipment. Though India's first use make little sense but if happened then it would be necessary for Pakistan to quantatively and qualitatively develop the nuclear arsenals like ballistic missiles and MIRVs to maintain credible deterrence and ensure the survivability of its nuclear capabilities.

<http://foreignpolicynews.org/2017/03/30/debate-on-assessment-over-indias-nfu/>

The Pragmatic and "Un-Ignorable" China

Sadia Kazmi

The most liberal water-sharing pact known as Indus-Water Treaty was signed by Pakistani President Ayub Khan and Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on September 19, 1960, in Karachi and the water of six rivers-Beas, Ravi, Sutlej, Indus, Chenab and Jhelum was shared between two countries. This landmark pact was brokered by World Bank. Since this agreement, India and Pakistan had fought three major wars and there was a constant strain in their diplomatic relations but treaty survived despite severe nature of relations between both countries. Recently, Indian Premier Narendra Modi stated that "Blood and Water can't flow simultaneously" but in fact, this Indian move will flow blood over water simultaneously. Historically, the partition of Sub-continent created a conflict over the water of Indus Basin. The newly born states were unable to share water and manage an essential and cohesive network of irrigation. Moreover, during partition, the tributaries of Indus basin were given to India and Pakistan felt its livelihood threatened by the possibility of Indian control over the tributaries that bolstered water into the Pakistani portion of Indus Basin. The IW system of rivers comprises of three Eastern Rivers, the Sutlej, the Beas and the Ravi while three western rivers are the Indus, the Jhelum, and the Chenab. As per arrangements, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej which constitute eastern system are exclusively allocated to India, Similarly Pakistan had allowed exclusive use of western rivers and India was bound to supply water to Pakistan for 10 years, Until Pakistan will be able to construct canal system for the utilization of water of Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab.

The accord was meant for the permanent solution of water between India and Pakistan but none of them was eager to trade off their particular positions and arrangements achieved a stalemate. Pakistan attempted to take the matter to the International court of Justice (ICJ) for the peaceful settlement of dispute but India refused to argue that it will be resolved bilaterally. The treaty has placed limitations on design and operation of hydroelectric plants, storage works and other river works that are to be constructed by India on the western rivers. India is bound to provide information relating to these works in advance while Pakistan has right to communicate its objection with India. Indus water treaty was meant for resolving their issues bilaterally, but now water dispute is intensely politicised in India because hawks in India publically demanding for abrogating the treaty without realising the side effects or rationality of their demand. Indeed, their demand is an attempt of pushing both countries to the brink of war.

The legal instrument had so far sustained and delivered despite ups and downs in Indo-Pak relations, but it is the first time that Modi's government called for abrogating IWT. The possible reason behind this statement is that Modi government lost his credibility and capability in delivering good governance. It also lost his support within. Hence, it came down to terrorist activities likes abrogating IWT. In this way, Modi's statement is an attempt to divert the mind of people and gain anti-Pakistan sympathy. It is not so easy to scrape Indus water treaty because World Bank is the Mediator while certain restrictions are implemented on both Parties in case of violating treaty. The article nine of IWT provide its better explanation and restrict both countries from violating Indus water treaty.

Simultaneously treaty couldn't be scraped unilaterally. Without consultation with Pakistan Indian move will be treated as an act of war and again it might trigger conflict between hostile neighbors over water which has serious consequences for both countries.

Pakistan is an agricultural country and water is the source of survival. Similarly, Indian robbery over water will never be accepted from Pakistan side. In fact, it is the matter 180 million lives. In this situation, Indian ambition of scraping Indus water treaty will be dangerous. Linking water with security, I think it is a narrow minded approach because there is no connection war and wide. So, such policies will not only suffer India and Pakistan but region too. In this situation, leaders should come up with durable solutions rather than triggering hostility.

<http://foreignpolicynews.org/2017/03/31/pragmatic-un-ignorable-china/>

CPEC and Sino-Pak Military Cooperation

Saima Ali

The \$ 46b mega project CPEC is a flagship project of Chinese broader vision of One Belt, One Road (OBOR). It has been rightly termed as “Economic Game and Fate Changer”. CPEC will not only bring prosperity to Pakistan and China but also benefit the region at large. China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has started with dozens of projects under implementation in all regions of the country. CPEC will open doors to immense economic as well as strategic opportunities for the people of South Asia and connect China to promote trade in Asia, Europe and beyond. The CPEC land route up to Gwadar will shorten the existing circuitous sea route of almost 16,000 kms to about 3,000 kms, greatly reducing the travelling time and economic cost. Despite of the debates being aired in opposition to CPEC, successful realization of CPEC will result in meeting the energy shortfalls, in addition to building the development and communication infrastructure.

China and Pakistan’s multidimensional interests continue to converge and CPEC now epitomizes the continuously growing strength of their alliance. The Russians have started engaging Pakistan at the economic, political and strategic levels. Its historical interest in the perennial warm waters of the Arabian Sea is getting revived by the success of CPEC. The CARs, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and even the EU amongst others have shown interest in getting involved with CPEC. From security perspective, Pakistan “has done everything” to ensure the safety about 19,000 Chinese working on different projects in the country. Pakistan has deployed more than 15,000 troops to protect the CPEC, and the country’s navy has raised a special contingent for the protection of the strategic Gwadar Port. In recent years, the relationship has deepened even further and China has entered several military projects and defence treaties with Pakistan. China has also been a perpetual source of military equipment and has assisted Pakistan in setting up weapon production and modernization facilities. Pakistan has been purchasing military equipment from China in order to bolster their efforts against militants. Islamabad and Beijing inked two new military procurements contracts during the visit of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao to Islamabad last year, which included the procurement of 20 CH-3 Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAV) developed by the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp (CASC).

CH-3 is a Medium-Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) unmanned platform and is capable of battlefield reconnaissance, fire adjustment, data relay, intelligence collection, ground-strike missions and electronic warfare missions. Few of the defence deals and joint ventures between both countries are JF-17 Thunder, PAF Shaanxi, ZDK-03 AEW&C, K-8 Karakorum, Advance Training aircraft, Al Khalid I & II Tanks, Hongdu JL-8, Type 054A Jiangkai Stealth Frigate, FC-20/J-10B, Fighter Jet. FT-5 small-diameter bombs for Army Aviation and the Type 022 Hobei-class catamarans for Pakistan Navy. Future Implications of China plans to step up military cooperation with “all weather” friend Pakistan to produce ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and a multi-role combat aircrafts. Official media here reported as Pakistan’s new army chief held talks with top Chinese officials On his first visit to China after he took over as Pakistan’s army chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa held talks with General Fang Fenghui, chief of

the Joint Staff Department under the Central Military Commission. China will provide the Pakistan Navy with eight modified diesel-electric attack submarines by 2028, the head of the country's next-generation submarine programme told the Pakistan National Assembly's Standing Committee on Defence during the committee's visit to the Naval Headquarters in Islamabad last year. This alliance between two neighboring Asian nations is significant geo-politically as well as strategically. COAS visit will consolidate and deepen military exchanges between China and Pakistan, while new cooperation on military techniques will be augmented further. China's authorization to Pakistan to produce ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, anti-aircraft missiles, anti-ship missiles and main battle tanks in Pakistan is also on the agenda.

Pakistan-China ties are to reach new heights as the two countries are forging ahead economically and strategically. The point need to be highlighted is that China has always second-hand its economic characteristic and authority to clear downs its ways to improve its strategic partnership with Pakistan. Moreover, bilateral visits by officers from both the countries in various military installations and academies / institutions and joint military exercise have further deepened the historic ties having a futuristic vision of enormous potential. CPEC is bound to become the massive centre of gravity politically, economically and strategically around which the regional and even extra regional economies will thrive in the near future.

<http://pakobserver.net/cpec-pak-china-military-cooperation/>

Decoupling of Its Nuclear Doctrine Reveals How India's Ambitions Are Destabilizing South Asia

Maimuna Ashraf

The purported claim of Indian Former National Security Adviser Shivshankar Menon in his book, *Choices – Inside the Making of India's Foreign Policy*, followed by the assessment of Vipin Narang at recently held Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference, have rekindled the debate about stirrings of change in Indian declaratory nuclear doctrine. The deliberations raised question if India is shifting from its No-First Use (NFU) doctrine of 2003 backed by massive retaliation in response to a pre-emptive strike. However, these voices indicating the amount of review in Indian nuclear posture are not seen as surprise by the Pakistani strategic community since this rethinking has been hinted by the BJP's election manifesto and personal views of former Indian officials (Lt. Gen. B.S. Nagal and Manohar Parrikar) in recent years. Moreover, India's stated stance in its official doctrine to threaten nuclear use against chemical and biological weapons had already questioned the sanctity of its NFU posture.

The 'grey areas' being discussed indicate 'flexibilities in use of nuclear weapons by India'. Narang based his assessment on the viewpoints of Menon, which assert that India would keep an option to go-first in its no-first use policy, "if India were certain that adversary's launch was imminent." In wake of presumed conventional and nuclear escalation scenarios in South Asia, it is opined that Pakistan would use low-yield tactical nukes against Indian conventional incursion. Pakistan's nuclear establishment argues that Cold-Start Doctrine (CSD) would provide India the space for conventional or limited conflict in a nuclearised region. For an appropriate reactionary response to CSD, which excludes massive nuclear retaliation, Pakistan developed the low-yield, short range, tactical battlefield 'Nasr nuclear missiles' which provides a qualitative response to the conventional threats and asymmetry perceived by India. Moreover, it offers a range of options since Pakistan will not be forced to retaliate with strategic nuclear weapons as a first response to conventional force.

Conversely, it has been lately expressed by Indian former head:

"India would hardly risk giving Pakistan the chance to carry out a massive nuclear strike after the Indian response to Pakistan using tactical nuclear weapons. In other words, Pakistani tactical nuclear weapon use would effectively free India to undertake a comprehensive first strike against Pakistan."

This implies that India will not open a conventional response to tactical nukes; rather it would launch a comprehensive retaliation response with the aim to completely disarm Pakistan's nuclear forces. It is plausible that India's massive response would inflict to diffuse Pakistan's capability to retaliate or launch a third-strike in response to Indian massive retaliation. The strategy probably aims to avoid interactive exchanges and put its cities under nuclear destruction. Nevertheless, the option of first-use or preemptive nuclear strike would end India's NFU posture. Interestingly the stir of change

revamped after Pakistan lately declared to achieve seaborne nuclear deterrent and MIRV technology that neutralized Indian nuclear powered submarine and BMD developments.

Here arises the question about Indian nuclear posture for its two nuclear neighbors: would India be adopting two different nuclear doctrines or postures for China and Pakistan? NFU for China and First-Use for Pakistan? Critics argue that these opinions do not speak volume about an official shift in India's NFU doctrine; they however specify a serious mainstream thinking of Indian elite to shift its counter-value strategy, which refers to target opponent's civilians and cities, to the counterforce strategy that aims at targeting enemy's nuclear weapons and military infrastructure.

Pragmatically, is it possible for India to locate all Pakistani nuclear weapons and completely destroy Pakistan's nuclear forces? Can India wage a full scale nuclear war on the basis of hypothetical scenarios or mere enemy's intentions? India currently does not possess the capabilities to maintain high level of accuracy and increase response in real-time crisis. Theoretically or practically, a 'splendid first strike' will not ensure the complete destruction of Pakistani nuclear forces.

Consequently, all these confusions and startling personal claims about a country's nuclear posture can be highly destabilizing as it would mount the ambiguities in the already murky landscape of South Asia. If this 'call for change' will be heard and India moves in the direction to abandon NFU, the country would speed up its all undergoing nuclear programs to increase its number of nuclear weapons, build-up new technologies and ensure readiness.

Opinion already prevails that India is moving from its minimum deterrent posture to higher state of readiness and war-fighting capabilities. It is also working to expand its intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities while the remote sensing and satellite capabilities will further boost India's confidence. When India advances the technologies to track Pakistani missiles and nuclear assets, Pakistan will also work on its operational nuclear strategy, the state of art technologies, assured second-strike capability and techniques to reduce the vulnerability of its nuclear assets. Resultantly, all these developments would increase the alertness level and lower the nuclear threshold in South Asia.

<http://nation.com.pk/blogs/31-Mar-2017/decoupling-of-india-s-nuclear-doctrine-reveals-how-new-delhi-s-ambitions-are-destabilizing-south-asia>