

## Deterrence Adrift: Dissecting Indian Coercive Military Doctrines 2017- 18

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### Abstract

*The recent flare-up between India and Pakistan, in February 2019, points to troubling new trends in strategic balance in the South Asian region. Considering the stated doctrines of Indian Armed forces- Joint Doctrine of Indian Armed forces (JDIAF) and Land Warfare Doctrine (LWD), it was long time coming. To this end, this study delves into analyzing these doctrines to deconstruct their role as driving logic behind Indian misadventures in South Asia. This study discusses the drastic changes this standoff between India and Pakistan has induced in the strategic balance of the region. This paper asserts that the recent events since Post-Pulwama attack have damaged the long-held myth of Indian conventional superiority and resuscitated the debate of drawing a clear nuclear threshold and uncertainty that surrounds it. It suggests that Pakistan needs to augment its resident fighting capabilities with modern technology and means of non-contact warfare. Along with its nuclear capability, Pakistan is required to expand its conventional capabilities to meet growing Indian challenge.*

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## Introduction

Joint Doctrine of Indian Armed Forces (JDIAF)<sup>2</sup> is India's first ever released public doctrine,<sup>3</sup> which envisions inter-services integration. While there is a global trend of Integration, JDIAF is the initial step to unify seven separate army commands, seven air force commands and three naval commands, making it total of 17 into just three theatre commands. US analysts have noticed the expressive likenesses between JDIAF-2017 and the Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States (JP-1).<sup>4</sup> JDIAF-2017 takes an overwhelmingly continental perspective of outside threats. As the precept takes note of, "India's threats primarily emanate from the disputed land borders with our neighbours,"<sup>5</sup> JDIAF will have long-term implications for Pakistan's threat perceptions and force posturing. The doctrine categorically states that Indian forces will deal with cross border threats with surgical strikes. India claimed

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<sup>2</sup>"Joint Doctrine of Indian Armed Forces", *Bharat Shakti*, April 2017, available at [https://bharatshakti.in/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Joint\\_Doctrine\\_Indian\\_Armed\\_Forces.pdf](https://bharatshakti.in/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Joint_Doctrine_Indian_Armed_Forces.pdf), accessed on August 15, 2017.

<sup>3</sup>AbhijnanRej, Shashank Joshi, "India's Joint Doctrine: A Lost Opportunity", *Observer Research Foundation*(ORF) India, 2018, available at [https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/ORF\\_Occasional\\_Paper\\_Joint\\_Doctrine.pdf](https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/ORF_Occasional_Paper_Joint_Doctrine.pdf), accessed on June 7, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> "Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States", *Federation of American Scientists*, July 12, 2017, available at <https://fas.org/irp/doddir/dod/jp1.pdf>, accessed on August 8, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> "Joint operational doctrine for army, navy, air force unveiled", *The Economic Times*, July 12, 2018, available at <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/joint-operational-doctrine-for-army-navy-air-force-unveiled/articleshow/58365762.cms?from=mdr>, accessed on August 8, 2018.

cross-LoC 'surgical strikes' of September 29, 2016<sup>6</sup> flagging another type of sub-conventional reaction. In a more recent development, Indian violation of Pakistani airspace has heightened the escalations between both the countries. JDIAF demands India to have deterrent capabilities to protect its interests on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) facing China and Line of Control (LOC)<sup>7</sup> with Pakistan, which means continuing India's belligerent behaviour for acquiring regional supremacy and operationalization of different tactics to meet such ends.

For India and Pakistan, the existence of security dilemma, conventional asymmetries, conventional and strategic arms race, defense production gap, nuclear offensive and defensive capabilities, absence of arms control and threat reduction measures have increased the threat of conflict escalation or initiating conflict among regional powers. JDIAF may also lead to a nuclear disaster owing to ambiguity on "the first-use or no first use of nuclear weapons".<sup>8</sup> In addition to JDIAF, Land Warfare Doctrine (LWD)<sup>9</sup> promulgated in later half of December 2018, offers an insight of Indian strategic thinking and dominant logic that drives Indian posturing and behaviour towards Pakistan. Both these doctrines are crucial in understanding the recent episode of escalations that have almost reached the threshold of nuclear exchange. Therefore, to understand the role of these doctrines as

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<sup>6</sup> M. Ilyas Khan, "India's 'surgical strikes' in Kashmir: Truth or illusion?" *BBC News*, October 23, 2016, available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-37702790>, accessed on March 23, 2019.

<sup>7</sup> "Joint operational doctrine for army, navy, air force unveiled", Op.cit.

<sup>8</sup> Joy Mitra, "When Push Comes to Shove, Will India's NFU Stand?" *South Asian Voices*, January 9, 2019, available at <https://southasianvoices.org/sav-review-when-push-comes-shove-will-india-nfu-stand/>, accessed on March 23, 2019.

<sup>9</sup> "India's Land Warfare Doctrine 2018: Hoping for the Best, Preparing for the Worst", *Bharat Shakti*, January 6, 2019, available at <https://bharatshakti.in/indias-land-warfare-doctrine-2018-hoping-for-the-best-preparing-for-the-worst/>, accessed on March 21, 2019.

driving force behind these events, first one need to unravel the essential lessons and policy determinants one can draw from these two doctrines. Following paragraphs are devoted to deciphering the important postulates of these doctrines.

### **Unfolding JDIAF**

Indian act of violation of International border, on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019, that resulted in limited escalation between the two countries can be explained and understood in the context of Indian Military doctrines, promulgated in succession, JDIAF and LWD. Both these doctrines are fundamental to understanding Indian posture of strategic coercion that inspired India to carry out airstrikes inside Pakistani territory. A classified version of the doctrine was circulated in 2006. So JDIAF which was publically presented in April 2017 is basically the second edition of the doctrine. However, it is the first ever public joint doctrine released by Integrated Defence Staff (IDS). It has 6 chapters, 2 appendices and consists of 68 pages.<sup>10</sup> Integration of Indian forces has been the primary objective of JDIAF. So, it deals with four primary issues which are following:

- I. Operational integration of three armed services
- II. Establishing a higher office to monitor integration
- III. Phenomenon of Limited warfare (Surgical strikes) and the Cold Start doctrine
- IV. Nuclear doctrine

Going further in details, the doctrine talks about the nature of threats India is facing and how India will respond to those threats. Some important takeaways from this document that are central to explaining recent stand-off between two warring parties- India and Pakistan are following;

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<sup>10</sup>“Joint Doctrine of Indian Armed Forces”, Op. Cit.

- It specifically delineates the threat spectrum for India. India has termed it as a “collusive threat”<sup>11</sup> coming from Pakistan and China.
- It promotes surgical strikes as response to terrorism by stating that “the response to terror provocations could be in the form of surgical strikes. These would be subsumed in the sub-conventional portion of the spectrum of armed conflict.”<sup>12</sup>
- While justifying Cold Start Doctrine it states that “India has moved to a pro-active and pragmatic philosophy to counter various conflict situations.”<sup>13</sup>
- Conventional options for military counter terrorism against Pakistan are limited. So it adopts the strategy of “Deterrence through Punishment”, contrary to “Deterrence through Denial”.<sup>14</sup>
- It also states that the future of wars will be “Ambiguous, Uncertain, Short, Swift, Lethal, Intense, Precise, Non-linear, Unrestricted, Unpredictable and Hybrid”.<sup>15</sup>
- JDIAF-2017 also reaffirms India’s commitment to expanding overseas operations.

While going through these characteristics of JDIAF, it can justifiably be argued that Indian strategic culture and thinking patterns have been gradually overwhelmed with ideas that induce strategic imbalance in the region between Pakistan and India. Indian ambitions to outnumber Pakistan in limited conventional warfare by means of technological advancements, adopting disruptive

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid

<sup>14</sup>“Joint Doctrine of Indian Armed Forces”, Op.Cit

<sup>15</sup>Joint Doctrine of Indian Armed Forces”, Op. Cit

technologies and integrating operational facets of three armed forces, have drastically threatened the peace of the region. A certain reflection of this can be noted in policy line Indian forces are sticking to, since last few years, particularly under the Prime Minister Narendra Modi government. The latest of these doctrinal additions was LWD.

### **Land Warfare Doctrine**

After one year of JDIAF-2017, in later half of 2018, India supplemented JDIAF with a rather new and quite forthright doctrine that clearly explains and drafts Indian military agenda to pursue its strategic objectives. It not only reflects Indian strategic thinking but also outlines future plans of Indian army to deal with uncalled for regional and extra-regional threats. Some important pillars of Indian LWD are:

- 1) It reiterates and prioritizes the notion of “collusive threat” coming from China and Pakistan and talks about “two-front warfare”. In furtherance to this notion, it endorses the idea of dealing with “primary front”<sup>16</sup> i.e. Pakistan with all available resources while maintaining defensive balance against China.
- 2) LWD further envisages enhancing the capacity of Indian forces to fight hybrid information, cyber and space warfare. It suggests incorporation of new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Quantum computing and nanotechnology to augment Indian armed services.

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<sup>16</sup>Rajat Pandit, “Artificial intelligence, robotics part of hi-tech Army warfare Strategy”, *The Times of India*, December 19, 2018, available at <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/artificial-intelligence-robotics-part-of-hi-tech-army-warfare-strategy/articleshow/67153564.cms>, accessed on March 22, 2019.

- 3) It advances the agenda of equipping Indian armed forces with disruptive technologies. Some of them include Directed Energy Weapons, Lethal Autonomous Weapons and Micro Satellites.

Both these doctrines are primarily aimed at securing multiple goals. These objectives include: achieving “escalation dominance”<sup>17</sup> in case of limited conventional fight against Pakistan, and initiating non-contact warfare against Pakistan. These two strategic objectives were evident during the recent episode of tensions.

### **Effect of Combined doctrines on India-Pakistan Relations**

Theoretical framework of Realism and Limited war best explains the relationship between India and Pakistan. According to offensive realism, wars must be initiated for the interest of a nation.<sup>18</sup> India, in this context, keeps on introducing offensive limited war strategies, such as JDIAF and Land Warfare Doctrine, which are offensive limited war doctrines. As introduced in 19<sup>th</sup> century by Robert E. Osgood, limited war aims at limited objectives that do not necessarily demand huge military mobilizations.<sup>19</sup> Usually the aim of such wars is three-fold: fear, honor and interest, wherein limited wars are usually honor and interest driven (Thucydides). In this context, whenever a limited war is initiated by a state, there are always strategic calculations based on intricate Cost-Benefit analysis, which can be comprehended in terms of “Rational Actor

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<sup>17</sup>Toby Dalton and George Perkovich, India’s Nuclear Options and Escalation Dominance”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, May 2016, available at [https://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP\\_273\\_India\\_Nuclear\\_Final.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_273_India_Nuclear_Final.pdf), accessed on March 16, 2019.

<sup>18</sup>John Mearsheimer, “Offensive Realism in Brief,” *GENIUS*, available at <https://genius.com/John-mearsheimer-offensive-realism-in-brief-annotated>, accessed on August 7, 2018.

<sup>19</sup>Robert E. Osgood, *Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy* (USA: University of Chicago Press, 1957).

Model”.<sup>20</sup> Based on Indian strategic calculation, JDIAP and Land Warfare doctrine aim at striking inside Pakistan to coerce and compel Pakistan into accepting Indian dictates.

The India-Pakistan crisis seems to have peaked to belligerent level. The two sides continue to trade intermittent small-arms<sup>21</sup> and artillery fire across the Line of Control that divides Kashmir. Skirmishes have occurred elsewhere near their border<sup>22</sup> and at sea,<sup>23</sup> but the situation is no longer escalating. Pakistani airspace is reopening,<sup>24</sup> and even the cross-border passenger train has resumed operations.<sup>25</sup>

After the Pulwama incident on February 14, 2019, chances were there that India would respond in the same manner it responded

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<sup>20</sup> Leoncebekemans, “An Assessment of the Rational Actor Model in International Cooperation,” *Being a Doctoral Dissertation Prepared and Presented at the European University Institute*, available at [http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/4900/Bekemans\\_Leonce.pdf?sequence=1](http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/4900/Bekemans_Leonce.pdf?sequence=1), accessed on August 13, 2018.

<sup>21</sup> “Ceasefire violation by Pakistan breaks two-day lull along LoC in J&K,” *India Today*, March 9, 2019, available at <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/ceasefire-violation-pakistan-line-of-control-jammu-and-kashmir-1469757-2019-03-04>, accessed on March 15, 2019.

<sup>22</sup> “Sukhoi downs Pakistan drone on Rajasthan border,” *Times of India*, March 5, 2019, available at <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/sukhoi-downs-pakistan-drone-on-rajasthan-border/articleshow/68262560.cms>, accessed on March 16, 2019.

<sup>23</sup> Naveed Siddiqui, “Pakistan Navy foils attempt by Indian submarine to enter Pakistani waters,” *DAWN*, March 5, 2019, available at <https://www.dawn.com/news/1467778>, accessed on March 18, 2019.

<sup>24</sup> “Pakistan airspace fully reopened, says aviation authority,” *The NEWS*, March 4, 2019, available at <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/439690-pakistan-airspace-fully-reopened-says-aviation-authority>, accessed on March 17, 2019.

<sup>25</sup> Zaheer Babar and Roshan Mughaal, “As Tensions Cool, Pakistan-India Train Service Resumes,” *Diplomat*, March 05, 2019, available at <https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/as-tensions-cool-pakistan-india-train-service-resumes/>, accessed on March 17, 2019.



after Uri attack.<sup>26</sup> Numerous analysts conjectured about Indian probable response that could be a so-called “Surgical Strike”<sup>27</sup> on Pakistani territory, of the post-Uri type. On the contrary, in the early hours of February 26 Indian Air Force claimed air strikes on the training facility of Jaish-e-Muhammad near Balakot, Pakistan.<sup>28</sup> Now this was new for Pakistan as violation of Pakistan’s air space and territorial integrity did not occur even during the 1999 Kargil war. These air strikes were too escalatory and established the fact that India wanted to dominate the escalation ladder. Pakistan responded the next day by launching an even larger number of aircraft towards Indian airspace, shooting down one Indian MiG-21 and capturing its pilot. The two countries looked on the precipice of an armed conflict. They mobilized forces and moved tanks to front-line positions. Nevertheless, Pakistan released the captured Indian pilot as a peace gesture in order to de-escalate the crisis. However, artillery duels continued on both sides of the Line of Control.<sup>29</sup>

Broadly, Indian response depicted its thrust for war, fueled by upcoming Indian elections which were to be held in April 2019 along with India’s aspiration to establish Indian military superiority and domination at the escalation ladder. India, in order to punish Pakistan for its alleged involvement in the Pulwama attack,

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<sup>26</sup>Syeda Saiqa Bukhari, “Pulwama Incident: Impact on India-Pakistan Relations,” *moderndiplomacy*, February 28, 2019, available at <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2019/02/28/pulwama-incident-impact-on-india-pakistan-relations/>, accessed on March 21, 2019.

<sup>27</sup>Atika Rehman, “What is a ‘surgical strike’?” *DAWN*, September 29, 2016, available at <https://www.dawn.com/news/1286893>, accessed on March 13, 2019.

<sup>28</sup>“India claims to have struck ‘biggest training camp of JeM in Balakot’,” *DAWN*, February 26, 2019, available at <https://www.dawn.com/news/1466149>, accessed on March 19, 2019.

<sup>29</sup>Samia Majeed, “Case Study: Pakistan India Conflict- Cross Border Skirmishes At LOC,” *Bahria University Tribune*, April 1, 2019, available at <https://bahria.edu.pk/butribune/case-study-pakistan-india-conflict-cross-border-skirmishes-at-loc/>, accessed on April 1, 2019.

accepted risks of crossing nuclear threshold. Indian crisis reaction made the stand-off more dangerous.

The Balakot strike and ensuing crisis was aimed at instituting deterrence in three manners. The first and most obvious was by India imposing costs through punishment. By claiming to demolish Jaish-e Muhammad facility, India attempted to inflict costs on Pakistan, hoping that it would deter Pakistan. For punishment to work, however, India tried to impose unacceptable, possibly existential costs. However, Indian air strikes failed to achieve their targets.

Secondly, India tried to build up deterrence by deliberately crossing the threshold and asserting its determination to rebuff Pakistan from escalation. Ever since last few decades, India has made military move from cannon duels to on-ground strikes, particularly in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. This time, with an air strike in Balakot, India heightened both vertically and horizontally - it demonstrated that it would not restrict to air strikes in PAK only but would also target Khyber Pakhtunkwa.

This was a critical limit to cross. It sets a point of reference that Indian military strikes are limited to geography now. This was a critical escalation from the 2016 post-Uri attack, which itself crossed the threshold. However, India still had to confine escalation as per its estimation. India's foreign secretary, in reporting the strike, clarified it happened in an uninhabited region to stay away from regular citizen setbacks. India explained that it was attempted against a non-military target and hence not against the Pakistani state. India legitimized its assault as a pre-emptive activity against an impending risk. The third conceivable way the crisis may have set up prevention was by "escalation risk" for two sides. The brisk cycle of military action and reaction on Feb. 26 and 27 raised the

phantom of general as well as nuclear war, which persuaded the two sides to de-escalate. Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan distinctly cautioned, "with the weapons you have and we have, can we afford a miscalculation?" He called for talks and released the Indian pilot immediately. The two sides returned to cross-LoC firings.

Pakistan de-escalated the crisis in 2016 as well. In both 2016 and 2019, Pakistan was clearly reacting to the danger of an uncontrolled war, instead of any direct strategic costs forced by India.<sup>30</sup> In the two cases, it was Indian activity that started stand-off. This control of hazard may direct Pakistani conduct in manners that cost-burden never has.

Hence,, Indian bluffs are probably not going to affect Pakistan's war-fighting strategy. Pakistan has already detained personnel of Jaish-e-Muhammad in order to facilitate peace talks with India. However, Pakistan cannot be blamed for every attack on Indian military forces in the Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK). The reaction is indigenous as a result of Indian brutal use of force and human rights violations in the valley against *Kashmiris*.<sup>31</sup> Concern over risk did keep the crisis from escalating any further. Pakistan is also hoping a more pragmatically altered behavior of India towards

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<sup>30</sup>Michael Safi, Mehreen Zahra-Malik and Azhar Farooq, "'Get ready for our surprise': Pakistan warns India it will respond to airstrikes," *The Guardian*, February 27, 2019, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/26/pakistan-india-jets-breached-ceasefire-line-kashmir-bomb>, accessed on March 14, 2019.

<sup>31</sup>Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018, and General Human Rights Concerns in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan," *UNHR*, June 14, 2018, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IN/DevelopmentsInKashmirJune2016ToApril2018.pdf>, accessed on August 29, 2018.

Indo-Pak crisis. In fact, mishandling of the Balakot crisis by India has once again reaffirmed Pakistan's unflinching rise on its ideational foundation as a sovereign responsible state. On the other hand, due to inherent hubris belief of India as a major political, economic and strategic power, India is dangerously leaned towards taking extreme steps by crossing the redlines while destabilising the region. India in fact looks more in a hurry to unravel its *Hindutva* regime consequently making the reactions from Pakistan compulsively detrimental. Similarly, the escalation criteria of the future stand-off will be established thenceforth if deterrence is presumably absent. According to many experts the key choice in India-Pakistan stand-offs has been India's disregard of peace ventures and prolonged crisis. Any Indian military activity was nearly ventured to release a relentless cycle of escalation. Earlier, Indian reaction has been reasonably controlled, picking not to strike back after a crisis. India's reaction on "26/11" Mumbai attacks was more realistic though the policy of blame game was instant and unfounded. However, a gradual change in the most recent crisis identified certain key options at each level of the stand-off. India retaliated and Pakistan responded, with air battle at the Line of Control. Both India and Pakistan stopped. Pakistan particularly offered peace gestures, and India could not escalate the crisis under international pressure. Both had strong incentives to de-escalate after their point was clearly conveyed to each other. The people of both India and Pakistan were also informed of their abilities and policies through their demonstrative attacks. Furthermore, post-Pulwama stand-off between India and Pakistan unfolded yet another crisis escalation paradox which underlines the conventional conflict between two states under the nuclear umbrella. India had already tried to test and prove viable off-ramps at various levels of escalation ladder, aimed at incentivizing India to opt for probable crises with strict military attacks. India intentionally tries to initiate and then escalate the crisis in order to

bring down the nuclear threshold. India seems to have no fear of inevitable escalation and is overconfident of its ability to de-escalate the crisis but on its own terms. The repercussions could be massive. If any state, either India or Pakistan, miscalculates probable reactions, both states can reach to a no-return point of escalation

In the February 27 crisis, India believes that it has discovered a way through by conventionally conflicting on a situation with Pakistan but not letting it escalate to a nuclear level. India tried to advocate its Cold Start Doctrine and aspires to empower it as well by making some sound arrangements for its implementation. With this backdrop, India might try to create high risks in a crisis in the future as well and in the following emergency may introduce new mobilization processes to intensify risk to an unprecedented level.

Pakistan, on the other hand, remained rational and gave well thought out reaction in order to avoid letting the crisis escalate to nuclear level. Nevertheless, if India crosses Pakistan's red lines, Pakistan will have to react to protect its territorial sovereignty granted in international law. If the Indian Army insists and continues to believe in Pakistan's nuclear programme as a bluff, it might be tempted to escalate more boldly. Next time, India's actions may not allow Pakistan to calmly de-escalate

Pakistan has emerged militarily more forceful after the 2016 and 2019 Indian reactions despite its conventional imbalance with India. Like that of the claimed 2016 assault, India's 2019 strike at Balakot could not constrain Pakistan to counter. In future, however, Indian adventurism could result in lowering the nuclear threshold even more. Despite the hawkish celebrations by Indians, India has not been able to attain much to stand strategically taller than it assumed. It has in fact, generated risk and mistrust between the

two countries. Risk could have been productive if it was dealt deftly. India however, could not deter Pakistan. India with few other viable options for deterrence, increasingly enamored by military swashbuckling and encouraged by the United States, may be seduced by competitive risk-taking once again. This could be consequential.

In conclusion, Pakistan arch-enemy India focuses entirely on brandishing nuclear risks to ensure its national security, so a more dangerous spiral is waiting to happen – and a rising India has a lot to lose.

### **What it means for the Region**

As noted earlier, these two doctrines and dominant strategic thinking have all the required ingredients to trigger nuclear war and to accelerate arms race in the region. Efforts to maintain peace as they existed prior to Indian polity was swamped with war mongering, sabre rattling and revisionist BJP, it is no longer effective to guide and help normalize relations between the two rival countries.

Under the new governments, policies as well as their logical underpinnings have taken a new turn. The desire of establishing Indian hegemony over the region now dictates the policies of India.

In this context, Pakistan is being pushed into a situation where it is bound to face a security dilemma from its neighborhood. Consequently, it would compel Pakistan to divert its resources to build its strength in terms of both: conventional and strategic buildup. Besides this, as it is mentioned in the Land Warfare Doctrine, India is investing more to reach to an advantageous position regarding non-contact warfare. India is contaminating space, cyber and information spheres with its heinous designs.

Towards this end, Pakistan is bound to respond. If it continues the way it is now happening, it will lead to a new facet of arms race in the region.

This military buildup won't come without any cost. It will definitely cost human welfare in the region. Major chunk of budget will be allocated to the arms build-up and poverty will continue to rule the region..

Hopes of peace and regional integration have emerged after CPEC (China Pak Economic Corridor) was initiated and it was destined to integrate the region economically.. To the disappointment of those who have always strived to secure peace through economic interdependency and liberalization of regional economy, India has adopted a hostile line against this project. This response was not limited to rhetorical opposition, rather it has brought into practice by means of supporting non-state actors in Pakistan through Afghanistan and Iran as well. Attempts to fuel terrorist activities have been made in Baluchistan, Karachi and Tribal regions of the country. This kind of attitude would breed no good for the region. Both India and Pakistan will face the maximum strain. .It is therefore needed that International community and secular wing of Indian society should come forward to compel the ultra-nationalist factions grounded in the Indian politics of hatred and fear, to retreat.

### **Way Forward for Pakistan:**

Keeping in view the emanating threat from Indian force posture and force development, some of the policy recommendations for Pakistan are as follows:

- In order to counter the threat of surgical strikes from India, there is a need of Special Response Force, air power

readiness and strategy of denial at conventional level. Pakistan needs to ensure that there is no gap in deterrence at every level (Full Spectrum Deterrence-FSD), including plugging holes in conventional level. As it has been observed during the recent standoff, quick response from Pakistan Air force denied Indian planes to carry out any damage except releasing their payload in an uninhabited place and pushed them out of Pakistani airspace.

- Cyber command is the 5th important dimension of military forces. For Pakistan, there is a need to constitute an additional and an exclusive cyber command for the armed forces of Pakistan including a computer emergency response team (CERT). For cyber-space capabilities, Pakistan needs to cooperate more with China.
- For having a semi 'Assured Second Strike Capability', Pakistan should ensure hardening of nuclear sites-silos together with striving for nuclear submarines. It should also look for the survivable second strike capability.
- Indo-Pak engagement seems impossible in near future yet the efforts should be made to bring them on the table. Intelligence sharing and some communication channels must be opened. To mutually articulate and agree upon diplomatic frameworks for cooperation on evidence sharing and access to prosecutors and investigators the dialogue process is the only viable mean. The technicalities of such cooperation can be mutually deliberated by sitting together only.
- U.S and Russia's relations with India are in their national interests, and as long as those do not affect Pakistan, this should not concern Pakistan. Similarly, the US should see Pakistan's relations with China in the same context and accept them as long as it does not affect its interests. Russia



is India's traditional partner, and the latter cannot be disengaged with Russia. However, Pakistan should maintain and strengthen its diplomatic ties with Russia.

- Pakistan must engage with the US administration. It should work to restore the economic aid and project its point of view in an effective way to make the US government understand that today's multi-polar world presents numerous challenges. Pakistan has to balance its relations with China, Russia and the US.
- Pakistan needs to utilize its diplomatic channels proactively. As one of the diplomatic tactics, Pakistan should propose a 'Trilateral Summit'. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was created to promote integration in South Asia but unfortunately it is not very effective and the situation is not expected to change in the near future. However, forums like Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) must be availed for rapprochement and sustaining bilateral engagements.
- Finally, economic condition of the country should be addressed noticeably and on complimentary basis. During last five years, the high level of foreign exchange reserves has been built solely on foreign loans. The proposed 'Make in Pakistan' drive and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with its Special Economic Zones certainly offer a ray of hope for breaking out of the low-level growth equilibrium. Better economy will bring Pakistan at a parity level with India to meet conventional imbalance and come to talking terms.

In the absence of a published national security strategy, a publicly released joint doctrine of the Indian Armed Forces could have been a key document in understanding the Indian national security

strategy towards Pakistan as well. Wars today have, however, become less rational and the potential costs are far greater. JDIAF-2017 itself notes that India has to be prepared to influence the world with its geography and all elements of national power. A pre-emptive nuclear strike or joint operations by India would be very difficult but not impossible (as seen in recent episode). Due to India's evolving nuclear and conventional posture and acquisition of technology from the US and Israel as well as indigenous development of its assets, the indicators of offensive strategy are worrisome. It does create a quandary for stakeholders in Pakistan at two levels. Firstly, it will be difficult to decipher and differentiate various levels of thresholds and to identify the nuanced magnitude of these bordering lines, which may include nuclear retaliation as a possible scenario. Secondly, it engenders the paradox of creating a balance between clarity and vagueness of the level to which a stated policy could be translated into practice. To this end, Pakistan's stated doctrine of full-spectrum deterrence, for its credible execution, requires no less than the cautious expansion of conventional capabilities of armed forces in addition to nuclear strength. In furtherance to this, a coherent strategy to fight non-contact warfare and improvements in terms of introducing technological advancements are required to keep threats from professed Indian military modernization at bay.