



# VISION

VISIONARY INSIGHTS INTO THE STRATEGIC INQUESTS OF NATIONS

## SVI FORESIGHT

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 11  
NOVEMBER 2017

Compiled & Edited by:  
S. Sadia Kazmi

**Strategic Vision Institute**  
**Islamabad**

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**STRATEGIC VISION**  
I N S T I T U T E

**Strategic Vision Institute (SVI)**

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## **Strategic Vision Institute (SVI)**

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Strategic Vision Institute (SVI) is an autonomous, multidisciplinary and non-partisan institution, established in January 2013. It is a non-governmental and non-commercial organization, administered by a Board of Governors (General Body) supervised under a Chairperson and administered by a Management Committee headed by a President/Executive Director.

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

## **SVI Foresight**

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

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## *Editor's Note*

*SVI Foresight* for the month of November covers a wide range of significant contemporary strategic and security issue. In this volume, one can find an article talking at length about the prospects of NSG membership of the non-NPT states. It is a known fact that the US has extensively lobbied with the countries of the world to accommodate India in to the club. This all began post- Indo US nuclear deal. Previously, several countries, apart from China, defied the US pressure and insisted on a two-step approach for admission of non-NPT states and development of an objective and equitable criteria which would be applicable to all future applicants. Therefore, this write-up provides a review of the NSG meetings where so far there seems to be a stalemate on the decision regarding the fate of non-NPT states' membership.

Another article in this issue highlights the impact of Nirbhay missile test by India on the deterrence stability of the South Asian region. Nirbhay is India's recently test fired, most sophisticated long-range subsonic cruise missile. These mounting Indian tests and experiments day by day are moving towards severe consequences with regards to strategic stability and regional security of South Asia is concerned. The nuclear arms and missiles competition offers a typical case of security dilemma whereby security of one state's action causes insecurity for the other state and the security augmenting measures of other state makes the first one insecure. A better guiding principle for both 'South Asian neighbors would be to undertake confidence building measures aimed at avoiding inadvertence and non-attack on each other's command and control centers and communication infrastructures to ensure the mutuality of deterrence.' The readers will find this article specifically helpful in developing better understanding of the concept of missiles and arms race and strategic stability of the South Asian region.

While discussing the rationale behind the development of Pakistan's Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicles (MIRVs) technology, the author of one the articles debates that this measure by Pakistan was essential to maintain its deterrence credibility. Even though it is believed that the advent of MIRVs will intensify the strategic competition in South Asia. The region is home to belligerent Nuclear Neighbors that are continuously involved in conventional and non-conventional military build-up to achieve security against each other. But, what is making the region more significant, in the eyes of International community is the ongoing nuclear arms race and the lack of escalation control mechanism between India and Pakistan. Recent development of Ballistic Missile Defences by India to secure credibility of its deterrence

resulted in the ripple effect of which the MIRV technology emerged only as a by-product. The main argument maintains that whatever Pakistan has done so far to strengthen its forces is an attempt to secure itself from the Indian ambitiousness. Whether it was the decision of going nuclear or developing low yield weapons, every action was defensive rather than offensive. So far, Pakistan is doing everything in its reach to make nuclear deterrence work against the enemy that is ambitious to outgrow it. Finally, it is believed by the author that to develop MIRV technology at its fullest for strengthening the credibility of nuclear deterrence, Pakistan needs to invest in its space programs.

Cyber security and the need to have awareness in this domain has been highlighted in yet another article included in this issue. Development in Cyber Space has taken the world by storm because of its accessibility to the masses, and it being relatively economical in comparison to the other technological revolutions. Today billions of people are using cyberspace worldwide as compared to 16 million users nearly twenty years ago. Hence it is important that a state must secure its virtual boundary along with its physical borders. Therefore, it is important for the policy makers in Pakistan to understand the importance of securitizing cyber domain, as this is the technology that contributed 4 trillion in world's economy in 2016 and is connecting billions of people around the world. Also, cyber domain has a potential to inflict damages and changes to our finite world that we hold dear and is of great importance to us.

Some other articles included in this issue include a useful commentary on the current state of Pak-US relations especially in the wake of Rex Tillerson's visit to the South Asian region, Cyber securitization and Pakistan's capabilities, the Implications of SCO membership for Pakistan specifically the fact that this success doesn't come without huge responsibilities which Pakistan must deliver on, the role of religious parties particularly the Muttahida Majlis e Amal in the politics of a state, CPEC as an opportunity for not just China and Pakistan but for Afghanistan as well, and an interesting debate on if and why the CPEC project needs more transparency on the part of the government of Pakistan.

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](#).

Senior Research Associate  
Syedah Sadia Kazmi



## ***NSG Special Group Meeting: Bleak Chances of Success***

### ***Beenish Altaf***

With the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) Plenary meeting of June 2017 failure to come-up with a criteria for the inclusion of new states into the group of nuclear commerce, the Chair announced his willingness to meet again on the agenda in November 2017. The issue of “Technical, Legal and Political Aspects of the Participation of non-NPT States in the NSG,” were in the discussion points of the 27th Plenary Meeting that was held in Bern, Switzerland, on 22nd and 23rd June 2017. Now, as the NSG special group meeting of November is approaching, the fingers are crossed once again with regards to the non-NPT state’s membership issue.

It is a known fact that the US is lobbying and pressurizing rest of the states in order to accommodate India into the club, and this all began post Indo-US nuclear deal. Previously, several countries, apart from China, were defying US pressure and insisting on a two-step approach for admission of non-NPT states and development of an objective and equitable criteria which would be applicable to all future applicants. Therefore, this write-up is an important review in view of the forthcoming NSG meeting wherein country’s positions/stances seem to be stalemated.

### **Stalemate Sustained**

In Pakistan, the foreign policy and diplomacy experts believe that the deadlock between Pakistan and India over securing entry into the exclusive NSG is likely to continue at the forthcoming NSG meeting. Pakistan’s former Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva and at the Conference on Disarmament said that given the diverse issues, a stalemate on applications of India and Pakistan is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. There is no change in sight nor expected in the positions taken by the US and China on this issue. Similarly looking into the contemporary geo-political environment and diplomatic channels, there is no chance of a consensus emerging on the subject.

### **Cause of Controversy**

Actually, India and Pakistan both are not Party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which constitutes an important consideration for the NSG membership. It is one of the obligations under the NSG guidelines (although not legal) in order to be part of the Treaty and for being eligible for inclusion into the nuclear commerce. There are certain other controversial pointers too including signing of CTBT, separation of civil and military installations etc. Nevertheless, up till now, no consensus could be reached and the decision remained pending for more than a year now.

### **Upshots in case of unfair decision**

The stubborn efforts of the United States to manage nuclear trade with India and make it a permanent member of the NSG will undoubtedly diminish Pakistan’s place in the nonproliferation regime. Likewise, Pakistan’s probability of entering into the nuclear mainstream or emerging to a recognized

nuclear stature will be closed permanently if only India got induced into the regime leaving Pakistan behind. Conversely, Pakistan could also be viewed as a prospective candidate for the nuclear trade's permanent member on its own merits, better than or equivalent to India.

### **An Adjustable Criteria**

The criteria as was advocated in the Grossi's proposal would not work anymore as it was not able to break the logjam in the process of NSG membership. Especially because it has nothing new to oblige India for any additional non-proliferation commitments. The only requirement of the hour is for the international community to develop a criteria or case on multilateral basis, with due considerations of strategic interests of all the parties involved with the goal of balancing them. It will ultimately aim at strengthening the non-proliferation regime. In doing so, the rigidity on the stance of signing of the NPT as a pre-requisite needs to be compromised, if eager to bring-in new states into the NSG club. The international community is well aware of the fact that India will never sign the NPT and hence neither will Pakistan. Accordingly, a little flexibility is needed to bring in the criteria set-in for inclusion of these states. Similarly, both states could be called to adopt a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing, a declared separation plan of military and civil installations, a prerequisite commitment of bringing in all the civil facilities (currently operating and future facilities) under the IAEA safeguards agreement, and the adoption of an IAEA's additional protocol.

As the NSG guidelines are not legal and welcome revisions, it can be altered and adjusted on favorable terms by mutual consensus. As for now, the stalemate needs to break down otherwise the outcome of this forthcoming meeting would also be nothing as the results of previous meetings and plenaries was a failure. Today, the NSG politics has gone beyond energy and economic gains and is perceived a medium to enhance the outlook and power status of a state.

<http://foreignpolicynews.org/2017/11/08/nsg-special-group-meeting-bleak-chances-success/>

## *Straining Pak-US Relations*

### *Qura tul ain Hafeez*

A friend in need is a friend indeed. However, in case of US-Pak relations, this proverb may prove wrong. Pakistan assumed itself a good friend of the US for the last couple of decades. But the current scenario shows that there is a shift in the US policy towards South Asian Allies. Today it clearly does not acknowledge this friendship or the past efforts made by Pakistan for War on Terror (WOT).

There was a time when the US was supporting Pakistan against the terrorist groups while Pakistan too did a remarkable job in the WOT, which is continuing till date. However, recently instead of recognizing the efforts and sacrifices made by Pakistan, the US ambassador to the UN called Pakistan “a state sponsoring terrorism” and that “Washington cannot tolerate any government that shelters terrorists”. Perhaps, the US is now chastising Pakistan because of its new regional friend i.e. India.

While ignoring Pakistan’s efforts and hard work in WOT, the US alliance with India became stronger, thus resulting in the Indo-US nuclear deal and NSG waiver. It allowed India to access international nuclear market. Instantaneously the US allowed India to embark upon massive militarization, and facilitated in establishing close relations with Afghanistan in the wake of bringing peace. Indo-US partnership is further evolving with the major aim to counter China. Moreover it reveals an operative solicitation for India to perform an even inordinate role in South Asian region. US unambiguously identify India’s domination over South Asia and wants India to become a regional safeguard. US ambassador to UN Nikki Haley gave a very harsh speech against Pakistan, which raised the concerns of Pakistani nation and hurt the sentiments of the Pakistani people who sacrificed their lives in the US’ imposed war against terrorism. Maybe, Nikki is being loyal to her parental country India as she belongs to an American Sikh family of Indian origin; however, the UN forum is not established for the demonstration of personal affiliations.

In her statement, she claimed that United States is “really going to need” India’s help in stabilizing Afghanistan”. In such a case, the question gets posed as to what has the US been doing in Afghanistan for the last 17 years? All the national security issues which Pakistan has been facing from past decades are due to its war against terrorism. To do further damage, India exploited the situation and sent a spy into Pakistan to carry out terrorist activities as is evident from the confession made by the spy.

Ms. Nikki is evidently buttering India while saying that, “US needs India’s help to keep an eye on Pakistan.” But one cannot be sorry to raise the questions such as “Is India really that much capable and does it deserve that respectable status to keep an eye on Pakistan? Here is an effective reminder for Ms. Haley in the face of Indian spies carrying out terrorist activities in Pakistan’s different areas, Kashmir, Baluchistan province, and near Pakistan’s boarder adjacent to Afghanistan. Starting from Sarabjit Singh,

Kashmir Singh, Ravindra Khushik, Sheikh Shammim to KhulbushanYadhav who have been responsible for terrorist attacks on Pakistan's soil.

Apparently India shows that it has been playing its part to manage instability in Afghanistan but actually Indian influence is becoming a primary source of instability and insecurity in Afghanistan as well as in Pakistan. This situation leads to various questions such as 'why India is doing so and why is the US supporting the cause? Are India and the US playing the policy of divide and rule? Both countries have their hegemonic interest in the region and India doesn't want Pakistan to influence the region owing to its deep rooted hostility with Pakistan.

The current scenario shows the unabated geo-strategic importance of Pakistan due to CPEC project. In the long term counter policies against China and Pakistan, India does not want Pakistan and Afghanistan to be united. Simultaneously, the US wants to contain China's presence in the region. Therefore, the US is using India as an instrumental counter-force against Chinese influence in the region.

Supporting her arguments the US ambassador to the UN said that "India is a nuclear power and nobody gives it a second thought. Why? Because India is a democracy that threatens no one". This statement has two aspects: One; does India really not threaten any one? According to an estimate of South Asian terrorism Portal 2014, there are more than 180 terrorist insurgents and extremist groups who have been operating in India for past 20 years. Moreover, as per the US' Department of State, most of them have been blacklisted by the US itself and the European Union in 2012. Moreover, Modi's government and NSCM-K is a declared terrorist organization as per India's Act of 1967. NSCN-K has resorted to terrorism by killing innocent civilians and security forces and engaging in other violent activities. A few years back Modi was blacklisted and prohibited to travel to the US. Then how can one expect from such government that sponsors terrorism, to keep an eye on a country with which it has been in a hostile relation since its independence. Keeping in mind the details mentioned above one cannot categorize India as a state that promotes peace without threaten any one.

While concluding the above analysis, one can infer that the US criterion for terrorism is very biased and it changes its allies with its changing interests with the passage of time. Pakistan has always been against terrorism and it will continue its efforts against this root cause to cure its national security objectives. The objective behind the US policies for Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, is to prevent these countries from enjoying prosperity. Because, once they rise they will become competitors against the US and its European allies.

<http://foreignpolicynews.org/2017/11/09/straining-us-pakistan-relations/>

## *India's Military Buildup: Challenges for Pakistan*

### *Anum Malik*

In recent times India has resorted to massive military buildup in both conventional and nuclear domains. Indo-US nexus has further bolstered India's modernization drive. The Indo-US nuclear deal and Indo-US strategic partnership facilitate India's military buildup that in turn increases security challenges for Pakistan.

India's economy is eight times bigger than that of Pakistan. A 2015 Credit Suisse report ranked India as the world's fifth largest military power. Moreover, according to a report by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), India remained the biggest arms importer during the period 2011-2015, accounting for 14% of the World's arms imports. All these facts coupled with India's growing belligerence towards Pakistan necessitate a credible response and efforts to maintain the fragile strategic stability in South Asia.

While India associates its military modernization with threats that it perceives from China's growing military and economic clout in the region and beyond, yet India's force posture and its military doctrines are Pakistan-centric. For instance, India's notorious Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) seeks to engage Pakistan in limited war below the nuclear threshold. Moreover, the latest Joint Armed Forces Doctrine (JAFD) is ominous as it envisions and formalizes the strategy of surgical strikes against alleged targets inside Pakistani territory. Such warmongering strategies espoused by India undermine the fragile strategic stability of South Asia and pose serious security threats to sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan.

Thus, India's growing ambitions and hegemonic designs have the potential to force its neighboring countries, particularly Pakistan to engage in a costly and dangerous arms race. But so far Pakistan has maintained unilateral restraint and expects the same from other neighboring countries including India. It has been a cardinal feature of Pakistan's foreign policy towards India that all unresolved issues including Kashmir should be resolved through negotiations and dialogue. But such a prospect seems bleak in the prevailing environment where India seeks international isolation of Pakistan and carries out subversive activities inside Pakistan through its proxies. In addition, international apathy towards Indian human rights violations and frequent cease fire violations has given India a free hand in pursuing its disastrous objectives of regional hegemony at the cost of peace and stability.

Unfortunately, this leaves Pakistan with the only option of making its deterrent capabilities more credible and robust so as to make it costly for India to engage in a war. It is in this backdrop that Pakistan's response towards India needs to be evaluated and recognized. Unlike India, Pakistan's relatively smaller

economy does not allow it to engage in a tit for tat response vis-à-vis India and hence it opts for cost effective strategies which serve the purpose of its security without incurring unaffordable damage to economy.

The strategic competition between India and Pakistan is evolving with India's exceeding conventional capabilities compelling Pakistan to rely on nuclear capabilities to manage the conventional asymmetry between them. Thus, Pakistan adopted 'Credible Minimum Full Spectrum Deterrence' capability in September 2013. This defensive posture aims at countering and neutralizing threats emanating from India.

The fact that strategic stability is an ever-changing phenomenon makes it harder to achieve and maintain. For instance, what India thinks as 'minimum' to counter China is always 'maximum' for Pakistan, consequently leading Pakistan to engage in a perpetual quest for strategic stability. India's military build-up and modernization has created a gap between the conventional and nuclear capabilities of India and Pakistan. This growing trend if unstopped will jeopardize the strategic stability of South Asia. Furthermore, Indian motives to wage a limited war under Pakistan's nuclear threshold created strategic and deterrence instability in the region. This asymmetric military build-up and adoption of India's CSD have pushed Pakistan to adopt 'Full Spectrum Deterrence' to restore strategic stability in South-Asia.

India's rapid arm-race has profound implications for regional and International security. It can severely harm the Asian balance of power. This situation can be improved in terms of stability and balance of power when India refrains from overspending in defence and instead engages in mutually beneficial course of action. In this regard an arms control agreement between India and Pakistan is need of the hour. Until such an eventuality Pakistan should rely on 'Full Spectrum Deterrence' to avert any unwanted adventurism from India.

Moreover, since both states have crippling human security related issues like abject poverty and illiteracy, it makes even more sense that the leadership in both countries think about improving the quality of life of their respective nations instead of resorting to war-hysteria and war mongering.

<http://foreignpolicynews.org/2017/11/09/indias-military-build-challenges-pakistan/>

## ***Pakistan's SCO Membership: Success with Liabilities***

***Babar Ali***

A few months ago, Pakistan successfully managed to secure the membership of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) which is, undoubtedly, a significant accomplishment for the country. Credit must be given to the drivers of Pakistan's foreign policy and owes to the multitude of reasons. However, Pakistan has much more to achieve via SCO platform because this membership has not only strengthened the regional position of Pakistan but at the same time has opened up various avenues of liabilities. Therefore, this achievement needs to be capitalised further as is frequently quoted "With great power comes great responsibility".

SCO membership is significant triumph for Pakistan for a number of reasons. Pakistan and China are already enjoying amicable relations in almost all spheres especially in the economic domain. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is the landmark project which is being materialised and is effectively taking this mutual relationship to further heights. China is leading the Shanghai Club and Pakistan's inclusion in this club is the remarkable addition to Pak-China relations.

There hasn't been any substantial economic activity or joint venture between Pakistan and Eurasian countries. This membership may provide an opportunity for Pakistan to enhance the trade volume and to launch the economic projects with Eurasian countries.

This success is also being considered as economic achievement because through this membership, Pakistan is getting back on the right economic track. Along with that, Pakistan may boost the cooperation in the fields of transportation and tourism as these fields are still untapped. Eurasian countries are also considered rich for tourism. Therefore, there is a wider space for joint ventures in tourism.

The SCO-membership also sends out a tacit message to the countries who have been attempting to diplomatically isolate Pakistan. The message is clear that their efforts are not going to bear any fruit in this regard. Pakistan's inclusion in SCO was the 'warm welcome' by member-states which explicitly illustrates the diplomatic strength of the country.

Moreover, India has also been included in the Shanghai Club which might give the chance to the two countries to sort out their bilateral issues by utilising the SCO forum. This could also be viewed in terms of diplomatic achievement for Pakistan as it was able to secure the membership in parallel with India.

However, this achievement doesn't come without major liabilities. Speaking at a briefing in Beijing on June 1, 2017, the spokesperson of Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Hua Chunying said that China

hoped Pakistan and India would improve bilateral relations after becoming the full members of SCO. “We hope that Pakistan and India will inject new impetus to the development of SCO.”

Pakistan must share its counter-terrorism experience with SCO member-states, especially Russia and the Central Asian states, for whom ‘terrorism, extremism and separatism’ have become an imminent threat. Such sharing on part of Pakistan may boost its position in SCO. Undoubtedly, sharing of this experience might be the most refined impetus to the development of SCO. Member-states, with the help of Pakistan, may propel to build a regional structure to counter the rising terrorism in which Pakistan may assume the leading role owing to its vast counter-terrorism exposure.

When it comes to cultural realm, Pakistan has more to do than India despite the fact that it enjoys peculiar socio-cultural diversity. Pakistan needs to put in vigorous efforts where it may offer cultural exchange ventures to deepen the ties with member-states, particularly with Eurasian belt.

As far as global scenario is concerned, SCO is a forum of eight member-states with two having the permanent membership of United Nation Security Council and four members are the nuclear power countries. Hence the SCO possesses the potential to influence the global order with these member states. SCO can ensure long-lasting peace and stability in the region by making joint efforts. Pakistan must endeavour to lead such efforts.

Pakistan should establish an institute devoted to formulating the policies attributed to member-states. Furthermore, the institute can propose different initiatives for Pakistan that will help it play critical regional and global role. Pakistan can advance itself in club by utilising those initiatives that may serve the region in terms of peace and prosperity. Expanding the role of SCO, Pakistan and member states may also work for peace in Afghanistan. In short, by securing the membership, Pakistan ascribed itself with greater responsibilities and it must be looking forward to fulfilling these responsibilities with dedication, commitment and diplomatic vigour.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/136562/pakistans-sco-membership-success-liabilities/>



## ***Rex Tillerson's Recent Visit to South Asia: Politics and Policies***

***Ubaid Ahmed***

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's recent visit to South Asia, which included Afghanistan, Pakistan and India has been proven to be a failed attempt at leaping forward in endeavours for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan, as the United States continued with its hegemonistic designs to foist its strategies forcefully.

Tillerson's visit had been hailed and praised as vital for initiating a regional peace process and for Afghan security. However his short sojourn in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, and undermining articulations against the latter, which has been its most vital partner in Afghanistan, has disappointed many in Pakistan.

It was Rex Tillerson's maiden visit to Pakistan as Secretary of State following Trump's election to the oval office. Thus, many optimists were anticipating that his visit would be a fruitful opportunity to restart bilateral cooperation for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. This is because peace and stability in Pakistan is directly linked to peace in the former. But the visit proved to be an utter disappointment as Tillerson once again pointed finger at Pakistan for its alleged inaction against certain terrorist groups. He placed emphasis on Trump's call for the country to 'Do More' in eradicating terrorism which is a problem within its borders, and which 'can lead to a threat to Pakistan's own stability.'

Many Pakistani analysts believe that Pakistan genuinely needs a brisk and dependable answer to the Afghanistan issue as it is specifically influencing its security and economy. However it is disappointing that the US government is persistently pointing the finger at Pakistan and making it a scapegoat for its own failures in Afghanistan.

Tillerson's statements against Pakistan, which is an important stakeholder in the Afghanistan issue, was just a misplaced attempt to please a third party.

And that is India, which is one of the greatest buyers of US made arms. Yet it can't be useful in comprehending the issue. Though Tillerson's visit has set a tone of optimism for growing Indo-US ties and a vision of shared strategic convergence alongside his meetings in India but India needs to be cautious, given some of the contrary and perturbed policy indications that have come from President Trump and his administration in the last few months. Tillerson may want India as a friend but what does Trump want?

Even the long awaited strategy on Afghanistan pronounced by Trump carried in it an overt threat to India which stated that India is 'making billions' in trade with the US, thus it is required to help the US more. Particularly 'in the areas of economic assistance and development', this might mean India has to cooperate or get itself prepared for something else.

However, the current volatility and incoherence in US foreign policy is one of a kind. A few months earlier it was widely reported that Tillerson belittled Trump as a 'moron' and rumours thrived that his

resignation was imminent, though these reports were denied by the Secretary of State later on. But New Delhi must keep this in mind while evaluating Tillerson's exuberant projections of Indo-US ties.

However, the visit has by and large proven to be a failure as it failed to bring any diplomatic breakthrough regarding the Afghan issue and what came out as a bi-product was an assertive China. This is because the rise of a more capable and assertive China remains the single most important driver of the growing partnership between Washington and New Delhi.

Although, it would be an utter injustice to call Pakistan's foreign office dysfunctional yet there are many flaws in Pakistani foreign policy amid foreign policy which need to be addressed. Pakistani foreign policy is based too much on geography thus leading to an exclusion of other variables chiefly economy and a fine display of a 'soft power' image. It is an unavoidable truth that Pakistan's narrative has failed to connect with US policy makers. Thus, understanding the American thought line process must be analyzed, revised and a new narrative needs to be developed.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/138294/rex-tillersons-recent-visit-south-asia-politics-policies/>

## ***Politics of Nuclear Suppliers Group: Pakistan's Options***

***Asma Khalid***

Politics of Nuclear Suppliers Group has proved that the international system never works on moral values and merits; it is based on interests of the states. NSG has gained attention of global community when India and Pakistan applied for membership of this nuclear cartel. India and Pakistan are determined to join the NSG to acquire new kind of high-tech nuclear related trade and technologies.

The Nuclear Suppliers Group is a body of 48 states, aims to export nuclear-related material for peaceful purposes and prohibits the Nuclear Proliferation for military use. India and Pakistan have applied to get the membership of the NSG for two reasons. First, inclusion would help them to become a part of international arena, where norms of nuclear commerce will provide access to sophisticated foreign nuclear technologies. Second, through membership of the group both states would be recognized as responsible nuclear states.

The United States and several other countries are supporting NSG membership. Although many states are supporting India for the NSG membership bid but few states, such as China and certain European states, are against this idea. These states are demanding non-discriminatory and criteria based approach. Under the NSG guidelines, a non-NPT state cannot get the membership of the group. This aspect has made India's NSG bid into a difficult task despite many efforts. China and other European states have concerns that considering India, which is not party to Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), will deteriorate the credibility of both the group and nonproliferation regime.

It is believed that the NSG membership of India and Pakistan revolves around the major power politics. India has been granted the status of special waiver whereas Pakistan is facing discriminatory attitude of major powers. The most ironic aspect of this issue is that the NSG was established in response to India's nuclear explosion to stop nuclear proliferation and now its entry is being strongly supported by major powers of the group. Additionally, other initiatives such as Grossi's proposal to support India's NSG bid has clearly defined the biasness of global power's politics. Therefore, NSG politics are shaping up to be perilous for nuclear diplomacy because irony of the issue is that NSG was established after NPT failed to hamper India from conducting nuclear explosion.

The International community should follow principled approach and treat the nuclear status of India-Pakistan equally. However, India is enjoying the exceptional treatment from various countries that are part of this group while leaving Pakistan at a disadvantage. It is imperative to understand that granting membership to India and not to Pakistan would disturb the strategic stability and inject the never ending nuclear arms race in the region. So, to secure the membership of nuclear cartel and to develop the favorable criteria, Pakistan needs to take multiple measures. These measures are as follows:

Pakistan needs to adopt more proactive foreign policy and diplomacy to cater the support for Pakistan's bid in nuclear group. Though China's official stance supports Pakistan's candidature but it is

important for Pakistan to maintain its resilience and sustainability in its strategy regarding membership of nuclear cartel. In this regard Pakistan should start a diplomatic campaign to convince the other NSG members of its needs and capabilities.

Economic engagement and need to project itself as a great economic incentive for other states would also be a good strategy for Pakistan to adopt. Thus, Pakistan should sign agreement for civil nuclear cooperation with other states, while focusing on economic progress to attract other nuclear vendors to discover commercial advantages in the country.

In future, the US and India will increase their efforts to convince member states including China to support India's membership application without considering the impact of such policies on South Asian strategic stability and global efforts of non-proliferation. Accordingly, knowing India's vigorous efforts to disturb the balance of power in the region, it is necessary for Pakistan to take measures to enhance its capabilities in order to ensure the strategic stability and regional security.

Thus, NSG politics is reflective of United States discriminatory approach to support India's membership which is deeply rooted in its own geostrategic and geo-economics interests. The membership of NSG is significant for Pakistan, but standing against the discrimination is imperative. As well as, the discriminatory approach of NSG member states has significant implications for the credibility of the nuclear cartel and its ability to support non-proliferation norms and international security. To conclude, Pakistan should remember that global politics are based on interest and there are no permanent friends in global politics. So Instead of relying only on China, Pakistan's policy makers should approach other NSG states to seek support for membership of nuclear cartel.

<http://foreignpolicynews.org/2017/11/14/politics-nuclear-suppliers-group-pakistans-options/>

## *MIRVs and Pakistan's Nuclear Deterrence*

*Ahyousha Khan*

It is believed that advent of Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicles (MIRVs) will intensify the strategic competition in South Asia. The region is home to belligerent nuclear neighbors that are continuously involved in conventional and non-conventional military build-up to achieve security against each other. But, what makes the region more significant, in the eyes of International community is nuclear arms race and lack of escalation control mechanism between India and Pakistan. Recent development of Ballistic Missile Defenses by India to secure its deterrence credibility has caused ripple effects of which the MIRV technology is only a by-product. MIRVs are considered as a technological solution to counter BMDs. So, owing to the mentioned fact, Pakistan developed and tested its first MIRV named Ababeel in January 2017. As MIRVs are considered as hard target kill, it means they must not only be very accurate but should entail numerical value to destroying enemies' hardened silos. In addition, MIRVs are considered as force multipliers because they entail many missiles in one delivery vehicles. So far MIRV technology is only achievable in ballistic missiles.

Considering Indian technological capabilities regarding hard target kill and its BMD program, development of MIRV by Pakistan was the need of the hour. Even then, Pakistan is criticized by international community for developing MIRVs because they are viewed as hard-target-kill weapons and have potential to change nuclear deterrence postures. Moreover, it is also believed that MIRVs play role in intensifying the arms race because more number of missiles are required in one weapon. In view of, unstable strategic stability in South Asia, the international scholars consider development of MIRV as offensive move. Furthermore, they fear that MIRVs give rise to pre-emptive strikes options to avoid destruction of one's own nuclear arsenals.

However, whatever Pakistan has done so far to strengthen its forces is actually an attempt to secure itself from Indian ambitiousness. Whether it was the decision of going nuclear or developing low yield weapons, every action was defensive rather than offensive. Rationale behind development of offensive technology like MIRVs by Pakistan also lies in securing its deterrence credibility against India. So far, Pakistan is doing everything in its reach to make nuclear deterrence work against the enemy that is ambitious to outgrow it.

Therefore, Pakistan has developed MIRVs because India already possessed the capability of MIRVing, though it has not officially tested and declared it. But, when it comes to security matters, states assess their enemies on the basis of capabilities not intentions and this is what Pakistan has been doing. Moreover, with advanced ISR capabilities, space program and dual capable delivery systems, India already has an edge over Pakistan which is destabilizing for nuclear deterrence between both the states. In addition, BMD technology possessed by India against Pakistani ballistic missiles is damaging for the credibility of Pakistan's delivery vehicles; that are tasked to reach in enemy's area during any conflict or war.

Internationally, whenever Pakistan has elaborated on its threat perception vis-à-vis India, it has faced criticism on being Indo-phobic. But, if Indian military developments – infatuation with surgical strikes, SSBNs, CSD, ISR and Cyber capabilities are to be analyzed, one cannot reject Pakistan’s claim regarding its security threats from India.

Furthermore, MIRVs were established by soviets and the US because of their cost effectiveness against spending large amounts in the construction of massive missile launcher. India developed BMD because it is huge a economy and has vast resources unlike Pakistan. In response MIRVs are developed by Pakistan, which not only ensures element of credibility in Pakistan’s deterrence posture but are also cost-effective considering small economy of Pakistan. So, why economical option that world powers like the US and USSR utilized, should not be considered by Pakistan, when its nuclear deterrence is under stress from growing Indian capabilities.

MIRVing by Pakistan is considered as destabilizing, but there are other subjective interpretations of the situations. Mostly, these interpretations are not brought under the light by international spectators. As far as the South Asian strategic stability is concerned, Pakistan’s MIRVing capability is a positive addition. It will provide Pakistan with options that were not available to Pakistan before, regarding retaliatory capabilities and to keep India at bay Pakistan has to rely on low yield weapons. Moreover, regional instability is linked with offense-defence imbalance, with the development of MIRVs by Pakistan, both states are enjoying balance vis-à-vis each other. Situation would have been threatening, if one of the rivals -India or Pakistan- didn’t have MIRV capability against the other.

Last but not the least, to develop MIRV technology at its fullest for strengthening the credibility of nuclear deterrence, Pakistan needs to invest in its space programs.

<http://foreignpolicynews.org/2017/11/14/mirvs-pakistans-nuclear-deterrence/>

## *Playing Smart with Iran*

*Nisar Ahmed*

The significance of Gen Bajwa's trip to Iran last week cannot be underestimated. Not least because it reflects the increasing maturity on the part of the Pakistani leadership. Meaning that Islamabad has recognised the need for friendly ties with its neighbours, especially against the backdrop of mounting regional uncertainties and the ever-constant terrorist threat. On the agenda were a whole range of issues pertaining to prevailing geostrategic dynamics, such as: management of the Pakistan-Iran border, the Afghan endgame and terrorism. Also on the table were bilateral trade relations.

Yet the real importance of the visit may be measured in terms of two important developments representing increased security and foreign policy challenges not just for Pakistan — but also for Iran, South Asia and the entire Middle East.

The first being Donald Trump's so-called new South Asia policy that has at its core a greater role for India in Afghanistan. This has naturally caused much strategic anxiety for Pakistan. The second relates to Washington's accelerated belligerence towards Iran that has seen Trump de-certifying the nuclear pact with that country.

Thus it is against such hostilities that Islamabad and Tehran are seeking to join hands. We share a 909-km-long border with Iran that separates the latter's Sistan-Balochistan province and our strategically important Balochistan province, home to Gwadar port. It is therefore hoped that the Army chief's visit will pave the way for a much needed border management mechanism as well as intelligence sharing aimed at preventing prevent-cross border infiltration, sporadic border skirmishes and the resultant breakdown of the bilateral relationship.

Pakistan is also cognisant of India's growing footprint in Iran in the form of Chabahar port; and this naturally represents a cause of concern for us. Therefore our reaching out to Tehran can be viewed through the prism of a careful regional balancing act vis-à-vis India. Fortunately for us, India's so-called strategic partnership with the US may be its 'undoing'.

Meaning that Iran may soon come to find New Delhi an unreliable partner; as it will unlikely wish to jeopardise relations with Washington in the long-term. Thus if the US and its allies decide to re-impose sanctions on Iran — India could well find it difficult to continue engaging with Tehran. Pakistan should be smart about things and endeavour to capitalise on this inherent weakness in Indo-Iran ties.

Afghanistan is yet another area that sees Pakistan and Iran on the same page, with both supporting the notion of an 'Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace settlement'. By sharp contrast, it is here that Iranian and Indian interests become divergent. Since the long-term US presence in Afghanistan is detrimental to Tehran's strategic interests in the energy rich and land-locked Central Asian region — it wants nothing more than to see a complete and immediate withdrawal of American troops. India, on the other hand, may not welcome such a development now that it has been promised an expanded role in

Afghanistan and beyond. Thus with New Delhi destined to kowtow to the US — Pakistan is the natural partner of choice for the Iranians.

Yet none of this should be taken as an excuse for us to become complacent in our dealings with Iran. For the reality is that Pakistan is going to have to confront the daunting task of striking a regional balance between both Riyadh and Tehran.

The two countries are engaged in a dangerous and ongoing proxy war that continues to play out in the Middle East. This Saudi-Iranian enmity can be best thought of as Pakistan's Achilles heel. For although we share ideological affinity and strategic ties with Riyadh — we also share a long border with Tehran, home to the second largest Shia population. Therefore, taking sides between the two in the event of a potential conflict is entirely out of the question.

Thus in order to get the best out of engagement with Iran — Pakistan should pro-actively adopt the role of mediator between the two regional giants; while being mindful of maintaining neutrality. For this will surely cost us less than if we were to pick a side; any side. The best way forward for Pakistan is to therefore pursue an independent foreign policy; one that goes beyond the Saudi-Iranian binary. The way to do this to focus on strengthening our economic clout in the region. Luckily for us, CPEC represents just the ticket.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/139046/playing-smart-iran/>



## ***Cyber Securitization: Need of the Hour for Pakistan***

***Ahyousha Khan***

Security ensures survivability of a state. No state in history has survived without securing itself. However, what is security for a state is debatable.

But, most states consider they are secure if their physical boundaries are intact. Nevertheless, the invention of information technology and cyberspace has considerably changed these previous notions of security by the states.

Development in Cyber Space has taken the world by storm because of its accessibility to the masses, and it being relatively economical in comparison to the other technological revolutions. Today billions of people are using cyberspace worldwide as compared to 16 million users nearly twenty years ago. Hence it is important that a state must secure its virtual boundary along with its physical borders.

Pakistan is a third world country; it is in a region that is prone to conflicts, war, and terrorism. Since its independence, Pakistan has been facing many interstate and intrastate conflicts. However, largely throughout the history, Pakistan considers security from external aggression its main security concern.

But, 21st century brought the biggest technological revolution in the form information technology. Like every other state, for the sake of globalization and to remain relevant in international system Pakistan adopted the information technology as well. Now, although, Pakistan is a developing state almost 10% of its population is using cyberspace and 8.97 % is accessing the virtual world through mobile phones. Threats to Pakistan's national security are growing as its dependency on cyberspace is increasing. Moreover, these threats faced by Pakistan are multidimensional rather than one-dimensional.

If we are to analyze Pakistan's cyber threat landscape, it is diverse and dynamic. It includes not only a threat of external aggression but makes a country prone to cyber terrorism and cyber crimes as well. It is true that Pakistan is located in a region where good relations with neighbors are not practiced rather regional competition based upon historical grievances is considered as a normal practice.

So, under widespread regional security practices in South Asia, the biggest threat to Pakistan's cybersecurity is its counterpart's constant obsession with exploiting lower levels of the threshold of strategic stability. India, with its vision of digitalization of whole nation, is achieving cyber capabilities rapidly. However, unlike Pakistan, India is aware of emerging potential threats with growing digitalization of society and is preparing itself to deter these threats by developing the policy of cyber offense in its military doctrines.

Recently, India presented its Joint Military Force Doctrine, in which India claims cybersecurity is achieving advantage against the enemy while denying it the same. It is not just the threat of cyber attack but also of cyber skirmishes that should worry Pakistan. According to estimates, 1600 websites were

hacked by India from 1999 to 2008. In 2013 Norwegian based firm discovered a cyber attack known as “operation hangover” that originated from India. The purpose was to attack sensitive information and gather militant, government and corporate data.

However, the threat from external aggression is not the only threat faced by Pakistan’s cyberspace.

Terrorism has its paws in the country’s cyberspace as well. It is the biggest tool of terrorist agencies for recruiting new members. But this is not the only purpose it is serving for the terrorists as they are utilizing the cyberspace to spread their narrative also. Moreover, Pakistani government cannot ignore the threats posed by terrorist organizations to the critical infrastructure of the state. With growing digitalization of Pakistan’s society, threats originating from cyberspace are becoming a reality. Now the society is vulnerable to not only external aggressor and terrorists but also criminals, who use cyberspace domain to achieve their targets.

Thus, the presence of cybersecurity perils should not remain ignored by oblivious Pakistani policymakers.

It would be unfair to declare that Pakistan has done nothing to secure its cyberspace. There have been some measures taken in this regard by the government. However, the point of concern in securing cyberspace is the politicization of the issue. So far the policy-making institutions in Pakistan have failed miserably to project cyber insecurity as an issue of existential threat to Pakistan’s security. What is happening in Pakistan is the politicization of the issue rather than its securitization. Government is sure that cybersecurity threats are emanating from the people engaged in raising their voices on social media. For this purpose, laws have been made which eventually suppress the freedom of expression. But, what is required is the realization that cyber insecurity is the threat of national level and it should be securitized at the same level otherwise Pakistan’s national security would be at stake.

Therefore, it is important for the policy makers in Pakistan to understand the importance of securitizing cyber domain, as this is the technology that contributed 4 trillion in world’s economy in 2016 and is connecting billions of people around the world. Also cyber domain has potential to inflict damages and changes to our finite world that we hold dear and is of great importance to us.

<http://southasiajournal.net/cyber-securitization-need-of-the-hour-for-pakistan/>

# *India's Naval Modernization and Implications for South Asian Region*

*Asma Khalid*

India has instituted the strategy of military modernization of its forces to achieve certain geo-strategic objectives. In this regard, Indian Navy is considered as a central force to full fill the strategic goals of India; to emerge as a major global Player. Traditionally, Indian navy remained Cinderella service due to Nehruvian continental mindset but now “Modernizing and Growing” are two significant elements to describe India Navy. Three significant arrangements are key drivers of Indian naval modernization: one is preventing the country’s coastline and expensive maritime area of economic interest, second is to full filling the desired regional and global ambitions and third is protecting the sea lines that deal with India’s supplies and trade. To achieve these goals Indian Navy has adopted more offensive and assertive doctrine based on ‘sea power framework’ of Alfred Mahan.

India Naval strategy of 2004 is comprised of six significant principles; increasing spending, modernization, expanding infrastructure, conducting naval exercises, deployment in Indian Ocean Region, active maritime diplomacy and Protecting SLOC. Whereas Indian maritime doctrine of 2009 defines six striking roles in Indian Naval Forces, remarkable elements are deterrence, protecting sea lines decisive military victory and protection from threat. The Naval Doctrine highlights the importance of enhancing capabilities to influence warfare on land and development of forward power projection abilities. To achieve these objectives India’s defence spendings are increasing. 4.3% of total defence budget of 2016-2017 is allocated for Indian Navy: In total, 2921 billion was allocated to Navy which is around 17.4 per cent of total defence expenditure of India from 2005 to 2015 in nominal terms. It is significant to note that the annual growth rate of the Navy’s budget is around 15-18 per cent.

India is extensively modernizing its naval capacity, by acquiring a number of various modern vessels. Currently, Indian navy possesses quite an influx of manpower with an approximate total of 79,023 personnel and “a large fleet consisting of 2 aircraft carriers, 1GAH amphibious transport dock, 9 landing ship tanks, 14 frigates, 10 destroyers, 1 nuclear powered submarine and 14 conventionally powered submarines, 25 corvettes, 7 minesweeping vessels, 47 patrol vessels, 4 fleet tankers and various auxiliary vessels.” Though, the modernization is related more with enhancing the quality rather than the quantity; as it is replacing the older vessels with the advanced ones.

The qualitative and quantitative increase, doctrinal evolution and recent trends in the Indian Navy indicate that these developments will pose various strategic implications on regional states and Indian Ocean region. Due to these trends, the region and Indian Ocean will experience new arrangement of strategic competition among regional states (India-Pakistan) and Great powers (US and China). The strategic competition will increase the role of external powers in the region and enhance the security dilemma in Ocean.

Secondly in recent era, Indo-Asia-Pacific is very significant for trilateral regional competition: India-China, US-China and India-Pakistan. The bilateral rivalries among states are increasing the instability and disturbing the strategic equilibrium in the region. Especially the growing political and strategic partnership and the Indo-US nuclear deal is characterized as alliance to counter the emerging strategic partners: China and Pakistan. India is militarizing as well as nuclearizing the region to hold the Chinese claims regarding the 'string of pearls' strategy. Indian naval developments and aspirations to nuclearize its Navy are not as troublesome for China as they are for deterrence equation in South Asia. The South Asian security landscape is already unstable due to India-Pakistan historical rivalry. Indian naval build-up and modernization in conventional and nuclear sphere is increasing the asymmetry between India and Pakistan. The conventional asymmetry and defence production gap between both states has made Pakistan to adopt the doctrine of full-spectrum deterrence to ensure its security and the launch of Indian nuclear-powered submarine this rivalry has entered in other regions such as in the Indian Ocean.

With changing regional scenarios and prevailing challenges, the South Asian strategic balance and security is threatened by India's naval modernization plan. Militarization and nuclearization of Indian naval forces has increased the Indian deterrence capability but disturbed the balance of power in the region by instigating the security dilemma and increasing the arms race.

India's proactive strategies, renewed defence settlements and the military build-up force Pakistan to take counter measures while balancing the strategic equilibrium at the same time; for Pakistan it is important to closely track Indian defence spending and modernization plan, as India remains the key threat to Pakistan's security.

<http://foreignpolicynews.org/2017/11/26/indias-naval-modernization-implications-south-asian-region/>

## *Middle East in Perpetual Crisis: The Way Forward*

*Nisar Ahmed*

The ongoing aggressive and violent quest for power and dominance in the Middle East between two regional rivals i.e. Saudi Arabia and Iran has rendered peace and stability into a utopian idea that evades the region. In addition, the continued meddling of foreign powers ostensibly to fight terrorism and extremism further aggravates the situation and has seemingly spawned more intractable problems than solutions to the existing humanitarian crisis. The Yemen crisis, described by UN as “the largest humanitarian crisis,” has the potential to affect the entire region. The troubling fact is that the flawed approach and myopia of policy makers and the disgusting apathy and inaction of human rights organizations remain the same.

Yemen, one of the poorest Arab countries, is going through “the largest humanitarian crises” as a result of a conflict between government forces and Houthi rebels that started back in 2011. The situation worsened when Saudi-led coalition entered the conflict in March 2015 to fight and crush Houthi rebels of a Shia faction, allegedly backed by Iran.

The indiscriminate air strikes and blockade imposed since then by Saudi-led coalition, backed by the US and UK has badly affected innocent Yemenites. With tens of thousands of people killed and the scarce economic-industrial infrastructure bombed by the warring groups, the war ravaged country is now facing an imminent famine as the situation sees no improving. The measures taken by the UN and other organizations in pursuit of resolving the crisis and mitigating its effects fall far short of what the gravity of situation demands. Ominously, the already precarious situation was exasperated when Saudi Arabia choked Yemen by imposing fresh blockade in retaliation to a recent missile attack on its air port allegedly carried out by Houthi rebels.

The ensuing war of words and blame game between Iran and Saudi Arabia has pushed the region towards further chaos and disaster. The protracted Saudi-Iran rivalry and proxy war, fuelled by foreign powers can engulf the hitherto relatively stable countries. For instance, the crisis in Lebanon after the sudden and apparently forced resignation of Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri can spiral out of control and turn Lebanon into yet another theatre of war between Iran, Saudi Arabia and Israel etc., if major stake holders do not mend their ways. Given numerous incidents and vast evidences, it is but tantamount to state the obvious that complicity of major global powers has proved to be a setback to efforts of normalization by the UN.

For instance, the apparent complicity of states like the US and UK as indicated by Human Rights Watch (HRW) in its report Yemen Events 2016 is alarming to say the least. Despite indiscriminate air strikes and atrocities perpetrated by Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, various states including the US, Russia and UK continue to either sell weapons to Saudi Arabia or share targeting intelligence with it.

More recently, an investigation report by BBC titled “Raqq’a’s Dirty Secret” exposes the tacit support of the US and UK-led coalition forces to the militant Islamic State group. The report reveals that

some 250 IS fighters with 3,500 family members were covertly evacuated from Raqqa under a secret deal by the coalition that purports to fight the same terrorists. This underscores the dirty game being played by global powers against each other on the geopolitical chess board of Middle East. Thus, it is clear that major actors involved in the Middle East crisis tacitly support terrorists when it serves their skewed sense of national interest.

It is worth mentioning here that the current crisis in the Middle East has its roots in the flawed and misguided approach adopted by states in the wake of the Arab uprising. Unfortunately the same selfish and zero sum game mindset can be seen at function when we observe how major powers deal with the crisis in the Middle East.

To recapitulate, since the 2011 Arab uprising one country after another in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has witnessed destabilization and destruction. The initial euphoria that this indigenous uprising against dictatorial and authoritarian regimes would usher in an era of greater emancipation from the clutches of authoritarian regimes was however short lived. Hopes of democracy taking roots in the region was shattered due to ill intent and flawed policies of foreign powers which mishandled and exploited the situation to maximize selfish geopolitical objectives to the chagrin of common people.

The consequent hopeless situation provided fertile ground for extremist elements like Islamic State (IS) to thrive and spread its tentacles within and beyond the region. Now after much death and destruction, Islamic State stands at least militarily defeated as it has lost nearly all the territories under its control, the significant in line being its two de facto capitals Raqqa in Syria and Mosul in Iraq. However, if not more, it is equally important to counter the extremist ideology of such terror outfits.

Since people tend to take extreme steps like suicide when they lose hope of any betterment and that extremist organizations feed on hopelessness; it is therefore crucial that stake holders in the Middle East, rights organizations and activists should all take measures to replace fear of any further exploitation, death and destruction with hope of peace and stability in the Middle East. After all, to quote Martin Luther King "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere".

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/26112017-middle-east-in-perpetual-crisis-the-way-forward-oped/>

## *Central Asian Republics Must be Tapped*

*Babar Ali*

After the Soviet Union imploded, the Central Asian Republics (CARs) assumed great significance in the region owing to their energy potential. Covering major part of the globe and having geographical proximity with South Asia, CARs have acquired the extensive geo-political and geo-economic importance in the region. CARs include five republics of the former Soviet Union: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. All republics are land-locked and energy-rich.

Pakistan and CARs share various religious and cultural commonalities. However, Islamabad has not cultivated close ties so far. Margins in mutual cooperation still exist. Even though Pakistan desires close political and economic linkage with the Central Asian states, there are a multitude of internal and external challenges that have been hampering progress in this regard.

Pakistan's internal and regional political conditions along with its flimsy economy have barred it from actively engaging with Central Asia. The unrest in recalcitrant Afghanistan has also created multi-faceted obstacles in Pakistan's efforts to establish strong bond with the CARs. The poor border situation with Afghanistan presents the biggest challenge in the materialisation of the economic ventures that Pakistan seeks to pursue, such as proposed pipelines projects which can transport oil and gas from Central Asia to Pakistan.

Regional and global powers' are competing to gain access to Central Asian energy resources. They have also been a major hurdle in Pakistan's endeavours to nurture cordial relations with the CARs. The long-standing presence of US led NATO forces in the region has impeded the formation of cordial bilateral relations.

Moreover, the rift between the US and Russia has managed to influence the foreign policies being followed by the CARs. Perennial fights in Afghanistan and competing interests of two powers have caused multiple intricacies in the present regional paradigm. Therefore, it has become an arduous task for Pakistan to find a reliable way to build ties it can benefit from.

Since the imposition of the 'war on terror' on Pakistan, its internal condition has continued to deteriorate and it's economy has become increasingly fragile. Political instability has also affected Islamabad's focus on the expansion of economic ties with various countries, including CARs.

Axiomatically, CARs have large reserves of oil and gas as well as extensive mineral wealth. However, as far as Pakistan is concerned, this wealth has remained untapped. Pakistan has a weak economy and lacks the technological which is essential to tap the CARs' energy reserves.

However, Pakistan and the CARs have signed various memorandums of understanding (MOUs) on 'economic cooperation and collaboration' in several fields. Furthermore, an inter-governmental Joint Economic Commission was also established with regional countries which gave the impetus for cooperative engagement in various sectors including trade, economy and science. However, Pakistan is

not reaping the benefits it expected because these agreements have not materialised or been implemented in true spirit as yet.

Interestingly, Pakistan and the Central Asian states are members of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) which was primarily formed to develop and improve the economic infrastructure and transportation system in the region. Fortunately or unfortunately, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) while making headway with two major powers, Russia and China, has almost eclipsed the ECO that has caused the considerable blow to its effectiveness.

Given the complicated picture of the whole region along with the CARs, Pakistan must revisit its policies towards Central Asia. Pakistan needs to evolve a vibrant, non-aligned foreign policy, exclusively based on respect for the sovereignty of these states. Cooperation and constructive engagement must be prioritised to be the cornerstone of Pakistan's approach towards this region.

There should be a mechanism for frequent exchanges of scholars, cultural representatives, and government officials to develop better mutual understanding and people-to-people contact. People-to-people contact is an effective instrument for the establishment of mutual relations. For that matter, Pakistan may offer scholarships to Central Asian students and professionals in expert fields.

Islamabad must utilise regional and international forums such as SCO and ECO in order to gain trust and enhance economic and political cooperation. Each Central Asian republic should be given equal importance by Islamabad in terms of the development of friendly ties while addressing a multitude of irritants and challenges. Instead of waiting for peace to return to Afghanistan so that transit and pipeline routes can be facilitated, Pakistan must implement all economic agreements in true spirit.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/147800/central-asian-republics-must-tapped/>



## *Muttahida Majlis e Amal's Revival: Conundrum, Challenges And Prospects*

*Ubaid Ahmed*

Six key religious parties in Pakistan avowed the revitalization of Muttahida Majlis e Amal (MMA) on November 10, 2017. One of the many aims behind this retrieval is to secure the Islamic character and identity of the nation, as the parties assert that this progression is the best way to guarantee fair steadiness within the country. However, as is evident from the history, relational unions are normally formed whenever the elections are at hand; thus securing significant vote banks for aspiring competitors.

The main driving force and inspiration behind this alliance was the votes MMA scored back in 2002. Yet, one viewpoint that this alliance of parties is overlooking is the fact that their voter base is merely constrained to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and does not stretch out to different areas. Also, within KP, the Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf is now an impressive challenger which did not have any impression in the area back in 2002. All the mainstream conventional parties e.g. PML-N, PPP and PTI do not have much to fear from the cooperation to the extent Punjab and Sindh are concerned. In 2008, the same MMA couldn't get a noteworthy number of votes. Recent by-elections both in Punjab and KP likewise do not hint at any distinctive resurgence.

The meeting up of these normal allies under MMA's banner may help them to enhance that execution by counteracting part of the religious vote; however it is probably not going to have any noteworthy effect on the general outcome. In short without a doubt, it would have no place close to the 2002 results.

Moreover, it is largely anticipated among masses and some political parties that the pioneers of these and different parties have consented to work towards framing a union out of the blue chiefly because of some 'shrouded factors', having an effect on everything. Let this be the case but the political improvements amidst the running month ought to be sufficient for all partners and stakeholders to understand that political collusions made under strain to satisfy impermanent motivation don't get the chance to see the light of the day. The destiny of the merger of Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) and Pak Sarzameen Party (PSP) is a valid example; for in a matter of days, both the parties have backpedaled on their underlying declarations.

Therefore it goes without saying that any external effort to bring together religious parties for the revival of MMA will similarly remain futile.

Likewise it would also be interesting to see what effects aggressive entities such as Tehreek e Labaik (TYL) and Milli Muslim League (MML) may have following the MMA's revitalization. Perchance they could join in the good times, or, on the other hand, endeavor to supplant the more established countenances of religious politics.

Though it is evident that such alliances are really not going to harm the existing political equilibrium, for major political parties really don't see MMA's revival as a threat to their respective vote banks. But, in the wake of Donald Trump's new Afghan policy and US administration's 'do more' mantra, such alliances are certainly going to bring Pakistan back under the spotlight. It is also evident from the fact that the Afghan Taliban have declared a month ago that they would bolster Pakistan against any danger by the Trump administration. They have vowed to remain by the legislature in the event of any forceful plan sought after by the United States against the nation.

However, shockingly enough this declaration was not made open by the Emarat e Islami Afghanistan, the official name of the Afghan Taliban, but was released by Maulana Samiul Haq, head of his own group of the Jamiat Ulma e Islam, one of the major forces behind the revival of MMA.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/28112017-muttahida-majlis-e-amals-revival-conundrum-challenges-and-prospects-oped/>

## *India's Missiles: Impact on South Asian Deterrence Stability*

*Beenish Altaf*

India recently test fired its most sophisticated long-range subsonic cruise missile called 'Nirbhay' from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur. This test fire continued for three days, the final of which was fired on November 10, 2017. This was the test that failed previously in December 2015. The tested cruise missile was part of the series of continuous susceptible moves by India that have adverse impact on the deterrence stability of South Asia.

According to the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) the indigenously-designed and developed missile was test launched from a specially-designed launcher from the launch complex-3 of the ITR with a strike range of 1,000 km. Nirbhay missile has a turbo-fan engine, which is guided by a highly advanced inertial navigation system. The missile can target multiple places simultaneously and is capable of carrying 24 kinds of war weapons.

The maiden test flight of Nirbhay was held on March 12, 2013 that had to be terminated mid-way for safety reasons due to malfunctioning of some of its components. However, the second launch was on October 17, 2014. The next trial was conducted on October 16, 2015, which then had to be aborted after 20 minutes of its launch. The missile was also test fired last time in December 2016, which failed also. All these trials were conducted from same defence base.

So, keeping in view Indian aspirations of getting the top most position in terms of acquiring such sophisticated capabilities, Indian Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that this trial would take India to the select League of Nations for possessing this complex technology and sub-sonic cruise missile capability. More to the point, if the said missile is operationalized successfully, it could be 'suited for targeting Pakistan's storage sites, command and control centers, radar installations, and bases.' In this regard, DRDO Director General Avinash Chander, formerly in a statement after Nirbhay's test in 2014, pointed to the missile's cruise capability being used to "fill a vital gap in the war-fighting capabilities of our armed forces," which is broadly believed to be in support of India's Cold Start Doctrine.

It is pertinent to mention here, the development of the dual use of Brahmos with the assistance of Russia. It is a supersonic cruise missile capable of flying at a speed of Mach 2.8, with a declared range of 290 kms, with sea, air, and land versions. An extended range version (450 kms) of this missile was test fired earlier this year and a hypersonic version is also under development. However, as distinct to ballistic missiles, the acquisition of a cruise missile capability means something different for India's targeting strategy. Now the Brahmos and Nirbhay would enable India to deliver a strategic standoff capability on land as well as at sea.

Moreover, the mounting political and strategic relationships among the countries have given birth to a new pattern of rising interactions with global forces. On the other side, India's quest is growing for multilateral export control regimes; it can be said that India has a unique history of its relationship with

export control cartels. The country that provided an idea for the formation of one of the cartels is now passing through a new phase, expecting a legal membership of the cartel. It is certain that the membership of such regimes will give India a distinct advantage by participating in the management of global commerce in advanced technology.

The trend of assistance to India, set-in largely by the US, though for its own interest, has and will further overwhelm India with uranium reserves. Since India's nuclear program is largely plutonium based, its uranium reserves are apparently shown to be low for civil nuclear usage, and are low for military usage.

However, these mounting Indian tests and experiments day by day are moving towards severe consequences as far as the strategic stability and regional security of South Asia are concerned. The nuclear arms and missiles competition between both permanent hostile states is a glittering case of security dilemma whereby the security of one state's action causes insecurity of the other state and security augmenting measures of the other state makes the first one insecure. Similarly, the challenge of putting cruise missiles to sea, through ships and submarines, will enhance chances of inadvertence and crisis instability.' A better guiding principle for both 'South Asian neighbors would be to undertake confidence building measures aimed at avoiding inadvertence and non-attack on each other's command and control centers and communication infrastructures to ensure the mutuality of deterrence.'

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/28112017-indias-missiles-impact-on-south-asian-deterrence-stability-oped/>

## ***CPEC: An Opportunity for China, Afghanistan and Pakistan***

***S. Sadia Kazmi***

While the acronym CPEC only seems to cater to China and Pakistan, there is no doubt about the fact that its geo-economic and geopolitical dividends are not just limited to these two countries rather reach far beyond the immediate region. CPEC offers a large scale infrastructural development projects, which grabs the attention of other regional stakeholders as well. Specifically mentioning Pakistan's westward neighbor Afghanistan, CPEC brings a huge opportunity to bind the three countries into mutually beneficial cooperative relation at various levels including economic, political, and social etc. This trilateral bond although is yet to be materialized despite an open invitation to Afghanistan by both China and Pakistan to be part of the CPEC. Afghanistan on its part has also shown inclination to join the CPEC. These intentions became more prominent since October 2016; however, many factors are at play in keeping this from happening.

Nonetheless the benefits to the three states far outweigh the hurdles. Not only does Afghanistan stand to benefit from joining CPEC, but both China and Pakistan will gain immense profit by Afghanistan's inclusion into this project. The infrastructural development is what Afghanistan desperately needs. The long decades of war, militancy and terrorism has caused immense damage which can be compensated sufficiently through the CPEC project. Also by being part of CPEC, Afghanistan will eventually be part of the larger BRI of China. Which means the bigger outreach of Afghan goods to other countries included in the Belt and Road Initiative. Hence it promises a huge economic relief for Afghanistan, simultaneously bringing stability in the country and the same fall out in the adjoining countries. Connectivity with Pakistan for a formal trade under CPEC will allow Afghan business, trade and investment to spread out in rest of South Asia.

China, on the other hand, can gain access to the untapped natural resources of Afghanistan. China also acknowledges the strategic location of Afghanistan at the crossroads of South and Central Asia. Previously in 2008, China signed a 30-year agreement worth \$ 3 billion with the Afghanistan government to access Mes Aynak, the world's second largest untapped copper deposit. However, the deal was stalled due to the internal security situation of Afghanistan. It is for the same reason China is now so dedicated toward peace efforts in the country. Similarly, the third and the most focal player in this trilateral cooperation Pakistan can also reap major benefits if Afghanistan joins CPEC. First and foremost, Pakistan can get an easy access to Central Asia through Afghanistan. At the same time a developed, stable and peaceful Afghanistan would mean peace and security for Pakistan also. This will also help in the revival of warm and cordial relations with Afghanistan. Pakistan will be able to release the burden of Afghan refugees by sending them back to their developed, stable and progressing country. This will lead to huge economic relief for Pakistan while at the same time settling the Afghan nationals back into their homeland. An improved security situation will be a win-win for both the countries.

Hence, China, Pakistan, and Afghanistan all stand to benefit from trilateral cooperation that enhances security and stability, increases infrastructural development, and opens the doors to economic development and connectivity.

Having said that it is important to not ignore the hard realities that pose serious challenges to the formation of the trilateral cooperation. Most important to mention are the security concerns and mistrust that is unfortunately on a rise between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Despite Pakistan's genuine efforts to bring peace in Afghanistan through Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, it is being constantly blamed for aiding militants on the Afghan soil. Afghan President categorically mentioned in his speech last month in India that "we would like a push factor from Pakistan vis-à-vis the Taliban, not a Pakistan-managed peace process". It is unfortunate that Pakistan is perceived as manipulator instead of a peace broker. While Pakistan has denied all the allegations and has constantly urged Kabul to eradicate "sanctuaries", the Pakistan Army is efficiently busy lying the barbed wire along the Afghan border to keep the militants from crossing into Pakistan. It is not to be forgotten that at the core of any potential investment will be the stabilization of Afghanistan's security situation, an effort that will require great cooperation.

The stability in Afghanistan will ensure peace in the country and will also help improve security situation in China's western region specifically the Xinjiang province. India is another major player relevant in this whole picture. India has its own grievances against CPEC, and the growing Indo-Afghan propinquity makes it natural for Afghanistan to look after India's interests in the region. Owing to these very factors, the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, last month gave a statement refusing to join CPEC if Pakistan refused to permit connectivity between India and Afghanistan. This statement came only a week after the recent Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) talks in Oman. Hence, in the wake of these realities, it is important that both Afghanistan and Pakistan work towards having at least some workable relation between them. Being the immediate neighbors and having enjoyed cultural, religious and ethnic ties spanning over the history, alienating each other is never a good option. CPEC in this regard provides a fresh opportunity to the two where Afghanistan specifically could try to break from its habit of suspecting Pakistan's motives and embrace the Chinese initiative with open arms for the ultimate economic relief of the whole region.

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## *State, Secrecy and the CPEC*

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Ever since the inception of the idea of CPEC, it has been embroiled in a lot of controversies with regards to its viability, alleged provincial preferences, never ending debate about cost and benefit and above all for the lack of transparency. Intentionally or unintentionally the ruling party in the Government has resorted to the policy of secrecy about the CPEC project despite it being the most sought after not just by the policy makers of the two countries involved but by the common public and the regional stakeholders alike. While CPEC does bring a wave of hope for the downtrodden province and parts of Pakistan by promising economic relief and addressing the energy crisis through energy projects, time and again there have been growing concerns and fears of all types associated with this multi-billion developmental project. Only recently there has been a renewed hue and cry about China getting 91 percent of the revenues from the Gwadar port as part of CPEC for the next 40 years leaving only 9 percent for Pakistan. There have been debates, concerns and endless analytical discussion in print and electronic media questioning the very purpose of the CPEC project when this is all that Pakistan is eventually going to end up with. This situation does raise question in one's mind as to why the Government is bent upon staying ambiguous even at the cost of inviting negative propaganda by ill-wishers.

In order to find an answer to this particular question, one has to look at the situation from a few slightly different perspectives. First and foremost, there is no doubt that ideally any democratic government should be accountable to the people; otherwise it inevitably leads to the pattern of distrust between the two. But at the same time every government has some limitations which in fact are intentionally being observed in order to keep the negative elements at bay. For instance, the states are particularly discreet about their respective capabilities as it varies from government to government. Such a disposition allows the states to work on their policies, projects, plans and interests with some level of freedom by keeping the enemies guessing. This kind of approach is especially adopted because every state enjoys different position of power in the global context. Maximilian C. Forte, an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Concordia University in Montreal believes that it is usually the weaker states that forego openness because the "so-called weaker states of the 'periphery,' formerly colonized nations, especially those which are the targets of covert war, economic destabilization, and political inference both by more powerful states and by multilateral financial institutions, have historically been the ones with the most to lose from 'openness' (whether voluntary, or as in most cases, coerced)". Hence from this explanation it becomes quite satisfactorily clear that sometimes it is in the best interest of the government to stay discreet in an effort to ultimately safeguard their national security. One can infer that this could very well be the reason in case of CPEC as well. Pakistan once was a British colony; it continues to be the target of proxy wars; the economic disturbances and political instability is caused not just by the incompetence of the concerned authorities but also because of the effective exploitation of the situation by the adversaries. Hence the government being secretive is justified to some extent especially when it the secrecy is being observed to gain some power or control. This control may not

necessarily be aimed at controlling others but essentially to have an authority over carrying out one's own actions with full autonomy.

However, one cannot ignore the fact that secrecy does create an issue of legitimacy about governments' policies. Trust building is a two-way process. If the government is not transparent in its working, it will lead to distrusting citizens. From that perspective, the governments should never hide anything from its people. The same has also been highlighted by Adil Najam, Professor of International Relations at Boston University; who believes that "Keeping some secrets may indeed be inevitable. But let them be so few, so infrequent, so vital, and so unusual that triggering secrecy requires not a public list or standard procedures, but deliberation, and maybe even introspection, at the highest levels. When in doubt, governments should err on the side of openness". By allowing the distrust to flourish, the citizens feed on their own doubts and end up spewing conspiracies against their own governments. Unfortunately, this case also applies to Pakistan.

This further leads to yet another question as to "who" should be "told" and "know" "how much". In today's age and time, this is slightly tricky to answer since most of the information is accessible with just a click of a button owing to the advancement in technology. However, the credibility factor of course cannot be ruled out in that case. Nevertheless, public demand for information cannot be outrightly rejected or ignored. It is for the same purpose that the official pages and websites have been generated to provide information about the CPEC. Relevant Chinese and Pakistani officials have been promptly addressing public queries on those sites. As was also in the case of recent information where China is set to get 91 percent revenues generated from Gwadar port. Federal Minister for Ports and Shipping Mir Hasil Bizenjo shared this news after senators expressed concern over the secrecy surrounding the CPEC long-term agreement plan, with many observing that the agreement tilted heavily in China's favour. Some further explanation was instantly provided by the Gwadar Port Authority which clarifies that the Gwadar port agreement is the same that was signed with Singapore Port Authority 10 years ago in 2007. It was signed with former port operating company, namely, Port of Singapore Authority International (PSAI). The port and its Free Zone could not be developed by PSAI as per the Agreement on Built-Operator-Transfer (BOT) basis till 2013. The present Port Operator, namely, China Overseas Ports Holding (COPHC) took over the operations of the Port after commercial negotiation with the concerned authorities in 2013 without any single amendment in the agreement. Therefore, the terms and conditions were defined long before the CPEC existed. Under the agreement the port operator has to construct new port terminals with equipment, machinery, marine vessels, and allied facilities on a vast area of the port. Furthermore, the company is developing Gwadar Free Zone at an area of about 2,300 acres of land. The entire project is to be completed on BOT basis with company funding. The company will be spending around US\$ 5 billions during the Concession period up to 2048. After completion of the Concession period the entire fixed asset constructed and developed will be transferred to GPA with billions of dollars businesses operating in Gwadar Port and Gwadar Free Zone. During the Concession period GPA is getting 9% of the gross revenue from port and marine service businesses and 15% of the Free Zone businesses.

This detailed and timely sharing of information sufficiently put several doubts to rest. It is commendable that Gwadar Port Authority immediately responded to the concerns and has managed to cultivate confidence and better understanding of various modalities of the project.



Hence it is important to note that Governments do need confidentiality to function, yet need to develop procedures for responding effectively to shifting demands of openness and secrecy. Developments in this direction benefit citizens, businesses, governance, and foreign policy.

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