



VISION

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JANUARY 2018

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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SVI Foresight

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 successfully completes the three years of regular publication and brings to its readers the first issue of its fourth e-volume in the month of January 2018. Keeping up with the previous record, the focus this year will remain to be the contemporary debate, analyses, and narrative building on the significant strategic and security issues. In the same vein, articles included in this issue bring forth the intellectual capital to explore various aspects of a certain issue. There is an insightful debate about nuclear deterrence in South Asia. There is no denying the fact that India's growing conventional and military capabilities, shifting nuclear strategy and aggressive policies have the potential to disturb the regional peace and stability but India is not willing to pay any heed to emerging challenges of deterrence. Therefore, Pakistan has adequately prepared itself to address the challenges of Indian aggression by maintaining credible nuclear deterrence and conventional defence. Pakistan's counter measures such as development of Nasr and Ababeel has thwarted India's Cold Start Doctrine and Ballistic Missile Defence System because facing the instability and aggression is not an option. Readers will be convinced as to why it is imperative for Pakistan to modernise its nuclear weapons i.e. primarily to deter India from taking any offense against Pakistan. Accordingly, any compromise on its nuclear weapon advancement and modernisation can be dangerous for regional stability and its own national security.

Driven by the same concern, Pakistan marked the end of year 2017 with real manifestation of the commitment to acquire deterrence at all spectrums of threat by testing Habra missile. This particular area has been covered in another article included in this issue. One finds out that it was at the meeting of National Command and Control Authority that Pakistan resolved to policy of Full Spectrum Deterrence, which is in line with the policy of Credible Minimum Deterrence. This was further validated when Pakistan marked the beginning of 2018 with the test of naval missile "Harba". This development by Pakistan in its naval capabilities was due since long. Moreover, with interest vested in Gwadar Port and China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) state level initiatives to strengthen Pakistan Navy for security of maritime borders and interests have to simultaneously increase. However, rapid initiatives to strengthen navy is not entirely for the sake of economic Interests. With India being its neighbor, Pakistan has never been

fortunate enough to spend a lot on its economic growth. Rather security threats from India engulfed Pakistan's resources. The author argues that Pakistan's security choices should be analyzed with pragmatic lens, which would prove that no other choice was available for Pakistan. None, but to face India with all its capability. The author manages to build a strong case for Pakistan and argues that almost a year ago, Pakistan didn't even have a second strike capability because of its unyielding belief in credible minimum deterrence. However, in response to Indian naval capabilities and its ambitiousness, Pakistan went for the option of second strike capability. It was an attempt to strengthen the deterrence and shared risk of destruction to keep India at bay.

Another article included in this issue talks at length about India's pursuit of missile development and strategic stability in South Asia. It reflects on the recent missile test of a long-range Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) by India with a range of 5500 km. This is the fifth missile of the Agni series. With its capability of delivering a payload of 1.5 tons, enough to carry a fusion and fissile nuclear warhead, it hints at India's regional ambitions where it has also been proclaimed that these ambitions are not only limited to the Ballistic Missile test, but India is also planning to develop a sea-based version of Agni VI. In this backdrop, the writer in the article raises some pertinent questions; that how long will India take to build Ballistic and Intercontinental missiles? And what are the strategic implications of India's missile tests? The readers will find it a good read as to how the Indian BMD system is leading towards a dangerous dimension in the South Asian nuclear environment that slowly but surely leads to an arms race between the South Asian nuclear powers.

Another significant development is India's membership of Australia Group. The regional implications of this development have been looked into in yet another article. The Australia Group admitted India as the 43rd member on 19 January 2018 through a consensus decision. It is the third export control group that India has joined in the series. It is already a member of Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies. After this India is more hopeful to get an opportunity to secure a berth in the 48-members Nuclear Suppliers Group. India believes

that the membership into these cartels reaffirms its non-proliferation credentials and its commitment to global peace and security, whereas in real, it has nothing much to do with its good proliferation credentials. In recent years, India is undoubtedly trying to integrate itself quickly within these regimes by playing politics. However, it is quite obvious that it would face roadblocks in its integration within the existing system. A somewhat deeper analysis indicates that the old non-proliferation order and actors are slowly reconciling to India's integration with the global export controls system. India's membership in the four multilateral export controls regimes questions the credibility and efficacy of the global system including the non-proliferation regime.

Another insightful debate on Pakistan's nuclear strategy can be found in this issue. It draws comparisons between the Indian and Pakistani compulsions, concerns and ensuing policies and brings forth sufficient justification for Pakistan's case. One is a witness that a nuclear South Asia has substantially altered the strategic doctrine and culture in the region. For India, it was allegedly to discourage China and retaliate for the mortification it faced in 1962. For Pakistan, it was to ensure the larger state, i.e. India, would not get involved in any misadventure. Notwithstanding India's military hardware imports are far greater than those of its avowed regional strategic competitor 'Pakistan'. Instead of entering into an arms race with its nuclear rival, Islamabad refurbished its nuclear deterrence posture. Pakistan reiterated that it would retain and stick to its Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD) in line with the credible minimum deterrence. Pakistan's full spectrum deterrence is to ensure there are no gaps in its deterrence capability. FSD is more of a qualitative response than a quantitative one to the new war fighting concepts of 'CSD' and 'PAO' introduced by India. However, its scope ranges from conventional to strategic and to the tactical levels.

Other articles included in this issue look closely at the US policy towards South Asia specifically towards Pakistan and explore whether Russia would avail the opportunity by drawing closer to Pakistan. However, the dynamics are not as simple. The same has been scrutinized in one of the articles. CPEC remains an integral component of Pakistan's national and regional policy and one would find interesting take on that issue as well.

It is hoped that the issue will help readers in staying updated with the current political environment and they will find the analyses useful. The SVI Foresight team invites and highly encourages the contributions from the security and strategic community in form of opinion based short commentaries on contemporary political, security and strategic issues. Any suggestions for further improvements are welcome at our [contact address](#). Please see [here](#) the copy of SVI Foresight electronic journal. You can find us on [Face book](#) and can also access the SVI [website](#).

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Pakistan's Harba Naval Cruise Missile Test and Deterrence in Indian Ocean

Ahyousha Khan

Year 2017, ended with the commitment by Pakistan to acquire deterrence at all spectrums of threat. At the meeting of National Command and Control Authority, Pakistan resolved to policy of Full Spectrum Deterrence, which is in line with the policy of Credible Minimum Deterrence. So, to validate its commitment for countering threats at all spectrums, Pakistan marked the beginning of 2018 with the test of naval missile "Harba".

On January 3, 2018 Pakistan successfully tested its indigenous naval cruise missile "Harba" from its newly commissioned fast attack vessel "PNS Himmat". Harba is capable of hitting its targets from surface to surface and is also capable of ground assault. Moreover, it has demonstrated impressive capabilities in accuracy and precision by hitting its target successfully. This particular development by Pakistan navy was not only an attempt to get another weapon in its arsenal but to exhibit its self-sufficiency in high-tech weaponry.

Another significant aspect of this particular development is Pakistan's indigenously built naval vessel "PNS Himmat" which is commissioned in year 2017. PNS Himmat is equipped with state of the art weaponry, sensors and Harba cruise missiles. It is the second indigenously built fast attack vessel which is capable of high speed, high fire power and enhanced endurance for rapid response at sea. The first indigenously built fast attack vessel by Pakistan was PNS Dehshat, which was inducted in to Pakistan Navy in 2012.

These developments by Pakistan in its naval capabilities were due since long time. Moreover, with interest vested in Gwadar Port and China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) state level initiatives to strengthen Pakistan Navy for security of maritime borders and interests are increasing. However, rapid initiatives to strengthen navy is not entirely for the sake of economic Interests. With India being its neighbor, Pakistan was not fortunate enough to spend a lot on its economic growth. Rather security threats from India engulfed Pakistan's resources. But, if Pakistan's security choices are analyzed with pragmatic lens, what other choice was available for Pakistan? None, but to face India with all its ability.

On the other hand, in realm of naval militarization and nuclearization, India is spending huge amount on indigenously building SSBNs and SSNs along with air craft carriers and fleet of naval vessels. This rapid militarization by India is destabilizing strategic equilibrium in Indian Ocean between India and Pakistan.

Almost a year ago, Pakistan didn't even have a second strike capability because of its unyielding belief in credible minimum deterrence. However, in response to Indian naval capabilities and its ambitiousness, Pakistan went for the option of second strike capability. It was an attempt to strengthen the deterrence and shared risk of destruction to keep India at bay.

But, nuclear tipped naval cruise missile is not end of the ladder in second strike capability rather it is start of the ladder. One of the key elements in making deterrence reliable is complementary conventional force. Decision to build naval missile system by Pakistan for conventional fast attack vessel supports reinforces the logic that Pakistan is not only building second strike capability but also complementing it with conventional force.

Point to focus on is that Pakistan's decision was based on the logic that Pakistan wants to stop India at all spectrums whether it be conventional or non-conventional. Furthermore, Pakistan does not always rely on nuclear deterrence to stop India, if it's possible to avoid reliance on only nuclear weapons, conventional means are preferred for regional peace and stability.

In addition, Pakistan's second-strike capability is based on nuclear tipped cruise missiles Babur 3. Thus, conversion of naval cruise missile into nuclear tipped naval cruise missile is the possibility that Pakistan could rely on in future to deter India. Deployment of nuclear cruise missiles on naval vessels is plausible option for Pakistan to counter Indian threat in Indian Ocean Region. As utilization of other options such as acquisition of SSBN and SSN is a time taking process. These measures are the options Pakistan may rely on till the development of survivable and credible second-strike capability.

However, in all this mayhem for acquisition of Second Strike Capability, the logic of nuclear deterrence should prevail to avoid catastrophe and destruction. As, it is deterrence that instills the fear of unbearable damage and encourages states to not manipulate the shared risks of destruction. If India and Pakistan wants to use the Indian Ocean Region for economic prosperity they need to let deterrence prevail. Lastly, deployment of cannisterized nuclear assets in Indian Ocean Region will require certain amount of confidence building measures by both India and Pakistan to avoid nuclear crisis.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/11012018-pakistans-harba-naval-cruise-missile-test-and-deterrence-in-indian-ocean-oped>

Titbits from NSG Special Group Meeting in 2017

Qura tul ain Hafeez

Membership of India and Pakistan in the Nuclear Suppliers Group is in cold storage and pending as of now evidenced by the special group meeting of NSG in Vienna on November, 2017. A special waiver has been granted to India and the NSG exempted India in 2008 from its full-scope obligation for nuclear trade with non-nuclear-weapon states, on United States demand. In mid-2016, India and Pakistan submitted request for their membership. But the NSG, which works by consensus, did not agree on a common set of criteria for membership for the two countries-that are not NPT signatories.

Therefore in consideration of membership criteria for countries that have not joined the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), on June 23 and 24, 2017 the Nuclear Suppliers Group held its 27th Plenary Meeting in Bern, Switzerland. India was not successful in its efforts to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group, nor did Pakistan. The meeting ended with the decision to hold a special group meeting in November, 2017 according to the chair of the NSG Benno Laggner however this NSG consultative Group meeting in Vienna on Nov, 11 ended much like the previous one without any break through.

China once again opposed India's bid primarily on the grounds that it is not a signatory to the NPT. China's stance is that a criteria based-NPT membership must be one of the key criteria as both India and Pakistan are non NPT signatory. Following China's suite majority of the 48NSGmembers supported a two-step process-agreement. One is objective and non-discriminatory criteria and the other is consideration of applications of membership for non-NPT states.

Although the special group meeting of NSG could not be successful in case of India and Pakistan but India got the membership of the Wassenaar group during its Plenary Meeting on December 6-7, 2017 held in Vienna. However this membership of India in Wassenaar Group and other multilateral forum such as MTCR does not pave India's way for the NSG membership because it still does not fulfill the basic criteria of the NSG. Besides a country which started its nuclear program apparently for peaceful purpose and later developed nuclear arsenals, is not reliable. The question that arises here is that will NSG give membership to such a country?

Moreover as far as India's record for nuclear safety and security is concerned, many of India's nuclear reactors (almost 8) are not under the proper full scope safeguards of IAEA. There are reservations that India is using its unsafeguarded nuclear reactors most probably for building the nuclear arms other than for civil purposes. It clearly shows that an exceptional relinquishment has been granted to India. This allows India to conduct nuclear deals not only with the US but with other countries as well. Countries like Australia and Japan have also inked various nuclear agreements with India. These alterations in the rules of the NSG for India, challenges the legality of the non-proliferation regime with its discriminatory characteristics.

Subsequently Pakistan is also concerned about India's membership into the Wassenaar and has been striving to convince the US and the international community about its credentials and the adoption

of a non-discriminatory approach with regards to giving membership of NSG to the non-NPT states. Pakistan is running its nuclear power plants in a safer mode under proper safety measures following the international standards. Though Pakistan is not a signatory to NPT, it has always supported nuclear non-proliferation and abided by the parameters implied by the NPT and different international treaties. Therefore joining the NSG would be identical to global recognition of those efforts. Pakistan, if becomes the member of the NSG would be in a better position to contribute to firming up the regulatory guidelines of NSG and safeguarding its interests.

Moreover countries like Pakistan should be allowed to do civil nuclear cooperation because it is the right of every state to pursue peaceful civil nuclear program for fulfilling its energy needs. Countries who are permanent members of the NPT and NSG should promote peaceful nuclear energy excess to the developing economies like Pakistan so that they can improve their socio-economic conditions and play their role in international markets.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2018/01/11/titbits-nsg-special-group-meeting-2017/>

Iran Unrest

Nisar Ahmed

The seemingly spontaneous and leaderless protest that erupted in Iran's second largest city of Mashhad on December 28, 2017 took many by surprise as it spread across several towns and cities within no time. Assuredly the simmering discontent and pent up frustration of the common Iranians that resulted in the protest has roots in socio-economic disparities and lack of personal freedoms in the Islamic Republic. The recent cuts in subsidy on various goods and services and hike in oil prices seem to have acted as the necessary trigger.

There is something intriguing about this protest that the participants not only target the elected government and its policies but the entire religio-political establishment with chants like death to the dictator, referring to Iran's supreme leader. This reflects the deep resentment of Iranians against the theocratic structure of the government which appears restrictive and dismissive as far as democratic rights are concerned.

Moreover, various opaque cultural and religious entities controlled by conservatives and their heavy toll on budget appear to have further disillusioned common Iranians about the utility of the existing structure of government and power distribution. The reformist and moderate President Hassan Rouhani himself had expressed displeasure with this fact in the past. Hence, the protest has come as a blessing in disguise for him to further his reformist agenda. However, the counter protests that ensued on Friday in support of the theocratic regime and government, makes it confusing and surely a daunting task for reformists to take any drastic measures in this regard.

But this is not the end of it. Indeed, Iran's regional ventures for dominance in various theatres of war in the conflict ridden Middle East has surely taken a high toll on national exchequer. Iran's growing military and political clout in countries like Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and Iraq has come at a costly price and not many Iranians are happy about the fact that the money which needs to be spent on their development is being diverted towards Iran's proxies in the region.

Yet another important thing to factor in while considering the causes of the protest are the high expectations of economic benefits attached to the Iran nuclear deal. Although the deal lifted several of the US-led international sanctions in return for crippling limitations imposed on Iran's controversial nuclear program but it seems that benefits accruing from the deal have not trickled down or have failed to meet the raised up expectations of the people.

Worse enough, the potential abrogation of the nuclear deal by Donald Trump in mid-January, which he has already decertified, provides no ray of hope either. On the contrary, chances are such that Donald Trump may use the government's crackdown on the protestors as a pretext to kill the nuclear deal. Rest assured, tweets and statements by Iran's rivals namely the US, Israel and Saudi Arabia in support of the protests are bound to be viewed with suspicion and contempt as their support threatens to discredit the genuine demands of the masses on the streets.

In the case of Donald Trump, doing nothing is better than doing anything and the same goes for his tweets in support of the protest. Thus, the apparently sympathetic statements by Iran's rivals like Trump clearly backfired as they provided the regime in Iran a pretext to suppress the protest by terming it as an act of enemy and the protestors as agents of the enemy. However, Iran needs to realize that pointing fingers at foreign powers is very unlikely to solve the myriad of socio-economic problems the country faces.

In conclusion, though largely subdued as of now after more than a dozen people being killed and hundreds arrested, the protest in Iran has a lesson for Iran's ruling elite that Iran will find it hard to sustain its regional dominance at the cost of the lives of common Iranians. Indeed, state security is dependent on human security of its populace and not the other way round. It is time for the ruling elite to reassess their priorities and policies in favor of Iran and Iranians only. Only an internally strong Iran can help achieve any regional and global aspirations that the Islamic Republic might have. Continued denial of fundamental democratic rights to citizens, increasing defence expenditures, and backing proxies for regional dominance may result in irrevocable losses as in the case of dismemberment of Soviet Union.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/11012018-iran-unrest-oped/>

Pak-Russia Relations and Trump's Strategy

Babar Ali

US President Donald Trump, in his first address to the nation in August, 2017 lambasted Pakistan for allegedly supporting and harbouring militants. In response, Pakistan's Ambassador to United States Aizaz Ahmed reiterated Pakistan's stance that there are no safe havens of terrorists in Pakistan.

In contrast to Trump's tirade against Pakistan, several significant states in the region have lauded Pakistan's efforts in the war against terror. The fact that Pakistan's all weather friend China as well as Russia came forward in defence of Pakistan reflects the credibility and respect Pakistan enjoys within the international community. Regionally, Pakistan was already enjoying significant diplomatic and military support from Russia.

Russia echoed sentiments in favour of Pakistan. Russian Presidential Envoy to Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov censured Trump's Pakistan strategy and insisted that Islamabad is "a key regional player to negotiate with. Putting pressure (on Pakistan) may seriously destabilise the region-wide security situation and result in negative consequences for Afghanistan".

One of the reasons behind Trump's statement is considered as the means to counter growing Russia-Pakistan relations and Russia's influence in the region. The two former Cold War-era rivals, who have the bitter past, have already managed to put their differences aside and step up their diplomatic, military and economic cooperation in recent years. Trump's strategy provided an impetus to growing ties between Russia and Pakistan. Undoubtedly, Trump's Pakistan strategy has eclipsed US-Pakistan relations. Now, Islamabad would rigorously seek deeper ties with Moscow and recent developments imply that Russia has gravitated towards Islamabad.

Russia is likely to have greater influence in South Asia. Since the Indo-Russia relations have been eclipsed with the larger US weapon export to India, Russia may need to look for prospective markets for the sale of its military hardware and its gas. Thus, in the wake of Trump's strategy, Pakistan is the best option for Russia to enhance its influence in South Asia. Now, Pakistan is likely to extend its relationship with Russia for military and economic cooperation, especially in the energy sector. Apart from economic opportunities, Russia views Pakistan as an important country in its backyard and very crucial in the Afghan settlement process. Trump administration has paved the way for these developments.

Some other factors can also not be over looked that are closing the distance between Russia and Pakistan. Renewed sanctions on Russia after the invasion of Ukraine, undoubtedly, have made Russia more pro-active in engaging with Pakistan. Ukraine episode has pushed Russia to explore new defence and energy markets. In such case, Pakistan might be lucrative market for Russia in these sectors.

A greater shift in international relations can also be predicted owing to the undesirable recent events between the US and Pakistan. India's close defence ties with the US may further push Russia towards Pakistan.

Besides improving relations on the diplomatic front, Russia and Pakistan have already started to strengthen economic relations and trade because there has always been immense room for improvement in these sectors. In this regard, during the visit of the then President of Pakistan (Asif Ali Zardari) in 2011, it was decided that the capacity of the Pakistan Steel Mills would be expanded and an MOU on expansion and modernisation of the Pakistan Steel Mills was signed by the two sides in February, 2013.

It is quite clear that Pakistan and Russia both find it mutually beneficial to develop economic and military ties at greater level. Axiomatically, there is great potential in fields of trade, energy and infrastructure development. It is to Pakistan's utmost advantage to have good relations with all major powers in the region including Russia, especially after the changing dynamics of relations with the US and limited policy options with new administration in Washington which is acting idiosyncratically towards Pakistan.

Moreover, Pakistani and Russian security interests are increasingly intertwined, so Moscow is not likely to afford ignoring the emergence of threats from different terrorist groups in Afghanistan. Trump's Afghan strategy has revealed the failures of US military in Afghanistan. In this regard, Pakistan may play a significant role in Afghanistan which can also be helpful for Russia to counter the emerging threats. Therefore, Pakistan must pursue its new relationship with Russia vigorously and should keep it independent of its relationships with other countries.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/178981/pak-russia-relations-trumps-strategy/>

Trump's Dilemma: Pakistan's Improved Narrative is Imperative

Ubaid Ahmed

The uneasy Pak-US ties since Donald Trump's new Afghan Policy (21st August, 2017) suffered a new year set back when on Monday Trump accused Islamabad as a 'Liar'. This is really not the first time Pakistan has been accused or blamed; subsequently 9/11 all we got as a nation to our unyielding efforts against terrorism were the exhortations to 'do more'. In his first tweet of the year on Monday 3rd January, Trump bullied to cut aid to Pakistan for purportedly deceiving the US and offering "little help" in its chase for 'terrorists' in Afghanistan. He also stated that the US has 'foolishly given Pakistan more than 33 billion dollars in aid over last 15 years'.

Notwithstanding, Islamabad and Washington walked a diplomatic tight rope for a couple of months which might put the relationship to a collision course but misconceptions merit clarifications. There is an ineluctable need for the twitter obsessed US president to recall that the US funds allocated to Pakistan, an impressive bit goes to the Coalition Support Fund (CSF), which is the reimbursement for costs incurred by Pakistan for participating in the US-led 'Global War on Terror' and supporting US operations in Afghanistan. Likewise, Pakistan also has sustained unbearable human and financial losses in the said war and has always desired sustainable peace and peace talks in Afghanistan for an avowed 'Enduring Freedom' of the people of Afghanistan.

The escalated war of words followed by the latest stresses in the bilateral relationship between the two countries has not come as a surprise. Since August the US has been trying to put Islamabad under squeeze on the 'Haqqanis' and the 'safe havens' for the 'agents of chaos'.

Now the very question that arises here is that as Trump pledged to change the nature of relationship between the US and Pakistan, what would be that probable course of change?

One hardly requires a crystal ball to extrapolate it, for Islamabad would be pressed harder with cuts in the financial aids leading to sanctions or embargoes. This is the height of incongruity on the part of the US, where once there were initiatives such as the Kerry-Lugar civilian-focused aid and endeavors to spur regional trade and productivity primarily because of Pakistan's durable role in the US led 'War on Terror', now there is slight more than wrangling over bills and military equipment.

Moreover, Trump administration this time wants India to perform major duties on its behalf. For instance the 'greater' Indian role defined in Trump's Afghan policy has been translated into a 'leading global power and stronger strategic and defense partner' to the US in the National Security Strategy Trump administration avowed last month. This could encourage India to boast its military might because of the acknowledgment incentive from a super power. Again this is no less than an irony that the US demands a more robust defense and strategic partnership from a nation notorious for its atrocities and abuse of human rights chiefly in Kashmir valley. Likewise, the US is also aware of the fact that welcoming India as a 'leading Global power' is an assured recipe for Pakistan-India proxy wars in region in general and on Afghan soil in particular.

Nevertheless there is also no denying of the fact that amidst Pakistan, the civil-military dynamics has largely and clearly affected the trajectory of Pak-US relations and steered it in the direction of being wholly security based. A part of blame must surely lie with the civilians and the present PML-N in particular.

Trump and his administration must acknowledge the sacrifices Pakistan has made so far and should also stop bullying like a head master disciplining his students, for this is certainly not the diplomatic way to deal with the allies. US needs to admit the fact that without Pakistan's support peace could never be achieved in the region. And this time to earn Pakistan's support the US ought to put a halt on the dual standards it is pursuing in the region. Thus seeking greater Indian role by keeping a blind eye on the decades long Kashmir issue, cross border and the state sponsored terrorism by India will certainly not fetch regional security that US often harps on about.

To conclude it is only Pakistan-US cooperation in fighting terrorism that served the US national security interests as well as the larger interests of the international community.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2018/01/14/trumps-dilemma-pakistans-improved-narrative-imperative/>

Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia

Asma Khalid

The deterrence equilibrium in South Asia serves as an assurance for peace and stability in the region. The strategic significance of nuclear weapons in the South Asian security equation is undeniable because these weapons reduce the chances of war and conflict between the belligerent states. In the South Asian security paradigm, nuclear deterrence is viewed as more stable than conventional deterrence.

Such as since the introduction of nuclear weapons, Pakistan has effectively deterred India's aggression on various occasions. Therefore, nuclear deterrence between India and Pakistan plays a vital role in maintaining strategic stability in South Asia.

Since the inception of the nuclear age, the credible deterrence posture is defined as one which can enable a state to survive a preemptive first strike by its opponent but still retain sufficient nuclear weapons and delivery systems to deliver a second strike that can cause unacceptable level of damage to the opponent.

Consequently, deterrence is a dynamic concept based on multiple inter-linked features including nuclear technology, doctrinal postures and international nuclear regimes. Change in the nuclear postures, sophisticated missile capabilities, shift in state's nuclear policy, shifting security environment and access to nuclear related material, technology and infrastructure are the key features that can affect the deterrence posture and nature.

Apparently, nuclear doctrines of South Asian nuclear states are based on minimum credible deterrence. But Since 2003, statements by India's nuclear strategists and officials have indicated that India is shifting its nuclear doctrine of 'No First Use' to 'First-Use'.

For instance, India's former National Security Advisor, Shivshankar Menon articulated in his book that 'India might find it useful to strike first against an adversary poised to launch or that declared it would use its weapons', this statement was a clear reference to Pakistan. However, India's vague nuclear strategy and hints of doctrinal shift are neither new nor surprising for Pakistan. For India's nuclear history is full with such contradictory statement but such contradictory assertions are posing serious challenge to nuclear deterrence.

In contrast, Pakistan's nuclear doctrine is Indian centric and aim's to deter India's aggression. Therefore in response to India's shifting nuclear strategy and growing capabilities, Pakistan's NCA has endorsed a 'Full Spectrum Deterrence'. What is meant by full-spectrum?

Lt Gen Khalid Kidwai pointed out that Full Spectrum Deterrence policy guides the development of nuclear capability, which brings every Indian target into Pakistan's striking range. Consequently, Pakistan is developing a "full spectrum of nuclear weapons in all three categories — strategic, operational and tactical, with full range coverage of the large Indian land mass and its outlying

territories” including Nicobar and Andaman Islands. For developments of the command by India at these Islands will severely undermine the deterrence and regional strategic stability.

After the introduction of ‘India’s Cold Start Doctrine’ and in response to growing conventional forces asymmetry, Pakistan has increased its reliance on nuclear weapons. Though, India tries to formulate alternative strategies around nuclear deterrence to achieve its regional and global strategic ambitions. However, Pakistan has countered the Indian technological and missile developments with calculated responses to uphold deterrence and strategic stability in the region.

Such as, successful test of Multiple Independent Re-entry Targetable Vehicle (MIRV), Ababeel is a reliable measure against Indian Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system. Additionally, India’s testing of Agni IV and Agni V in year 2017 has demonstrated that the development of low yield Nasar is a stabilising addition to the prevailing deterrence equation. However, in the shifting regional security environment, arms race, vertical proliferation, war mongering mindset of political elites and absence of arms control regime is viewed as unavoidable challenge to deterrence equilibrium at tactical level as well as strategic level.

India’s growing conventional and military capabilities, shifting nuclear strategy and aggressive policies have the potential to disturb the regional peace and stability but India is not willing to pay any heed to emerging challenges of deterrence. Therefore, Pakistan has adequately prepared itself to address the challenges of Indian aggression by maintaining credible nuclear deterrence and conventional defence. Pakistan’s counter measures such as development of Nasr and Ababeel has thwarted India’s Cold Start Doctrine and Ballistic Missile Defence System because facing the instability and aggression is not an option.

To conclude, it is imperative for Pakistan to modernise its nuclear weapons to deter India from taking any offense against Pakistan. Accordingly, any compromise on its nuclear weapon advancement and modernisation can be dangerous for regional stability and its own national security.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/180960/nuclear-deterrence-south-asia/>

NPT Review Conference 2020: Prospects and Challenges

Beenish Altaf

The NPT Review Conference is held after every five years since the treaty went into force in 1970. The Review Conference is structured to help member states review its performance and implementation for identifying the next steps in-line with the aims of the treaty.

The Review Conferences usually endeavours to end with a substantive, consensus based document. It should not only be reviewing the implementation of the NPT, but might take account of new initiatives to support its aim.

However, the success of adopting such a consensus document has followed an irregular pattern up till now. Proper documents based on consensus of the member states were adopted by the Review Conferences of 1975, 1985, 1995, 2000, and 2010. However, the concluding documents of the 1980, 1990, 2005 and 2015 Review Conferences were entirely procedural. Therefore, these conferences are considered to be a failure on the part of the NPT Review Conferences.

Review Conferences perceived lack of progress towards actual disarmament by the five NPT nuclear weapons states and the stalemate in the aim to attain a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East; an issue directly resulted in the failure to reach consensus in 2015.

More specifically, the failure to produce a consensus at the 2015 conference led to disappointment across the world. It was widely expected that steps would be taken to advance the 64 point Action Plan agreed on at the 2010 conference. It entailed promoting nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The opposition of the United States towards a plan for convening a conference on the establishment of the Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone and strong differences between nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states on the divisive issue of disarmament prevented the participating countries from agreeing on a final document.

However, on Pakistan's account, many Pakistani experts believe that the country's leadership has made the correct decisions on nuclear issues in the past owing to the failure of the NPT Review Conferences to produce a document with a substantive consensus.

Pakistani analysts consider that a nuclear deterrent should be both 'credible and symmetric' with its conventional and strategic capabilities and the refinement of nuclear capabilities should continue. Ambassador Tariq Osman Hyder, who was a member of the Oversight Board for Strategic Export Controls, said the collapse of the NPT Review Conference was a setback to developed countries, which had projected this flawed and discriminatory treaty as the linchpin of the non-proliferation regime.

Ironically, distress between the nuclear weapons states and non nuclear weapons states is not coming to an end. Instead the friction over the issue of nuclear disarmament is continuously rising.

Russia has apprehensions regarding proposals to limit its nuclear arsenal to 1,000 warheads and views US developments in ballistic missile defence, prompt global strike as undermining strategic stability.

Moscow is perhaps too critical in viewing this global missile defence system as a security threat. Even the members of the SCO believed national security should not be achieved at the expense of the security of other states as 'the unilateral and unlimited capacity of individual states' or groups of states' missile defence systems will be detrimental to international security and strategic stability.'

Apart from nuclear disarmament, proliferation of nuclear weapons is the discord of our times. Iran has been managed diplomatically in the form an agreement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), but North Korea on the other hand is being dealt with the opposite way. This is a reminder that the nuclear non-proliferation treaty is not a success in preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

While identifying the challenges to the 2020 NPT Review Conference, the blazing issues of 2015 Review Conference have not been addressed yet, so the plausibility of the failure is there for the next Review Conference as well. Three options could be presented here to increase the probability for the 2020 Review Conference to accomplish something positive.

First, it could be discussed whether the traditional focus on one final consensus document at the end of a Review Conference can be changed, so that tensions on certain topics do not block everything else as well. In other words, a consensus document could be a must outcome at the end of 2020 Review Conference for which states could go for alternative agreements beforehand.

Second, new explorations are required to solve the deadlock on the aim to establish a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East.

Third, nuclear weapons states should show more willingness to accelerate their disarmament efforts, for which some strategies or tactics need to be adopted by the P5 states specifically.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/187184/npt-review-conference-2020-prospects-challenges/>

India's Pursuit of Missile Development and Strategic Stability in South Asia

Qura tul ain Hafeez

India once again tested a long-range Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) with a range of 5500 km. The missile is capable of delivering a payload of 1.5 tons, enough to carry a fusion and fissile nuclear warhead. This is the fifth missile of the Agni series. Previously India tested the Agni-1 with 700km range, Agni-2 with 2,000km range; Agni-3 and Agni-4 with 2,500km to over 3,500km range respectively. Agni-5 is the most advanced missile in the Agni series, because of its latest navigation and guidance, warhead and engine features. The missile has been made in a manner that after reaching the peak of its trajectory it will head down to the earth's surface, towards the target, with increased velocity due to the gravitational pull.

India's ambitions are not only limited to the Ballistic Missile test, but it is also planning to develop a sea-based version of Agni VI. India's Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) revealed in 2012 that it is also in the process of developing another variant of Agni-VI missile. This will be a submarine-launched solid-fuel missile with a maximum range of 6,000 kilometers and a payload of three tons. Moreover, Agni-VI will be a four-stage ICBM, and it is expected to have Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicle (MIRV) as well as Maneuverable Reentry Vehicle (MaRV) – once the process of hardware development is completed. However, due to maneuverable warheads, the range of the missile may extend.

Here are some questions to ponder that how long will India take to build Ballistic and Intercontinental missiles? And what are the strategic implications of India's missile tests?

Considering the no-first-use nuclear doctrine that India follows, apparently, it is trying to fill the gaps in the anti-Missile defense shield. In fact, India is developing a nuclear missile shield which reveals the offensive nature of Indian defense posture. This is not merely an effort to achieve the objective of credible minimum deterrence but an intentional effort to become a regional hegemon. Such highly sophisticated missile technology is reinforcing India's capability, and one must not ignore India's aggressive ambitions of Fissile Material stockpiling. India already has K4 and K15 Sea-based missiles, for the SSBN. DRDO often claims to build the missile with a striking range of 10, 000 Km to compete with DF31A of Chinese missile having the range of 11,200 Km. Indian BMD system is leading towards a dangerous dimension in the South Asian nuclear environment that slowly but surely leads to an arms race between the South Asian nuclear powers.

As far as the strategic implications of Indian missile defense system are concerned, the advancement in the Agni series will not only disrupt the equilibrium of deterrence equation but the strategic stability of South Asia. India's non-stop efforts are to enhance its military power to seek military parity with China, but this will only upraise the rivalry between the two nuclear-armed rivals-India and Pakistan. The region, where the strategic environment is already very complex, vulnerable and

volatile, a country like India is a source of instability. Moreover, it also raises questions about the nonproliferation efforts as well. India on one side claims to hold a good record for proliferation but simultaneously it is increasing the arms buildup on a huge scale, leaving a big question mark on the global efforts of arms control and disarmament.

Although India claims to follow the nuclear doctrine of credible minimum deterrence, however, it is moving towards more than a credible deterrence. It has an aggressive force posture moving from counterforce to counter value, eventually leading towards nuclear arms proliferation. Subsequently, India's continuous arms buildup and quest for nuclear triad will hamper the security situation of the neighboring countries like Pakistan and China. Agni 1, II, and III were specifically Pakistan oriented but the recent test of Agni V has brought China's northernmost parts within the striking range of India along with most of Europe and Africa. It has also raised security implications for China as well because the major cities of China easily fall within the radius of Agni V.

The international community, to reinforce the arms control regimes, should take measures to counter India's increasing military spending and nuclearization. Since Pakistan is the regional protagonist and shares the deeply rooted hostility with India, therefore Pakistan is concerned with these changing dynamics or missile build-up. India's missile tests are hampering the security environment. Therefore, Pakistan should bring on board all the states parties to non-proliferation regimes to discourage the arms race.

<http://southasiajournal.net/indias-pursuit-of-missile-development-and-strategic-stability-in-south-asia/>

SAARC Satellite: India Sugarcoating its Military Ambitiousness

Ahyousha Khan

The 21st century has brought many changes. There have been new trends in international arena like information technology, globalization, geo-economics and regional integration. States are relying on regional cooperation and integration to achieve their economic and developmental goals.

However, even in 21st century regional integration is one thing South Asian states are infamous for. Their grievances, deep-rooted mistrust, conflicts and ambitions never allowed these hostile neighbors of South Asia to experience regional solidarity. Every action taken by one state is a concerning matter for the other state in the region. As states in the region are more concerned about absolute gains and are in for a zero-sum game. Even in this gloomy situation, all is not lost, and some regional cooperation and integration initiatives are active in the region.

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is one such arrangement that strengthens the faith that there is hope for South Asia. In the 18th SAARC Summit India, one of the most prominent states in South Asia instills the faith in regional cooperation by announcing that it will gift its South Asian neighbors a satellite to communicate with the help of its 12 Ku Band transponders. This announcement by India was received with enthusiasm not only at the regional level but also at the international level.

But, there is a famous proverb that “nothing is free of cost.”, So was this gift from India to its neighbors that came with the cost. It cost India’s neighbors the right to operate the gift-satellite or right to learn anything about the gifted technology.

So, Pakistan along with other South Asian states rejected this marketing stunt of the Indian government. Initially, Pakistan wanted to be part of this project and proposed technological and financial assistance. But, upon recognizing India’s intentions about its satellites program, Pakistan withdrew from the initiative.

This attempt by India to take regional states on board through a gift offer was nothing but a counter-measure to control China’s influence in the region. For Pakistan, the alarming aspect in such an agreement was a dependency on India, when there is no way to ensure that in time of crisis whether such communication channel will be effective or not.

Moreover, Indian continuous ambitiousness in the space is eliminating its rhetoric for utilizing space capabilities as a gift. In the year 2017 India made a world record of sending 104 satellites in space, which also entailed Cartosat-2 series satellite. India began the year 2018 with the launch of PSLVC-40 by its Polar satellite launch vehicle, which also carries 710 kg Cartosat-2 series satellite. The fact to be reckoned with is that Cartosat-2 series satellite is not an ordinary satellite; it is specially designed for earth observation. Thus, it is capable of high-resolution scene-specific spot imageries using its panchromatic and Nutt spectral cameras and is able of remote sensing. Which will enable India to gather

intelligence on its enemies without many hurdles? So, with this technology now India has an eye in the sky and is militarizing space with dual-use technologies.

Considering the track record of arms proliferation in South Asia, one cannot neglect that peaceful Indian utilization of space is nothing but a façade. India is an ambitious player that is robustly working towards its military goals. With an eye in the sky in the form of satellite, India's Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities will multiply. Another fact is an intensification of such efforts by India and its negative effect on the strategic stability of South Asia.

But, point to ponder for Pakistan in this situation is how long it will rely on foreign satellites for communication and ISR capabilities. Moreover, what is the credibility of such satellites service providers during the crisis?

Furthermore, for how long Indian ambitiousness will threaten Pakistan's vital interests. In all these circumstances Pakistan needs to reorganize its priorities regarding where to spend and how much to spend. No doubt, space technology is expensive and time taking, but such vital initiatives must never be politicized. As the coming age will be dominated by information technology, communication, computers, and intelligence, it is important that Pakistan must gear up not only to counter Indian ambitiousness but for its survival and development as well. As satellites are the key to gathering intelligence and communication negligence is not an option for Pakistan.

<http://southasiajournal.net/saarc-satellite-india-sugarcoating-its-military-ambitiousness/>

Modi's Strategic Embrace Doesn't Augur Well for the Muslim Middle East

Nisar Ahmed

In a much hyped visit, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu landed in India for a 5 day official visit in January 14, 2018 with a large entourage of professionals and businessmen. The two countries agreed to enhance and deepen bilateral cooperation in innovation, business and trade, space, homeland security and cyber, higher education and research, science and technology, tourism and culture. However, strategic complexities emanating from divergent interests of Israel and Muslim countries in the region make establishment of congenial relations with all these states, if not impossible, a difficult affair. Thus, in this context India's open and strategic embrace of Israel will affect its ties with Muslim states within and beyond Middle East for a variety of reasons.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Israel in 1992, India has seemingly struggled to maintain a difficult balance between Israel and Arab or the Muslim Middle East. For the past 25 years, India has generally conducted its Israel policy with little fanfare and with careful attention to the sensitivities of Palestinians and their international backers. But with right-wing Modi and Netanyahu in power in India and Israel respectively, an apparent shift can be witnessed in India's Israel policy. This shift has been indicated by the growing bonhomie between India and Israel. Last year in July Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Israel in 25 years. But India's ties with Israel come at a huge cost of alienating and distancing other major powers in the region, some being major partners.

Iran is one of the major Muslim countries in the region having strategic rewards for India. Iran hosts Chahbahar port, built with the cooperation and financial assistance of India. Through this port India wants to connect with the energy rich Central Asia via Afghanistan. Iran's unique geo-strategic location is India's most logical conduit for projecting power into Central Asia and land-locked Afghanistan. India is eager to expand its power and influence over the smaller states in its near abroad. Given the mutual enmity of Israel and Iran, any move Modi makes in a bid to expand ties with Israel will ultimately disillusion Iran leading it to further cementing its ties with Pakistan, to the chagrin of India.

Indeed, Iran is clearly wary of Indo-Israel defence cooperation. Iran will never be happy to see Indian defence and security cooperation resulting in the strength of its arch nemesis .i.e. Israel. In addition, India's strategic partnership with the US along with Israel renders it a less reliable partner for Iran owing to the ongoing undeclared war between Iran and US-Israel nexus. The induction of India in this nexus has long been in the making but now India has no qualms about publicizing this.

Notwithstanding their own state-terrorism against Kashmiris and Palestinians, Indo-Israeli security cooperation is also based on a shared perception of dangers from terrorism and its purveyors. Considering the US rhetoric against Iran for its alleged sponsoring of terrorism and India's strategic

partnership with the US, India would be compelled to join the US bandwagon against so called Islamic terrorism of Iran thereby further weakening the prospect of balanced ties.

Notwithstanding the conflicts and differences among Muslim countries in the Middle East, Palestine remains the unifying force. The way Muslim countries rejected and denounced Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital is a recent example of solidarity in the face of injustice. Modi's attempts to delink Palestine from Indian approach to Israel is tantamount to accepting Israel's brutal treatment and colonization of Palestinian against which India's founding father Gandhi had famously said "Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English or France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs. What is going on in Palestine today cannot be justified by any moral code of conduct...."

It is widely felt that India's ties with Palestine are symbolic and without substance. India's recent vote in favour of Israel against the US move to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital is not driven by Gandhi's vision rather by mundane considerations of securing Muslim votes in India's internal politics. In a response to All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) President M Badruddin Ajmal for thanking Sushma Suvaraj on Palestine vote, the audacious external Minister who doesn't hesitate to defend India's brutal use of force against Kashmir is shamelessly demanded votes in return.

This realization may lead the backers of Palestine to downgrade their relations with India if a situation so arises that a perceived inaction on part of these Muslim countries in the face of brutal repression of Palestinians and Kashmiris by the Indo-Israel nexus risks their credibility. This is the last thing to be desired by two heavy weights i.e. Saudi Arabia and Iran. Indo-Israel growing bonhomie is a serious concern for any country seeking the leadership of Muslim Middle East and reputation in the Muslim. Thus, India's strategic ties with Israel will seriously affect its interests in the oil rich Arab world. The cost of such an eventuality is immense for India which heavily depends on the oil rich Muslim states for energy requirements.

In conclusion, as India seeks to cement its strategic relations with Israel and the US it will be tempted to take sides. It will also come under pressure to take decisions which otherwise it would not have taken. To secure its long-term interests, India will not resist such temptations and pressure, and will be sucked into the rivalries in the region. India has made such mistakes in the past as well such as giving in to the American pressure on the issue of Iran's nuclear technology.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2018/01/27/modis-strategic-embrace-netanyahu-doesnt-augur-well-muslim-middle-east/>

CPEC and Information Silk Road

S. Sadia Kazmi

CPEC with its multifaceted dimensions offers a number of arenas of cooperation for both China and Pakistan. Gwadar port, energy generation, special economic zones, industrial cooperation and connectivity are the main centers of focus, which have shown steady progress over the last 32 months. The focus on “Connectivity” among the proposed ideas covers a wide range of linkages through the construction of roads, railways, ports, highways, bridges, seaways and a very significant process of laying fibre optic cables along the CPEC route. The idea is to develop cyber-ways and internet highways which will make the CPEC a high tech digital corridor. A digital information society with telecommunication, advance internet technology infrastructure, smart cities, e-commerce, e-business and e-markets will expose the CPEC to much larger communication networks. This particular dimension of CPEC came to the fore more prominently during the 4th World Internet Conference that was held in China where it was deliberated that China should take up a more influential and leading position in cyber space through bringing improvement and developing its digital technology. This is not something new for China as it has already been working on the integration of its economy, politics and social develop with digital technology, and the cyber security. In the same vein the idea was first implemented in 2013 when the 18th CPC Central Committee made “perfection of the cyberspace leadership mechanism” as one of the 60 reform tasks.

The successful progress on this front for last 5 years has enabled China to exercise efficient cyberspace governance and to make it more secure from the external threats to its national security and development. Now that China is actively expanding its economic network with the outside world, with the help of six economic corridors, it wants to replicate the same model so as to ensure robust security and development of the corridors with the other regions. Chinese President Xi Jinping maintains that, “China hopes to work with the international community to respect cyberspace sovereignty and carry forward the spirit of partnership to commonly advance development, safeguard security, participate in governance, and share the benefits.” Addressing the first China – EU Digital Co-operation Roundtable in Brussels, the head of the Cyberspace Administration of China, Mr. Lu Wei also said that “We are ready to invest because there are infinite opportunities. We can build a digital Silk Road, a Silk Road in cyberspace. On the basis of respecting their network sovereignty, history, culture and religious belief, Chinese Internet companies should forge closer links with their counterparts in the countries.”

For this purpose, the government of China co-launched “The Belt and Road Digital Economy International Cooperation Initiative” with seven other countries at the 4th World Internet Conference in Wuzhen, Zhejiang province in China on December 3, 2017. Egypt, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Serbia, Thailand and Laos decided to extend their collaboration with China to strengthen trust and confidence for secure, peaceful, open and regulated cyberspace and digital economy. This will not only result in a highly interconnected network of information silk roads along the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road under One Belt One Road initiative of China, but will specifically make these corridors immune to external threats to a large extent. Within CPEC, a huge

amount of US \$ 44 million has been dedicated for Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Such digital connectivity through cyberspace will not just be limited to China and Pakistan but will also link other 65 countries across Central Asia, Europe, South East Asia and Africa. This vision is planned to be materialized with the help of projects including fibre optic cable, a new submarine internet station for internet traffic flow, and digital TV.

Another significant dimension to constructing the digital linkages is the addition of digital economic generation power. Looking at China's example where the digital economy contributes around 30.3 % to its total GDP i.e. around 22.58 trillion Yuan, Pakistan can also hope to generate huge revenues from digital economy. In China almost all the transactions take place online. According to official figures, around 467 million online Chinese customers have raised the transaction volume to 2.61trillion Yuan. This will not only plug the gaps in global digital development but will also offer a pattern of global governance based on Information and Communication technology.

In order to benefit from these projects, it is important that the private and public sectors are trained and made to be familiarized with these advances technologies. It is equally important to carry out these measures simultaneously otherwise the high tech digital highways constructed under CPEC will remain underutilized when the public and private sectors will not be satisfactorily equipped with the required knowledge and expertise.

<http://foreignpolicynews.org/2018/01/28/cpec-information-silk-road/>

There Can be No Peace without Political Engagement

Ubaid Ahmed

It is unlikely that Afghanistan will ever be peaceful or stable without a peace settlement between the Afghan Taliban and the Afghan government. The ceaseless savagery in Afghanistan is an impression of the strategic stalemate in the conflict; besides, it likewise shows the failure of the military option in vanquishing the Taliban.

There has not been any genuine undertaking to positively shape the grounds for peace talks in Afghanistan. Any efforts to bring about effective peace talks are neutralised by the blame games of all the parties involved. Meanwhile, the fact that the primary goal of peace talks, which should be the quick cessation of conflict, even on transient basis, remains forgotten.

The Taliban may not be forthcoming and political expediency is likely to prevent Kabul and its Western supporters from undertaking such an initiative nonetheless, the desire for peace must not be viewed as an indication of shortcoming by either side. Giving peace a reasonable chance is the greater responsibility of those who have more to lose compared to the insurgents.

Consequently, the strategy of 'fight and talk' may need to be abandoned to end the existing trust deficit. It would be helpful if under a ceasefire, some Taliban commanders return to Afghanistan to 'Afghanise' the long stalled negotiation process. Though we can't be certain of a positive reaction from the Taliban, by and by, it would offer the peace process a reasonable shot while additionally decreasing the insurgents' public appeal.

An end to the Afghan conflict is connected with a genuine, legitimate and meaningful negotiation process with the Taliban. Along these lines, it is imperative that the Taliban be sought after towards a political engagement. Making the negotiating table attractive for the Taliban is the job of the Afghan government and the US. However, up to this point, nothing advantageous has been offered to bait the Taliban.

Without enticements, the quest for effective peace talks will remain slippery. The strategy of selective engagement with insurgents is likewise not feasible and is probably not going to help in gaining sustainable peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The US has not been exceptionally open to the possibility of a comprehensive dialogue process, particularly with the Haqqani Network (HQN), nonetheless, Haqqanis are progressively co-opted by the post-Mullah Omar Taliban. The emphasis thus ought to be on scattering the impression of separating or debilitating the revolt through talks rather than pursuing a policy of building pressure and squeezing Islamabad for fruitful results.

Nevertheless, the unending conflict in Afghanistan can't exclusively be credited to external factors. Afghanistan is made up of various ethnic groups with varying interests; a state of conflict has, thus, always prevailed in the country.

Throughout the years, external players have exacerbated the ever present ethnic fault lines in Afghan society. Whilst eliminating the overarching trust deficit among conflicting domestic players may not be possible immediately, an impression of compromise amidst Afghanistan is essential.

It is also imperative that besides initiating a negotiation process between the Taliban, the government and the foreign military forces present on Afghan soil, a comprehensive intra-Afghan dialogue is encouraged and prioritised.

To conclude, Pakistan continues to support an inclusive political reconciliation process in Afghanistan as the only viable path towards obtaining lasting peace in the region, Moreover Pakistan has bolstered and urged the Taliban to continue talks in Afghanistan, but it abstained from drawing in with the Taliban in the wake of the current stressed relations with Washington.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/189948/can-no-peace-without-political-engagement/>

Durand Line Fencing is Not Outlandish

Babar Ali

The invisible line that bisects thousands of Pashtun tribal people's dusty villages and demarcates the Afghanistan-Pakistan frontier is being transformed into fenced-wall divide. The fence will run down the middle of "divided villages". Pakistan, worried by Afghan interventionists, has set off to building a fence to avert militants crossing the 2,500 km porous frontier along the Durand line drawn up by the British in 1893.

Seven such villages have been spotted around the Chaman district. This district provides the most convenient point for border-crossing into Pakistan's south-western province of Baluchistan. Other divided villages exist further north in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).

The authorities in Baluchistan are now working on shifting Pakistani citizens residing in the divided villages to the Pakistan's side of the fence. In support of this wall being termed as border wall, Col. Muhammad Usman, Commander of Pakistan's Frontier Corps paramilitary force in Chaman maintained that "(A border wall) was there in Germany, it is in Mexico. It is all over the world – why not in Afghanistan and Pakistan?" "These tribal people have to understand that this is Pakistan and that place is Afghanistan." He further added "Trump is doing as per requirements of America; we are doing as per requirements of Pakistan."

Previously Pakistan attempted to build fence a decade ago which resulted in failure. Therefore, skepticism about the fence abounds. Many doubt whether it is possible to secure such a lengthy border. Although the appeal of erecting tangible border barriers diminished after the Berlin Wall was torn down in 1989, yet in recent years, several elected and chosen populist leaders have backed the building of walls to curtail movement of foreigners, notably US President Donald Trump, who planned a wall along the entire border with Mexico. Recently, Hungary also decided and fenced the border with Serbia to prevent the flux of Syrian refugees and other Muslim migrants from entering Europe as Hungary acts as a gateway to the Eastern Europe.

Afghanistan seems unable to digest the construction of a wall all along the border. Relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan were already tense and boiled over in two divided villages when Afghan border troops clashed with the Frontier Corps in May 2017 which took more than 10 lives. Meanwhile, Kabul and Islamabad continued to accuse each other for sheltering militants and providing safe havens to Islamist groups that carry out cross-border attacks. Pakistan's military planned to complete the construction of chain-linked and barbed-wire topped fence by December 2018 across the South Waziristan portion. Durand line fencing is imperative to preserve peace in tribal areas of Pakistan and it would equally benefit the region. To curb the menace of terrorism, this is the tangible development which provides the impetus to anti-terrorism efforts.

Unfortunately, Pakistan could not secure due acknowledgment for its efforts in so-called 'war on terror' which only mitigated the US-led global pressure of 'do more'. Decision of Durand line fencing

seems to have rationale on part of Pakistan to diminish the notion of safe havens in Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA).

Last month during a tour of South Asia, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson also called on leaders to join in eradicating fighters that seek safe haven across Durand line. Ergo, it has become regional need stemmed out from Pak-Afghan border for successful furtherance of 'war on terror'. On the other hand, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's Administration has frequently denounced and threatened armed confrontation regarding the construction across the Pak-Afghan border. Afghanistan is still stuck with anti-Durand line notion. Apparently, border fortification and its utility is being misconstrued by Afghanistan. Border fencing is not only instrumental in curtailing cross-border movement of terrorists but also to prevent smuggling of drugs, weapons and other goods. The UN estimates that Afghanistan's opium poppy production has grown by 700 tons to 4,800 tons in the decade ended 2016. The border barrier is also expected to reduce the drug trade across the border. The UN reported that about 40 percent of the opium produced in Afghanistan is transited through Pakistan.

No exact timeline has been given for the completion of Duran line fencing. Since it has been initiated, the rapid work is in progress and it is expected to be completed soon. Seemingly, it is a fruitful strategy devised by Pakistan. However, it is yet to be seen whether it may bear any fruit or not.

<https://pakobserver.net/durand-line-fencing-not-outlandish/>

CPEC as a Regional Economic Hub

S. Sadia Kazmi

Pakistan, owing to its geographical location is in an ideal position to serve as a corridor to Central, South, East and West Asia. Not only does it provide easy trade links to these regions but has the potential to provide a convenient transit route too. This is one of the major reasons why Pakistan has always figured important in the regional and global politics. The fact that it is located adjacent to world's largest economies further elevates its status as a significant geostrategic location. Even though Pakistan's economic indicators have not have been very hopeful in the past but with the CPEC unfolding fast and meeting its deadlines, Pakistan can prove to be a potential regional geographic hub by connecting and integrating the regional economies.

However, having the potential and tapping it to one's advantage are two different things. The concerned authorities really need to look into the troubled areas and devise pragmatic policies to take advantage of this potential i.e. strategic location and geography. For now, even though the CPEC remains largely bilateral as is also evident from its nomenclature, its inclusivity cannot be ignored. Time and again there have been statements by the Chinese leaders where all and any country is welcomed to join the CPEC, if they wish to. This might practically materialize at some later stage when CPEC; the flag ship project of BRI starts to deliver. While still in the developing stage it has managed to attract worldwide attention wherein large number of countries has shown the inclination to join. These countries include Russia, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Romania, Belarus, Ukraine, Italy, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, and the Central Asian Republics etc. Hence, once the CPEC is fully completed, it will be able to embrace in its folds several other countries into a mutual network of economic and security cooperation. Therefore, this aspect of expanding the CPEC to the adjacent economies is not only doable but already under consideration. CPEC could then be specifically expanded to the neighboring economies of Central Asia, West Asia, Afghanistan and India. In such an arrangement, the Central Asian energy markets will not only be easily accessible but it will provide the resource rich landlocked Central Asia states to reach the markets in Pakistan, China, West Asia and India and an access to the warm waters. Once these goods have a larger outreach, it will foster the regional and global economic trade as well as connectivity.

The possibility for the CPEC to be extended to Central Asia, Afghanistan and India has already been mentioned by President Xi Jinping during his address to the Pakistani parliament on his first visit to Pakistan in April 2015. He welcomes the regional economic integration and believes that the changing geopolitical requirements demand reshuffling of policies. The same realization is there in the official circles of Pakistan that the reorientation of its regional and global economic policies focusing on the export oriented framework to the new global markets including the Indian markets in order to uplift its economy is the need of time. China-Pakistan trade volume is not too satisfactory at the moment, so the expansion of CPEC to India will only enlarge the volume of overall regional trade between China, Pakistan and India. CPEC provides an excellent opportunity to Pakistan to extend trade to South and Central Asia including India.

China attaches great importance to the CPEC for obvious reasons as it reduces its dependence on the South China Sea by allowing to directly connect to the Indian Ocean and the Middle East. This has given China the chance to bypass the highly contested waters of South China Sea which might be choked for the trade and traffic any time by the competing actors. Such a situation could be detrimental to China's economic activities as 80% of its oil and energy needs are met by transportation through the Malacca Strait. Hence, the CPEC emerges as the major connection to the outside world for China if such a situation arises. China is on a lookout for the safe passage for its economic activity while the its economic and energy security interests in the region are under serious threats because of the heightened tensions between China and the global players in South and East China Sea. This is especially true as the US rebalancing policy and Trans Pacific treaty in Asia Pacific region includes, military, economic and strategic cooperation with the South East Asian states including India against China. This eventually raises alarm for China. Gwadar port is 400 km away from the Strait of Hormuz. This allows China to transport its good at much lesser distance which would be reduced from 12000 km to only 3000 km. In this way, the Chinese goods to the West Asian markets can be made available in much lesser time, at much lesser cost of travel, and also by passing the contested Malacca Strait. This not only ensures the economic security i.e. unhindered flow of economic goods, but allows China to address its Malacca Dilemma.

For now, India has been working on an alternative access point i.e. Chabahar port to reach West Asia, Central Asia and Afghanistan. This is understandable given the long history of rivalry between Pakistan and India where Pakistan naturally feels reluctant to give a free passage to India through its soil. This move to bypass Pakistan has become more evident in the wake of trilateral framework between India, Iran and Afghanistan for economic cooperation. Nonetheless, such strict positions and distrusts need to be mitigated and instead the regional dividends for all should be made the bigger cause. One possibility could be to make Gwadar and Chabahar ports into regional imports, including other regional states in them to increase the regional trade. Iran has floated this idea to Pakistan regarding the Chabahar port while Pakistan has also reassured to India that Gwadar should not be seen as the rival port but a regional port instead.

Pakistan on its part should give importance to the successful and timely materialization of the CPEC and then focus on making its regionally inclusive. As the Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reform, Ahsan Iqbal, mentioned that Pakistan had achieved 5% economic growth and is now able to create a favourable socio-economic ecosystem that enjoyed political stability. A favourable ecosystem is what the country needs to continue to focus on in order to attract the interest of key global investors which are now eyeing Pakistan as a potential market for investments. China is promoting regional and global connectivity across the Asia Pacific region as part of its One Belt One Road initiative. Similarly, Pakistan's Vision 2025 focuses on helping Pakistan to leverage its geo-strategic location in order to explore the inherent economic options.

<http://foreignpolicynews.org/2018/01/30/cpec-regional-economic-hub/>

Pakistan's Nuclear Strategy

Asma Khalid

A nuclear South Asia has altered the strategic doctrine and culture in the region. For India, it was principally to discourage China and retaliate for the mortification it faced in 1962. For Pakistan, it was to ensure the larger state, i.e. India, would not get involved in any misadventure.

Pakistan needed to wind up plainly as a nuclear state not by choice rather by the impulse of conditions because of developing ordinary asymmetry and threat perception vis-à-vis India. When Pakistan detonated its nuclear device in 1998 in response to India's nuclear tests, it like a responsible member of international community chose nuclear restraint as a part of nuclear policy and vowed to maintain its capability as a credible minimum deterrence to ward off security threats from India. This viably implied that Pakistan would not utilise its nuclear devices unless incited to do so. The incitement implies that Pakistan would utilise its nuclear capability only when the adversary goes past Pakistan's nuclear threshold. That is to say, greater the conventional force lower would be the threshold to employ nuclear deterrence.

Indian strategic analysts' acuties that addition of sophisticated weaponry and the introduction of new war fighting concepts like 'Cold Start Doctrine' (CSD) and 'Pro Active Operations' (PAO) will shift the balance of power to New Delhi's favor is an austere folly. Nonetheless, technologically advanced nations like UK, US, France and Israel are also encouraging India to advance its armed force' capabilities. India's widespread military development with the uncontrolled help from the aforesaid technologically advanced countries is disturbing for the South Asian strategic stability.

Notwithstanding India's military hardware imports are far greater than those of its avowed regional strategic competitor 'Pakistan'. More recently India was admitted as 42nd member of the multilateral export cartel regime, the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA).

New Delhi's entrance into WA would help Indian military in acquiring critical dual military goods and innovations for their up degree and modernisation. Moreover, India was also admitted as a full member of MTCR (Missile Technology Control Regime) in 2016, a west dominated cartel which maintains the monopoly over trade in missile and space technology.

Likewise, the large scale acquisition of military hardware, Academic professionals and public rejection of 'no first use' policy and aspirations to carryout disarming strikes against Pakistan has raised concerns within the official circles of Pakistan but Pakistan responded in an effective and well calculated manner.

Instead of entering into an arms race with its nuclear rival Islamabad refurbished its nuclear deterrence posture. Pakistan reiterated that it would retain and stick to its Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD) in line with the credible minimum deterrence. Pakistan's full spectrum deterrence is to ensure there are no gaps in its deterrence capability. FSD is more of a qualitative response than a quantitative

one to the new war fighting concepts of 'CSD' and 'PAO' introduced by India. However, its scope ranges from conventional to strategic and to the tactical levels.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/191433/pakistans-nuclear-strategy/>

India's Australia Group Membership and Its Regional Implications

Beenish Altaf

After the membership of Wassenaar Arrangement, the membership in another of the four major export control regimes is expected to give India an opportunity in its bid to secure a berth in the 48-members Nuclear Suppliers Group. Ironically, India managed to get into three of the export control cartels over the last two years, i.e., membership of MTCR, Wassenaar Arrangement and Australia Group.

However, apparently, India believes that this move reaffirms its non-proliferation credentials and its commitment to global peace and security, whereas in real, it has nothing much to do with its good proliferation credentials.

The Australia Group (AG) is an informal association that works on the basis of consensus. It aims to allow exporters or transshipment countries to minimise the risk of further proliferation of chemical and biological weapons (CBW). The Group meets annually to assess ways in which the national level export licensing measures of its 41 participants can collectively be rendered more effective to ensure that would-be proliferators are unable to obtain necessary inputs for CBW programs, which are banned under the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). It is the cooperative and voluntary group of countries working to counter the spread of materials, equipment and technologies that could contribute to the development or acquisition of chemical and biological weapons (CBW) by states or terrorist groups.

The Australia Group admitted India as the 43rd member on 19 January 2018 through a consensus decision. It is the third export control group India has joined in the series. It is already a member of Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies.

Paradoxically, this move is expected to raise New Delhi's stature in the field of non-proliferation and also help it acquire critical technologies. Likewise the membership of these groups will give India a distinct advantage when participating in the management of global commerce in advanced technology.

In recent years, India is undoubtedly trying to integrate itself quickly within these regimes by playing politics. However, it is quite obvious that it would face roadblocks in its integration within the existing system. A somewhat deeper analysis indicates that the old non-proliferation order and actors are slowly reconciling to India's integration with the global export controls system. India's membership in the four multilateral export controls regimes questions the credibility and efficacy of the global system including the non-proliferation regime.

India has claimed that it has a spotless non — proliferation record and that it should be included in nuclear mainstream countries by also making it part of the NSG. However, it seems India's non-

proliferation record is not as clean as it would have wanted the world to believe. A lot has been written about India's first nuclear test in the post-nuclear supplier's group debates. That test spurred the United States and several other countries to create the Nuclear Suppliers Group to more vigilantly restrict and monitor global nuclear trade.

Since India's nuclear program largely is Plutonium based, its uranium reserves are demonstrated to be low for its civil nuclear usage and military usage. The trend of nuclear deals with India — set largely by the US — has and will further overwhelm India with the Uranium reserves. India will not only benefit from its civil nuclear program but will also keep an extensive amount of Uranium for its burgeoning nuclear weapons program. The assistance to India has made it a potential aspirant to become a South Asian nuclear giant. It also expects to be recognised as a world's legal nuclear power.

Nevertheless, India is undoubtedly spending more and more on developing its terrific firepower and strike capabilities. It outdoes China as the world's largest importer of weapons systems, indicating the country's intent of modernising its military abilities and demonstrating capabilities beyond South Asia. It is feared that the whole Asian security is fueling arms trade now as the region has accounted for 46 percent of global imports over the past five years. As according to a report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), six of the world's ten largest arms importers are in Asia and Oceania.

This is alarming for the world in general and the region in particular as it could lead to a destabilising impact on South Asia. Since India is neither party to the NPT nor it accepted full scope safeguards on its nuclear trade, therefore there should not be any chance of including India into the hub of civil nuclear trade, especially within the multilateral export control regimes. If done so, the purpose of all the regimes to aid non-proliferation efforts would be futile.

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