

Stability On the Brink, Indian New Normal Policy and Threat of Nuclear War in South Asia

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Abstract

Since its independence in 1947, Pakistan faced a constant challenge by its eastern neighbour. India's attitude towards Pakistan had always centred on hostility and undermining its stability. Various methods have been employed to undermine Pakistan's sovereignty; its disintegration in 1971 would not have been possible without India's crucial role. While Kashmir remains a bone of contention between the two South Asian states, India's aspiration to become the regional hegemon has complicated the relations between the two rivals even further. India desires regional hegemony while Pakistan deems it unacceptable. After the inception of Nuclear weapon in the South Asian Theater, it was believed that a permanent balance had been achieved, but it was unacceptable for India. To overcome the nuclear dilemma, India came up with the Cold Start doctrine. Cold Start Doctrine is conventional military strategy under which India will increase the efficiency of its force so that it can invade Pakistan any time in a very short period. Though immediately this strategy was neutralized by Pakistan. Pakistan introduced short-range, tactical nuclear and asserted that it would

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use these short-range missile in case of aggression by the Indian military. Even in the presence of tactical nuclear weapons, India did not back out from its plan to become regional hegemon or to acquire enhanced capability and capacity to undermine Pakistan at any given time. To achieve this goal, India is discussing to change its nuclear doctrine, which will be supported by a missile defence system. With already present nuclear shadow in South Asia, aggressive Indian policies to create a new kind hegemonic order in the region can lead South Asia to destruction.

Keywords: Cold Start Doctrine, Balance of power, Arms Race, Strategic Stability, Tactical Nuclear weapons, Deterrence, Ballistic Missile Defence System, Surgical Strikes

Introduction

Soon after independence, India began efforts to undermine the sovereignty of Pakistan and reduce it to a failed state. From the very beginning, the relation between the two neighbours was marred with bitter rivalry, ill will and harrowing reminders of partitions. The bilateral relations remained a reflection of the pre-independence rivalry between Muslim League and Congress whose basic political ideologies not only clashed with each other but on a level formed a code of conduct for their successors. Though Congress acknowledged, the independence of Pakistan veiled references and statements regarding the Greater India and the unfortunate fate of the Pakistani state were continuously made. The Central Working Committee of Congress in a statement affirmed that the pre-partition India would remain in their “hearts and minds”.

Moreover, Mr Gandhi famously said that ultimately, India would reunite. In the same tone, Sardar Patel stated that Pakistan would

not survive and sustain. These statements provide us with a glimpse into the minds of Indian leadership who remained convinced that Pakistan will eventually reunite with India. The refugee crises, along with the fair division of resources between both the successor states were some of the immediate hurdles in the way of a viable relation between the two neighbours. The financial assets of British India were to be divided into the successor states, India constantly delayed and in some cases retained Pakistan's share of assets. Pakistan's share of cash amounting to Rs750 million was overdue for months, causing numerous problems for the administration. Pakistan had a share of 165,000 tons of defence stores, only 18,000 tons were paid to Pakistan.

Furthermore, in 1948, India cut off Pakistan's water supply flowing from Ravi and Sutlej. Ultimately this crisis was resolved under the arbitration of World Bank 1960. Though the bone of contention between the two states rose after the unfair boundary demarcation by the British jurist Cyril Radcliff. The demarcation was to be on the principle of the Muslim majority and non-Muslim majority area. Contrary to the principle Muslim majority areas were awarded to India including two subdivision of Gurdaspur district which ultimately gave India the land access to the state of Jammu and Kashmir. This served as the foundation for the still ongoing Kashmir conflict³. India illegally annexed the state of Kashmir in 1948, which is a Muslim majority area with a Hindu ruler. Although Indian claims that it was Maharaja of Kashmir who asked to intervene however this claim cannot be justified keeping in view that fate of Hindu majority state of Junagarh whose Muslim ruler desired to join Pakistan but was not allowed to do so. According to UN resolutions on Kashmir, a plebiscite was to be held in the contested region so that Kashmiris could decide their fate along with the

³SattarAbdul.2010."Pakistan's Foreign Policy 1947-2009" *Oxford University Press*.

establishment of a ceasefire line. However, the proposed settlement was unacceptable to India. Kashmir has a geostrategic value. First of all, by annexing Kashmir, India could claim that the two nation's theory was built on a weak foundation since even a Muslim majority state is under its rule. Secondly, three important rivers (Sindh-Jhelum-Chenab) of Pakistan come from Kashmir and by controlling the Kashmir region they can control the economy of Pakistan, which is agrarian.⁴We can see the practical implication of this doctrine in this modern time, in September 2016, after a terrorist attack on an Indian military camp, Prime Minister Narendra Modi famously said: "Blood and water cannot flow simultaneously".⁵ Pakistan denied any kind of involvement in a terrorist attack. India is also building dams on the rivers which were given to Pakistan under the Indus Water Treaty. The international community is also concerned about Indian hydropower projects in IOC. In 2011 United States Senate committee on foreign relations said that Indian might use these hydropower projects to stop water supplies in Indus river, which is the most important source of water in Pakistan in both agriculture and for drinking.⁶

So far Kashmir dispute has not resolved, but a ceasefire line is maintained which is not recognized as an international border. Consequently, Kashmir remains a bone of contention between the two countries. India used Kashmir as a pretext to take different violent actions against Pakistan.⁷On September 06, 1965 India

⁴Cheema, Musarat Javed. 2015. "Pakistan-India conflict with special reference to Kashmir." *South Asian Studies* 45-69.

⁵Mohan, Indrani Bagchi and Vishwa. 2016. "'Blood and water can't flow together': PM Narendra Modi gets" *The Times of India*, September 27.

⁶*The Guardian*. 2017. "India fast-tracks Kashmir hydro projects in disputed ,that could affect Pakistan water supplies." March 16.

⁷n.d. *1965: Indian Army invades W Pakistan*. Accessed December 17, 2018. http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/september/6/newsid_3632000/3632092.stm.

attacked West Pakistan by invading international border near the provincial capital Lahore. Pakistani forces successfully blocked Indian advance. On September 22, 1965, a ceasefire agreement was signed between belligerent parties, supported by the international community and mediated by USSR. Forces of both countries moved to prewar position.⁸

Kashmir is not the only excuse which India had used to undermine the sovereignty of Pakistan; it was involved in other instances as well. In 1971 an internal conflict started in East Pakistan overpower distribution disagreement between two wings of the country. It soon turned violent, as a consequence of which the state of Pakistan had to use force to maintain law and order, but it had not taken any aggressive action against India. India supported the rebel group called Mukti Bahinis .They received economic and military assistance. Under the pretext of humanitarian intervention, India aggravated the complex internal problem in East Pakistan. An Independent Bangladeshi government was established in India. Pakistan gave a proposal that the UN peacekeeping forces be deployed on the border between East Pakistan and India which was rejected by India. Finally, in December 1971 Indian forces invaded East Pakistan from the international border, and played an imperative role in the disintegration of Pakistan.⁹it was a time of celebration for Indians since they had never accepted the notion of two-nation theory and Pakistan as an independent state. These sentiments were reflected in a statement after disintegration by

⁸Vij, Shivam. 2015. *Why neither India nor Pakistan won the 1965 war*. August 27. Accessed December 17, 2018. <https://www.dw.com/en/why-neither-india-nor-pakistan-won-the-1965-war/a-18677930>.

⁹Iqbal, Mehruunisa Hatim. 1972. " INDIA AND THE 1971 WAR WITH PAKISTAN." *Pakistan Institute of International Affairs* 21-31.

then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi that” “We have drowned the ideology of Pakistan in the Indian Ocean”.¹⁰

With this ever-persistent threat to its survival, Pakistan tried to acquire different means that can stop further Indian aggression. Indian first nuclear test, although it was named as smiling Buddha or test for peaceful purpose further changed the balance of power in South Asia. After this, Pakistan realized that the development of a nuclear program was inevitable in order to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity. During 1980s India started a massive military exercise along the Pakistani border which was named as Brass-tacks. Pakistan conceived it as preparation to conduct a surgical strike on Pakistan’s nuclear program. During these events, Dr Abdul Qadir Khan, founder of Pakistani nuclear program gave an interview to an Indian journalist in which he said that we have now nuclear capability and we will use if there is a direct threat to our existence.¹¹

Regardless of efforts by Pakistan, to not engage in an arms race in South Asia India remained determined in its plans. When BJP, a Hindu nationalist party came into power in 1998, it conducted a nuclear test for the second time in Indian history. It was a cataclysmic event in shifting the balance of power towards India, in the region which was already facing turmoil. After a successful nuclear test, Indian Home minister said that “Pakistan should accept new strategic reality in south Asia. “In response to these events, Pakistan also successfully tested five nuclear weapons. After this nuclear test, Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said that we want regional peace and stability, but these nuclear tests

¹⁰Mehboob, Rizwan. 2015. "Thank you, Mr Modi." *The Express Tribune*, July 06.

¹¹Chakma, Bhumitra. 2006. "Pakistan’s Nuclear Doctrine and Command and Control System: Dilemmas of Small Nuclear Forces in the Second Atomic Age." *Institute for Regional Security* 115-122.

were necessary to create a balance of power in the region which was disturbed by India a few weeks ago.¹²

Indian Strategic Thinking under the Nuclear Umbrella & Cold Start Doctrine.

After nuclear tests by arch-rivals India and Pakistan, it was believed that a balance of power had been established in the region. Both countries would now focus on their domestic issues. However, this nuclear shadow was overwhelmed by Indian cold start doctrine, which was produced in 2004. This new military strategy was adopted after failed mobilization of Indian troops, that started in 2001, after the attack on Indian Parliament Cold Start in simple words is an offensive military strategy in which India will use eight integrated groups of Indian armed force. They will invade from different sights along the Pakistani border and will penetrate 50 miles inside the Pakistani territory. It will be done in a very short period, which will be almost 48 hours so that Pakistan could not mobilize its forces in time and it would not reach that threshold which can potentially invite a nuclear response from Pakistan.

Moreover, just 48 hours would not give enough margin to the international community to take any concrete efforts to halt the advance of Indian forces. Then India can use this 50 miles of Pakistani territory along with Pakistani administrated Kashmir, or it can use it for any other purpose as a bargaining tool.¹³ This doctrine does not just exist in theory; Indian forces have tried to transform themselves into the modern war-making machine. From 2004-2010 a total of 10 military exercises were carried by Indian Armed forces in the province of Punjab and Rajasthan near the border of Pakistan. These military exercises were done with modern

¹²Anderson, John Ward, and Kamran Khan. 1998. "PAKISTAN SETS OFF NUCLEAR BLASTS." *The Washington Post*, May 29.

¹³Khalid, Hafeez Ullah Khan and Ijaz. 2018. "Indian Cold Start Doctrine: Pakistan's Policy Response." *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan* .

weaponry and with the collaboration of all the components of Indian Armed Forces. Primary goals of these exercises were to achieve a decisive victory over the enemy in a very short period, as it was explained in the original theory of cold start. With these military exercises, India also increased its defence spendings. It was the second-largest arms importer in the world from 2005-2010. Its arms imports increased from \$1.04 billion to \$ 2.01 billion in 2010. Its total defence budget was \$31.17 billion in 2010. Indian imports of arms include 82 Sukhoi-30 MKI fighters, 300 T-90 tanks from Russia. India has also included an A-50/Phalcon Airborne Early Warning (AEW) system, and it was bought from both Israel and Russia.¹⁴

Terrorist Groups on the Western Border of Pakistan are Helping India to Execute its Cold Start Doctrine.

India is not only trying to destabilize Pakistan using its conventional forces, but it has also supported different insurgents and terrorist groups in Pakistan. India has a long history of supporting the insurgency in Pakistan. In 1971, by supporting MuktiBahni, India played a decisive role in the disintegration of Pakistan. 9/11 attacks and subsequent US invasion of Afghanistan, again provided India with an opportunity to interfere in the internal affairs of Pakistan. Pakistani authorities regularly claimed that India is fueling the insurgency in Baluchistan and also supporting Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan with the help of Afghan intelligence services. On many occasions, evidence of Indian involvement was presented. Latif Mehsud, the commander of TTP, was captured by US forces in Afghanistan in his confessional statement he admitted that TTP is supported and funded by India. Pakistan also captured a senior member of the Indian intelligence service from Baluchistan named

¹⁴Khattak, Masood Ur Rehman. 2011. "Indian Military's Cold Start Doctrine: Capabilities, Limitations and possible response from Pakistan." *South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI)* 12-26.

as Kulbhushan Jadav. He was a senior officer of Indian premier intelligence agency RAW. He also confessed about financing and supporting militants in Pakistan. Support of terrorist by Indian intelligence service from Afghanistan is an open secret now. Chuck Hagel, former US defence secretary, said in a statement in 2011 that Indian is using Afghanistan as a source to create instability in Pakistan. Due to Indian supported terrorism, Pakistan has already deployed more than 200,000 troops on the western border.¹⁵ The rationale behind supporting these terrorist groups on the western border of Pakistan is to minimise Pakistani forces on the Indian border. This will eventually help India to accomplish its military plans like cold start doctrine.

Tactical Nuclear Weapons as a Deterrent and a New Dimension in Indian strategic Thinking.

As a result of this aggressive posture, Pakistan was left with no options but to build low yield tactical nuclear weapons .it tested its first tactical nuclear weapon in April 2011, which was named as Nasr. It is a low yield nuclear weapon which can successfully engage any target within 60 KM radius. The former head of the Strategic plan division of Pakistan Lt General (ret'd) Khalid Kidwai once said that we had built these tactical nuclear weapons to provide deterrence against the conventional Indian forces which have enhanced their capacity under the name of Cold Start Doctrine.¹⁶

Despite all these efforts, India is unable to reach a position where a limited war with Pakistan under the nuclear threshold could be possible. Regardless of the newly emerged cold start

¹⁵Naazer, Dr Manzoor Ahmad. 2018. "Internal Conflicts and Opportunistic Intervention by Neighbouring States:A Study of India's Involvement in Insurgencies in South Asia." *the Islamabad Policy Research Institute* 90-96.

¹⁶Biswas, Arka. 2015. "Pakistan's Tactical Nuclear Weapons: Deconstructing India's Doctrinal." *Strategic Analysis* 684-686.

doctrine, India still cannot afford a limited war because of two strategic reasons. First, it could not carry out its limited operation with high accuracy and full speed.¹⁷ Secondly the nuclear deterrence of Pakistan. While Pakistan remained persistent that it wanted to maintain this balance of power in the region which is crucial for regional stability, New Delhi does not seem too adamant on it .it is working hard to shift the strategic balance towards India.¹⁸

Former Indian Commander of the Northern and Central command Lt Gen H S Panag has created a scenario in which India will go for a limited war with Pakistan to capture territory in Pakistani administrated Kashmir and along the International border to make a negotiated settlement about Kashmir on its terms. According to Gen Pang if by 2022, Indian can reach to a clear military and economic superiority than the possibility of limited war will be high to achieve the goal mentioned above.¹⁹

Since India was unable to achieve the objective of its cold start doctrine because of the strategic stability provided by tactical nuclear weapons, they have adopted a new twofold policy. This new policy was aimed at the rapid increase in conventional military capabilities while neutralizing Pakistan's nuclear deterrence through the Missile defence system and by adopting a counterforce strategy.

¹⁷Haider, Ejaz. 2018. "S-400: PAKISTAN FACES MAJOR ASYMMETRIC THREAT." *Newsweek Pakistan*, October 11.

¹⁸Jaspal, Dr. Zafar Nawaz. 2011. "BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE: IMPLICATIONS FOR." *Institute for Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis (ISSRA)* 01-04.

¹⁹HS Panag. 2017. "Why there can be no winners in a limited war between India and Pakistan." *Hindustantimes*, June 07.

Indian Recent Increase in Conventional Military Capabilities.

According to a report published by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute India is now among the top five countries with the highest military spending. These are the statistics of 2017. India was on the sixth position in 2016, but now it has surpassed France to make its place among the top five with the highest military spending. Total military spending increased by 5.5 per cent in 2017, and the total defence budget of Indian is now \$63.9 billion. Which is more than that of the UK and France? According to a report by SIPRI, Indian military expenditures rose by 45 per cent from 2008 to 2017.²⁰

India is not only developing military equipment indigenously, but a bulk of its military supplies are coming from other countries as well. It is among the top 5 arms importers of the world. In fact, in 2017 it topped the arms importer's list. Its arms imports account for 12 per cent of total arms imports of the globe. 62 per cent of Indian arms supplies come from Russia alone, while 15 per cent from the United States and 11 per cent from Israel. India does not solely depend on Russia for its arms supplies; it is using alternative means as well. There was an increase of 557 per cent in US arms supplies to Indian from 2008 to 2017.²¹ According to 2018 Global firepower index, active military personal in Indian armed forces is 1,362,500. A huge stockpile of military equipment supports these personals. Indian army has a total of 4,426 combat tanks. These tanks are supported by 3,147 armoured fighting vehicles and 4,158 towed artillery guns. India is

²⁰ nan tian, aude fleurant, alexandra kuimova, pieter d. wezeman and siemon t. wezeman. 2018. *TRENDS IN WORLD MILITARY EXPENDITURE, 2017*. Solna Municipality: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

²¹ pieter d. wezeman, aude fleurant, alexandra kuimova, nan tian and siemon t. wezeman. 2018. *TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS, 2017*. Solna Municipality: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

also increasing its air power and has a total of 2,185 aircraft. While in case of navel equipment India owns an aircraft carrier .beside this Indian Navy has a total of 16 submarines, 14 frigates and 11 destroyers.²²

Indian Nuclear and Air Defence Program.

India is gradually modernizing its nuclear weapons capacity, increasing the number of Nuclear weapons and transforming its old delivery system into robust modernized delivery arrangements. It is believed that India has 600 kilograms of weapon-grade plutonium. This weapons-grade material is capable enough to produce between 150-200 nuclear weapons. Historically Indian adopted a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons but when India added the clause that it would use nuclear force against chemical or biological attack this “no first use of nuclear weapon “ came under criticism. Besides this, no first use of a nuclear weapon is seriously under analysis by experts. It is argued that shortly, India might adopt a new nuclear doctrine. During border tension with Pakistan, Indian defence minister Manohar Parrikar said that “India should not “bind” itself to no first use policy “.²³

India has three major types of nuclear weapon delivery system. First of all, India can use its Air force for delivery of nuclear bombs. It was believed that India could use its Mirage 2000h or Jaguar IS fighter for a nuclear attack. Moreover, India has different types of Land-based ballistic missiles system. Currently, India has two major groups of ballistic missile system Prithvi and Agni. Prithvi type ballistic missiles are a short-range missile; on the other hand, Agni type missiles are long-range missiles. India has successfully

²²n.d. *Global Fire Power*. Accessed December 28, 2018.

https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=india.

²³Korda, Hans M. Kristensen & Matt. 2018. "Indian nuclear forces, 2018." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 360-363.

tested, Agni I short-range, Agni II medium-range and Agni III intermediate-range missile and these are now part of the Indian military capabilities. While Agni IV with a range of more than 3500 Km and Agni V with a range of more than 5000 KM are in user trials and are not providing service but they will soon be included in Indian military stores. They are also working to build the technology of multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles.²⁴

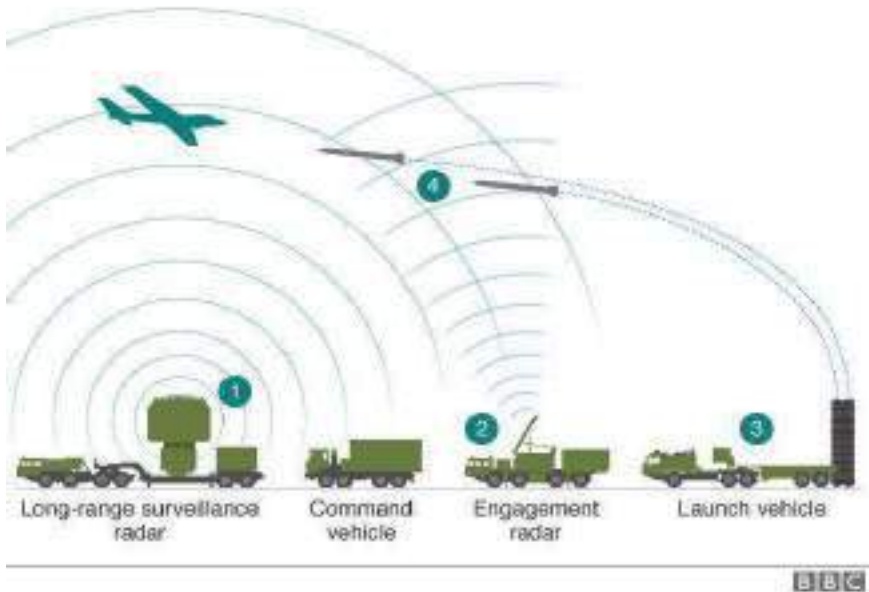
The sea-based missile system is the third part of triode Indian nuclear forces. This sea-based missile system operates from ships and a nuclear submarine. Ship-based ballistic missiles have a range of 400 KM and can be launched from patrol vessels which are specially made for these missiles. India is also building a small fleet of nuclear-powered submarines SSBN. Although the first submarine of this family is not operational now because of some technological issues. A second SSBN was launched in 2017, and it is also believed that India is close to building two more SSBNs. A program is underway to develop two types of submarine-launched ballistic missiles. K15 is a submarine-launched a ballistic missile with a range of 700 Km while K4 is SLBM with a range of almost 3500 Km.²⁵

Even within the presence of this advanced nuclear program, limited war is not a wise option because of the nuclear deterrence of Pakistan. To neutralize this nuclear deterrence, India moved towards missile defence system. Indians and Russians have signed a defence deal worth of \$ 5 billion. Through this deal, Russia will provide five squadrons of s400 air defence missile systems. It can engage its target in an area of up to 400 KMs. The deal was signed

²⁴(SIPRI), Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. 2018. *SIPRI Yearbook 2018 -Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

²⁵Korda, Hans M. Kristensen & Matt. 2018. "Indian nuclear forces, 2018." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 360-363.

in October 2018 When Russian president Vladimir Putin visited New Delhi. S400 is an upgraded model of s300 air defence missile system, and currently, it is considered as one of the best in the world.



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S400 air defence missile system is highly sophisticated and deadly accuracy .it can detect and engage aircraft, missiles UAVs. If we look at the working of this system, first of all, it has radar which can detect a target almost one thousand KM away. Even if multiple targets are coming, they can detect them at the same time. It will give information to Launcher, which will produce a suitable missile that will be according to the incoming target.²⁷ In addition to this, India is also indigenously building missile defence system. This program has two types. First part is the Prithvi Air Defense system,

²⁶Pandey, Vikas. 2018. *BBC NEWS*. October 05. Accessed February 20, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-45757556>.

²⁷Joseph, Josy. 2018. "What is Russia's S-400 Triumpf system all about?" *THE HINDU*, July 18.

which will be capable enough to engage high altitude target. The second type is Advanced Air Defense, which can engage targets that are on lower height.²⁸If India can deploy all these missile defence programs, it can give India a false sense of security and can be very harmful to mutual deterrence in South Asia

Twofold Indian policy to create a new normal situation in South Asia.

This recent Increase in Indian conventional and nuclear capabilities have a policy background. India perceives itself as a regional hegemon and wants to dominate the smaller regional states. India shares its border with six South Asian states, and none of them has a military that is at par with Indian military might.²⁹This is not a new perception; Historically, India has tried to dominate all South Asian states and influenced their foreign and security policies. Pakistan always remained a counterbalancing state which is providing strategic stability in the region.³⁰

From last few years, India is working hard to shift this strategic stability in South Asia in its favour. Nuclear deterrence has so far provided strategic stability in the region, but India is working to materialise a program in which it can engage in a limited war with Pakistan under the nuclear umbrella. A political will also supported increase in military spending. Indian policymakers intensely debated the idea of limited war and retired civil and military officials. They are trying to find a point on which they can

²⁸Khan, Zafar. 2017. "India's Ballistic Missile Defense: Implications for South Asian Deterrence Stability." *The Washington Quarterly* 190-194.

²⁹Falak, Jawad. 2017. *STRATAGEM*. April. Accessed April 22, 2019. <https://stratagem.pk/setting-the-record-straight/indian-hegemony-roots-south-asian-conflict/>.

³⁰Ayoub, Mohammed. 1991. "India as regional hegemon: external opportunities and internal constraints." *International Journal : Canada's journal of global policy analysis* 421-427.

punish Pakistan under any circumstance even under the presence of a nuclear umbrella. It was endorsed in 2015 by the then Indian Army chief General Dalbir Singh who said that we are ready for very short, swift strike against Pakistan if the situation demands. According to him, we have already developed such kind of capabilities.³¹

India tried to demonstrate their capability of punishing Pakistan under a nuclear umbrella by its claim that it had carried out surgical strikes against militants along LOC in Pakistani administrated Kashmir. Although Pakistan denied any such kind of activity.³² However, since the inception of the Cold Start Doctrine, it was for the very first time that India has claimed such types of strikes.

India made second attempt to create a new normal in sub-continent when its paramilitary forces were attacked by suicide bombing. According to officials, at least 42 soldiers were killed in the attack. Although the attacker was a local citizen and belonged to Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir, immediately the blame was put on Pakistan without any investigation. The India Prime Minister said after the attack that “we will give befitting reply” and he was pointing towards Pakistan.³³

On February 26, Indian Fighter Jets entered Pakistan and claimed to destroy a Jaish E Muhammad militant camp. Again, this claim was denied by Pakistan although Pakistani authorities

³¹Correspondent, The Newspaper's. 2015. "Indian army chief says military ready for short, swift war." *Dawn*, September 02.

³²Asad Hashim, Fayaz Bukhari. 2016. *Reuters*. September 30. Accessed April 22, 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-pakistan-kashmir-idUSKCN1200UT>.

³³Farooq, Michael Safi and Azhar. 2019. "Dozens of Indian paramilitaries killed in Kashmir car bombing." *The Guardian*, February 2019.

accepted that Indian fighter jets did an intrusion, but they have dropped only payloads and were forced by Pakistan air force to leave its air space. Later a report by Reuters news agency has confirmed that Indian planes did not destroy any terrorist camps, but only a few trees were damaged in the attack. To show its capabilities and resolve Pakistan also engaged five targets in Indian Occupied Kashmir and shot down an Indian fighter jet during a dog fight. Abhinandan Vardhman, an Indian pilot, was captured by Pakistani security forces. Though he was released after a couple of days. According to Pakistan PM Imran Khan, they have taken this decision to bring peace again in the region and avoid any further escalation. The situation remained tense for a few weeks.³⁴

These two events demonstrate that India is trying to create a new kind of hegemonic order in South Asia in which it can violate the sovereignty of Pakistan at any time when it is willing. They are building their capabilities, and they have tried to demonstrate their resolve and capacities by carrying out these two misadventures. However, were unsuccessful both times They intended to fulfill their plans, but they were neutralised on the very first stage by conventional forces of Pakistan. The Dilemma was that they could not escalate it further because of the threat of nuclear war that is always looming in South Asia.

The point is that India is unsatisfied with the current regional order and want to achieve regional dominance. Even after not succeeding they are working on their planes to create a “new normal” in South Asia in which they can attack Pakistan at any given time. With this failure, they have a second plan to use nuclear power as a shield or even threaten to use nuclear weapons in case of such kind of events. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, after

³⁴2019. *Al Jazeera*. March 10. Accessed April 23, 2019.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/02/india-pakistan-tensions-latest-updates-190227063414443.html>.

almost two months of this jets intrusion in Pakistan, that, we have not kept our nuclear weapons for Diwali and we will not feel threatened by nuclear deterrence of Pakistan.³⁵ India is also working to change its nuclear doctrine so that it may use nuclear weapons as offensive weapons. BJP has written its election Manifesto that they will change India nuclear doctrine if they came to power. Initially, it was seen as election rhetoric of Bharatiya Janata Party.³⁶ However, in the last few years' ideas of changing Indian nuclear doctrine is widely debated in Indian political and intellectual circles.

Theoretically, India is pursuing a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons. This was adopted after India conducted its successful nuclear test in 1998. But practically Indian political leadership has a different mindset, as former Indian Prime minister Vajpayee once said: "If they think we will wait for them to drop a bomb and face destruction, they are mistaken". However, overall the issue of first use of nuclear weapons remained in the shadows until BJP government again came to power in 2014. The issue was again widely debated in Indian political and intellectual circles during BJP's tenure.³⁷ Different practical possibilities were considered about changing Indian nuclear doctrine. As former Indian Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar while speaking at gathering questioned the policy of "No First Use" and said, "We

³⁵Desk, News. 2019. "Our nuclear weapons are not for Diwali, Modi threatens Pakistan." *The Express Tribune*, April 21.

³⁶Khalil, Sameer Ali Tanzeela. 2018. "Debating Potential Doctrinal Changes in India's Nuclear Ambitions." *Islamabad Policy Research Institute* 2-5.

³⁷Ramana, Kumar Sundaram & M. V. 2018. "India and the Policy of No First Use of Nuclear Weapons." *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament* 160-163.

should not bind ourselves to no first use policy".³⁸ Lt. Gen. B.S. Nagal (ret.), a former strategic forces commander, had also written an article in which he recommended that India should reconsider its policy of no first use. According to MrNagal, there should be ambiguity in Indian nuclear doctrine, or it can use the option first use. It will be the best option for protection of Nation.³⁹ VipinNarang, an expert on South Asian nuclear strategy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology also made a similar statement in which he said that India can reconsider its policy of no first use and may carry out a preemptive nuclear strike if it is necessary.⁴⁰

While India has developed a cold start doctrine and changing its nuclear doctrine to demonstrate its first-strike capability and capacity. The Missile defence system supports both of these strategies. This missile defence system will not only help India in its defensive policies, but ultimately it will help India in pursuing its offensive military strategies while having a sense of security that its cities are safe in case of Pakistan's counter-attack.⁴¹

Conclusion

The belief that balance of power would finally be achieved in South Asia after both Pakistan and India had acquired the nuclear capability evaporated when India came up with its Cold Start

³⁸Lakshmi, Rama. 2016. "India's defense minister questions its no first-use nuclear policy — then says it's his personal opinion." *The Washington Post*, November 10.

³⁹(ret'd), Lt Gen. B.S. Nagal. 2014. *Force*. June. Accessed April 25, 2019. <http://forceindia.net/guest-column/guest-column-b-s-nagal/checks-and-balances/>.

⁴⁰*The Economic Times*. 2018. "India may abandon its 'no first use' nuclear policy: Expert ." July 12.

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Khan, Zafar. 2017. "India's Ballistic Missile Defense: Implications for South Asian Deterrence Stability." *The Washington Quarterly* 188-192.

doctrine. India strategically continued supporting the insurgent groups on the Western border to continuously engage Pakistani forces so that when the hour arrives Pakistan would be unable to mobilise its forces on the eastern border. This scenario forced Pakistani policymakers to innovate against the Cold Start and build low yield tactical nuclear weapon. For Pakistan from the very inception of a nuclear arsenal to building the tactical weapons, the aim has been to restore the balance of power in the region. India, to the contrary, in line with its hegemonic designs, has attempted to shift the balance in its favour. The counter move by Pakistan created a new deterrence ensuring that India does not attempt any aggressive action against Pakistan by staying under the nuclear threshold. To neutralise this nuclear deterrence, India is procuring s400 missile air defence system. This acquisition has raised alarms in Pakistan since the strategic stability would be destabilized and the stable nuclear deterrence would be derailed.

Moreover, such actions raise the possibility of a nuclear arms race in South Asia. Pakistan's nuclear acquisitions are rooted in the fact that in terms of conventional force, the asymmetry is too significant for Pakistan to bridge; hence, the focus is on nuclear deterrence. The acquisition would shift the strategic stability in the Indian favour and Pakistan would devise a new policy to counter this Indian move which would ultimately result in an arms race in the subcontinent