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Edited by:
M Waqas Jan

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Editor's Note

Following President Trump's first presidential visit to India and the recently concluded peace agreement between the US and the Taliban, the South Asian region is once again in focus for a whole host of geo-strategic reasons. Pakistan as always, remains dead center of such developments with the repercussions of both the Afghan-US deal as well as President Trump's carefully orchestrated overtures to Prime Minister Modi well underway.

However, there is a certain caveat to the primacy that the South Asian region has been afforded with. In both these cases, President Trump's desire to appear strong and popular overseas, while ensuring that he keep his electoral promises of bringing US troops back home loom large against the backdrop of the impending US elections - an event which in itself marks a period of great uncertainty with far-reaching global repercussions. Especially considering the increasingly divisive nature of US politics in recent times, the consequences of the impending US elections on US foreign policy have exponentially amplified this uncertainty; the impending consequences of which have yet to be fully realized.

Yet, considering how amidst all these developments the situation in India has deteriorated to unprecedented levels, there is a distinct sense of irony over how despite such rampant extremism and blatant fascism, the world at large remains silent over the willful desecration of India's social fabric at the hands of Narendra Modi's BJP. Especially during a time when it is Pakistan that instead remains accused of financing terrorism under the FATF framework, or for supporting non-state actors in Kashmir and Afghanistan, the Indian government is given free reign to terrorize its own people. Be it in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, or in the very heart of New Delhi, an internationally rubberstamped Indian government in charge of one of the world's most dangerous militaries – and that too equipped with nuclear weapons - represents nothing short of a shameful travesty of international norms and justice.

As history has already borne witness countless times, such travesties remain only tenable to a certain tipping point after which there is no turning back for the world at large.

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M Waqas Jan
Senior Research Associate

Assessing India's Enhanced Air Defence Shield with Reference to Pakistan's MIRV Capabilities

Haris Bilal Malik

Since the last few years, India has been continuously carrying out an extensive military modernization program aimed at enhancing its counterforce capabilities vis-à-vis Pakistan. Under this notion, one of its most important components is the enhancement of its air defence capabilities aimed at providing an extensive multi-layered air defence shield. This has been done partly by combining indigenously developed systems with some of the world's most expensive and advanced Missile Defence Systems which India has been [purchasing](#) over the last few years. Pakistan, due to its economic constraints cannot compete with India on a tit for tat basis. Hence, to address such a threat, Pakistan, for the time being, seems to be enhancing its indigenously developed Multiple Independent Reentry Vehicle (MIRV) capabilities. These, in turn, are aimed at accurately penetrating the Indian Air Defense network that is being currently developed, by swarming it with a plethora of smarter and precision-based warheads to devastating effect.

At present, India possesses and intends to acquire various air defence systems in its missile defence inventory. These include indigenously developed ballistic missile defence systems such as the Prithvi Air Defence ([PAD](#)) missiles, the Advanced Air Defence ([AAD](#)) Ashwin missiles and the [Barak-8](#) missile defence system which has been jointly developed with Israel. Furthermore, to enhance its future capabilities, India had also signed an agreement with Russia for the acquisition of the [S-400](#) anti-missile system back in October 2018. In another significant development, India reportedly intends to acquire the 'National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System-II ([NASAMS-II](#)), a medium-range missile system from the US. India's acquisition of advanced missile defence systems such as these would thus likely destabilize the pre-existing deterrence framework in South Asia, as it would embolden India to consider countering Pakistan's existing range of warhead delivery systems such as its ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, fighter jets, and unmanned aerial vehicles with greater impunity.

In order to restore stability, Pakistan has two choices; firstly, in the long term, to purchase similar, albeit expensive missile defence systems from the international market – such as from Russia and/or China. A tall prospect which already seems difficult given the country's economic difficulties. Secondly, to counter the Indian advanced air defence shield while staying within its existing doctrinal posture, it seems that the induction of an increased number of MIRV capable ballistic missiles appears as the more plausible and immediate solution.

It is worth mentioning here that Pakistan's Ababeel Ballistic Missile, a medium-range ballistic missile, which it had tested in [January 2017](#), is believed to have introduced MIRV technology into Pakistan's nuclear arsenal with its reported range of 2200 kilometers. Pakistan's rationale for achieving this milestone is widely believed to be inclined towards neutralizing a broad range of the expected outcomes of India's military modernization drive, including the threat from its enhanced missile defence systems.

This is further evident in the statements of [Pakistan Military Officials](#), in which they have clearly stated that the development of the Ababeel weapon system is aimed at ensuring the survivability of Pakistan's ballistic missiles 'keeping in view the growing regional Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) environment', hence further reinforcing nuclear deterrence.

In the same vein, there is widespread speculation that Pakistan's recently tested short-range ballistic missile [Ghaznavi](#) – with its operational range of 290 kilometers – is also MIRV capable. No matter the validity of such speculation, there is still an ongoing debate questioning whether Pakistan needs to have such a short-range MIRV capable ballistic missile. Particularly keeping in view India's [counterforce designs](#) which highlight an apparent shift towards nuclear counterforce and the notions of 'splendid first strike' and surgical strikes against Pakistan. A strategy that is, in turn, directly linked to its Air Defence modernization plans because such counterforce temptations might provoke Pakistani retaliation. Hence, the road mobile Ghaznavi missile, based on its accuracy and, shorter range and flight times could thus be a prospective platform for being a MIRV capable delivery system aimed at penetrating the Indian Air Defence shield. Hence, for Pakistan, the provision of such short-range MIRV capable ballistic missiles like Ghaznavi would likely serve as a key deterrent against the Indian advanced air defence shield.

At the present, Pakistan by being [overtly threatened](#) by the ruling BJP government still holds a principled stance in working towards bringing about lost peace and stability in the South Asian region. However, Indian aspirations as evident in its ambitious military modernization plans have compelled Pakistan to take all possible measures to assure its security and preserve its sovereignty. As such, Pakistan may need to expand its strategy of playing its cards close to its chest particularly when taking into account India's ongoing expansion of its Air Defence shield. In this regard, the induction and perhaps even testing of a medium to short-range MIRV capable missile seems to be the only way out, at least for the time being.

<https://strafasia.com/assessing-indias-enhanced-air-defence-shield-with-reference-to-pakistans-mirv-capabilities/>

Sri Lanka A Key Piece in The Great Game of The Indian Ocean

Sher Bano

Whoever controls the Indian Ocean will dominate Asia... the destiny of the world will be decided on its waters” – Alfred Thayer Mahan

Island republics can advantageously secure global outreach as well as serve as spearheads in international competition. Growing dependence over maritime trade and its efficacy to serve as a trading nerve center renders all maritime transactions as part of a broader Sea Lines of Communications Matrix. In this arrangement, global powers aim to gather support from allies that have enhanced littoral potential. Between the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative and America’s established maritime presence in South Asia, Sri Lanka is likely to serve as a major lynchpin in any future competitive engagement. For both China and America, seeking a Sri Lankan alliance has evidently become a viable strategy which can also upset their own adversarial relationship with another. As such, the Indian Ocean and its coastal states are fast becoming centers of immense global focus.

This for instance is evident in how India and China have enhanced their financial outreach to construct maritime ‘outposts’, for securing vital economic markets and interests. For America, this might not pose as a threat currently due to its established presence in these regions. But once it crosses certain thresholds, there is bound to be a reaction. Renewed security commitments and meltdowns in the Middle East divert all pressure on its alternatives and closest in proximity to the vital sea lanes is Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan ports offer its investors access to directly tap into global maritime traffic. Only ten nautical miles south of Sri Lanka lies the busiest East-west shipping route through which 60,000 ships carrying almost half of world’s containerized cargo and two-thirds of global petroleum supply pass annually. Because of Sri Lanka’s position as a nautical corridor between the east and west, a country like China is fully aware that its success in the Indian Ocean depends upon its ties with Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka consists of a coastline which can also be used to build deep sea water ports with the ability to handle high density cargo. It also offers a unique vantage point and an overwatch to keep an adversary’s maritime interests in check. For China and its post Malacca Dilemma, investing in Colombo and Hambantota and looking to amalgamate Sri Lankan interests with its own has added a new dimension to Indian Ocean politics. Around 4500 tanks and 36000 ships pass from Sri Lanka annually through the Hambantota port. International maritime trade can be hugely affected even if there is a slight disturbance at the southern tip of Sri Lanka. Security of sea lines of communication (SLOC) is also directly linked to Sri Lanka which is very important for China in order to establish its roots in the Indian Ocean.

America believes that China, by connecting Chabahar, Gawadar, Colombo and Hambantota, wants to increase its influence and control over global trade. Alternating Diego Garcia to a more robust and comprehensive maritime arrangement would mean incentivizing Sri Lanka to a point where it is able to converge towards a mutually agreeable position. Ideally, that would mean Sri Lanka would have to prioritize Chinese and American incentives towards a more affable design. Realistically, such a choice is

either riddled with qualifiable criteria or is undesirable. For Sri Lanka, this poses not only an immense opportunity but also posits a substantive dilemma. Choosing to allow one state would mean unnecessarily intimidating the other; something Sri Lanka cannot afford to do considering its economic and political conditions.

India also has a deep-rooted desire to dominate the Indian Ocean. With the growing influence of China in the Indian Ocean, India's interests in the region are being challenged. In order to secure SLOCs to the Middle East which is used to supply oil and energy, India is also trying to strengthen its relations with littoral states to reassure and reinforce its maritime sustenance. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi chose Sri Lanka and the Maldives for his first foreign visit since his reelection which shows that the Indian Ocean region is a major priority for India. This stands in contrast to the 1980's when India-Sri Lanka relations had deteriorated considerably owing to the rise of civil war in Sri Lanka. That period had also allowed China to enhance its economic cooperation with Sri Lanka. Hence, at the present, India is planning various development projects in cooperation with Sri Lanka to counter China's economic dominance. One such project includes building the Tricomalee port which can be seen as a counterweight to the China funded Hambantota port.

The Indian Ocean is about to become the epicenter of the tri-polar competition between China, India and the US and can become one of the most intense points of conflict in the near future. All three states have their own interests and priorities in the Indian Ocean region. Sri Lanka hence being located along the east west corridor is the key for them to achieve regional dominance. Hence, whether Sri Lanka would remain neutral or align with any of the three regional powers will have strong geopolitical implications. It is likely to play a major role in determining who will come out victorious in this great game.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/12022020-sri-lanka-a-key-piece-in-the-great-game-of-the-indian-ocean-oped/>

Battle of Yokes: Indo-US vs. Sino-Pak Nexus

Shamsa Nawaz

Rearrangements of new realities after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan in 1979, and the readjustment of post WWII International Order into a multi-polar regionalized and globalized world, has led to the twosome power game in South Asia to continue via proxy. In all, from the legacy of 9/11 to the unsubstantiated accusations of 'terrorist proxies,' having safe havens for the Haqqani and the Taliban, Pakistan remains in a tender predicament despite being the 'most allied non-NATO ally' of the US. The role of a frontline state for the US was played unfailingly by Pakistan both during and after the-Cold War by joining anti-communist alliances like CENTO and SEATO and in the War on Terror (WoT) respectively. Pakistan was also a strategic ally to the CIA and facilitated its biggest covert operation against Soviet forces in Afghanistan. It helped the US provide billions of dollars in weapons to the Afghan Mujahideen. Till then, India was on the opposite side of the fence as it pursued a pro-Soviet policy.

Amidst the rise of a multi-polar politico-economy in a more regionalized and globalized world, India has successfully attracted its economic and diplomatic successes into new international opportunities. As such, shifting its romance towards the US after the Soviet Union was more lucrative to its politico-strategic clash with Pakistan.

In fact, India was already a better choice for the US. It had its comprehensive industrial base with 10% economic growth rate in early 1990's, at the time of the breakup of the Soviet Union. The policy of self-reliance pursued uninterruptedly by India ever since its independence also adhered well in an increasingly more integrated international financial system despite new political dynamics. Its geo-strategic location next to the emerging US new competitor, China, embodied better transactional value. The \$400 billion Foreign Exchange Reserves, 7.4 percent economic growth rate almost equal to China and an earnings of about \$30 billion from Foreign Direct Investment provide a solid base much in contrast to Pakistan's import and aid driven economy.

Pakistan, on the other hand, had to largely compromise on its national interests by looking for bailout packages from the International Monetary Fund and other International donors with its political status already weak as the mutual mistrust between the US and Pakistan reached new heights. To find a space in such an international politico-economic rivalry was an uphill task for Pakistan.

Hence, Senior US diplomat Alice Wells' renewed criticism on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), during her visit in January 2020, is a realistic tilt towards India. Evidently, the US allying itself with India more than Pakistan is more useful for the US and should be understandable. Her vehement criticism on the flagship projects of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in repetition of her earlier remarks at the Wilson Centre in Washington on Nov 21, 2019, represents simply politics of pragmatism and interest. Similarly, alleging a lack of transparency in CPEC projects and claims that Pakistan's debt burden was growing due to the Chinese financing is an argument in the same vein. Amb. Wells went even further to declare that the companies blacklisted by the World Bank got contracts in the CPEC and

had opposed the debt sequence as well. She also suggested that by getting Chinese financing for the projects, Pakistan was buying expensive loans which would eventually take a heavy toll on its already struggling economy.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi's talk about human rights abuses by the Indian troops in the occupied Kashmir and intensified LoC ceasefire violations, assurances of Pakistan's resolve for peace and stability in Afghanistan, was more of a diplomatic struggle to gain a strategic and political space amidst already strained relations and a growing Indo-US nexus. The US already considers India a 'major defence partner' to facilitate defence technology, combat exercises and wargames. Joint projects have already been designed to include aircraft carrier technologies and jet engines, futuristic helicopters, infantry combat vehicles, F-16/ F-18 fighter production lines and billions of dollars' worth of arms deals including the C-17 Globemaster, Poseidon-8, C-130 Super Hercules, Apache attack helicopters and Chinook heavy lift helicopters. Pakistan, on the other hand, has been denied for creating a strategic imbalance in the nuclear South Asian region ever since the Obama presidency.

The times of Donald Trump are no different with his new syndrome of Islamophobia. Though, Trump praised Pakistan's role in the War on Terror and in Afghanistan during his several rounds of meetings with Prime Minister Imran Khan, his earlier declaration of Pakistan as the most dangerous country after Iran and the relations promoted between India and the US by four successive presidents prove enough evidence on the convergence of their interests. India holds a significant place in the American strategy to contain China also. Their policy of strengthening India's conventional forces is growing with every passing regime. The statement of Alice Wells should therefore be seen in the light of the Mike Pompeo's (the US Secretary of State) earlier warning to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He said that the Trump administration will not allow it to lend US dollars to Pakistan for repaying China. The looming threat of placing Pakistan on the FATF blacklist should also be taken as yet another arm twister with the same aim. Based on this insensitivity, arrantly ignoring Pakistan's legitimate security and economic concerns is certainly a blow for a country which had suffered immense material damages amounting to over \$120 billion during the US War on Terror as a frontline ally. Hence, as is, can Pakistan rely on such passive diplomacy?

Understandably, the onus of understanding this dilemma in their relations lies more on the US. It can be safely held responsible for changing the balance of power in South Asia with its consolidated political, strategic, monetary and military union with India. Its apathy towards the strategic balance in the region with three nuclear powers; China, India and Pakistan, along with the Afghan quagmire cannot be ignored. Neither does it absolve Pakistan for keeping all its eggs in one basket. Notwithstanding the fact, Pakistan remains a state of crucial relevance to the region. To revitalize its role, Pakistan needs to look beyond the \$5.5% projected GDP for the 2020s as a catalyst towards regionalism of South Asia and bring its house in order. Remarks of Daniel S. Markey of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), that, it "is anything but clear. A clean break between Pakistan and the US seems unlikely, despite simmering disagreements over a number of issues" cannot be ignored either.

<http://southasiajournal.net/battle-of-yokes-indo-us-vs-sino-pak-nexus/>

The Wider Geopolitical Repercussions of Enforcing a One-Sided Peace onto the Middle East

M Waqas Jan

Of all the varying reactions from the rest of the world following the White House's [latest Mid-East Peace Plan](#), none as such have come as a surprise considering the last few years' trajectory of interstate relations within the Middle Eastern region. The 'peace' plan which was [announced by President Trump](#) alongside a beaming Benjamin Netanyahu was already contentious enough in its one-sidedness considering it was developed without any consultations with Palestinian representatives. What's more, the presence of the Bahraini, Emirati and Omani ambassadors at the unveiling of this plan at the White House marked sort of a tacit endorsement from key Arab countries, a lot of whom have been steadily normalizing their relations with Israel. Add to that the [encouragement](#) voiced by the Egyptian and Saudi governments on how the plan represents an important starting point, and what one's left with is the bitter yet glaring confirmation of the US and its regional allies' increasingly gratuitous tilt towards Israel.

This tilt is further evident in the recent trajectory this 'peace process' has taken particularly under the Trump presidency. Controversially spearheaded by Jared Kushner, the US President's son-in-law, the entire process has been characterized as the 'deal of the century' in an almost business-like manner. As a result, Mr. Kushner and his family's long-held business ties within Israel, along with his willingness to cultivate a stronger relationship with Saudi Arabia in the form of one of the biggest arms deals in recent history, have carried with them the unsavory appearance of Mr. Kushner's mixing business with government. What this has led to is even further imbuing the White House with Mr. Trump's characteristic way of cultivating diplomatic goodwill amongst other world leaders in an almost transactional like manner. Something that remains characteristically reminiscent of his past reputation as a wheeling and dealing New York real estate mogul, as well as the [basis for his recent impeachment](#).

Yet, accompanying the Trump dynasty's overly pragmatic and rent-seeking approach to diplomacy, there is an overpowering sense of indifference to the complex history of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Not to mention President Trump's almost habitual compulsion to pay homage to some of the region's most controversial strongmen ranging from autocratic royals, to former military and intelligence moguls. Especially in the case of Prime Minister Netanyahu and his consistent strong-arming of the Palestinian cause, President Trump's Peace Plan for the Middle East simply legitimizes the systematic encroachment and encirclement of Palestinian lands within an already brutal and repressive police state. In fact, he has undone whatever little credibility past US presidents had painstakingly developed in the form of projecting the US as still a somewhat trustworthy mediator.

Instead, by simply echoing Israeli hardliners he has used the Iranian threat to the region as a rallying cry for shoring up Arab support in favor of Israel. As a result, even though the Palestinian cause still resonates strongly with the predominantly Muslim population of the region, it has been reduced to nothing more than mere lip service and symbolism at the state level. This holds particularly true in the case of the Arab Kingdoms of Bahrain, UAE and Saudi Arabia, where economic and security ties with the

US centered on the Iranian threat have increasingly led to a growing sense of indifference to the Palestinian cause. This was clear as day even in the [OIC's recent condemnation](#) of this plan, which while aimed at presenting a unified opposition to the Palestinian position, rang hollow considering how the same summit was used by host Saudi Arabia to once again politicize its enmity with Iran. Hence, while the summit which was held at the request of Palestine presented a swift and unified retort by rejecting the US plan on the surface of things, the OIC as a whole is finding it increasingly difficult to paper over the rifts that continue to divide its members along some of their most deep-seeded historical and religio-political fault-lines.

It is thus no wonder that this vision or rather responsibility of uniting the Muslim *Ummah* – which ironically once lay at the heart of why the OIC was set up – is being carefully revived by states outside the region. These include Muslim majority countries such as Turkey, Pakistan and even to a certain extent Malaysia which while not directly involved in the Middle East's conflicts still face serious economic and security issues that emanate directly from this region. As economic and/or military powers in their own right, these states have the geo-strategic advantage of being at the periphery of this volatile region, while still being able to exert considerable diplomatic influence both within as well as with outside power brokers such as the US, China and Russia.

The geo-politics behind the recently held Kuala Lumpur summit at which [Pakistan has been at the center](#) presents the perfect example. It is exactly this challenge which OIC members are faced with when setting up an objective, impartial and yet effective international forum along the lines of the UN or SCO while still staying true to the very concept of a unified Pan-Islamic Muslim Ummah. Yet, as exemplified by the precarious position Pakistan has found itself in between the overtures of the Saudi dominated OIC at one end, and the growing assertiveness from the likes of Turkey and Malaysia at the other, any challenges to the prevailing status-quo must be undertaken with the utmost delicacy and diplomatic finesse.

This holds especially true when the most immediate need is to balance vital economic and security interests against the more principled stances required in defending the Palestinian (and even Kashmiri) cause. A definite tragedy considering that despite all its destructive interventions, it was once the United States that stood for championing the importance of equality, freedom and justice within global politics as timeless ideals over brute pragmatism. With its latest Mid-East Peace Plan, it appears that the US has even stopped pretending let alone actually caring for such idealistic virtues – leaving Palestine along with the rest of world none the better.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/02/13/the-wider-geopolitical-repercussions-of-enforcing-a-one-sided-peace-onto-the-middle-east/>

How Internal Political Instability Risks Are Threatening Pakistan's International Commitments

Irfan Ali

Dharna (Mass sit-ins) politics in Pakistan is not a new phenomenon as it has happened several times by various political parties and other entities. Yet, it is the 'timing' of such *Dharnas* that is the most important thing for the success and failure of such methods when pressurizing governments. Currently Pakistan faces [numerous problems](#) ranging from an unstable economy, terrorism, staunch opposition from other major political parties such as the PML (N) and PPP, the Kashmir issue, the Afghanistan matter and mounting Western pressure regarding CPEC. Any misadventure created by a *Dharna* or any other issue could cost the present government a heavy price in the form of regional commitments considering the current situation of the country.

Recently Bilawal Bhutto announced a *Dharna* to be held in March in addition to the one planned by Fazl ur Rehman this month. Both parties through *Dharna* politics want to pressurize the incumbent government via politicizing the widespread inflation plaguing the Pakistani economy. They also aimed to further build on how Fazl ur Rehman through his previous *Dharna* the previous year had tried to pressurize the Imran Khan government along similar lines. One of his top demands then was calling for a re-election because [he considered the election of July 2018 rigged](#). This demand was favored by wide swathes of the opposition because of their resentments against the existing government and its policies.

As is the current situation within Pakistan is already unstable because of various problems. The most pressing being Western pressure being applied through the FATF and IMF in key development projects such as CPEC. Under the current circumstances, the government cannot afford any kind of strike or resentment by political parties which can diminish its image at the national as well as global levels.

This is apparent in how, the [United States and India through the FATF and other means have been pressurizing Pakistan](#) on the pretext of clamping down on money laundering which is allegedly being used by various terrorist organizations within Pakistan. In this regard, any kind of trouble generated within the country through *Dharna* politics or any other means would lead to the country gaining further unfavorable international attention. The resulting political instability could further bring Pakistan closer to being placed on the FATF blacklist. If that happens then Pakistan would suffer immensely giving birth to a whole host of new political and socio-economic restrictions for the whole nation.

According to the present government, it has already been struggling to control the list of demands given by the FATF to avoid being put on the blacklist. This was evident in the recent visit by Imran Khan and the Army Chief to the US where a whole range of issues were clarified with the US government. These included the internal situation within Pakistan along with other regional concerns such as terrorism, the Afghan peace process, the Kashmir dispute and Chinese involvement through CPEC. Moreover, the statement by American president Donald Trump should be taken seriously by the present government that America with the cooperation of various nations will protect human rights violations throughout

the world and fight against radical Islamic terrorism. There are many precedents where America has been intervening within various regions of the world under the pretext of protecting human rights and eradicating terrorism.

In addition, there is no denying that [India wants to exploit the situation further by projecting the Pakistani state as the mother of terrorism](#) at multiple regional and global forums. There can be various motives behind this move in which the Kashmir issue and RSS ideology hold immense importance. It is widely believed that PM Narendra Modi wants to divert the attention of Pakistan as well as other regional and global forums from the atrocities and human rights violations taking place in Jammu and Kashmir.

In this regard, Imran Khan has been trying his best to halt Dharna politics through multiple strategies by calling for political unity to help alleviate the current difficult situation in the country. This for instance has been evident in his attempts to prioritize the threat from India regarding the Kashmir issue well as India's designs to portray Islamabad as a terrorist state, above the internal politics being waged within Pakistan. Such concerns have made the situation of the country considerably sensitive hence the government has to behave and act sensibly to control the emerging situation. If such issues are not going to be solved skillfully and efficiently, then the entire nation is likely to bear the consequences and repercussions of the troubles generated through such internal instability.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/17022020-how-internal-political-instability-risks-are-threatening-pakistans-international-commitments-oped/>

Emerging Cyber Warfare Threats to Pakistan

Basma Khalil

“The potential for the next Pearl Harbor could very well be a cyber-attack.” -Leon Panetta

In the modern era, war has been revolutionized due to rapid advancements in technology. As a result, cyber security along with its pros and cons is contributing increasingly to modern warfare. Pakistan, however, is still in the developmental phase of cyber security. Although Pakistan has passed its first law related to cyber-crimes, in the form of the 2016 Prevention of Electronic Crime Act, the overall legislation related to cyber security is still vague and not as strong to deal with the dynamic and broad-ranging nature of threats that emanate from the realms of cyber security.

In recent years, the government has taken some initiatives in order to build capacity amongst the general public such as through PAK-CERT, Presidential Initiative for Artificial Intelligence & Computing (PIAIC), Skills for all Hunarmand Pakistan, Kamyab Jawan, and National Vocational & Technical Training (NAVTTTC). Yet, as has been the case for quite some time, most of these initiatives are aimed simply at spreading greater awareness to help lay the foundations for a more robust cyber security architecture. Amidst such developments, the question that arises for Pakistani policymakers is thus where their country currently stands in the cyber domain and how cyber warfare is posing threats to its national security.

In this era of innovation and connectivity even major powers such as the U.S, Russia, China, Israel and the United Kingdom remain vulnerable to an evolving spectrum of cyber threats. Across the world, states are now increasingly dependent on cyber technology which has greatly increased their chances of vulnerability. The most known example is 2015 Stuxnet virus, whereby a devastating cyber-attack on Iranian nuclear facilities wreaked havoc such as at the Nantaz Nuclear facility, significantly rolling back the Iranian nuclear program. Similarly, the WannaCry outbreak in 2017 caused mass disruption by shutting down vital computing systems in more than 80 NHS organizations in England alone. This resulted in almost 20,000 cancelled appointments, 600 GP surgeries having to return to pen and paper, and five hospitals simply diverting ambulances, unable to handle any more emergency cases. Widely attributed as being state sponsored, the attack set another devastating precedent testifying to the wide-ranging vulnerabilities that exist even in some of the world’s most advanced countries.

Pakistan’s cyber space too is insecure for many reasons because Pakistan is dependent on others for technology. According to leading global cyber security firms such as Symantec, Pakistan is among the ten most targeted countries in the world. Main targets include Pakistan’s nuclear and other critical installations, with publicly revealed assaults on an assortment of media houses, as well as the communications networks, of key government departments including, transport and, basic utilities. Such threats for instance were further confirmed by the Snowden documents released between 2013-2014 that had showed how the NSA was keeping an eye on Pakistan’s civilian and military leaders, utilizing a malware called SECONDDATE.

Recently in the year 2019, Rising Security Research Institute has captured the attack launched by the internationally renowned Advanced Persistent Threat (APT) organization “Rattlesnake” through the Rising Threat Intelligence System. This time, the organization had targeted the Pakistani Navy via Target collision hijacking method. Specifically targeting the Pakistan Naval Public Relations Bureau, the attempt was aimed at stealing vital information from secure military networks while planting misleading documents masquerading as official statements from the Pakistan Navy regarding its regional neighbors such as China and India. Based on such threats, Pakistan must be readily prepared for any kind of cyber espionage and take steps towards establishing a strong national cyber policy to protect its civilian and military infrastructure.

Therefore, at this stage it is imperative that Pakistan seriously focus on the development of a robust cyber war apparatus. This would especially help mitigate the numerous threats being posed to its banking system, as well as major government networks such as its ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as other military networks that have been previously targeted such as in the case shown above. As such Pakistan can take a number of initial steps by developing strategies to prevent malwares and denial of service (DOS) attacks to reduce such threats at least to a certain level.

Yet, Pakistan has still not developed a cohesive Cyber Command or any National Cyber Policy to deal with the regional cyber threats being posed to Pakistan. Even though Pakistan has recently developed a cyber-security auditing and evaluation lab, it is still in its formative stages. There is still immense space to develop advanced tools and research technologies to protect Pakistan’s cyberspace, sensitive data, and local economy from cyber-attacks while restricting illegal penetrations in it. Especially such as the initiative taken by the newly setup National Centre for Cyber Security which aims increase the number of indigenously trained cyber security professionals within the public sector.

Keeping to this trajectory Pakistan should emphasize more on indigenously developing its own cyber security industry so that in the near future it could benefit both its civilian and military infrastructure in the long run. Hence, while Pakistan may be limited in its ability to wage a strong offensive campaign within the realm of cyber warfare at the moment, such steps would go a long way in helping lay the foundations to build something greater on.

<http://southasiajournal.net/emerging-cyber-warfare-threats-to-pakistan/>

Artificial Intelligence: Potential Intensifier of Strategic Dynamics in South Asia

Hananah Zarrar

With growing dependency on artificial rationalization, human reasoning and decision-making is under continuous suppression. Where machine learning and deep learning tends to empower machines to carry out functions and break assigned tasks into easier ones, it nevertheless fastens the route towards a world order that is likely to be in absolute control of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Does it indicate cutting humans entirely out of the loop?

This deliberate submission of power to machines has some assured repercussions in the realm of strategic stability which rational actors must take into consideration. The simulation of human cognition – the capacity of the human mind to learn, interpret and reason - is what artificial intelligence refers to. It eventually stands as a defining feature of modern societies. By the enhanced use of algorithms, AI optimizes the ability for collecting a vast range of data whether numeric or categorical in the form of big data to measure the information and derive results accordingly. Thus, Artificial Intelligence is itself emerging as a vast technological industry for creating intelligent machines. Such machines would be capable of independent decision-making based on the level of subjectivity conceded to AI. This subjectivity defines the rationale of decisions made by machines. Along with enhanced precision and prompt responses, it suggests that over-reliance on AI could probably take the shape of absolute control.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the International Arena (IA) acts as a modifier of global affairs and challenges whether bilateral or multilateral. Additionally, it is transforming military strategies with its significant precision and speed via contracting the action-reaction loop. As such AI is being developed for assessing and responding to problems with minimum human supervision. Which, the other way, predicts an autonomous crisis escalation with minimal or no chances of containment. One such example is the development of lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS). Analyzing the broad view of global affairs under the predominant existence of nuclear weapons, robotic and computational technology is so far effectively assisting states in maintaining the safety and security mechanisms of nuclear and fissile material/data. It is evident from the [events of the cold war era](#) that other than human error, technological error within the realm of nuclear strategy could easily escalate towards nuclear war fighting or its accidental use with a catastrophic domino effect. Despite the precision, speed and human-like reasoning, machines are likely to lack a considerable situational variation with respect to risk assessments of actions and their reactions. The reliance on artificial rationalization means increased unpredictability and competition that resultantly means greater strategic instability around the globe.

Strategic stability demands a [credence among nuclear weapon states](#) that their adversaries would not likely be able to undermine their nuclear deterrence by any means. This surety is crucial in the case of South Asia. Comprising of three nuclear weapon states with inter-state rivalries, South Asia demands a stable strategic environment which requires a considerable level of risk assessment and management.

Machine learning and big data analysis are some already adopted strategies in South Asia as in other parts of the world to predict and track an adversary's aggressive posturing. Although, it is technically challenging for a state to be able to locate and target all of its adversary's dispersed nuclear weapons and delivery systems during crisis-time, AI maximizes this detection and tracking ability. Hence, it could provide a win-win strategic advantage to one party over the other. This likelihood convinces states to pursue greater reliance on advanced AI-supported defence technology while greatly increasing the chances of a possible malfunction or misinterpretation of command.

Strategic stability of South Asia is already [fragile](#). The prediction dynamics of this strategic stability after AI inception has long been a bone of contention. It can be traced that [China's New Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan](#) and its AI advancements within strategic realm could lead to more aggression stemming from India's hegemonic designs. Resultantly, Pakistan's nuclear deterrence would be reasonably undermined. This can lead to a mutual fog of war in terms of strategic vulnerabilities and disparities. Moreover, the cyber-vulnerabilities and [cyber-breach events in South Asia](#) already foretell the emerging uncertainty currently undermining strategic stability in the region.

Furthermore, the prevalence of AI within nuclear realm elevates the risks of an accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons which as an outcome could trigger escalation. Incorporating AI within command and control mechanisms of nuclear weapons states would possibly increase the risk of a misinformed and irrevocable weapons launch. China in pursuit of advanced AI, a bellicose India and balancing Pakistan (vis-a-vis India) would all be vulnerable to such misadventures inflicted by an over and uncontrolled reliance on AI. In this regard, keeping the strategic stability of South Asia intact is a much more challenging matter than anywhere else on the globe.

Being an alluring domain, Artificial Intelligence has become a necessary evil which based on the above discussed risks still poses an existential threat to humanity. It presses states around the world and particularly in South Asia as a technologically nascent yet rapidly advancing region to compete in such a way that it may eventually turn into their absolute submission to AI. Another alarming aspect is that ultimately human intelligence adheres to the necessity of the human security perspective whereas AI, if not programmed correctly, may not recognize or emphasize the human safety or security enough. Instead of relinquishing total control and submitting to machines intentionally which could be real risk attracting phenomenon, Artificial intelligence must be employed to assist and empower human cognition to better respond to the collective and individual strategic challenges.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/02/25/artificial-intelligence-potential-intensifier-of-strategic-dynamics-in-south-asia/>

Present Limitations of India's Nuclear Triad

Sher Bano

In November 2018 Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi proudly announced that India's nuclear triad was complete after the INS Arihant, India's first nuclear powered submarine, successfully completed its deterrence patrol. Although it was considered a significant milestone in India's nuclear capability, the submarine does not considerably add up to India's second-strike capabilities. There are still various issues related to its capability, capacity and effectiveness when comprising of an otherwise key dimension of the nuclear triad.

A nuclear triad consists of a three-dimensional capability of launching nuclear missiles from land, air and from undersea. It is very easy to detect land and air launch platforms with sophisticated technology and ground level intelligence. In theory, an actual nuclear deterrent for a country would depend upon a system that is very difficult or impossible to detect. Such a possibility is offered by a nuclear-powered submarine which, unlike a conventional diesel or electric submarine, has the capability to remain under water for longer durations of not only weeks but even months. It becomes nearly impossible to detect a nuclear-powered submarine due to its maneuverability and submersion capacity. Deterrence patrol is not a short time affair as in order to assure continuous deterrence – via an adequate second strike capability – it is necessary that at least one SSBN (Nuclear powered submarine equipped with ballistic missile) deployed at a readiness level of continuous alert constantly remain under-sea. In principle it would require more than one SSBN for India to ensure that at least one such platform is deployed at sea for a continuous period of time. The INS Arihant has a limited capacity of an 83-megawatt nuclear power plant and has a very short refueling cycle which effects the submarine's speed and endurance. India, by inducting the INS Arighat in the Arihant class is aiming to enhance such capabilities through incorporating additional submerged platforms as part of its deterrence patrol stratagem. The only hurdle in this scenario would be India's economic commitment to the cause which remains overburdened with other projects aiming at military modernization. Beyond nuclear submarines and attack submarines, India's desire to replicate an America-like naval arrangement or a United Kingdom like submarine signature requires extensive financial and technical evaluation of a second strike 'deterrence patrol' program. Hence India is still on its way to form blue water navy.

Deterrence patrols also require that naval nuclear platforms always be in a heightened state of operational readiness in order to assure a viable second-strike capability. The INS Arihant is equipped with K-4 missiles with a range of 3500 km and K-15 (Sagarika) missiles with the range of 750km to 1500km. In 2018 there were reports that an accident might have damaged the INS Arihant. According to the [news](#), the Arihant was about to sink because its propulsion compartment was flooded because a hatch was left open by mistake.

According to [The Economic Times](#) there also exists an upsetting partition between the military authority and nation's political leadership. Such an error, actual or speculative, is evidence enough that there are certain serious shortcomings within the Indian Nuclear Command Authority as the [news of the Arihant's absence](#) from operational duties came to the political council only after the Indian navy requested the

precautionary advanced deployment of the submarine, following the Doklam standoff with China. Hence, India's political leadership was already faltering over one leg of its strategic triad when it was crucial to its policy goals. Such an incident reveals not only the professional incapability of Indian navy but also depicts the dangerous gaps that exist within its civil-military relations, specifically within India's Nuclear command and control authority.

Hence, training and personnel readiness is as important as the ability of decision makers to foresee any 'accidents'. If the Arihant did not sink but still lost its operational consistency due to a 'minor incident', not being able to reconcile such a scenario reveals much about the checks and balances pervading throughout India's nuclear command hierarchy. Without Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) technology at their disposal and a faltering management of its nuclear submarine it becomes an uphill task to comprehend the overall efficiency and efficacy of such second-strike parameters.

In order to fulfill its hegemonic designs India aims to build six nuclear powered attack submarines and long range k-series SLBMs such as k-5 (5000km range) and k-6(6000 km range) which India still seems a little far from acquiring. Pakistan however has already built the Baber-3 or Hatf V-II (submarine launched cruise missile) with MIRV capability in response to India's growing submarine capability. Even though India successfully test fired the K4 missile in January 2020 presenting it as a major milestone, the missile range is still sub-optimal because it would require the submarine to operate on the north eastern fringes of the Bay of Bengal. Hence, requiring these submarines to travel round the Burmese and Bangladeshi littoral waters in order to target China's vital economic and political hubs.

Hence, unless India is able to deploy an SSBN fleet with missiles capable of reaching inter-continental ranges (such as those offered by the k-5 or k-6), its sea based deterrent credibility will remain incomplete. However, all these limitations are being readily addressed by India as it is expected to commission Arighat in 2020 and will also conduct various long-range missiles tests in the near future to further enhance its existing naval capabilities.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/25022020-present-limitations-to-indias-nuclear-triad-oped/>

Assessing the Endorsements Pouring in on Pakistan's Stance on Kashmir

Haris Bilal Malik

Despite the tumultuous developments that have taken place since last year, the Kashmir issue has once again intensified considerably over just the last few weeks. The emergent security dynamics of the South Asian region are directly and indirectly linked with this long-standing issue in several ways. Exactly one year ago, the February 2019 Pulwama attack and the resultant military escalation between India and Pakistan are evident of its potential as a 'nuclear flashpoint' between the two countries. Later on, in [August 2019](#) the revocation of the special constitutional status of Kashmir by the Indian government, referred to as the [Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act 2019](#) coupled with a brutal lockdown in the disputed region and worldwide criticism have further internationalized the dispute. The diplomatic significance of the Kashmir issue was also evident during the UN General Assembly's 74th session last year as many world leaders emphasized its peaceful solution during the session. In the same vein, it seems that Pakistan's diplomatic efforts in highlighting these have been acknowledged in the year 2020 as well based on its appropriate foreign policy approach.

The Kashmir issue has since remained one of the most crucial agenda items during Prime Minister Imran Khan's recent visit to Malaysia. According to the [joint statement](#) at the end of the summit, the Kashmir issue had been raised during the talks between the two leaders. Prime Minister Imran Khan also thanked the Malaysian Prime Minister, Dr. Mahatir Muhammad for standing by Pakistan on Kashmir dispute and speaking against the injustices being perpetrated by Indian forces in occupied Kashmir. Moreover, Turkish President [Recep Tayyip Erdogan](#) while addressing the joint session of Parliament during his recent visit to Pakistan has once again [criticized](#) India's unilateral moves. He [reiterated](#) Turkey's stance on the resolution of outstanding Kashmir dispute through dialogue and peaceful means and termed recent unilateral steps of India as alarming. From these statements, it is evident that despite not getting support from the Gulf States or the OIC, Pakistan can still count on support from Turkey and Malaysia based on its religious affinity as well as a more principled show of unity and solidarity.

As Pakistan's diplomatic efforts towards addressing the worsening situation in Kashmir continues, it is worth mentioning that, UN Secretary-General [Antonio Guterres](#), during his maiden and highly significant official visit to Pakistan also expressed his concerns over the worsening situation. He emphasized maximum restraint from both countries. He also pointed out the employment of Article 99 of the UN Charter, which authorizes the Secretary-General to bring this matter to the UNSC based on its grave implications for international peace and security. If the ongoing situation continues in Kashmir, the UN Secretary-General might involve the UNSC to once again discuss the issue and provide a road map for its peaceful settlement. Despite India's unilateral moves to annex Kashmir politically and militarily, Pakistan's current efforts to internationally raise the Kashmir seems to have borne some success, at least for the time being. Furthermore, such an assertion by the UN Secretary-General is a clear vindication of Pakistan's principled stance on Kashmir issue based on human rights grounds and its significance for peace and stability in the South Asian region.

Furthermore, as part of US President Donald Trump's maiden visit to India which recently took place from [February 24-25](#), there was widespread speculation that he would blindly support the Indian stance on Kashmir. If that would have been the case, it would have been projected as a massive diplomatic coup for India. However, contrary to such widespread speculation, Mr. Trump once again reiterated his offer to [mediate between India and Pakistan](#) to resolve the bilateral issue of Kashmir by describing it as a big problem for both countries. It is quite notable here that Mr. Trump didn't indulge in any harsh statements against Pakistan by blaming it for sponsoring terrorism or otherwise. In fact, Mr. Trump openly acknowledged Pakistan's stance on Kashmir as an international and disputed issue. Thus, still representing a victory of sorts for Pakistan's recent diplomatic overtures towards the US.

Hence at the present, India's expectation of a diplomatic win over the Kashmir issue led by Mr. Modi has not entirely met his expectations for the time being. Contrary to his intentions, the issue remains internationalized as Pakistan has still gained considerable support from prominent international leaders such as U.S. President Trump and the UN Secretary-General Mr. Antonio Guterres. This is in addition to the support it has consistently received from [China](#) as well as the shift in stance from [Russia](#). These leaders have publicly expressed a realization of the sensitivity of the Kashmir issue and seem to be focused on supporting a peaceful settlement. This does not guarantee that the situation would remain the same in the future as well. Pakistan needs to redraw a long-term strategy to present its case in front of the international community against the backdrop of the emerging dynamics of the Kashmir issue that still seems to be worsening day by day. There is still a lot more to be done to get firm support from other forums like the OIC and EU.

<https://foreignpolicynews.org/2020/02/26/assessing-the-value-of-the-endorsements-pouring-in-on-pakistans-stance-on-kashmir/>

Indo-Pak Relations in The Post-Truth Era

Basma Khalil

Ralph Keyes in his book "[The Post-Truth Era: Dishonesty and Deception in Contemporary Life](#)" said, this is the era of post truth in which the borders between the truth and lie are too vague. He said, in the present, people have truth, lies and statements alike which they are too generous to consider as false. Same goes for nation states, which take the benefits of the post truth era and manipulate the truth accordingly to use it against their rivals. Based on these developments, false propaganda has been launched by states against each other against the background of being either good friends or foes.

In 2019, a European based non-governmental organization, [EU DisinfoLab](#) revealed that an Indian sponsored network of 265 counterfeit local news channels across 65 countries had been set up to disseminate an anti - Pakistan narrative. Several [online sites](#) masking as international news portals and magazines have been involved in the propaganda that is directly linked with the Indian state. The website EP Today for instance was investigated by EU DisinfoLab Lab, which claimed to be an online magazine for the European Parliament in Brussels. Later, it was revealed that this particular website was involved in simply republishing news copied from genuine portals such as voice of America and Russia Today to lend credence to the otherwise false news it was publishing regularly against Pakistan. Initially Russian sources were suspected for the interference but the servers traced, were originally being operated by the Indian based [Srivastava Group](#).

Similarly, many of these fake websites use names of defunct newspapers to provide a veneer of credibility. Such fake online sites are named as zombie sites, because names of dead media outlets were resurrected. One of the sites is called Manchester Times. Its information segment utilizes content duplicated from a Wikipedia passage about a paper with a similar name. But it omits the section in which it was written, "The newspaper's last issue appeared on 22 July 1922". By utilizing and misdirecting duplicate syndicated content from news agencies, such websites present themselves as genuine news destinations. However, what they primarily focus on is doling out anti-Pakistan stories and opinion pieces from employees of NGOs linked to the network to serve India's lobbying interests. It seems that India taking a page from the infamous Joseph [Goebbels](#) has based their activities around the idea that: 'The bigger the lie, the better the results' which in itself belies a better understanding of Indian intentions.

This was evident in the 2019 Pulwama attack, where India had tried its best to play its cards against Pakistan. False propoganda was carried out by the Indian government and media to mislead its own people and international community to fulfill its domestic political gains. Former GOC of the Indian army's Northern Command Gen. D.S. Hooda stated that, '[It is not possible to bring such massive amounts of explosives by infiltrating the border](#)'. Offering a genuinely plausible explanation, he claimed that the material may have been taken from stockpiles of explosives being used to blast a mountainside to broaden the highway to Jammu, the same road where the attack occurred. Later on after facing considerable pressure the General had to renege his statement and explicitly state that he was not denying that the explosives had come from Pakistan but that it would be very tough to smuggle in such

material. These contradictory statements considerably damaged the credibility of the Indian state and military both regionally and internationally.

Similarly, after Pulwama, the Balakot air strike was carried out by the Indian air force in which highly publicized claims were made that India targeted a terrorist camp inside Pakistan. However, based on internationally verified reports no such damage was reported on the targeted infrastructure. These include analyses from various open-source satellites imagery by the [Atlantic Council's Digital Forensics Laboratory San Francisco-based Planet Labs, European Space Imaging, and the Australian Strategic Policy Institute](#). All of whom had determined that India did not hit any targets of significance on the Jaba hilltop site in the vicinity of Balakot. James Martin Centre for Nonproliferation's senior research associates Lewis and Dave Schmerler, who also analyzed the satellite images, said that if weapons would have been used, then the damage to the structures should be visible in the pictures. This represents one of the most recent and visible instances where state sponsored propaganda which directly linked to military action was brought into question at an international level in front of a global audience.

Pakistan proficiently dealt with the Indian propaganda against it, which was aiming to achieve a purely electoral objective, by using soft power to counter the Indian narrative. India tries its best to fully utilize the tactics of the post truth era as well as propaganda theorems of the likes of Joseph Goebbels. But as been the case, these attempts in the case of Pulwama were nullified on technical and diplomatic grounds. The concerned incident depicts the growing reliance on fake news and propaganda means in the realm of hybrid warfare to propel inter-state rivalry which would likely intensify in the near future.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/25022020-indo-pak-relations-in-the-post-truth-era-oped/>

Similarities between Trump-Modi Policies and their Actions

Irfan Ali

President Donald Trump calls PM Narendra Modi the father of India. According to him, he has been successful in combining every section of society like a father combines the whole family through caring for the needs, necessities and reservations of his children. Including praise for PM Modi, President Trump has raised very serious matters for the nations of the world in his recent speeches. Throughout his tenure, President Trump has also remained centered on the idea of “American Exceptionalism.” As evident in his statements, he has already expressed in one of his recent speeches that [“The future does not belong to globalists, the future belongs to patriots”](#). He further explained that this is the rise of nationalism and fall of globalism. Though, whatever the ideology guiding President Trump’s statements and strategies it still creates several complexities for the world, especially for weaker developing nations. In the same way, PM Modi has expressed his ideas and thoughts – as influenced by RSS ideology – which are also based on a similar sense of superiority albeit based around a predominantly Hindu inspired nationalism.

Considering this idea of America as the savior of the world - as evident in its penchant to intervene in any part of the world - the US has created its own definitions of what is just and unjust. Likewise, PM Modi’s more hands-on approach to Kashmir and even to a certain extent Gujrat represents a similar approach couched in a sort of ‘savior’ complex. According to PM Modi, the ancient books of Hinduism teach that humanity throughout the world is protected under their responsibility. In this regard, they will work in collaboration with other states who also want to protect the same cause of saving humanity as described by both President Trump and PM Modi during the Howdy-Modi gatherings in United States. Thus, hinting at perhaps a dangerous penchant for a more interventionist approach to world politics.

Now this is psychological rhetoric used by different entities to provide a moral justification for their actions in an attempt to make their actions legal and just in front of a specifically targeted audience. As such this kind of maneuvering, used by States and individual rulers via looking over the changing global dynamics, is all about gaining interests, power, dominance and influence. There was a period when Narendra Modi was banned in America as well as some other countries of the world. He was banned because of the numerous atrocities, massacres, misconducts and the spread of [RSS extremist ideology](#). He was the central person who was [allegedly involved](#) in the massacre of the Babri Masjid in Gujrat, India. He has been an active member of the RSS for a very long period of time. As such he remains famous for his fascist, extremist, hawkish and discriminatory policies imposed on the people of India. These include his harsh policies against the people of Jammu and Kashmir which are glaring proof of several human rights violations.

PM Modi and President Trump have the same ambitions despite the varying differences between the status, development levels, technology, and economies of their respective countries. However, there are numerous similarities within their ideologies, policies and actions as they are mostly inspired by their far-right more conservative electoral bases. Such types of states or individual rulers use beliefs and ideologies for legitimizing their actions. In this regard, United States of America has been practicing

these policies and actions within various parts of the world like Palestine, Middle East, Afghanistan. If America is imposing such injustices such a significant share of the world's population while projecting itself as the savior of human right, then any state with the ability to project power and influence could exploit the situation against the pretext of saving human rights. As evident, it is this same mentality that has led to the deterioration of the security of various parts of the world.

Similarly, Narendra Modi's ideology has been generating serious issues for the security of South Asia. In this regard, [PM Modi](#) along with several other RSS stalwarts have been accused of spreading violence, discrimination and hatred against India's marginalized communities such as Dalits, Sikhs Christians particularly Muslim and other religious minorities. The recent controversy embroiling the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) is an example of such violent and extremist policies which have already resulted in mass agitations and strikes throughout India. The policies and actions adopted by PM Modi have been the cause of various problems within India as well as in the region including the repeated threats from BJP leaders against Pakistan.

When there are nuclear states being led by such leaders who have already fought several wars over multiple issues, they require a certain maturity, sense of responsibility, rationality and understanding in their behaviors as well as the actions of their rulers. Such kind of statements and behaviors portray a picture of madness or irrationality which can generate various problems for the peace and security of both nations as well as [regional stability](#). Both PM Modi and President Trump would do well to ponder over that together during their forthcoming meetings in India which is considered very important for the strategic partnership of India as well as regional security and stability.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/566249/similarities-between-trump-modi-policies-and-their-actions/>

Trump in India: Assessing the Current Trajectory of Indo-US Ties

M Waqas Jan

The last few days saw India pulling out all the stops for President Trump's first official visit to the country. High on optics and bollywoodesque fanfare, the trip despite serving as a vital political boost to both leaders remained shy of any concrete agreements. At least that is what the initial [consensus](#) amongst key analysts and media [pundits](#) seems to point towards in this visit's immediate aftermath.

This for instance was evident in the absence of a signed trade deal that would address the contentious issue of tariffs that has dogged US-India relations particularly under the Trump presidency. Similarly, while the signing of the \$3bn arms deal comprising of US attack helicopters and other US military equipment was also formalized, it still pales in comparison to India's arms deals with Russia – a country that accounts for more than half of India's defense imports worth \$15bn just in the last three years.

Thus, considering the timing of Mr. Trump's Presidential visit within the context of the looming US elections, as well as the [political fallout](#) being faced by PM Modi following his violent crackdown in Indian Occupied Kashmir and the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act, it is perhaps unrealistic to compare the strategic significance of this visit with other key US presidential visits from the past. Such as for instance, the landmark civil nuclear agreement that was signed when President George W. Bush had visited PM Manmohan Singh in Delhi in 2006.

Nevertheless, considering the trajectory of Indo-US ties since the signing of the 2006 nuclear deal, both countries' strategic interests have converged on several key issues. The most salient of which remains their need to contain a rising China which in addition to its growing economic influence has increasingly come to challenge both the US and India's ability to project power within South and South-East Asia. [President Trump's references](#) to the Indo-Pacific and the 'quad' during this visit stand as a clear case in point. So does his mentioning of the need to have a secure 5G wireless network, a clear reference to the US's misgivings regarding the international role and overarching influence of Chinese tech giant, Huawei.

Yet, while the indirect references to China, however veiled were still apparent, there was a conspicuous silence on key things Russia. For example, questions over whether India would face US sanctions over its \$5.5bn deal with Russia over five squadrons of the S-400 Air Defense System still remain unaddressed. Last month's [statements from US State Department officials](#) regarding whether India would face sanctions under the Countering America's Adversary's Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) had cast even further ambiguity on the matter. The US position as it was reported then stands that while the US was unwilling to degrade India's defense capabilities, there was no blanket waiver offered to India for the S-400 purchase. [China](#) has already been sanctioned by the US for purchasing the S-400 under CAATSA with similar threats having been levied on NATO ally Turkey just last year.

If this issue of sanctions or a waiver had been discussed between PM Modi and President Trump in the last few days, it was not made public. In fact, according to recent reports, India in walking a diplomatic tightrope between the US and Russia seems to have instead delayed the procurement of its five S-400 missile batteries by up to another year. Whereas, [earlier reports](#) had indicated that India would take delivery of the S-400 System by October this year, more recent developments have suggested that deliveries of this system are expected to be made instead by the [end of 2021](#).

Based on this, it is likely that India may be biding some time for a possible change of heart in the US while ensuring it does not antagonize its long-standing relationship with Russia. Similarly, Russia too may have agreed to delay the delivery in order to ensure that its decades old and highly lucrative inroads within India's military industrial complex remain intact. Especially at a time when India by flexing its economic muscles and amid a military modernization spree stands as one of the most lucrative markets for defense exporters across the world.

Based on these developments, while President Trump may have surreptitiously avoided bringing up issues directly pertaining to Russia, there is no denying that there is considerable impetus in Washington towards gaining a larger slice of India's military-industrial pie. Hence, the [inroads being made](#) by the likes of Boeing and Lockheed Martin are likely to serve as important stepping stones for not only more lucrative deals and technology transfer agreements in the near future, but also for developing a robust strategic alliance centered on the quad framework.

Hence, whereas both India and the US have embarked on this strategic partnership particularly in view of China's expanding influence in the region, the implications of this move on Russian interests both in India and as well as the wider region may demand a lot more serious attention than what appears to have been given at the present. Especially considering how India's historic penchant for preferring a non-aligned foreign policy runs counter to the US's more hands-on and involved approach to managing international relations.

<https://foreignpolicynews.org/2020/02/29/trump-in-india-assessing-the-current-trajectory-of-indo-us-ties/>

'Westlessness': Shaping Anew the EU's Power

Shamsa Nawaz

The endurance of a political order cannot be permanently measured in the absence of any instrument. Neither can it be substantially responded to at any given point and time. Similarly, the collapse of a system does not require any clear or prolonged warning. The world has experienced a relatively stable bi-polar system for several decades in the post-Cold War era, gradually replaced by the US dominated neoliberal post-Cold War era which is now being succeeded by a multi-polar world. This is accompanied with shifting alignments.

In the same vein, the debates at the 2020 Munich Security Conference (MSC) provided new insights into the shifts currently underway within the EU. In the most expansive sense of that term: 'Westlessness', reigned throughout the MSC despite the fact that it had played a vital role in world affairs after World War II. Earlier, marking the seventy fifth anniversary of the end of the World War II, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, President of Germany, warned that the erosion of international cooperation was evident in the US's growing interest in Asia at the expense of its transatlantic relations. Will Europe come up more integrated in this shifted paradigm? How would a more sovereign Europe become a better partner to a more socially equal United States on global problems? The technological giants have also disrupted major economies, societies, and political systems.

Historically, Germany as a core EU country has been the largest and most successful [economy](#) with a GDP of almost \$4 trillion under Angela Merkel, since 2005. Germany sends the most members to the European Parliament. It has efficaciously maintained stability during the euro crisis. The Russian invasion of eastern Ukraine in 2014 and her open-door policy of 2015, in which over 1 million refugees were given shelter in Germany, was built on those premises. Germany provided an example of how to deal with a difficult past. However, using the legacy of the Holocaust, Germany has craftily absolved itself from the responsibility of security, defense, and leadership precisely. Will it continue to be the same in the post-Brexit paradigm? Steinmeier warned that, "if the European project fails, the lessons of [German history](#) will be called into question."

Merkel's Germany is already being criticized for not being able to provide international leadership. The objective of an integrated economic and political Europe is similarly unclear. Merkel has also not been able to fend off criticism that [Germany has failed to meet the NATO commitment](#) to spend 2 percent of GDP on defense, although it is already spending about 1.36 per cent of its [GDP](#).

Within Germany, the ever-growing popularity of the far-right, anti-immigration, and anti-Semitic Alternative for Germany (AfD) has remained increasingly cumbersome for Angela Merkel. It is creating a leadership crisis for Germany. On February 10, 2020, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, as Merkel's designated successor has also resigned as a leader of the governing Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party. This leadership crisis has emerged at xenophobic times of nationalism and populism espoused with the state of anomie, in Europe. The strains in the transatlantic relations and the rise in China's global role have afflicted this specter further afield.

Speaking pronouncedly, the French President Emmanuel Macron also talks about the need for a more integrated Europe by exercising [responsibility for Europe's future](#). "This united Europe will only survive if we regard it as the most concrete repository for German responsibility . . . of all the dangers I sense facing Germany, I see none greater than that our German narrative of the future dispenses with the united Europe, whether as a result of a lack of insight, because of indifference, or in some people's eyes even through intent."

The panacea lies in strengthening European [security and defense policy](#) as suggested by Steinmeier. He however, distinctively speculated that it would be opposed by the Central and Eastern Europeans. Besides, the fear is that Europe is no longer relevant for the US in great power competition. "Only a Europe that can and wants to protect itself credibly will be able to keep the U.S. in the alliance," was a major concern of Steinmeier.

The French President Emmanuel Macron was yet another person at the MSC who supported and rejected the idea of subordination to America in its new role. He even suggested a smaller "core" group of EU nations moving towards a military union. Macron even raised the prospect of France helping this military union by sharing its own nuclear weapons. He suggested ending the dependence of several countries on the US nuclear umbrella and recommended to think in a European way as well. Macron even invited Germany for talks on the subject of nuclear weapons with France. The French leader had earlier asked Merkel for a financial and military contribution to a joint anti-'jihadist regional force' under the rubric of G5 Sahel made up of forces from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

Already, the "Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy" presented by HR/VP Mogherini in June 2016, had laid down the foundations for a comprehensive package of measures in the areas of security and defence. It consists of three major pillars:

- New political goals and ambitions for Europeans to take more responsibility for their own security and defence.
- New financial tools to help Member States and the European defence industry to develop defence capabilities ("European Defence Action Plan").
- Set of concrete actions as a follow up to the EU-NATO Joint Declaration while identifying areas of cooperation.

Though, this siding of Macron with Germany by indicating the emergence of two blocs – the German led block vs the US led Britain, Australia and New Zealand bloc - shows an obvious lineage in global power trends. The objectives of the two are opposing while the NATO from which France benefitted the most, is almost obsolete for France. Similarly, the time of US-Europe cooperation against Russia also appears to be over.

Notwithstanding, apart from Macron's closer alliance with Germany, he is also encouraging Europe's oldest institution, the Roman Catholic Church. Would it mean the Resurrection of the Roman Empire and hence, the church states in the backdrop of rising *Islamophobia*? This certainly leads to several more questions.

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