



**STRATEGIC VISION**  
INSTITUTE

# VISION

VISIONARY INSIGHTS INTO THE STRATEGIC INQUESTS OF NATIONS

## SVI FORESIGHT

VOLUME 6, NUMBER 3

MARCH 2020

Compiled & Edited by:

S. Sadia Kazmi

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

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**Strategic Vision Institute (SVI)**

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

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

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

## **SVI Foresight**

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

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## *Editor's Note*

This issue of the SVI-Foresight comes out at a time when the whole country is unitedly battling a pandemic caused by a novel Coronavirus; the Covid-19. While it is quite difficult to predict the long-term consequences of the Coronavirus outbreak, one cannot help appreciate the collective national response to this sudden calamitous event. The nationwide display of solidarity is commendable. The compassion and commitment with which the doctors and paramedic staff are selflessly offering their services, restores one's faith in humanity. However, this also brings to light a glaring fact that how ill prepared the world is to deal with pathogens which could suddenly present such challenges. The inadequately equipped health care system and lack of preparation for pandemics has revealed serious shortcomings. Today it will be roughly five months since the first Coronavirus patient was reported in Wuhan-China, and yet the world remains clueless about how it can be treated or even be curbed down. This uncertainty has invoked fear, anger and skepticism among the people. The psychological ramifications will be even more serious. Nonetheless, the current situation offers the world with an opportunity to make proper investment and give attention to the infectious diseases and work toward cleaner environment. Two articles in this issue specifically cover the Covid-19 pandemic. The readers may find a timely and insightful analyses of the current situation that may help them in devising a pragmatic course of action. Furthermore, the current crisis cannot undermine the plight of Kashmiris which now should be highlighted even more vigorously. Hence, one of the opinion articles stresses on the need for more intensified national and diplomatic efforts to lift the lock down imposed by India in occupied Kashmir. Other contributions closely look at the evolving security environment in the wake of Indo-US defence deal, US' sale of weapons to India and the implications such developments carry for the regional stability, specifically for Pakistan. An interesting take on the dynamics of escalation within South Asia has been presented in one of the articles which looks at Pakistan's nuclear threshold. It is hoped that an array of analyses presented in this issue will make for a good read. The SVI Foresight team invites and highly encourages the contributions from the security and strategic community in form of opinion based short commentaries on

contemporary political, security and strategic issues. Any suggestions for further improvements are welcome at our [contact address](#). Please see [here](#) the copy of SVI Foresight electronic journal. You can find us on [Face book](#) and can also access the SVI [website](#).

Senior Research Associate  
Syedah Sadia Kazmi

## ***Bloodletting in Delhi: A Tighter Hug on Program***

***Shamsa Nawaz***

In an intense echo of bloodletting during the partition of 1947, in which approximately 2million people died and several lost their property and homes, phased into a rerun of the Gujrat riots in 2002, Modi's Hinduisation is ambitiously hankering on geo-politically strategic and obfuscated regional and international championship once again. Reeling under communal violence which resulted in the death of more than 50 people and injury to another 300 in the heart of the country, Delhi, on the visit of Donald Trump to India on February 24, 2020, was a clear message of polarized internal strife. The streets in the New Delhi neighborhood were horrifyingly littered with scraps of bricks and haunted by the site of bloodbath. India is evidently stalled into Syria and Iraq like situation.

The 16<sup>th</sup> century conquistadorial silencing, to torture and mass incarceration, Stasi surveillance to demographic engineering to suppression of assemblage, the longest digital siege ever imposed in a democracy, the gagging of free press, the devastation of economy, the crippling of the education system, the criminalisation of speech (those who've been set free have literally had to sign "bonds of silence") and the suppression of civil society is already a state-crafted sojourn in a Muslim majority Indian Occupied Kashmir. An unwitting war waged by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in an us-versus-them culture has allowed him to turn many into state-less citizens by the introduction of CAA/NRC. It is being criticized as the "greatest act of social poisoning by a government in independent India," aimed at making the country a Hindu state.

Not to mention the non-conformation to the international norms and law and human rights values. The Human Rights Watch published a report in 2019, observing that the BJP, filled with religious fervor drilled into his workers, uses "communal rhetoric" to spur "a violent vigilante campaign," whereby radical cow protection groups lynched 44 people to death, 36 of them Muslims, between May 2015 and December 2018. Hindus consider cow as 'Holy' and disallow its meat consumption to non-Hindus. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)Michelle Bachelet, has already filed an intervention application in the Indian Supreme Court against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

The violations of UN Security Council resolutions and tenets of the secular spirit of the Indian constitution, all allow a prospective anarchy to the US led international order. By declaring Russia and China as top national security threats in the 2018 American Defence Strategy, India is evidently emboldened by the US appeasement policies which regrettably contradict its own criticism on China's detention camps for Muslims in Xinjiang province. Should we then agree with



the chairperson of SDPI Board of Governors, Shafqat Kakakhel who said that “We are living in Trump era, who simply walked-out from two international agreements, i.e. Iran Nuclear Deal and UN-Paris Agreement on climate change?” Modi’s scrapping of Article 370 in the occupied Kashmir and introduction of citizen amendment bill (CAB) are significantly akin with Trump’s erstwhile decisions.

At the regional level, revision of Modi’s foreign policy on ideological lines vis-à-vis its smaller neighbours in general and Pakistan in particular, and his radical and drastic changes in Indian non-aligned politics, its aspirations for great power and bidding for the UNSC permanent membership, could have perilous spillover impacts in the region. Pakistan’s foreign policy is already India-centric. His anti-Pakistan and anti-Muslim rhetoric saved both the nuclear states, on February 26, 2019, from an almost full-fledged war by short aerial dogfight.

Similarly, condemning Modi of “killing Muslims” and “patronizing communal violence” in his country, the demonstrators in Bangladesh demanded their government cancel its earlier invitation to him for an official visit on March 17, 2020. “We want punishment of killer Modi,” “Killer Modi has no place on the soil of Bangladesh.”

On the domestic front, the Hindu nationalist BJP launched a three-pronged strategy against the Muslim minority:

It struck down the special status of the Indian-occupied Kashmir (IOK). By doing so, it dishonored both the legal and moral foundations of the post-World War order.

Second, it manipulated through RSS extremist organisations perpetrating unbridled religious violence against Muslims and other minorities without impunity.

Third and finally, embedding religious discrimination by the introduction of controversial citizenship law.

Religion is essentially an individual phenomenon. Its realization calls for building up a religious fellowship. If the interests of a group are couched in a garb of religion; they are easily manipulated/ persuaded to lay their lives while ignoring the original objective of religion. It is basically a fulfillment of soul which directs a code of life. It easily becomes an ideology when politicized. In this manner, religion starts rendering the material and political goals and the thin line between faith and politics gets exploited. How would then the killings in pursuit of material or political goals at such massive scale, which are unbecoming of human dignity and life, be defined as “communal riots” only? More so, when they are not simply a clash between two mobs or groups? In Delhi, the state was clearly seen siding with one group either by looking away or by encouraging and sometimes even directly participating in the violence? It had clearly used its instrument of police force against a community of Muslims which incidentally is also the largest



minority in India. How would be a line drawn between the riot and progrom- a term devised in tsarist Russia when pogroms were launched against Jews? At prima facie, it is no less than an organized cleansing of Muslims through annihilation and egregious disgrace directly by the central government in Delhi, which is the capital of the state of India, unlike Gujrat massacre. If Modi was boycotted as the Chief Minister of Gujrat, should the hug have been tighter by Donald Trump on unleashing progrom?

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/03/12/bloodletting-in-delhi-a-tighter-hug-on-progrom/>

## ***India-US Defence Deal 2020: Security Implications for Pakistan***

***Sher Bano***

During President Trump's recent visit to India, both the countries signed US 3 billion dollars defence deal involving various sophisticated weapons. The deal consists of the sale of six Boeing AH-64E Apache Guardian attack helicopters for the Indian Army and 24 Sikorsky MH-60R Sea Hawk multi-role helicopters for the Indian Navy. Pakistan has already shown concerns that this deal would result in further destabilizing the already volatile region. Pakistan's Foreign Ministry's Spokeswoman Aisha Farooqui stated that "the sale of such sophisticated weapons to India will disturb the strategic balance in South Asia with security implications for Pakistan and the region." She also stated that the region could not afford an arms race or conflict and urged the international community to prevent the destabilization of the region.

Since 2007 India's defence cooperation with the US has reached US 17 billion dollars as it aims to modernize its military to achieve its ultimate goal of becoming the global power. With the recent purchase of the sophisticated weapons, India is increasing its sphere of influence in the region which is quite alarming for its neighboring countries specifically Pakistan. The defence agreement between them clearly marks close collaboration in military, conventional and non-conventional weapons which may pose serious repercussion on geo-strategic scenarios of South Asia. US being the major power is supporting India to play a larger role of the regional policeman and fulfill its long term hegemonic designs to dominate the smaller states with the help of its military strength. Hence this defence cooperation has accelerated India's dream of becoming the global power.

Moreover, India's obsession of buying the most sophisticated weapons is a serious concern for Pakistan as it is likely to create conventional asymmetry in the region. The recent deal consists of weapons which Pakistan doesn't have right now, hence it will disturb the conventional balance between the two states. Maritime security cooperation between India and the US is nothing but an attempt to secure the maritime domain which can cause serious maritime conflict between India and Pakistan in the Indian Ocean and international seas as well. The Apache attack helicopters are equipped with the hellfire missiles, night vision capabilities, 70 mm rockets and an automatic gun, which makes it the most lethal machine in the world. The Apache would add greater firepower and agility to the Indian ground forces for any quick and intense operations against Pakistan.

This Indo-US deal has the potential to undermine Pakistan's strategy of minimum credible deterrence. Hence this cooperation can have disastrous effects on the stability of the region by tilting the strategic balance between in favor of India. Pakistan should convey to the US at the

highest level, its security concerns caused by the latest Indo-US defence deal. We must emphasize upon the destabilizing consequences for South Asia caused by the open ended supply of highly advanced weapons to India, creating conventional asymmetry in the region.

Pakistan being the smaller state with a fragile economy cannot afford to indulge in an all-out arms race. However, Pakistan also should not remain oblivious to growing Indo-US cooperation as it can have strong security implications. Enhanced capacity building of Indian armed forces can threaten the deterrent value of Pakistan's nuclear and conventional weapons. Hence a combination of expedient foreign policy along with credible conventional and nuclear deterrent could meet the desired national interest. In order to counter the conventional imbalance Pakistan has to rely on the indigenous weapon production, superior strategy and training. Pakistan needs to build anti-weapons and long-range air defense system to detect any aerial threats and reduce the pace of the Indian mechanized forces. Moreover, with these capabilities Pakistan can tackle with any advantage of Indian military in the conventional domain. Pakistan should build stronger ties with China while remaining strategically relevant to the US. Pakistan must revive its economy in order to counter the negative impact of the Indo-US strategic convergence.

It cannot be reiterated enough that the Indo-US defence deal raises strong security implication for Pakistan as it further increases the conventional asymmetry between the two states which will ultimately threaten the strategic stability of South Asia. Hence Pakistan needs to improve its overall conventional capabilities in order to fill the gaps and maintain the conventional balance.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/13032020-india-us-defense-deal-2020-security-implications-for-pakistan-oped/>



# *Current State of Terrorism and Counter-terrorism Measures by Pakistan*

*Basma Khalil*

Lately, there have been numerous reports and indicators that hint at the improved security situation across the country. According to the report of Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies' (PIPS), over the decade terrorist activities in Pakistan have plummeted by more than 85 %. This could be attributed to the determination and resilience of the Pakistani nation. Simultaneously, the Government of Pakistan and military made commendable efforts in fighting against the menace of terrorism. A National Action Plan was devised combined with foreign and domestic policy initiatives aimed to detect, pursue and prosecute terrorist organizations while providing protection to the vulnerable across the country. National Action Plan is a well-structured and coordinated state response against terrorism, which has received unprecedented level of support and co-operation across the country. Military operations such as the Operations Zarb-e-Azab and Rad-ul-Fasaad added to the credibility of NAP in countering terrorism. Secretary General of the United Nations Mr. Antonio Guterres during his recent visit lauded Pakistan's efforts and termed it as a journey from terrorism state to a tourism state. He called for the need to recognize and appreciate this at the global level.

While this is a moment of pride for the whole nation, one should still stay objective and not turn a blind eye to the reality. The menace is not yet fully over. As is evident from the monthly security review of Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies' (PIPS), 21 terrorist attacks took place in Pakistan during the first month of 2020. These were mostly confined to the province of Balochistan and KPK. Terrorism-related casualties for any one region of the country happened in Balochistan with 19 casualties. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 13 reported attacks killed 10 people. After terrorist attacked a Sikh shrine in Southern Punjab, Prime Minister Imran Khan promised zero tolerance for extremists. Most recent attacks carried out in 2020 were perpetrated by religiously inspired militant groups including the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Hizbul Ahrar, Jamaatul Ahrar, local Taliban, and the Islamic State (IS) terrorist groups.

Major reason for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan to confront the terror attacks is that both share borders with Afghanistan and Iran. Due to the presence of porous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, infiltration of non-state-actors is easy inside Pakistan's border area provinces such as KPK and Balochistan. However, 25th constitutional amendment, which merged the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) with adjacent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, is one of preeminent initiative by government of Pakistan which resulted in better law and order situation of KP. Along with this, solidification of Pak-Afghan border

through cross-border fencing, terrorist incidents are gradually decreasing. There is a firm resolve within the security forces which would continue taking action against anti-state elements operating from within and the other side of border and prevent their infiltration.

Along with targeting terrorist elements and prevention of non-state actors to cross into the borders of Pakistan, government of Pakistan also took the initiatives of rehabilitation centres operating under the military in KP and the Peaceful Balochistan Package, which is also running with the support from security agencies. Out-come of the KP centers has been reported by Dawn news last year that 110 former militants had been de-radicalized under the army-led Sabawoon project. 'This was the seventh batch to complete the course during which the de-radicalized militants were taught Islamic teachings, basic schooling, psychological and psychiatric treatment'. They were also trained in different useful trades to enable them to become useful and peaceful citizens.

Reintegration programme Peaceful Balochistan Package has been underway in Balochistan for many years, with the aim to provide incentives to Baloch insurgents to quit violence and help them reintegrate into the society. In recent years several hundred of Baloch insurgents have surrendered their arms under the programme. The incumbent provincial government of Balochistan has also reiterated to provide complete financial and rehabilitation support to those Baloch insurgents who quit violence, abandon militancy against the state, and join the mainstream under the Peaceful Balochistan Package. Last year, a compensation distribution ceremony in that regard was held in Sui area of Dera Bugti where compensation amount was distributed among 32 former militant commanders and sub commanders.

As nature of war is changing, revision of the current counter-terrorism and counter extremism framework is required to address the minor fragilities left over that allowed terrorist to re-launch the terror attacks. Modification of the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997, proclamation of the Protection of Pakistan Act 2014, and approval of the 21st Constitutional Amendment has provided a sufficient framework for apprehension, trial, and conviction of terrorist. Consequently, as part of a vigilant counterterrorism initiative, Pakistan fulfilled fourteen points out of twenty-seven provided by FATF which has been recognized and duly appreciated by the FATF.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/03/13/current-state-of-terrorism-and-counter-terrorism-measures-of-pakistan/>



## ***RA'AD-II: Enhancing Pakistan's Deterrence Posture***

***Haris Bilal Malik***

Over the past few years, the South Asian region has witnessed profound developments and enhancements of cruise missiles. This is primarily because of India's aspirations for supersonic and hypersonic weapons. Evidence comes from how India has been carrying out an extensive cruise missile development program along with its prospective enhanced air defence shield. It has developed and operationalized advanced cruise missiles such as the short-range Nirbhay cruise missile and the most advanced recently operationalized short-range cruise missile BrahMos having land, sea and air launch versions with incredible supersonic speed. This adds to the spectrum of threat and compels Pakistan despite serious financial constraints, to follow suit while staying within its existing doctrinal posture of credible deterrence.

Pakistan's cruise missile inventory includes short-range land and sea-launched Babur, and short-range air-launched Ra'ad missiles. These missiles are aimed at providing credible deterrence against a wide spectrum of threats from India that include; supersonic cruise missiles, acquisition of advanced air defence systems and conventional superiority as well. In a recent development, Pakistan has successfully test-fired Ra'ad-II air-launched cruise missile (ALCM) on February 17, 2020, with a reported range of 600 kilometers and capable of delivering multiple types of warheads. The Ra'ad-II cruise missile which is an advanced version of the Ra'ad-I cruise missile is believed to be a 'stealth' with pinpoint accuracy. Furthermore, it is described as terrain hugging as well as a highly maneuverable missile. At present, the Ra'ad-II is attachable to Pakistan's Air Force's (PAF) Mirage-III aircraft with a provision to be integrated with the JF-17 thunder jets as well.

It is worth mentioning here that cruise missiles, unlike ballistic missiles, fly an essentially horizontal cruise path for most of the duration of their flights and can maneuver like a fighter jet through various waypoints. They are difficult to be located and provide a distinct advantage over ballistic missiles. Moreover, due to their varying altitudes during the flight, they are believed to be complex as far as their detection and interception are concerned with the provision of air defence systems. This has been evident in how Iran's cruise missiles back in September 2019 have reportedly penetrated the US Patriot surface-to-air system (PAC-2) – one of the most advanced air defence systems in the world. The PAC-2 has spectacularly failed to deter and defend against the reported cruise missiles attacks by Iran. The lapse was such that even the US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo had to justify it by admitting that some of the finest air defence systems do fail sometimes when it comes to providing defence shield against the cruise missiles.



Coming to the relevance of air defence systems vis-à-vis cruise missiles in the South Asian context, it would be significant to highlight some prevalent factors. India is investing heavily in the provision of a sophisticated air defence shield aimed at deterring Pakistan. In this regard, at present, India possesses and intends to acquire some advanced air defence systems in its missile defence inventory that would likely cover a broad range of spectrums including cruise missiles. 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 which would also cover the spectrum of cruise missiles, India had also signed an agreement with Russia for the acquisition of the S-400 anti-missile system back in October 2018, the delivery of which will start by end-2021. 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. This system once acquired, would be an addition to India's air defence inventory specifically focused on cruise missiles.

In the same vein, India's development and operationalization of advanced cruise missiles such as the Nirbhay and the BrahMos would likely destabilize the pre-existing deterrence framework in the South Asian region. Simultaneously, India's provision of Air Defence Systems would encourage India to counter Pakistan's existing range of warhead delivery systems including cruise missiles. However, the inadequacies of some of the battlefield tested advanced air defence systems such as the Patriot system vis-à-vis cruise missiles are also evident from recent examples. Moreover, given such inadequacies, India's acquisition of S-400 would not solely guarantee the non-penetrability of India's air defence shield by Pakistan's cruise missiles in the foreseeable future. In this regard, Pakistan's cruise missiles especially the Ra'ad-II as a standoff weapon with its extended range and pinpoint accuracy would likely remain a key determinant of the deterrence posture probably in years to come.

Hence at present, Pakistan is being threatened by the Indian offensive military aspirations of enhancing the cruise missiles and a non-penetrable air defence shield. Pakistan still holds a principled stance of working for peace and stability in the entire region. However, Pakistan, being a responsible nuclear weapons state and having huge economic constraints does not want to deal with India on a tit for tat basis with regards to the provision of supersonic and hypersonic cruise missiles. Pakistan's response against the backdrop of severe threats from India is aimed at assuring its security and preserving its sovereignty. In this regard, Pakistan's credible air-launched cruise missile capability i.e. Ra'ad-II within its existing doctrinal posture seems a plausible way out at least for the time being.

<https://foreignpolicynews.org/2020/03/14/raad-ii-enhancing-pakistans-deterrence-posture/>

## *Papering Over the Fissures Inherent in the Afghan Reconciliation Process*

*M Waqas Jan*

In the wake of last month's highly publicized peace agreement between the US and the Taliban, as well as the recently concluded Presidential elections, political turmoil in Afghanistan has once again taken center stage. While both these developments represent much welcomed progress of sorts in helping stabilize a fragile and war-torn country on the surface, there still however remain a whole host of underlying issues that have cast even greater uncertainty over the prospects of achieving lasting peace and stability. The kind of peace that would benefit not only the Afghan Nation, but the wider South Asian, Central Asian and Persian Gulf regions.

These issues include the finer points of the US's agreements with the Taliban particularly regarding prisoner exchanges, as well as the highly public rifts within the Afghan state apparatus that have brought serious challenges to the legitimacy of its newly re-elected President and his accompanying cabinet. The kind of legitimacy which otherwise holds the key to presenting a united and credible negotiating team to represent the Afghan government in its dealings with the Taliban. Thus, taken together, these issues present dangerous obstacles which need to be overcome if the country's nascent peace process is to stop from being derailed even before having properly begun.

For instance, the spectacle of two rival presidential inaugurations that were aired in split screen throughout Afghan news channels earlier this week represented the clear schism that exists within the country's more mainstream politics. Fueled by yet another controversial presidential election result, this tussle for power between former president Ashraf Ghani and his long-time rival Abdullah Abdullah manifests the deep-rooted differences that have existed amongst Kabul's ruling elites for almost two decades since the US toppled the Taliban. Hence, it is no surprise that both Mr. Ghani and Mr. Abdullah, despite their diverse support bases within the war-torn country, have repeatedly relied on the US as a key mediator and power broker within the Afghan political system.

These difficulties are in turn further indicative of the immense complexity associated with the many tasks assigned to the US Special Representative for Afghan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad. Not only has Mr. Khalilzad been made responsible for bringing about an equitable peace deal between the US and the Taliban from a position of relative weakness, but also to reconcile the deep seeded political differences that have permeated through the Afghan



democratic system, most of which are of the US's own making. In fact, the very advent of a democratic Afghanistan since the creation of its 2004 constitution is of the US's own making with all its so-called victories and failures.

The Afghanistan Papers that were released just a few months back have presented ample reasons for these outcomes. They have provided key insights into the unrealistic expectations and lack of appreciation on the US's part for the extremely difficult task it had set out for itself in its 'nation-building' experiment. Attributed to a clear lack of goals and strategy, the US is estimated to have spent \$133 billion just to have built up Afghanistan, with only rampant political instability and insecurity to show for it. What's worse, the US (ironically along with Russia) has had to now condemn and downplay recent statements from boisterous Taliban representatives that they would soon be restoring the Islamic government that had existed before the US invasion in 2001. Hence, nullifying whatever achievements the US had to show for in terms of bringing an inclusive democracy backed by a capably enforced rule of law.

The initial catchphrases of 'empowering', 'bringing freedom' to, and 'enabling political representation' for the Afghan people were touted globally as huge successes. Built on the back of championing women's rights and amidst promises of unfettered development and investment these presented as one of the many goals the US had achieved over the course of its campaign in Afghanistan. However, the succeeding lawlessness, rampant nepotism and corruption that has since plagued the Afghanistan has marred whatever political gains the US had to show for on the international stage over the last decade and half.

Rather, one of the very reasons why the Taliban have gained so much traction politically, and why they still enjoy a considerable support base amongst the local population, is primarily because of the rampant corruption and bureaucratic in-fighting that has since characterized the US backed Afghan government. It also stands as one of the primary reasons why the Taliban beyond its power as a militant force has still come to politically represent considerable swathes of the Afghan population. Thus, representing a reality which even Pakistan had been trying to get the US to realize ever since the US embarked on its hunt for Al-Qaeda in the Af-Pak theatre.

However, considering the haste and forced manner in which the US is going through with its current exit in Afghanistan, it seems there are still key lessons the US has once again ignored. Despite its attempts at fostering political reconciliation, empowering the Afghan military and police, as well as bringing about some semblance of modernity in what by US standards was an archaic country, the US is nowhere near achieving these ambitions for all its military and economic might. Instead what appear to be the primary factors driving Afghan reconciliation at the moment are the much-needed headlines and photo-ops required for an embattled president



to win re-election. Not to mention the mounting domestic pressure to bring US troops back home from an unending quagmire that has seen the US sink limitless amounts of blood and treasure in. A glaring truth which no optics or spin doctoring has been able to convince the American public let alone the rest of the world.

<http://southasiajournal.net/papering-over-the-fissures-inherent-in-the-afghan-reconciliation-process/>

## ***Pakistan Committed to Curbing Money Laundering and Terror Financing***

***Irfan Ali***

Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog. It has nine associate members and Asia Pacific Group is one of them. Pakistan is the member of APG because of this membership it is bound to comply with the recommendations. Pakistan was placed in the grey list for the first time in 2012 and remained there till 2015. Since June 2018, Pakistan has once again been put in the grey list. In this regard, FATF gave 27 points agenda to Pakistan for countering money laundering and terrorist financing to avoid being blacklisted. The basic theme of this 27 points agenda revolves around high level political commitment from Pakistan to work with the FATF and AGP. While working with them it has to strengthen its Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Countering Financing of Terrorism (CFT) regime and address its strategic counter-terrorist financing-deficiencies within various fields. With regard to commitment and progress over the recommendations given by FATF, the government of Pakistan, as a result of restless efforts and struggle, has been successful in fulfilling the fourteen points out of 27 point agenda.

There are ten points where FATF has shown fully satisfaction over the efforts of government of Pakistan which include; “activation of NACTA website to place proscribed persons; real time access to all and continuous update, precautions in State Bank of Pakistan regarding Know Your Customers KYC; biometric verification of accounts, dissemination of reverse feedback and intelligence reports by law enforcement agencies to SBP and Financial Monitoring Unit, risk assessment of cash smugglers particularly with special reference to terrorist financing, integration of Customs controls at all entry and exit points of land, air and sea, effective utilization of domestic agencies against terrorist financing, regulation of private banking system by the regulatory framework of SBP, investigation mechanism on risk-based approach against terror financing and Awareness campaign to all stakeholders regarding terror financing”.

Therefore, FATF in its meeting held in February 2020 has given the positive response over the measures taken by the government of Pakistan for countering terrorism and terror financing. It has praised Pakistan’s efforts and recognized seriously taken actions by Islamabad against the money laundering and terror financing throughout the country FATF conducts three plenary meetings in a year consecutively in the months of February, June and October. The first tri-annual plenary meeting of year 2020 was held from 19-21 February 2020 in Paris chaired by FATF President Xiangmin Liu of the People’s Republic of China. By looking over the progress made by Pakistan, it was decided to keep it in the grey list till June 2020. Simultaneously, the FATF



instructed the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to regularize and keep the record of three sectors namely real estate, gems and jewelry to ensure that they are not misused by any terrorist organization or individual. What could be the implications or benefits of the recommendations by FATF for Pakistan if government becomes successful in bringing the change in the rules and laws of these three sectors?

Pakistan needed 3 votes out of 39 member states of FATF to remain on the grey list and to avoid the “Black list”. In the FATF meeting held in the month of February 2020, Turkey, Malaysia and China voted in favor of Pakistan. This resulted in FATF providing more time to Pakistan to work over recommendations regarding AML and CFT. There is a strong hope within Pakistan particularly at the governmental level that it will get itself out of grey list and will try to put itself in white list. Moreover, Pakistan requires at least 12 votes out of 39 votes to be able to remove itself from the grey list and secure position into white list. These will open doors for various kinds of local and foreign investment by states, MNCs, IGOs, INGOs and business community. Moreover, Pakistan will continue to receive the funds and loans from World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) along with support in the economic, social and political sectors. Keeping these prospective benefits in mind, the present government tries to fulfill new demands given by FATF. If it fails to work efficiently, there is a probability to be put into the black list.

Unfortunately, Pakistan has been going through various internal problems which cause hurdles in the peaceful and smooth running of affairs ultimately impacting the stability and progress of state. As a matter of fact the government has been fighting to control the money laundering and terror financing within the country since long, even before the demands made from FATF. It conducted various operations to eliminate the ‘safe heavens’ of terrorists for instance Zarb-e-Azband Rad-ul-Fasad. This had been instrumental in reduction of terrorist incidents across the country. Pakistan needs to continue putting in efforts otherwise “black listing” will harm the country’s political, economic, social and business affairs. It can face multiple sanctions in which the international forums and institutes such as WB, IMF and ADB will stop their financial support to Pakistan. Along with this it can also face other restrictions such as avoidance of investment by states, big companies and corporations. In addition, any misadventure created within country could be harmful for the incumbent government, national interest and common people of country. So, it is the responsibility of the government to handle all these internal and external problems very keenly through understanding the basics and current domestic as well as global circumstances to avoid being black listed.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/03/15/pakistan-committed-to-curbing-money-laundering-and-terror-financing/>

## *Cybercrime Effecting Banking Sector/Economy of Pakistan*

*Basma Khalil*

Cyber-crime is not a conventional offence as its ramifications transcend borders. It affects a society in different ways. The term “cybercrime” denotes any sort of illegal activity that uses a computer, cell phone or any other electronic device as its primary means of commission. The computer and electronic devices serve as the agents and the facilitator of the crime. Cyber criminals take full advantage of obscurity, secrecy, and interconnectedness provided by the internet and are able to attack the foundations of our modern information society. Breaching of cyber space is an issue of utmost concern for the banks and financial institutions. The menace of data theft is growing in magnitude with huge financial impact. As custodian of highly valuable customer information, banks have always been the favorite target of the cyber-attacks.

Moreover, it is estimated that banks are more frequently targeted by the hackers than any other business organization. IT based financial solutions of the banks such as ATMs, mobile banking and internet banking are exposed to various forms of frauds including skimming and phishing etc. Affected banks may also witness decline in their share prices. Banking industry is more susceptible to the breach of cyber security due to its financial lure for the transgressors. In Pakistan, banking is increasing its user base at a brisk pace; the resulting threats are also multiplying. Financial services in Pakistan i.e. credit cards, accounts information and other, can also be acquired for theft or fabrication. During last few years Pakistan faced some serious cyber breaches in the banking sector. In 2018 it lost US \$6 million in cyber-attacks as online security measures failed to prevent breach of security in which overseas hackers stole customer’s data. Data from 19,864 debit cards belonging to customers of 22 Pakistani banks has been put on sale on the dark web, according to an analysis conducted in year 2018 by Pakistan’s Computer Emergency Response Team, PakCERT.

However Cyber breaches of January 24 and January 30, 2019 included such data in large quantities pertaining to bank Meezan Bank Ltd. Gemini Advisory; a body that provides guidance with addressing emerging cyber threats stated that the compromised records posted between January 24 and January 30, 2019 is associated with a compromise of Meezan Bank Limited’s internal systems. Cyber security company “Group-IB” on a February 22,2019 in advisory stated that money mules use the fake cards, to either withdraw money from ATMs or buy goods” that are later resold by fraudsters. Despite efforts of banks to eliminate ATM card fraud, criminals still find ways around security measures to acquire card data at the point of sale.

The impact of a single, successful cyber-attack can have far-reaching implications including financial losses, theft of intellectual property, and loss of consumer confidence and



trust. The overall monetary impact of cyber-crime on society and government is estimated to be billions of dollars a year. While, the banks in Pakistan claim that they have insurance policies, they do not seem much interested in securing their system and the public remains highly affected by such attacks. There is growing sense of distrust in the online banking. Several banking organizations fail to provide proper insurance to their customer. That is why people are more comfortable in keeping their money and reserves at home rather than banks. This is one of the major factors that add to country's severe economic decline.

Pakistan needs to develop its cyber capabilities infrastructure and should invest in the youth to build a cyber security force of young experts. Simultaneously, there is a need to focus on artificial intelligence, block chains and software robots as suggested by Chief Technology Officer Huawei (Middle East and European Union) Jorge Sebastiao in the recent international seminar on Global Strategic Threat and Response (GSTAR). Establishing a stronger cyber infrastructure will provide stronger security guarantees to the IT enabled services especially to the banking systems of Pakistan. This will in turn enhance the economic growth and security. Furthermore, the transnational nature of cyber-crime makes cyber-security a global challenge and, hence, demands collective and collaborative measures at the international level with flawless and strong legal and cyber policy framework.

In this regard, Pakistan's cyber-law provides for 'international cooperation.' It has the membership of the International Multilateral Partnership against Cyber Threats (ITUIMPACT) and participates in Asia Pacific Security Incident Response Coordination Working Group (APSIRC-WG). However, cyber-security does not appear to be a priority on the country's agenda for international dialogue and agreements. Pakistan needs to review the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Bill which will contribute mainly to increase the security of banking systems.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/03/22/cybercrime-effecting-banking-sector-economy-of-pakistan/>

## *Halt in Kashmir's Diplomacy*

*Sher Bano*

It has been seven months since India unilaterally annexed occupied Kashmir. Since then, Pakistan has made several efforts in order to peacefully resolve the long-standing Kashmir issue. Lately, criticism has been coming from not only the opposition but also from within the federal cabinet that Pakistan is not effectively pursuing the Kashmir case anymore. Dr. Maleeha Lodhi, Pakistan's former envoy to the United Nations told the Senate Foreign affairs committee that "Right now there is an inexplicable halt in our Kashmir diplomacy. People ask why?" while speaking on "Pakistan's Foreign policy Challenges and opportunities". Along with that Dr. Lodhi called for consistency and clarity in Pakistan's Kashmir's policy and insisted that Kashmir issue could lose focus of international community if urgent steps are not taken by Pakistan.

Pakistan's early diplomatic response was prodigious, which involved terminating trade with India, recalling ambassadors and approaching United Nations and other international human rights organizations. After a period of 50 years, UNSC met to discuss the Kashmir issue on request of Pakistan which was a clear diplomatic victory. Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan and his address at United Nations General Assembly was also a commendable effort to raise this issue and to gain attention of international community. Pakistan's efforts to resolve Kashmir issue seems to have mellowed down, as pointed out by Dr. Lodhi. According to her Pakistan needs consistency in its diplomatic campaign on Kashmir and needs to keep pushing boundaries at international level otherwise world might forget about the Indian atrocities in IOK.

The question arises why the Kashmir issue has lost momentum in the foreign policy of Pakistan? First reason can be the gap between policy and practice. Despite having a proactive approach towards the internationalization of the Kashmir dispute, the government of Pakistan has been unsuccessful in calling a result oriented meeting of UNSC to resolve the situation in IOK. All the members of the UN have the right to call the meeting of the Security Council and an emergency meeting of the General assembly if the issue is a serious threat to international peace and security. The closed door meeting of Security Council that took place on January 15<sup>th</sup> on the request of Pakistan and China also failed to put any pressure on the Indian government to end its brutalities in Kashmir.

Pakistan also has been unsuccessful in organizing a ministerial meeting of the Organization of Islamic cooperation. There was need for emergency session to be held to discuss the Kashmir issue instead the OIC called the meeting in April. Apart from that Pakistan should have participated in the Kuala Lumpur summit because it was a platform where Kashmir issue



could have been highlighted as Turkey, Iran and Malaysia had already shown their support for the Kashmir cause. But Pakistan withdrew from participating in the summit at the eleventh hour.

Hence Pakistan needs to take urgent steps in order to resolve the Kashmir dispute. The compulsion for the international community and Security Council to intervene in the dispute and promote solution depends upon Pakistan's persistence in propagating the Kashmir cause in the face of Indian coercion and threats. Pakistan needs to take every step-in order to make the international community intervene and resolve the Kashmir dispute.

Moreover, Pakistan needs to strengthen its economy and bring political stability in order to take firm stance against India. Pakistan should convey to India in clear terms that if the genocide happens in Kashmir, Pakistan will go to any length to protect those facing the threat of ethnic cleansing. Pakistan must expose the ugly face of India and its plan of carrying out ethnic cleansing in IOK by calling a special session of UN Human rights council in Geneva. The world will only intervene if the genocide or ethnic cleansing occurs in Kashmir or there is a real threat of war between India and Pakistan.

Role of major powers is also important especially the five permanent members of the UNSC. Geopolitics will play a very important role in their positions. China however had already shown its support for Pakistan. Even though China's support is important, Pakistan also needs to gain US backing to secure its Kashmir strategy. In order to get US support Pakistan can leverage its facilitation of US-Afghan peace deal or US-Afghan negotiations. UK also might be sympathetic on the Human rights issue; hence its support depends upon how strongly Pakistan puts forward the case of Kashmir in the UN. Lastly France and Russia can be persuaded by taking stronger diplomatic measures.

Hence in order to avoid Kashmir from becoming a forgotten case Pakistan needs to bring consistency and clarity in its diplomatic campaign on Kashmir. Which includes the continuous effort to internationalize the Kashmir issue to impose the international pressure, strengthening its economy and bringing political stability. The world needs to know that if India doesn't stop atrocities in IOK, it might provoke another war between India and Pakistan. And if the war happens it will bring catastrophe not only to South Asia but to the whole world.

<https://foreignpolicynews.org/2020/03/22/halt-in-kashmirs-diplomacy/>

## *Impunity in the Time of Corona(virus)*

*M Waqas Jan*

As day to day life changes dramatically around the world as a result of the novel Coronavirus, there still lies this uneasy sense of continuity to the way International Relations are playing out within an ongoing global pandemic. Be it the latest oil price war between Russia and Saudi Arabia, China and the US blaming each other for the advent of the Coronavirus, or the latest round of US sanctions against Iran; it seems that despite a worldwide emergency which almost begs for a more liberalist approach to foreign policy, it is instead the prevalence of a dangerous realpolitik that has continued to define the international system.

This is evident in how as of writing, the COVID-19 virus has spread to over 250,000 people spanning 166 countries. So far it has led to more than 10,000 deaths with the majority of these occurring in some of the world's most politically and economically developed countries such as China, Italy and Spain. Countries with sprawling and well-funded public health sectors as well as a considerable surplus of key resources and scalable infrastructure that should on paper help easily tackle any such public health emergencies. Not to mention the fact that all three of these countries are being run by stable governments built on a strong sense of political consensus. The kind of political stability which is further manifest in their foreign policy dealings as well as their overall standing amongst the comity of Nations.

Yet, the fact that all three of the above-mentioned countries account for 75% of all COVID-19 related fatalities, presents a harrowing insight into the frailties of the prevailing global politico economic system. A system which having institutionalized the glaring differences between the global haves and have-nots is being challenged by an international pandemic -which in turn by transcending borders, nationalisms and socio-cultural and racial fault lines has only just begun to wreak havoc across the world. It has not only exposed a general lack of preparedness and cooperation on part of these developed countries, but also stands as a precursor to how its effects on lesser equipped and already threatened countries is likely to be even worse. These include countries such as war-torn Afghanistan and Yemen, a heavily sanctioned Iran, or any of the fragile economies of sub-Saharan Africa where even just identifying and recording the impact of the novel Coronavirus presents a herculean task in itself, let alone combating it.

Hence, with more than a month having passed since the virus started to dominate global headlines, there has been a complete lack of empathy to the plight of some of the world's most vulnerable countries and communities. Instead what has been witnessed is every country turning inward to protect its own interests and people while remaining firmly bound to the cycles of power and greed. Be it for instance, the now infamous fights over toilet paper at the community



level, or allegations of President Trump attempting to secure an exclusive vaccine from German Researchers at the international level, this prevalence of self-interest at both the individual community and international state levels represents one of the most dangerous and disheartening realities of our world today.

This reality was in itself best described about a year back by former UK Foreign Secretary, David Miliband as the 'Age of Impunity.' Drawing on his work as the President and CEO of the International Rescue Committee, Mr. Miliband has identified the overall political culture that has characterized this last decade and a half as standing in stark contrast to the preceding era of accountability and international cooperation. In his now infamous lecture for the Fulbright Commission, the former foreign secretary had explained how whereas the Post-Cold War era had seen 'growing civilian protection internationally and a surge in accountable government nationally', it was the reverse which was now taking place the world over. The rise in political demagoguery along with the prevalence of greater autocracy and authoritarianism has directly coincided with the impunity with which international norms have been cast aside. These include norms which once emphasized an almost sacred adherence to greater international cooperation on the basis of international law and universal human rights. Norms which also once formed the very basis for advocating a more liberalist approach to foreign policy whilst strengthening key international organizations such as the UN, WHO and WTO, etc.

This Age of Impunity that we now live in however has seen the revitalization and consolidation of a more dictatorial approach to national leadership, which is further expressed in the confrontational and more aggressive approach to foreign policy that has now been adopted by most world leaders. This approach which most scholars and observers would see couched amidst a ruthless realism of sorts has been evident throughout President Trump's America First policy, a post-Brexit UK, and the revitalization and consolidation of dictatorial style politics across India, China, Russia, Turkey, Brazil and Saudi Arabia. All of whom have aimed to redraw the prevailing international system more on the basis of self-interest rather than for the collective interests of an increasingly interconnected and inter-dependent global village.

If the Coronavirus for all the fear and havoc it has wreaked across the world has done one good; it's shown how the response of most countries in times of a global crisis has laid bare the failings and inadequacies of our current international order. It has shown that rather than having a worldwide pandemic on such an unprecedented scale re-ignite the kind of cross-border cooperation and faith in international organizations, that had emerged in the halcyon days of the Post-War era, the world as a whole remains unchanged in its turn towards a ruthless Machiavellianism.

With closed borders, collapsing markets and unfettered capitalism reigning supreme over the need for aid, empathy and a collective resolve to help address this global threat, there is thus

a definite need for greater introspection and self-reflection on a collective level. The kind of introspection that critically assesses whether the complex and far-reaching politico-economic systems that we endorse and have set up are conducive to the challenges humanity as a whole faces in this day and age. Unless there is a serious conversation on whether the ideals of peace, cooperation and stability which so many of us have fought to learn, abide by and pass on to future generations hold any relevance to our world today, the world as a whole is likely to descend into further chaos as those in power continue to lead and act with such unchecked self-interest.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/03/22/impunity-in-the-time-of-coronavirus/>



## *U.S. Sale of IADWS to India at the Cost of Regional Peace*

*Hananah Zarrar*

It is undeniable that South Asia cannot afford another weaponry race among nations in the wake of recent frictional events between India and Pakistan under continued aggression of present Indian regime. After S-400 deal, India is moving towards the acquisition of multi-layered missile defence system. Pakistan's Foreign Office has rightly expressed concerns over United States' recent approval of Integrated Air Defence Weapon System IADWS sale to India. Surely such a deal would fuel the offensive posturing of India and is likely to disturb the strategic balance in South Asia, precisely putting Pakistan into another security dilemma. Additionally, the regional dynamics do not allow any offensive state to continue with acquisition of latest weaponry and bringing an asymmetry to already volatile region.

The proposed Integrated Air Defence Weapon System IADWS with an estimated cost of US \$1.87 billion, is currently deployed around the Washington D.C. It comprises of launchers, targeting and guidance systems, advanced medium-range air-to-air missile (AMRAAM) and Stinger missiles (shoulder-fired Man-Portable Air Defense System, which is relatively effective, lightweight, reusable launcher), 3D Sentinel radars, fire-distribution centers and command-and-control units. IADWS is the advanced form of National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System (NASAMS-II).

According to Delhi's Air Defence Plan, the national capital is set to get a multi layered missile defence system similar to that of Washington. The NASAMS will form the innermost layer of the protection of Delhi, as per the proposed overall air defence plan of the national capital. The layer over the NASAMS will be formed by indigenous Aakash defence missile system with a 25-km range. The Russian S-400 systems, scheduled for delivery in the October 2020-April 2023 timeframe, will provide the second layer of protection. These are the highly automated and mobile S-400 systems, which will have missiles with interception ranges of 120, 200, 250 and 380 kms, backed by their associated battle-management system. It is followed by Barak-8 medium range surface-to-air missile systems, jointly developed by Israeli Aerospace Industries and Defence Research Development Organization (DRDO).The indigenous two-tier ballistic missile defence (BMD), comprising of advance air defence (AAD) and Prithvi air defence (PAD) interceptor missiles, system being developed by DRDO will be the outermost layer of Delhi's missile shield.

Sale of such sophisticated weapon system to India carries serious implications for Pakistan and will bring repercussions for the whole region. Beside cross border conventional and sub-conventional attacks lately, Indian political and military leadership has repeatedly threatened

Pakistan with an intent to be more aggressive in the strategic and cyber domains. Acquisition of IADWS signals the future intensity of airspace violation by India as was done in the recent past (Balakot airstrikes). Pakistan's foreign office also expressed its concern and warned the international community of possible false flag operation by India to divert attention from its real-time state-sponsored terrorism.

Rather than ensuring peace and stability, the air defence weapon system sale to India shows US' unwillingness to keep the regional equilibrium intact. In complete disregard to this concern, both the US and India obstinately proclaim that the latter one intends using such defense articles and services to modernize its armed forces, and to expand its existing air defense architecture to counter threats posed by air attack. Nonetheless, it will strengthen the US-India strategic partnership. In other words, despite Indian government's blatant aggression and adventurism, the US stands unconvinced of India's potential to drag the region into a confrontational future. Furthermore, the major powers' continued defense support to India indicates deliberate neglect of regional peace. With enhanced air defense capability, firstly India puts Pakistan under pressure of acquiring equitable technology. Secondly, with such advancement India is likely to become more belligerent towards its rival states which would increase the chances of warfighting that could eventually cross the threshold.

To prevent further destabilization of the region, Pakistan proposed a discussion on a strategic restraint regime for South Asia which includes the proposal to avoid the induction of weapons contributing towards lowering of nuclear threshold. With normalizing strategy and prompt resolve, Pakistan has responsibly prevented an escalation in the region despite Indian provocations. It is now international community's responsibility to carry out an in-depth analysis of regional dynamics and trace frictional events between the two nuclear weapon states. Furthermore, major powers with their rational and responsible approach must ensure regional stability via unbiased and stabilizing initiatives which would encourage both parties to avoid escalation.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/03/25/u-s-sale-of-iadws-to-india-at-the-cost-of-regional-peace/>



# *Dynamics of Escalation in South Asia and Pakistan's Nuclear Threshold*

*Haris Bilal Malik*

The South Asian region has always been regarded vulnerable to military escalation based on its ever-changing complex security dynamics and volatile relations between India and Pakistan. Since the year 2019, the prevalent security environment of the South Asian region has once again become a dominant regional and global concern. The world witnessed India's continued brutalities in Kashmir and a prospective fear of a nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan against the backdrop of the Balakot crisis. Moreover, in August 2019 India changed the special constitutional status of the Kashmir region by revoking Article 370 and 35A thus further adding to the volatility of the region. Despite the international criticism, India imposed a lockdown in the disputed region which is still reportedly continuing. This demonstrates India's motives for dominating the escalation in the region with its provocative strategies. All these factors would likely provoke Pakistan revisiting its nuclear threshold level vis-à-vis India's aggressive and provocative policies to dominate the region.

Based on India's provocative strategies, there remains a continuous fear of escalation in the South Asian region which is adversely impacting regional security, stability, and strategic equilibrium. In recent years, India has continuously enhanced its counter-force offensive posture vis-à-vis Pakistan with the notion of 'Surgical Strikes' and its proactive war doctrines which include the 2017 Joint Doctrine of the Indian Armed Forces (JDIAF) and the 2018 Land Warfare Doctrine (LWD). All of them are based on proactive strategies and indirect threats of preemptive strikes against Pakistan aimed at challenging Pakistan's nuclear threshold.

Furthermore, the recent technological advancements which form the very basis of India's military expansion include its supersonic and hypersonic missile development programs, provision of an enhanced air defence shield, space capabilities for intelligence, reconnaissance, and surveillance (ISR), and its nuclear-capable submarines fleet. India's anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons test back in March 2019 is also indicative of this continuing trend. These technological advancements are clear indicators that India's policies seem to deliberately dominate the escalation in South Asia and ultimately destabilize the deterrence equilibrium in the region.

India's approach to challenging Pakistan's nuclear threshold is also evident in the February 2019 short-lived military engagement between India and Pakistan. India, under its notion of limited war and proactive strategy, threatened Pakistan with a 'preemptive splendid first strike' and had reportedly entered Pakistan's air space with fighter jets; this led to a dangerous escalation of hostilities at the political and military levels between both countries. The

whole episode has also questioned the existence of Pakistan's nuclear deterrence and, ever since there has been an ongoing debate at the domestic and international levels about nuclear deterrence and its applicability to such a critical situation. India's sub-conventional aggression was appropriately met by Pakistan at the same level the very next day. Still, Pakistan's nuclear threshold remained relevant during the whole episode because of the widely regarded perception that if both countries escalate further, the situation might turn into an all-out nuclear war.

Pakistan's threat perception has, over the years, become even more inclined towards India primarily based on its conventional asymmetry vis-à-vis India. Furthermore, India's quests for limited conventional or sub-conventional aggression (which it expects would remain below Pakistan's nuclear threshold) would likely provoke Pakistan to further intensify its nuclear threshold. This would further strengthen Pakistan's resort to neutralize the Indian challenge of breach of sovereignty in the form of low-intensity conflict in a much better position. In the same vein, Pakistan's nuclear deterrence approach which over the years has evolved from 'minimum credible deterrence' to 'full spectrum deterrence' would likely remain a key component of the overall security apparatus. This posture provides deterrence against all forms of aggression from India with the combination of conventional forces and nuclear capabilities.

It is worth mentioning here that, Pakistan's timely and calculated responses have all played a significant role in the preservation of minimum credible deterrence and the assurance of full-spectrum deterrence at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. The responses such as the development of intermediate-range ballistic missiles (Shaheen III), short-range ballistic missiles (Nasr), multiple independently reentry targetable vehicle (MIRV-Ababeel), air and sea-launched cruise missile (Ra'ad and Babur) and the speculated development of a naval second-strike capability all have played their role. Moreover, Pakistan's induction of the tactical nuclear-capable 'Nasr' missile is also perceived as battlefield nuclear weapons in response to India's aggressive and proactive strategies. It has further enhanced the deterrent value of Pakistan's nuclear threshold and would likely serve as a 'weapon of deterrence', which aims to deny space for conventional or sub-conventional aggression and avoid any escalation-domination from India.

Hence, at present, Pakistan has been threatened by India's conventional and unconventional military modernization and its proactive strategies, which India hopes would likely stay below Pakistan's nuclear threshold. At the same time, Pakistan has been in an asymmetric equation of conventional forces vis-à-vis India, an equation that has led the former to preserve its security with the assurance of credible nuclear deterrence. However, time and again India has tested Pakistan's nuclear threshold notably at the sub-conventional level as evident from the recent examples. Pakistan, which has been relying on its nuclear program to overcome both conventional and unconventional threats from India, needs to further enhance



its deterrence posture at the sub-conventional level as well. This would likely remain a plausible determinant of the nuclear threshold in the years to come.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/25032020-dynamics-of-escalation-in-south-asia-and-pakistans-nuclear-threshold-oped/>

## ***SAARC Video Conference: Reclaiming the Humanness***

***Shamsa Nawaz***

The opportunity provided by crisis in the backdrop of worldwide emergency due to lethal Corona pandemic (Covid 19) has re-set the button to once again appreciate the values of human connectivity and to co-exist on March 15, 2020 in South Asia as well. A call by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi in a bid to foster collective thinking amongst the SAARC countries after a hiatus of four years, was a welcome step responded enthusiastically by all the member states. Reclaiming the space essential for a multilateral or even a bilateral dialogue, particularly between Pakistan and India, scuttled by the protracted and historically generated acrimony, this nature's intervention has a lesson to learn from, as humans. It is a lesson needed much more than ever, against merciless encroachment allowed to the politics of might through arms race, nuclear supremacy and economic concentration. Already, the arrogance of nationhood has significantly destroyed the peace of the stressed habitat belonging to the South Asian region occupied by 3% of the world's landmass and 21% of world's population. The SAARC countries have even agreed to set up COVID-19 fund with India contributing an initial corpus of \$10 million. All the leaders shared country situations and experiences in the aftermath of the outbreak of COVID-19, as well as measures taken by them to control the spread of the virus. They also recognized the need to analyze and address the long-term economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region and continue with the consultation process through meetings at the ministerial and experts' level; identifying the Nodal Experts to take further action on the proposals discussed during the Conference; and formulating a comprehensive regional strategy against COVID-19 through the SAARC process and other appropriate steps.

South Asia has managed to resist the COVID-19 assault so far, given the vast region it covers but the unpredictability continues to loom. How long will this sense of cooperation and coordination prevail and help the nations of the region transition the defunct SAARC? It is direly essential to improve the immunity required to counter unprecedented challenges? How sustainable will these measures be in the absence of building confidence ruined so brutally over the years?

The Advisor to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Dr. Zafar Mirza, in his address to the video conference of South Asian Association Regional Cooperation (SAARC), very pertinently pinpointed the member states; India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, and urged them to gear up its resources as a region to fight against the deadly virus collectively. However, while highlighting the core human issue, realizing the freedom of Kashmiris living in Indian Occupied Kashmir forcefully quarantined for more than 200 days is could be the first step of not only towards the humanness, but also would encourage the



importance of unanimity. India itself was the first one to have taken the Kashmir issue to the world's international forum, UN, way back in 1958 while respecting the collective solution of the outstanding issues. The issue has taken an ugly curve due to India's non-compliance with the UN decision of holding plebiscite. Instead Kashmiris are suffering from worst denial of human rights by using the brutal mechanism of state terrorism. They are being constitutionally ripped off their demand for self-determination. More so, the exponential rise in communal program seen in the recent past has further exasperated the fear of non-secular behavior. The contradiction in the primary role itself along with the fancied or may be masqueraded in a perpetual hypocritical policy already fractures the collective mechanism proposed by India itself. India needs to do more to initiate a human gesture.

Already, founded in 1985, the cooperative outcomes denied by the pain of non-socialisation of the member states particularly after the Uri attack, mainly initiated by India during the 19<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit, which was to be held in Islamabad in November 2016; undermined the vitality of regional integration. In March 2018, during his visit to Kathmandu, Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi once again sought the help of Nepal, the chair of SAARC, to revive the organisation by convening the pending Summit in Islamabad. Pakistan has also solicited the support of Sri Lanka. Aimed at achieving peace, freedom, social justice, and economic prosperity by promoting a shared understanding, good neighbourly relations, and meaningful cooperation, improving the quality of life in the member countries by fostering self-reliance, promoting mutual assistance, and strengthening the relations has been a baseline objective. However, the mismatch between SAARC's ambitions and achievements has been unfortunately profound. Unlike the other regional forums like European Union (EU), The South East Asian Association of ASEAN etc., no tangible economic or political benefits have been realised by SAARC so far. It is mostly termed as a case of 'retarded regionalism'. Regrettably, the regional behavior of India has also not been very encouraging, since no initiatives have been portrayed by India to transcend the parochial politics with Pakistan as a co-member of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) unlike the other smaller states of the organization. In fact, the behavior had been on the contrary with continuing strategic offense. The resonance of surgical strikes, the pronounced offensive nuclear doctrines, the politics of diplomatic and economic isolation desired for Pakistan, all add more weight to the disrespect of peaceful co-existence rather than the cooperative and coordinated step. The re-buttoning of SAARC is a welcome opportunity and holds silver line, yet the journey holds massive ifs and buts for its structure to sway the temporariness in the call. The mechanism of this Regional Association has to be strengthened with more permanent sincerity.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/03/26/saarc-video-conference-reclaiming-the-humanness/>

## *Covid-19 and Threat of Bio-War*

*Irfan Ali*

“In 1879, General William Sherman of the American Civil War Union Army uttered the immortal words, “War is hell.” However true that may be, one thing is clear: war is good for business, and weapons are amongst the most lucrative products known to man”

World has been spending huge amount of money over new and innovative technologies with regard to hard power which emphasizes over military might and destructive weapons since long. Those states which are spending more money on acquiring new technology in weapons and arms remain much influential and powerful nations of the world. For instance, United States of America remains at the top of the list of the countries which spend lot of money for their defense and arms technology. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the world military expenditure rose to US \$1822 billion in 2018 which shows an increase of 2.6 percent as compared to previous year. In the year 2018, the top five countries which spent huge amount of money on military expenditure are the United States, China, Saudi Arabia, India and France. In 2019, global defence spending rose by 4.0 percent as compared to year 2018. Along with this the international arms transfer has increased by 5.5 percent in five years from 2015 to 2019 as compared to years 2010 to 2014. In which the United States of America remains at the top and other nations such as Russia, France, Germany and China respectively come after it.

The changing dynamics of world also effect the moods of war, transitioning from traditional to other forms such as Bio-War, Hybrid war, and Cyber war etc. As far as the Bio-War is concerned, it could be more destructive than any other form of wars. The possibility of current pandemic COVID-19 caused by Coronavirus, being a bio-weapon cannot be ruled out. The world scientists and virologists are closely monitoring its causes and spread however, so far have largely remained unsuccessful. Nonetheless, in addition to causing wide scale deaths across continents, this has spread acute fear across the nations of the world for now, it is highly embroiled in various conspiracy theories. These term Coronavirus as a bio-weapon created either by China or the US. In 1981, Dean Koontz an American fiction author in his work titled “The Eyes of Darkness” described a virus which would emerge from a Chinese city of Wuhan and spread throughout the world. He further identified it as the most important and dangerous biological weapon known as the Wuhan-400 by the Chinese.

Furthermore, Dany Shoham, a former Israeli military intelligence officer, who has studied Chinese biological warfare said the Wuhan Virology Institute is linked to Beijing’s covert bio-weapon program. Explaining to Washington Time he stated that “certain laboratories in the institute have probably been engaged, in terms of research and development, in Chinese



biological weapons at collaterally yet not as principal facility of the Chinese BW alignment”. He further explained that “the Wuhan Virology Institute is under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, but certain laboratories within it have linkages with the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) or BW-related elements within the Chinese defense establishment”. Another theory regarding this was published in CBC News that “Dr. Xiangguo, her husband Keding Cheng and an unknown number of her students from China were removed from Canada’s only level-4 Infectious Disease Facility laboratory. Therefore, it is said that two Chinese spies stole this particular virus and brought it to Wuhan lab that’s how this Coronavirus outbreak took place. Third theory originally floated by a YouTuber and conspiracy theorist Jordan Sather which entertains that the patent for Coronavirus was applied in 2015 and granted in 2018 to Pirbright Institute UK.

As far as the Chinese point of view regarding Coronavirus outbreak is concerned, the Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian’s tweets claim that the US military brought Coronavirus to Wuhan. In addition, “Zhao urged his more than 287,000 followers in two tweets to widely share an allegation from a Canada-based conspiracy website that the coronavirus originated in United States rather than the Wuhan. The allegation was apparently linked to the US Army’s participation in the international Military World Games held in Wuhan in October, 2019”. However, there is no substantial proof or credibility behind these conspiracy theories about Coronavirus’ outbreak but it has wrapped the whole world in fear because of its fast spread all over the world. This clearly shows that the threat of covert Biological Warfare among the nations is real which has affected the whole financial, political, social and economic structure of the world.

There are various writers and scholar who have informed the world about the new forms of war and threats such as Bill Gates, during its TedTalks, explained that the disaster we worried about most was a nuclear war. “Today the greatest risk of global catastrophe is not nuclear weapons instead it is Bio-War or Bio-Terrorism in the form of virus. If anything kills over 10 million people in the next few decades, it’s most likely to be a highly infectious virus rather than a war, not missiles, but microbes. We have invested a huge amount in nuclear deterrents and invested little in a system to stop epidemic”. Moreover, the current pandemic has exposed how ill prepared the nations are to deal with a virus. Therefore, it is high time that robust measures and parallel efforts are invested in finding defence, cure and vaccines against new and emerging threats in the form of Coronavirus. In this regard, nations have to be rational when it comes to policy making. Therefore, world needs to prepare a group of epidemiologists, medical team, volunteers, treatment approaches, health workers, good response system, make drugs and vaccines fit for that pathogen, strong global health system, to set up advanced research and development and to allocate a moderate budget.

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