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SVI Foresight

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

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Editor's Note

The month of May holds special significance for South Asian region owing to the overt nuclearization it underwent 22 years ago. Pakistan was able to establish itself as a de facto nuclear power by conducting five simultaneous underground nuclear tests on 28th May and one on 30th May 1998. India's nuclear tests had made it inevitable for Pakistan to respond and maintain the much-needed strategic balance. The day is celebrated as "Youm-e-Takbeer" every year throughout the country "as an earnest reminder of Pakistan's desire for peace as well as the nation's unswerving resolve to defend its territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence." This issue of *SVI-Foresight* specifically offers its readers a well-rounded insight into the circumstances which compelled Pakistan to go nuclear, where the region stands today, how the nuclear doctrines of Pakistan and India have evolved over a period, and the current security situation in South Asia. The authors have also highlighted India's aggressive hegemonic tendencies in their analyses of current Sino-Indian standoff at Ladakh and India's adventurism in Lipulekh Pass. This will help readers understand India's obsession with domination within and beyond region. Readers will further find a comprehensive evaluation of India's massive military buildup and continued suppression of people of Kashmir amid the pandemic. One of the articles looks into the renewed global focus on biosecurity. It is hoped that readers will find a good blend of articles focusing both on traditional as well as much needed non-traditional security debate. The SVI Foresight team invites and highly encourages the contributions from the security and strategic community in form of opinion based short commentaries on contemporary political, security and strategic issues. Any suggestions for further improvements are welcome at our [contact address](#). Please see [here](#) the copy of SVI Foresight electronic journal. You can find us on [Face book](#) and can also access the SVI [website](#).

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Pakistan's Befitting Response to India's Offensive Naval Buildup

Haris Bilal Malik

Over the last few years, India has embarked on an extensive and all-encompassing naval modernization program. This has been carried out primarily because of India's aspiration for becoming a 'blue water' navy aimed at dominating the Indian Ocean and beyond. In this regard, India has expanded both its indigenously developed weaponry and most recently signed short and long-term hi-tech defence deals with the US to consolidate its naval buildup. By doing so, India has been able to enhance its strategic relationship with the US while acquiring advanced and sophisticated naval hardware. Since India has been recognized as the 'major defence partner' by the US, these deals carry a significant weightage for both its diplomatic and strategic ties with the US. Based on this, India's offensive naval buildup would lead to significant long-term implications for the regional security and stability of South Asia.

In modernizing its navy, India's major focus seems to be enhancing its deterrent capabilities against Pakistan. This has been done with the acquisition of aircraft carriers, nuclear and conventional submarines, sea-launched cruise and ballistic missiles, destroyers, and attack and reconnaissance planes. At present, India possesses and intends to acquire a broad range of advanced weapons in its naval inventory that includes; advanced anti-ship missiles, torpedoes, and anti-surface and anti-submarine aircrafts. Furthermore, during President Trump's first-ever official visit to India in February 2020, a deal worth \$ 3 billion was finalized. The deal along with the provision of six AH-64E Apache attack helicopters for the Indian Army also includes 24 MH-60R Seahawk helicopters for the Indian Navy aimed at enhancing its anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare capabilities. Such acquisitions by India would likely further enhance its future capabilities vis-à-vis Pakistan.

It is worth mentioning here that the capabilities of both the AH-64E and MH-60R would be augmented by the Communications, Compatibility, and Security Agreement (COMCASA), which formalized the integration of secure, bilateral communication networks between the US and India back in 2018. These helicopters would be the first post-COMCASA hardware available to the Indian military and especially to its navy. Once acquired, upon delivery, the helicopters could come fully integrated with bilaterally secure networks and communications. This would increase Indian naval capabilities and dramatically enhance US-India military interoperability. In the same vein, this would likely help incorporate India into the larger sphere of cooperation with other western militaries that use similar equipment and software acquired from the US.

In another significant development, on April 15, 2020, on India's request, the US government has notified the sale of naval specific weapons worth \$ 155 million. According to

this, the US would provide 10 AGM-84L Harpoon Block II air-launched missiles and 16 MK 54 lightweight torpedoes to India. The advanced Harpoon missile system would be integrated into the P-8I anti-submarine warfare aircraft aimed at conducting anti-surface warfare missions. Moreover, the MK 54 lightweight torpedo would provide India the capability to conduct anti-submarine warfare missions. India's acquisition of advanced naval weapons systems such as these would thus likely destabilize the pre-existing deterrence framework in South Asia. It would embolden India to consider countering Pakistan's existing range of naval capabilities such as its anti-ship missiles, sea-launched cruise missiles, and reconnaissance planes with greater impunity.

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 anti-ship and anti-submarine capabilities. In order to restore stability and address this spectrum of threat, Pakistan has two choices; first, in the long term, to purchase similar, although expensive weapons systems from the international market such as from Russia and/or China. This obviously is a tall prospect, which already seems difficult given the country's economic difficulties. Second, to counter India's advanced naval weapons while staying within its existing operational capabilities. It seems that the induction of an increased number of anti-ship and anti-submarine platforms is a more plausible and immediate solution.

In this regard, on April 25, 2020, Pakistan demonstrated its naval preparedness with a series of anti-ship missiles tests in the North Arabian Sea. The successful firing of the anti-ship missiles would likely boost up Pakistan Navy's operational capabilities and readiness. Furthermore, it was reported that a fast attack aircraft of the Pakistan Navy fired the missiles from the sea to surface level while few missiles were also fired from an underwater conventional submarine towards the ground. Pakistan's rationale for exercising this milestone is widely believed to be inclined towards neutralizing a broad range of the expected outcomes of India's naval modernization drive. This is further evident in the statement of the Naval Chief Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi who acknowledged the navy's satisfactory operational preparedness. He also asserted that Pakistan is fully capable to give a befitting response to India's naval aggression, hence further reinforcing deterrence based on Pakistan's appropriate naval resort.

Hence at present, India intends to project itself as a technologically advanced country that is capable enough to establish 'strategic deterrence' in South Asia based on the deployment of advanced naval weapons systems. The acquisition of advanced missiles and torpedoes, along with technical assistance and logistic support from the US is quite alarming at the time when the world is concerned to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. This would further destabilize the already volatile South Asian region. Pakistan, which still holds a principled stance on instituting lost peace and stability in the region, is being overtly threatened by this Indian offensive naval

buildup. In this regard, the induction and perhaps even testing of a medium to short-range anti-ship and anti-submarine missile seems to be the only way out, at least for the time being.

<https://foreignpolicynews.org/2020/05/09/pakistans-befitting-response-to-indias-offensive-naval-buildup>

Kashmir Lockdown Continues Amid Pandemic

Sher Bano

On 5th August 2019 India revoked the special status of Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK). Since then the IOK has been under strict inhuman security lockdown. It has been more than eight months since Indian forces are deployed in the valley to tighten the curfew. There has been complete media and information blackout including no access to internet and cellular networks. Even the widespread international condemnation and a severe humanitarian crisis like COVID-19 could not compel the Indian government to end its inhumane siege or remove the internet ban in Kashmir. The outbreak of pandemic like COVID-19 has further intensified the already chaotic situation in Kashmir and has unleashed a new wave of terror in the valley. Nonetheless the pre-COVID 19 situation wasn't any less worrisome.

From the continuous security lockdowns, complete media blackouts to Pandemic quarantine, Kashmir is about to become a boiling pot that can explode any time. Current pandemic has urged the world to observe social distancing, quarantine and isolation. Hence, switching to online channels of communication has become a new normal as a precautionary measure. However, in the absence of good internet connectivity, the Kashmir valley faces various challenges like low downloading speed of internet which makes it difficult for the doctors to keep up with the guidelines and provide advice to the locals seeking online guidance. Apart from that there is a lack of enough information regarding basic healthcare protocols and notices to general public. COVID-19 has been declared the public health emergency in the world, where social distancing is a new phenomenon. However, for the people of IOK this new normal is an old normal with strict curfew and heavy Indian military presence for the last 8 months. According to many international analysts, Kashmir is the most ill-prepared nation to cope with the COVID-19 patients. It has been declared a 'hotspot' for COVID-19 in India. Because of the strict security lockdown there are limited number of medical equipment and testing kits which are not sufficient as per number of population. The hospitals are ill-equipped and understaffed to fight the outbreak.

With the cases of COVID-19 increasing in the valley fear of human catastrophe loom large over the closed valley with minimum or no contact with the outside world. Even at this critical juncture Kashmir finds itself consigned to the struggle for the fundamental right to information. Indian authorities have made the current pandemic a law and order situation to further criminalize the existence of already vulnerable people. The brutality with which the freedom of mobility has been curbed shows the government's reluctance to resolve the crisis with dialogue and coordination. Instead this has been used as an opportunity to spread terror in

the valley. The authority's decision to continue the blackout of internet which already works at 2G speaks volumes about the criminal negligence by the Indian state.

Currently on one side Kashmir is battling with its old age traditional conflict and suffering from health crisis on the other. India by not giving the basic health facilities and preventive measures to cope with COVID-19 is using this pandemic as a tool of genocide of Kashmiris according to one of the criteria of UN Convention on Punishment and Prevention of the Crime of Genocide 1948. Indian Authorities are trying to bring major demographic changes in Kashmir by providing insufficient medical facilities and by introducing new domicile policy to provide permanent residence to non-Kashmiris. India aims to make Kashmir a completely "Hinduized" valley by diminishing the Muslim majorities of Jammu & Kashmir through its genocidal policies under both security and human security lockdowns since August 2019.

Holding innocent people as political prisoners during the outbreak of a pandemic is true violation of human rights being committed by the Indian authorities. The Indian strategy of completely wiping out the Muslim population from Kashmir seems to become successful in near future if Kashmir is kept under the lockdown. Past eight months have been a living hell for the Kashmiris. COVID-19 is not even taken as a major threat in the Indian occupied Kashmir where genocide takes place every day. Forced quarantine, lack of medical facilities and social distancing was already part of their routine life. If not the pandemic, the pellet guns and shelling will surely kill the Kashmiris.

Pakistan has been urging the international community to intervene as Kashmiris are being treated inhumanly even during the global health crisis. The international community must pressurize India to lift the internet restrictions so that people in the valley can have full access to the health and safety related information. It's high time that Kashmir should be considered a global crisis where guns and diseases are wiping out the Muslim population of the Kashmir. Activism, campaigning and diplomatic pressure must be exerted by the UN and the international community on India to stop its atrocities in the Kashmir and move toward peaceful and sustainable solution.

<http://southasiajournal.net/kashmir-lockdown-continues-amid-pandemic/>

Emerging Technologies: Changing Nature of Irregular Warfare

Basma Khalil

This era of most cutting-edge innovations and inventions in science and technology (S&T), has the potential to revolutionize governmental structures, economies, international security and wars. Emerging technologies epitomize doomsday situation and the military use of such technologies carry greater potential to fundamentally shift the balance of power.

Today S&T means the intersection of Cyber and Artificial Intelligence with various emerging technologies such as nanotechnology, including meta-materials; robotics, including lethal autonomous systems; artificial intelligence and machine learning; the cognitive neurosciences; biotechnology, including synthetic and systems biology; high energy weapons; additive manufacturing called 3D printing, space weapons, and the intersection of each with information and computing technologies.

Such concepts and the underlying defense needs were articulated at the multi-national level in NATO's May 2010 New Strategic Concept paper: "Less predictable is the possibility that research breakthroughs will transform the technological battlefield. The most destructive periods of history tend to be those when the means of aggression have gained the upper hand in the art of waging war."

According to the New America Foundation's Future of War program technological advances are driving "changes in the nature of warfare". But the question arises that how technological development will shape the future of war and the state? This is one of the important questions that is causing much anxiety in both academic and policy-making circles.

Nevertheless, technology is being extensively used in warfare strategies to create asymmetric advantage for one actor to impose his will over another. Multiple scholars have argued asymmetry potentially gives the weak actors, advantage over the strong actor in irregular warfare, when technological advantages are employed in irregular warfare. Because the weak do not have the capability to face strong actors conventionally, they complicate the environment by operating when and where they choose, with weapons that attack weaknesses of the strong and in a manner that often are invisible to a stronger actor.

However, the shifting nature of technological progress may bring enhanced or entirely new capabilities. Many of these capabilities are no longer the exclusive domain of any of the state. Analytical assessments suggest that emerging technologies often expose the gaps within the mainstream scholarship on international security, understanding of the military technological innovation and acquisition processes, and fundamental understanding of the underlying science.

In context of South Asia currently cyber technology and Artificial intelligence are dominating the irregular warfare. Now a days war are being fought below the level of threshold, as it is evident, wars are now being fought while sitting in the rooms through computers and media (including social, print and Television) rather than in the battle fields.

With the passage of time Cyber technology and Artificial intelligence has become the most sought after means for waging irregular warfare. They serve as a tool for propaganda, phishing, and data manipulation, dissemination of information, identity theft and establishment of cyber physical weapons along with Advanced Persistent threats (APTs) to be used against critical infrastructure of states.

However, on the other hand, Artificial Intelligence is also changing nature of irregular warfare because of its potential to significantly enhance intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities. AI-enabled satellite imagery and remote sensing may help states to interpret each other's actions correctly which may make nature of irregular warfare more complex and ambiguous. Under the regime of Modi increased Indian intrusions in Pakistan's sovereign assets, marked the aggressive approach of towards Pakistan. Due to Indian military modernization and acquisition of sophisticated weaponry of cyber and AI, peace and stability of South Asian region is at stake. Indian aggression and illicit breaches can lead to the wreckage of the region.

Emerging technologies will introduce new and sophisticated class of weapons that will alter the geopolitical landscape. Security issues in South Asian region will be unresolved underlying the use of potentially disruptive technologies will have acute implications for defense policy, arms control regimes, international security, regional stability and security. Currently there exist two schools of thoughts regarding the future of irregular warfare: those who are in favor of prioritizing the role of technology, and those who are skeptical and still reluctant. One must be skeptical of slipping into a technological deterministic mindset and cognizant as well. This is the belief that technology alone, being the most important factor, can determine the outbreak or outcome of conflict and this is may be true to some extent. In the coming decades states may stick to the idea that emerging technologies can be a blessing and a curse at the same time.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/11052020-emerging-technologies-changing-nature-of-irregular-warfare-oped/>

India's Increasing Military Expenditure: Implications for South Asian Security

Irfan Ali

India is one of the top nations which has been increasing its military expenditure, weapons import from multiple countries and private firms, and defence budget. Over the last three decades, India has been experiencing momentous variations in its military-strategic thinking resultantly this brings the significant changes in its defence policies as well. In this regard, India has been trying to revolutionize its military capacity via importing sophisticated conventional arms.

Recently, a report published by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on 27th of April 2020, shows that “global military expenditure sees a largest annual increase in a decade reaching \$1917 billion in 2019”. SIPRI’s database entertains that the total global military expenditure represents an increase of 3.6 per cent as compared to the previous year 2018. Moreover, the five largest spenders in 2019 according to statistics computed by SIPRI were the U.S., China, India, Russia, and Saudi Arabia, respectively. SIPRI statistics also show that two Asian states, namely China and India, have featured among the top three military spenders for the first time.

As far as India is concerned, it has increased its military expenditure by 6.8 per cent as compared to 2018 reaching \$71.1 billion. According to Siemon T. Wezeman (the Senior Researcher at SIPRI) “India’s tensions and rivalry with both Pakistan and China are among the major drivers for its increased military spending”. This massive increase in the Indian military expenditure makes it the world’s second-largest arms importer after Saudi Arabia. Delhi has involved in various deals and agreement with the world’s top nations for the import of military technology.

Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi signed \$3 billion in defence deal with President Trump during his visit to India in February 2020. According to this deal, the U.S. would provide helicopters and other equipment to India’s military. Moreover, the U.S. is fully assisting India in its desire to acquire global power status through military means. Pentagon in October 2019 stated that “the bilateral defence trade between Washington and Delhi expected to reach \$18 billion by the year-end”. In addition to this, the U.S. State Department in 2019 said that it is going to sell India “MH-60R Seahawk helicopters (\$2.6 billion), Apache helicopters (\$2.3 billion), P-8I maritime patrol aircraft (\$3 billion), and M777 howitzers (\$737 million)”.

This growing Indo-US nexus in defence has continued since long such as both the nations concluded a significant communication agreement in September 2018 named Communication

Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) to facilitate closer defence cooperation. In August 2016, India also signed a military logistic agreement with the U.S designated the Logistic Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) to counter the growing maritime influence of China. This agreement allows both the nations to govern the use of each other's land, air and naval bases for repair and resupply.

Ash Carter the then U.S. Defence Secretary and Manohar Parrikor (Indian Defence Minister) said that "signing of the agreement would make the logistics of joint operations so much easier and so much more efficient". Another agreement named General Security and of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) signed between Delhi and Washington in 2002. it paves the way for greater technological cooperation in the military sector. Similarly, GSOMIA also "allows the sharing of classified information from the U.S. government and American companies with the Government of India and Defense Public Sector Undertakings (DPSU).

There can be various reasons behind India's military modernization; however, its military buildup raises severe questions for creating instability and posing security threats to the regional states, particularly Pakistan. Pakistan and India are considered the arch-rivals in nuclear South Asia since conventional violence between them could quickly turn into a nuclear war. As far as the deterioration of the security situation of South Asia is concerned, Delhi played an essential role in worsening the security and generating threats for the stability of the region. South Asia region has already been considered the most sensitive part of the world because of a massive increase in traditional and non-traditional security threats, particularly after the incident of 9/11.

In this regard, a report published by SOS Children's Villages Canada about the poverty in India states that *"two-thirds of people in India live in poverty: 68.8% of the Indian population lives on less than \$2 a day. Over 30% even have less than \$1.25 per day available – they are considered extremely poor. It makes India one of the poorest countries in the world; women and children, the weakest members of Indian society, suffer most. It is the situation of poverty in India where people are dying because of poverty, hunger, and strife. In contrast, its rulers are spending a tremendous amount of money on military expenditures as well as their lavish lives."*

Instead of focusing on multiple problems such as poverty, corruption, instability, inequality and violation of minority rights, barbarism over Muslims etc. India is bent upon increasing its defence budget. It exposes Indian hegemonic designs for the South Asian region. It is ultimately becoming the primary reason for instability and insecurity not only for Pakistan but also for other regional states.

Furthermore, both India and Pakistan are considered arch-rivals in the South Asia region. Multiple unresolved problems cause their power asymmetry to prevail such as Kashmir, constant warmongering by the political leadership as well as Indian military, Indian involvement in

Balochistan, and Indian massive military modernization etc. Besides, after the establishment of BJP government India aspires to be the world power such as PM Modi after taking office in May 2014, said to his diplomats that “to help India position itself in a leading role, rather than [as] just a balancing force, globally”.

Likewise, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, the then foreign secretary of India, also entertained that “country now aspires to be a leading power, rather than just a balancing power”. These all force postures and recent military developments by Indian government pose some severe implications and dangers for regional peace and stability.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/11052020-indias-increasing-military-expenditure-implications-for-south-asian-security-oped/>

India's Monolithic Understanding of Religion

Shamsa Nawaz

There are about 1.4 billion people living in India with a population of 80% Hindus, 14% are Muslims, 2% are Christians, and 4% are either followers of other religions, or have no religion. Though, early India had strong traditions of cultic and religious syncretism yet, the religious freedom was auspiciously tolerated by the dissuasion of religion or nationalism from the politics of secular India till the rise of Hindutva. Since then, it has been experiencing serious “egregious religious violations” particularly, after 2002, Gujrat genocide.

Theoretically, the perception of unresponsive entities in the entity implicit theory of sociology (which in case of India is non-Hindu), endorses the stereotypes and narrow nationalism residing in the history of 19th century. Some Indians also began to speak of the tolerance of Hindus, but this also clearly privileged Hinduism over other religions. Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883), who founded the Arya Samaj in 1875, claimed to believe “in a religion based on universal values... above the hostility of all creeds...” However, as a champion of the Vedic religion, he sharply opposed all other religions. Similarly, his contemporary Ramakrishna (1836-1886) spoke of the equality of religions, but in his view “the Hindu religion alone is the Sanatana Dharma”.

Today, based on misguided and perpetual xenophobia, the heterogeneous power components of India are exponentially religion centric. Tagging particularly Muslims responsible for spreading Covid 19 pandemic in India and calling those “human bombs” are some of the unfortunate myopic rhetoric of an unsafe and intolerant India much contrary to their claims of 19th century. This has made India's international relations detrimental. For instance, in the Middle Eastern countries, there are about 8.5 million Indians living, contributing around \$55 billion annually as remittance to the economy of India from the Gulf countries alone. Moreover, the Indians serving in the Muslim countries are sending back around \$120 billion to beef up the economy of India. Could the Hindutva regime sustain an economic and social backlash in this age of interdependence when the Arab public is voicing against such piercing strategies? The OIC has also already demanded from the Indian government to take an action on the intolerance towards the Muslims in India.

According to the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA), the religious freedom conditions are already experiencing a further downward swing since 2019, with religious minorities under continuous assault by the institutionalized national level politics by center to right Bharatya Janata Party (BJP) in India. Living in continuous fear, the enactment of Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and implementation of National Population Register (NPR), 1.9 million

residents, both Muslims and Hindus, have been excluded, as illegal, particularly in the border regions of Assam.

Similarly, highlighting religious intolerance in India, the three United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteurs have already warned that exclusion from the NRC could result in “statelessness, deportation, or pro-longed detention. These migrants have been referred as “termites” to be eradicated, in the deplorable remarks of Home Minister Amit Shah. To perpetuate this discrimination and in order to protect Hindus, the BJP officials instrumentalised the corrective measure through CAA throughout the country. CAA would have the consequences of statelessness mainly on the Muslims reacted stridently by the Muslims of India in widespread protests even during President Trumps visit in February 2020. Notwithstanding the secular values or democratic stature, he BJP chief minister Yogi Adityanath pledged “revenge” against anti-CAA protestors and stated they should be fed “bullets not biryani.” Earlier in December 2019, almost 25 people died in attacks against protestors and universities in UP alone, contesting CAA. According to reports, police action specifically targeted Muslims.

In fact, throughout 2019, the BJP’s discriminatory and violently demonizing enforcement of cow slaughter and anti-conversion laws had been humiliating for the Muslims living in India. The last nail was perhaps the November Supreme Court ruling on the Babri Masjid site. It created a culture of impunity for nationwide campaigns of harassment and violence against religious minorities. Mob lynchings of persons suspected of cow slaughter or consuming beef continued, with most attacks occurring within BJP-ruled states. Lynch mobs often took on overtly Hindu nationalist tones despite warnings given by the Indian Supreme Court.

What more could have been mortifying for the Muslims of India? The BJP government in its revocation of Article 370, which had granted the autonomous status to the Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir, stripped the Muslims off their rights. Strict security measures by the installation of more than 7 lac Indian armed forces, imposition of unbridled black laws, change of demography, longest information blackout in the human history, restricting the freedom of movement and assembly, cutting Internet and phone access, and arresting Kashmiri leaders, including religious leaders, have been a continuous feature of BJP’s non-democratic and non-secular nationalist governance. USCIRF in its latest report has been able to finally highlight the unlawful restrictions on attending prayers and religious ceremonies as components of program. USCIRF is a Commission of the state of the United States, a close political, economic and strategic ally of India since the recent past. It enjoys a bi-partisan support of both the Democrats and the Republicans. The Report regards the intolerance, extremism and Islamophobia in India as a major threat to the Indian Constitution, violation of international norms and the international system. It also suggests implying restrictions on Indians vitiating extremism and non-plural society in India much to the dismay of India.

Impacting human rights, peaceful co-existence, inferiorizing and marginalizing minorities by a religiously racist government of India, with a hand on a nuclear button and third largest arms importing status, how would Prime Minister Modi offset the growing extremist and insane perception? Muslims in India are facing multi-dimensional threats; of terror attacks, humiliation and responses to the attacks, the economic deprivation and bracing with the Covid 19 pandemic. On the other hand, Islamophobia, talked about by Imran Khan in his speech at the UN General Assembly session in 2019, portraying the most dangerously spread out phenomenon of malignant racism, inflicting a dense impact on the socio-cultural and politico-legal harmony between the nations, communities and ethnic groups has gained recognition. Modi needs to realize that, seizing power by instilling hatred with the use of institutions, ethnic, political or religious groups has a potential to transmigrate and adds to the destabilization and human security deficit, not welcomed in a world of interdependency and co-existence. The space created for a plural and secular India in the international system is already fast shrinking with even more bigoted ingress in the nation building to no fault of Indians. Pakistan has won the diplomatic and political front though after protracted failures of making the world realize. Its falsely portrayed perception of a 'terrorist state' (desired to be declared for long by India itself) is naturally diluted by RSS extremist phenomenon. Not to forget, the opening of Kartarpur Rahdari, to provide unhindered access to the Sikh community in India by Pakistan adds to its diplomatic might. Hence, the world has recognized and Modi must also surrender to Gandhian derivative of an inter-faith dialogue to offer panacea for the people of South Asia. The post-Covid 19 is certainly an era of soft power where dialogue and cooperation will have more fruits to bear.

<http://southasiajournal.net/indias-monolithic-understanding-of-religion/>

Reconciling Public Safety and National Security Via A Renewed Focus on Biosecurity

Waqas Jan

As the broad ranging consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic wreak havoc across the global political economy, there have also simultaneously come up several issues pertaining to policy and governance particularly related to International Security. These include for instance the growing emphasis now being laid on biosecurity which under the current context of an unprecedented global pandemic has greatly exposed the failings and lack of preparedness of even some of the world's most developed countries.

One has to merely glance at the fast-rising death tolls in the US, UK, Italy and Spain to gauge how some of the world's foremost economies and health services have been left devastated owing to a severe lack of preparedness. Countries which boast some of the world's most robust military industrial and technological complexes, have been unable to otherwise safeguard not only the health and safety of their own populations, but also to preserve what can be only described as their entire way of life. Something for which they have been more than ready to go to war in the past.

Its hence no surprise that the US for instance, in its incessant need to scapegoat (or to just simply bomb) and divert mounting public outrage has been consistently directing blame towards China. This has ranged from alleging China to have deliberately engineered the virus, to holding the Chinese government accountable for having initially covered up the severity of the outbreak in a bid to safeguard its own economic and diplomatic standing. While it is unlikely that the US would go to war with China solely over this, the dramatic deterioration in relations that has been witnessed in the kind of rhetoric and proposals that have been coming out from both countries stands as cause for grave concern for the world at large.

Yet, what's lost amidst this blame game that has dominated headlines for over a month, has been perhaps the more important and timely discussion that had arisen on the importance of incorporating more robust bio-security measures. This is understandable considering how the term biosecurity has itself over the last two decades come to be associated more in relation to enacting safeguards against bioterrorism and bio-chemical weapons. Aspects that were directly based for instance on the anthrax and smallpox scares that had dominated US policy discourse shortly after the September 11 attacks. Or for instance from the more recent threats issued by ISIS regarding the use of such weapons against Western targets. The above linked report from the Hudson institute for instance evaluates the US's need to enact such biodefense (or biosecurity) measures within exactly such contexts.

However, it is this very context related to terrorism and homeland/national security which in dominating US policymaking circles is more attuned towards focusing on the perpetrators of such threats; be they state or non-state actors. Consequently, the whole aim of the US – and also arguably its closest allies – has been to justify its more interventionist and hands-on approach to mitigating such threats before they reach US shores. Hence, the emphasis being more on preventing such biological ‘attacks’ from occurring in the first place as opposed to dealing with them once they’ve ‘hit’.

While justifiable in its own right, what this approach however misses in its overarching focus on national security, is perhaps the more pressing need to address public health and safety domestically. Which in essence is what national security is premised on defending in the first place – an effective Civil Defense of sorts.

For instance, a widely cited comparison of the ‘Western’ response to the Coronavirus with that of certain East Asian countries such as Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea and Japan shows how these latter countries’ more recent experiences in dealing with the SARS and MERS outbreaks had contributed immensely to their relatively better responses to this pandemic. By already having in place certain contingency and policy directives grounded more in a domestic public health and safety perspective – as opposed to an outward looking national security one – each of these states was able to mount a more coordinated, timely and socially aware response to this crisis. Most importantly their responses had public support and sympathy directly built into their policies which saw the overall public perception of their governments’ measures as wholly necessary and compulsory; as opposed to being forced and reactionary. This latter aspect for instance is manifest in how several countries have witnessed severe public and political backlash towards the social distancing and lockdown policies that were enacted the world over. This includes backlash witnessed in countries ranging from the US to Pakistan, where the economic costs of such policies – which once again are tied directly to externally inspired national security concerns – were given unassailing primacy over domestic public health and safety.

Talking specifically of Pakistan and its long history of being portrayed as a security state, such threats to national security from a potential bio-chem attack, are already prioritized along the lines of a potential WMD attack considering the primacy such threats hold for a Nuclear Weapon State. However, even within such military dominated approaches to biosecurity, there is still a public safety and awareness component from a Civil Defense perspective, that even in the case of any WMD attack remains already lacking. Thus, belying the prioritization afforded to deterring external threats, rather than on eliminating such shortcomings within, just like the US.

The current global pandemic has provided a rare chance to have this conversation regarding the very premises and priority this concept of Biosecurity has been accorded within government policy circles. It has afforded a previously unfound impetus and political capital to

enact and fund such measures. Instead of being squandered however, such impetus should be used to mitigate such lapses that have now been brought to the forefront of governance and policy discourse the world over. Unless these realities are adapted to, life is likely to become even harder in a world that has changed dramatically in just the last few months.

<http://southasiajournal.net/reconciling-public-safety-and-national-security-via-a-renewed-focus-on-bio-security/>

India's New Road Through Lipulekh Pass and Its Hegemonic Designs

Irfan Ali

Lipulekh (elevation 5,200 m) is a Himalayan pass on the border between India's Uttarakhand state and the Tibet region of China, near their tri-junction with Nepal. The pass is near the Chinese trading town of Taklakot (Purang) in Tibet and has been used since ancient times by traders, mendicants and pilgrims transiting between India and Tibet.

Ever since the "treaty of friendship 1950" between Delhi and Kathmandu, both countries have been enjoying friendly relations. However, in 1962 because of Sino-Indian War India closed the Lipulekh Pass, compelling Nepal's trade to pass through the Tinker Pass. India unilaterally closed the Lipulekh pass that was the violation of the treaty of friendship reached between the two nations in 1950. Although during the war in 1962 between India and China, New Delhi had deployed there its troops since then the first boundary claim was made by Nepal. However, Nepal started protests over reopening of the Lipulekh Pass by China and India in 1997.

Similarly, Kathmandu grew upset over the bilateral agreement aimed at increasing trade through Lipulekh Pass between India and China in 2015. Therefore, Kathmandu condemned this act of bypassing its authority. The friction over this issue continued between India and Nepal. However, it got momentum in November 2019 when Indian government circulated a new map with the inclusion of Nepal's Kalapani territory (the southern side of the Lipulekh pass) within India and started building a new road through Lipulekh Pass.

It is essential to mention that a treaty was signed between Nepal and Britain in 1815 later ratified in 1816 called the Treaty of Sugauli. That treaty recognized the Lipulekh and Kalapani region as part of Nepal declaring Makhali River as the boundary. The Lipulekh and Kalapani being a tri-junction among India, China, and Nepal keeps much geostrategic, geopolitical, and geo-economic importance for them.

This road through Lipulekh Pass is vital for strategic and tactical reasons for India with regards to Chinese movement. On May 10, 2020, border skirmishes emerged between Chinese and Indian forces in northern Sikkim and eastern Ladakh. It further motivated Delhi to acquire full control over this region to keep Chinese movement under check.

Meanwhile, Lipulekh Pass is situated in the northern state of Uttarakhand's Vyas Valley that makes it one of the natural passes to access Tibet through Uttarakhand. On May 08, 2020, Indian Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh inaugurated ghatiabagar Lipulekh motor road that

connects the last Indian post on the Indo-China border. This track will not only ease the journey of pilgrims but also act as a strategic road that India could use it as deterrence against Chinese aggression.

Because of the hegemonic designs of PM Modi's government, it claims the territory as its part of the region. Resultantly, Nepal's Foreign Ministry stated India's decision to build the road through territory at the Lipulekh pass was a breach of the agreement reached between the two countries in 2014. In 2014, PM Modi and (then) PM of Nepal Sushil Koirala reached the agreement that solution to boundary issues would be sought through negotiations.

Nepal has urged India to discuss the matter and solve it through diplomatic means. But India's decision to build new road through Lipulekh Pass also invoked widespread unrest among the students and political parties in Nepal who set out to protest against Indian occupation of Lipulekh territory of Nepal. Protesters have been chanting slogans, displaying placards rejecting Indian illegal and unilateral action.

On May 9, 2020, the ruling Communist Party of Nepal (NCP) issued a press statement which categorically termed it as a criminal activity of Delhi and an attack on the sovereignty of Nepal. The NCP further explained that "It is deplorable that this development has taken place at a time when the entire humanity is faced with an unprecedented health crisis in the wake of coronavirus, and all our efforts are concentrated on fighting against this pandemic."

Moreover, on May 10, 2020, ruling party leaders such as Pushpa Kamal Dahal (ruling party chair and former prime minister) called for action on India encroachment of Lipulekh. Dahal further said that "Nepal should first pursue high-level political and diplomatic channels to resolve the issue, but if that does not help resolve the issue, Nepal must come to a conclusion on what to do next."

Similarly, Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Foreign Minister of Nepal, said that "India had encroached upon around 19 kilometers of Nepali territory while building the road link." Strongly condemning India's injustice, Nepal draws on Delhi to refrain from carrying out any activity inside its territory. The latter claims that India is motivated by its hegemonic ambitions and is bent upon eating up the territories of other neighbours. It shows the hawkish and colonial mentality of Indian government which Nepal has refused to accommodate.

India, on the other hand, rejects Nepal's opposition and maintains that the newly inaugurated road does not illegally cross into neighbouring Nepal. It dismisses Nepal's objection of long ignoring a longstanding dispute over Lipulekh Pass and calls it is within Indian territory. Meanwhile, M.M. Naravane, Indian Army Chief, remarked that another country propels the diplomatic objection of Nepal over India's newly christened road. He further explained that

behind all this, there is a 'China factor' which is trying to create friction between Delhi and Kathmandu.

While responding to the Indian allegations, Pradeep Gyawali, Foreign Minister of Nepal said that the condemnation of Indian occupation over Nepali territory is based on Nepal's internal decision-making and not inspired or influenced by China or any other country. India tries to divert the attention of Nepal by blaming it and linking the China factor to fulfil its vicious plans.

Hawkish and fascist policies and actions by PM Narendra Modi portrays his hegemonic designs which are also evident from his decision taken as on August 5, 2019; to change the status of disputed Jammu and Kashmir Valley after revoking Article 370. He also imposed the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) that resulted in Hindu-Muslim riots in India.

Similarly, the 'Corona Jihad' propaganda by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led the Indian government against Indian Muslims resulted in the killings of many Muslims all over the country. The same dictatorial mindset is reflected in the construction of the new road by India over Lipulekh pass. Its hegemonic designs are visibly challenging other countries in the region. Delhi has continuously been violating the ceasefire on Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan and resorting to unprovoked firing, targeting the civilian population. It is the responsibility of the United Nations and international community to condemn India's unbridled misadventure in the region and take intense action against its hegemonic designs that are damaging for the peace and stability of the region.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/25052020-indias-new-road-through-lipulekh-pass-and-its-hegemonic-designs-oped/>

Is an Electioneering Trump Over blowing the China Threat?

Waqas Jan

As several analysts grapple over the futility of calling for greater international cooperation against the Coronavirus pandemic, US – China relations seem to be plumbing to ever increasing lows day by day. One has to just glance at the daily news cycle to see how both the virus and the US – China rivalry seem to be going almost hand in hand in representing perhaps the most serious threats to global peace and prosperity. Threats that are in turn more than likely to dramatically impact the world's economic and security outlook for many years to come.

Yet, even before the COVID-19 pandemic stormed all forms of political and international relations discourse, the primacy with which the US – China rivalry had been afforded was never in doubt of fading anytime soon anyway. Especially considering President Trump's incessant obsession with everything China in his previous election campaign, it was already expected that his hardline stance on China would only intensify the closer it came to his re-election bid. This for instance was best encapsulated in his 'successfully concluded trade deal', which in supposedly ending the long and protracted US- China trade war, was to stand as one of the most significant achievements of the Trump presidency. In fact, it was to represent in essence a vindication of President Trump's entire ethos of America First as manifest in his more assertive and obstinate approach to US diplomacy and foreign policy.

Yet based on some of President Trump's most recent statements, even the achievements of his much-touted trade negotiations now stand jeopardized as both the White House and State Department continue to directly blame China for causing the Coronavirus pandemic. In fact, the way both President Trump and Secretary of State Pompeo have gone about in accusing China of deliberately covering up and mishandling the crises during its earliest stages has stood out particularly for its lack of evidence and sole reliance on hawkish rhetoric. What these claims have instead effectively done is to conflate the security and economic implications of the 'Chinese threat' on US primacy. An aspect which has in turn continued to resonate unequivocally with President Trump's highly conservative and mostly far-right electorate.

Its thus not much of a surprise that China's response has been to mount an even stronger diplomatic offensive. This has been evident in the collective vitriol expressed by a new breed of more assertive diplomats engaging in what has been ascribed (perhaps more disparagingly) as 'Wolf Warrior Diplomacy'. Yet, it is worth emphasizing that while such a response is likely to have been expected, it still represents a marked departure from the more subtle, patient and restrained manner that had up till now characterized Chinese diplomacy under the now infamous guiding principles of Deng Xiaoping. While such assertiveness may represent a benign attempt

by China at limiting the defense of its international credibility to the diplomatic front, it could also point towards the growing eminence of more hawkish voices taking hold within the Chinese politburo. Hence, ultimately signifying a more overt and perhaps more dangerous challenge to US primacy on China's part.

Yet as this back and forth between Chinese and US officials rapidly intensifies, many have been left wondering whether the very threat of China's rise has been deliberately overblown within US policymaking circles to begin with. This argument for instance has been raised by a number of leading analysts such as Fareed Zakaria among others. In a recent article, Zakaria very pointedly explains how designating China as a strategic competitor has allowed the Pentagon to once again justify the kind of grandiose plans and expenditures which more or less defined some of the most tense days of the US – Soviet Cold War. This kind of thinking for instance is replete in some of the latest analyses and commentary calling for a complete overhaul of the US military – industrial complex in response to the 'Chinese threat'. Chris Brose's recent book 'The Kill Chain: Defending America in the Future of High-Tech Warfare', makes exactly this argument drawing on his years of expertise working closely with the Pentagon and the US Senate's Armed Services Committee. As pointed out by Zakaria, this kind of discourse feeds directly into the perceived inevitability and simple predictability of a US – China conflict in what has been famously ascribed to now as the much-vaunted Thucydides Trap. A concept whose own author – Graham Allison – has warned against turning into a self-fulfilling prophecy. A similar skeptic can be found in Michael Beckley whose latest research also questions the severity and alarm that has been afforded to China's rise. Especially when considering the long way China still has go to overtake the US both economically and militarily.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that on the purely political front, this debate on China's rise while completely stripped off its historical precedents and hard economic numbers has been reduced to just diplomatic vitriol between both powers. Whereas, President Trump has simply continued what he knows best, the more assertive line taken by China now however directly feeds into US insecurities regarding the future of its power projection capabilities even more.

With the COVID-19 pandemic now representing the latest battleground for this rivalry to play out, China's attempts at 'Mask Diplomacy' and pandemic aid are adding even more fuel to this fire by appearing to take on a more leading role in international leadership. All while appearing to eclipse the US's waning influence even further as it undergoes one of the most divisive US elections to date. A development that is to only further complicate this rivalry more along the basis of simple prestige than on any serious hard power discrepancies in the years to come.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/05/25/is-an-electioneering-trump-overblowing-the-china-threat/>

22 Years of Nuclearization of South Asia: Current Doctrinal Postures

Haris Bilal Malik

May 2020 marks the 22nd anniversary of the overt nuclearization of South Asia. The evolved nuclear doctrinal postures of both India and Pakistan have been a key component of their defence and security policies. During this period; India has undergone gradual shifts in its nuclear doctrinal posture. The Indian posture as set out in the 1999 'Draft Nuclear Doctrine' (DND) was based on an assertion that India would pursue the 'No First Use' (NFU) policy. The first amendment to this posture, which came out in January 2003, was based on a review by the Indian Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) of the nuclear doctrine. It stated that if India's armed forces or its people were attacked with chemical and biological weapons, India reserves the right to respond with nuclear weapons. This review could, therefore, be considered a contradiction to India's declared NFU policy at the doctrinal level. On the basis of this notion, it could be assumed that India has had an aspiration to drift away from its NFU policy since 2003.

Subsequently, the notion of a preemptive 'splendid first strike' has been a key part of the discourse surrounding the Indian and international strategic community since the years 2016-2017. According to this, if in India's assessment, Pakistan was found to be deploying nuclear weapons, in a contingency, India would resort to such a splendid first strike. With such a doctrinal posture, India's quest for preemption against Pakistan seems to be an attempt to neutralize the deterrent value of Pakistan's nuclear capabilities. In this regard, India has been constantly advancing its nuclear weapons capabilities based on enhanced missile programs and the development of its land, sea, and air-based nuclear triad thus negating its own NFU policy. This vindicates Pakistan's already expressed doubts over India's long-debated NFU policy. Such Indian notion would likely serve as an overt drift towards a more offensive counterforce doctrinal posture aimed at undermining Pakistan's deterrence posture. This would further affect the strategic stability and deterrence equilibrium in the South Asian region.

India's rapid augmentation of its offensive doctrinal posture vis-à-vis Pakistan is based on enhancing its strategic nuclear capabilities. Under its massive military up-gradation program, India has developed the latest versions of ballistic and cruise missiles, indigenous ballistic missile defence (BMD) systems in addition to Russian made S-400, nuclear submarines, and enhanced capabilities for space weaponization. In the same vein, India's aspiration for supersonic and hypersonic weapons is also evidence of its offensive doctrinal posture. Furthermore, India has been carrying out an extensive cruise missile development program having incredible supersonic speed along with its prospective enhanced air defence shield. Through considerable

technological advancements India has shifted its approach from a counter-value to a counter-force doctrinal posture, as it demonstrates its ambitions of achieving escalation-dominance throughout the region. These technological advancements are clear indicators that India's doctrinal posture is aimed at destabilizing the existing nuclear deterrence equilibrium in South Asia.

Pakistan, on the other hand has been threatened by India's offensive postures and hegemonic aspirations. Consequently, it has to maintain a certain balance of power to preserve its security. Pakistan's doctrinal posture is defensive in nature and has over the years shifted from strategic deterrence to 'full spectrum deterrence' (FSD) by adding tactical nuclear weapons which, it claims, falls within the threshold of 'minimum credible deterrence'. In this regard, Pakistan too has developed its missile technology based on; short, intermediate, and long-range ballistic missiles. Pakistan's tactical range 'Nasr' missile is widely regarded as a 'weapon of deterrence' aimed at denying space for a limited war imposed by India. The induction of 'multiple independent reentry vehicle' (MIRV), the development of land, air and sea-launched cruise missiles and the provision of a naval-based second-strike capability 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.

Contrary to India's declared NFU policy, Pakistan has never made such an assertion and has deliberately maintained a policy of ambiguity concerning a nuclear first strike against India. This has been carried out to assure its security and to preserve its sovereignty by deterring India with the employment of Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD) within the ambit of Credible Minimum Deterrence. This posture asserts that since Pakistan's nuclear weapons are for defensive purposes in principle, they are aimed at deterring India from any and all kinds of aggression. This has been evident from recent crisis situations as well during which Pakistan's deterrent posture has prevented further escalation. Therefore, even now Pakistan is likely to keep its options open and still leave room for the possibility of carrying out a 'first strike' as a viable potential deterrent against India if any of its stated red lines are crossed.

Hence, the security dynamics of the South Asian region have changed significantly since its nuclearization in 1998. The impact of this has been substantial and irreversible on regional and extra-regional politics, the security architecture of South Asia, and the international nuclear order. As has been long evident India has held long term inspiration to become a great power. There have been continuous insinuations about the transformations in India's nuclear doctrinal posture from 'No First Use' to counterforce offensive posture. The current security architecture of South Asia revolves around this Indian behavior as a nuclear state. In contrast, Pakistan's nuclear doctrine is based solely on assuring its security, preserving its sovereignty, and deterring India by maintaining a credible deterrence posture. Based on the undeniable threats from India

to its existence, Pakistan needs to further expand its doctrinal posture vis-à-vis India. This would preserve the pre-existing nuclear deterrence equilibrium and the 'balance of power' in the South Asian region.

<http://southasiajournal.net/22-years-of-nuclearization-of-south-asia-current-doctrinal-postures/>

Yaum-e-Takbeer: Recounting Perceptions, Ideas and Resources

Shamsa Nawaz

Enwrapped in a whirlpool of desire and compulsion, to achieve the ideals, is a key determinant in security perceptions of the two major powers of South Asia. One limited itself to history and conflicted with the present and the other's compulsions dictated its forward-looking consistency and adaptability to change in policy formulation. In Indo-Pak rivalry India desired and Pakistan was compelled...one acted and the other reacted. The words of Alberuni "we believe in nothing in which they {Hinduism} believe. Their {Hindus} fanaticism is directed against all foreigners. They call them impure and forbid having any connection with them" is truer today with ever growing *Hindutva* wave.

Recounting the political history of the Sub-continent in the post-World War II era, India's size and strength, population and problems, location and ambitions, all helped her earn a place in the arena of regional and international politics. Professedly a democratic and a secular state in the times of Nehru and his personal role of a moderator between the Super Powers in 1950s while condemning the use of force, was either a sincere effort for AHIMSA (peaceful co-existence) and non-alignment or using the ploy of pacifism due to inefficient military abilities, particularly vis a vis China. The Indian defeat in 1962 war against China was nonetheless, well comprehended.

On the other hand, the pace of development ensured by science and technology, particularly nuclear, to build its harbours, water reservoirs, dams and electricity projects were either well-nigh impossible or of probative cost for a newly independent India. Nehru, in his speech at Lok Sabha on May 10, 1954, said, "Atomic energy for peaceful purposes is far more important for a country like India, where power resources are limited, than for a country like France, an industrially developed country." One gram of uranium was equivalent to 3 tons of coal or 12 barrels of oil.

The developing world missed the industrial revolution but didn't want to miss the bus once again by distancing from the nuclear world despite seeing the harrowing effects in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In fact, by then nuclear weapons had already become the status symbol of power. They were a reality of legitimacy in terms of deterrence and potential use in the industrialized world. Further on, the radioactive isotopes and radiation was already being used successfully in the fields of agriculture, industry, medicine and natural resources worldwide during 1950s.

India was fortunate to have inherited the prerequisites of developing a nuclear programme with a broad base of scientists, engineers and technologists. Its sound industrial

infrastructure was also sufficiently supportive with adequate thorium reserves. Thorium has a tremendous capacity of conversion to energy and fertile to U-233. Though handicapped, yet the uranium reserves were at 60%, gold at 40%, 98% of global diamond supply and rich oil reserves and India's geo-strategic configuration, all provided reassurance to its leaders to follow discreet power politics for manipulation.

At the same time, the scientific research which had started in the Bose Institute, set up by J.C.Bose in 1917, provided an adequate ground work. Further on, setting up of the TATA Institute for Fundamental Research by Homi J. Bhabha, the father of India's nuclear programme in 1944, with a belief that "there is no form of power as expensive as no power," became a cornerstone of its aggressive nuclear development strategy in three phases:

1. The development of natural uranium heavy water reactors.
2. To make Fast Breeder Reactors (FBR)
3. To produce Thermal Breeder Reactors

In order to acquire self-reliance in nuclear technology with a minimum loss of time, the policy of 'leap-frogging' was adopted. Divided on four phases; from 1947-1956, from 1956-1966, from 1966-1970 and 1970- 1980, India was able to demonstrate its nuclear explosive ability in 1974 through an underground explosion. It made India the first amongst the developing world to join the nuclear club.

This gatecrashing nuclear explosion under the garb of "Smiling Budha" left the region with three major options;

- Scare of India's bomb in the South Asian region and its nuclearization. It however encouraged nuclear proliferation in a development starved and poverty stricken South Asian region.
- In reaction Pakistan developed its nuclear programme in order to ensure its security. It however encouraged nuclear proliferation in a development starved and poverty stricken South Asian region.
- And the third one was for its own nuclear programme since the supply of nuclear aid from Canada and America was suspended, but temporarily.

Though set up in 1972, by the initiative of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, after the breakup of East Pakistan with Indian subversive support (this was confessed by the Indian Prime Minister Modi himself in an intimate swipe with the Bangladesh's Prime Minister), the Indian explosion gave a new momentum to Pakistan's nuclear programme. By the coming of Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan in 1975, and under his direction, Pakistan also employed an extensive network in order to obtain the necessary materials and technology for its developing uranium enrichment capabilities.

In 1985, Pakistan crossed the threshold of weapons-grade uranium production, and by 1986 it is thought to have produced enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon. Pakistan continued advancing its uranium enrichment program, and according to Pakistani sources, the nation acquired the ability to carry out a nuclear explosion in 1987.

Known as Pokhran –II, India once again brought the two warring nations of South Asia, at the brink of nuclear competition by conducting the nuclear tests involving five detonations in May 1998. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee declared India a full and openly a nuclear state. He even challenged Pakistan’s control of parts of Kashmir. This invited a compulsive response from Pakistan. On May 28, 1998 Pakistan announced a successful detonation of five nuclear tests with a seismic signal of 5.0 on the Richter scale. The total yield of the bomb was up to 40 KT (equivalent TNT). According to Dr. A.Q. Khan one device was a boosted fission device and the other four were sub-kiloton nuclear devices.

On May 30, 1998 Pakistan tested one more nuclear warhead with a reported yield of 12 kilotons. The tests were conducted at Balochistan, bringing the total number of claimed tests to six. It has also been claimed by Pakistani sources that at least one additional device, initially planned for detonation on 30 May 1998, remained emplaced underground ready for detonation.

Both the countries had to face international denunciation. The United Nations Security Council passed a resolution condemning the tests and renewed efforts to pressure the two countries to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In fact, the United States tried to dissuade Pakistan and urged Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif not to react. Several nations reacted with their own sanctions and condemnation.

The nuclear programme of both India and Pakistan supported by their successfully designed scientific auxiliary nuclear delivery systems and nuclear doctrines and recounted with the hostile and xenophobic political history has maintained the required equilibrium yet has a clear tendency to debilitate any peace effort. History has proven that pacifism, secularism, democracy and non-alignment was conveniently but deceptively postured by India. This has kept the world guessing while keeping the world-wide opposition unfortunately, to its minimum. It is being repeated in Kashmir once again. India has folded the issue into immeasurable and innumerable asymmetrical steps of state terrorism by sabotaging its constitutional right given in Article 370 while keeping the world conjecturing once again.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/05/28/yaum-e-takbeer-recounting-perceptions-ideas-and-resources/>

Nuclearization Of South Asia: Where Do We Stand Now?

Sher Bano

Pakistan-India relations have continued to deteriorate since the nuclear test of May 1998. Both the states have faced numerous crisis during which the nuclear weapons have played a very important role. Nuclear weapons have been an effective deterrent force and kept the conflicts from blowing into all-out war. All the recent events suggest that there is a dire need to take transitional measures to reduce the nuclear risks. Nuclear weapons are confusing pieces of technology as their efficiency of destruction is best established when they are not deployed and yet in the same breath, they are to be used when required. This dilemma is further demented when one state is enemy with the other on almost everything. Escalation is both inevitable and perhaps one of the most devastating missteps in nuclear deterrence; one that requires an impressive level of trust. To achieve such a barrier, conventional rivalries need to be revisited, caution needs to be reinstated and communication needs to be uninterrupted.

From Massive Retaliation of John Foster Dulles to McNamara's Assured Destruction, nuclear bipolarity changed faces and paved ways for agreements and treaties to replace escalation and deployments. From direct engagements to proxies, from installation of hotlines to breaking ice and bilateralism, even when there was hope the world still endured in fear of an all-out devastation. Still, after all this, what lessons were learnt? How was 'responsible nuclear weapons state' defined? More importantly, what was the yardstick beyond which no state possessing such technology dare not tread? States possessing nuclear weapons technology decided not to escalate beyond a certain point and declared that no matter the trust deficit, they were supposed to always adhere to bilaterally settle their disputes. Even after two decades of nuclearization Pakistan and India, admirers of nuclear learning and experts of nuclear deterrence, perhaps were and might still are devoid of such bilateral convictions.

Looking at all the crisis situations in past most importantly the 1999 Kargil conflict, where the things escalated too quickly under nuclear overhang the question arises whether South Asia learnt anything on how close the Kargil was to a showdown of unimaginable proportion? Talking about more recent event 'Pulwama', Whatever happened after Pulwama in 2019 cannot be merely set aside as an emotional rhetoric, it was an actual sub-conventional engagement which had the potential to escalate. Like Kargil Pulwama was a chance to reexamine exactly what went wrong for things to go this far. Instead, India initiated overhauling of its force posture and Pakistan played along. South Asia went from Cold Start to Tactical Nuclear Weapons, from asymmetric confrontations to trans-border infiltrations and from hostilities at Line of Control to Abhinandan's failed leap for glory. Instantly, everyone started crying war with no one to vouch

for peace. What we see now is Indian prompted continued escalatory trajectories, distorted sense of stability, a desperate call for third-party mediation and a complete lack of bilateralism.

Nuclear deterrence, in its generic understanding, requires engaging parties to manifest caution while communicating their strategic posture. Confidence Building Mechanisms in that regard are important but as standalone systems are usually inefficient in dealing with their desired results. Soviet Union's iron curtain is what caused Cuban Missile Crisis but even a man like Khrushchev realized what could have happened and resorted to engaging with Kennedy. For Narendra Modi and his cabinet, the idealized fog of war cast by an iron curtain of fear/compellence is much more desirable than a chance at cooperation/dialogue. Bilateralism via Track-II might be fruitful but considering how much we distrust one another, it's highly likely that all such actions would eventually be put to unnecessary speculation of possessing vested interest. Pakistan and India might not resort to an all-out confrontation, but their trust deficit is enough to keep low-yield kinetic engagements alive. Pakistan fears for a false flag terrorist activity from India while India is wary of Pakistan trying to internationalize what it considers to be a bilateral issue.

In the past we have seen that issues between India-Pakistan are never resolved instead the hostility has increased so much that mitigation of the conflict looks like a farfetched idea. Both states need third party to get running the wheel of diplomatic engagement. Nuclear strategy is not a circular motion rather it is a spiraling affair with each turn graduating it to a new occasion whilst remaining hinged to a singular immovable point of connection. If nuclear deterrence keeps rotating without graduating, it tends to wear out its capacity to deter. What happens next is either another Kargil or something even worse. Pulwama, like Pathankot was a chance for both states to engage positively whilst maintaining their adversarial relationship and even now things are, in a way, plausible for this to occur. Threat, in this context, is how the current trajectory is moving from trust deficit to zero tolerance which can lead to incalculable repercussions.

If both India-Pakistan do not learn any lesson from the past, then the future might not be very welcoming. Nuclear deterrence is as important as it is frightening, and Mutually Assured Destruction is almost certainly a final outcome if bilateralism is sacrificed at the altars of diplomatic inflexibility. An arms race without restraint is as dangerous as an uncontrolled escalation of sensitive flashpoints and both strategies are corrosive if taken without mutual consent.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2020/05/29/nuclearization-of-south-asia-where-do-we-stand-now/>

Afghan Peace Process and Indian Involvement

Basma Khalil

The Afghan peace process initiated in 2018, marred with episodic halts, finally witnessed an agreement between the US and Taliban on February 29 in Doha. Both signatories Taliban and the US agreed to some core conditions and compromises to be made. Afghanistan, a land known as the Graveyard of Empires has become a huge quagmire for the US forces and now even after 18 years of war they are still nowhere close to defeating the Taliban. Eventually Taliban had to be accommodated in the US strategy for Afghanistan. The Taliban are still stronger on the ground. There have been occasions even after the deal when Taliban were found to carry out attacks to show off their military strength and presence. This sends out a message to the US that a reduction in violence may not be confused with complete termination of attacks. Taliban being fully aware of their limitations as a disciplined troop, realize it would be hard for them to bring back their militia into the region if peace process doesn't settle desirably. Geographically Afghanistan is at the crossroads of Central Asia and South Asia and is also bordered with Middle Eastern states. Such geographical presence makes everything happening in Afghanistan reach a dozen of adjacent countries with great intensity and magnitude. Recently concluded agreement in February this year has offered a world to witness a historic moment in which parties at dispute are finally making adjustments to end this protracted war. This agreement will have far reaching impact on many regional countries which will be compelled to respond according to their interests and likely benefits.

Most recent development in the Afghan peace process is the induction of a "Power sharing Deal" between Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah. The power sharing deal is a political settlement wherein both Ghani and Abdullah are looking forward to sharing the burden together in a hope to pave a path to peace, improved governance, human rights, laws, values eventually moving towards successful materialization of Afghan peace process to have stable Afghanistan. US secretary of state Mike Pompeo also supported this political settlement to end the conflict. In the meantime, Secretary-General of NATO Jens Stoltenberg applauded the deal between Ghani and Abdullah.

This, however, wasn't an easy feat. The US had to nudge the naysayer: India in this case; for its negative and its covert activities to derail the peace process. India finds a stable Afghanistan unfavorable to execute its illicit activities and propaganda. There would be fewer chances to exploit the soil of Afghanistan for its vested interests. Zalmay Khalilzad, the US Special Representative for Afghan Reconciliation, had a meeting with Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in New Delhi and conveyed the firm message for India to shun its anti-peace role in

Afghanistan. Chief Negotiator of Taliban, Abbas Stanikzai also criticized India stating “India has always played a negative role in Afghanistan. India supported traitors in the country”.

Such Taliban sentiments are prevalent but rarely expressed. Afghan government/NDS and RAW has consistently opposed peace with the Taliban as both stands to gain from discrediting the Taliban. Therefore, depicting Taliban as violent and active propaganda showing them as unreliable to firmly handle the evolving situation, serves Indian interest. Coupled with all this, a delayed withdrawal of US troops and attacks still being carried out in Afghanistan fueled the violent situation to the relief of spoilers of peace that want to see the peace deal completely derailed.

India’s Afghanistan policy is very much Pakistan-specific. India doesn’t want peace in Afghanistan because unrest on Pakistan’s western border makes it doubly challenging for Pakistan to secure its borders on two fronts. India backed anti-separatist elements get free flow across the porous Durand line into Baluchistan. This is the very reason India never favored a peaceful political settlement between Taliban and Afghan government. Some Indian analysts such as former Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran openly argue that Indian policy should aim at preventing complete Taliban takeover of Kabul, provoking Taliban towards a broad-based government.

While India remained active in hampering the peace process, globally Pakistan’s key role in the entire peace process has been highly appreciated. Zalmay Khalilzad US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation praised Pakistan’s efforts for the deal. Moreover, Pakistan’s role in the peace process is also recognized by Russia, China, and the Afghan Taliban. Pakistan has made several efforts to bring the Afghan Taliban to the negotiating table with the US which eventually resulted in the much-awaited peace agreement and has become a ray of hope for the stability of Afghanistan and region as well. There is no doubt this peace deal is in the interest of Pakistan and peace of region because stable Afghanistan means stable Pakistan. Moreover, there are now brighter prospects for lesser clashes near Durand Line between Pakistan Armed Forces and Afghan Forces. Afghan forces have been time and again attacking Pakistani forces near the Pak-Afghan border. It is hoped that the new political regime will also help in maintaining border peace between the two neighboring countries. However, one has to keep looking out for possible Indian mischief as it doesn’t want peace to prevail in Afghanistan.

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