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Strategic Vision Institute (SVI)

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SVI Foresight

SVI Foresight is a monthly electronic journal. It has a multi-disciplinary perspective highlighting 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

In September this year, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) 75th session was held in the COVID-19 pandemic environment. As expected, the majority of the leaders didn't appear in person and participated in the session virtually. Likewise, Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan virtually addressed the 75th session of the UNGA. The author maintains that he has utilized this opportunity to expose the fascist ideology of Mr. Modi led BJP government's continued atrocities and brutalities in the Indian occupied Jammu Kashmir in front of the international community. Like his last year's address, he has voiced against the genocide being carried out by the RSS backed BJP government of India. Moreover, it is opined that India's provocative and aggressive development of its strategic nuclear and conventional warhead delivery systems having supersonic and hypersonic speeds have been intensified. This is very much evident from the rapid augmentation of the missile tests by India, especially in the last 2 months. With 9 missile tests in just 35 days, India has been trying to dominate the regional strategic environment while projecting its strategic and nuclear capabilities. This has emerged as one of the most destabilizing factors for the regional equation of strategic stability and nuclear deterrence equilibrium.

In this volume of the *SVI Foresight*, one of the articles opines that the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in military affairs has gained momentum in recent years. This has generated a competition and arms race with a special focus on utilizing AI in military strategies. In South Asia, India aspires to dominate the region in this domain by developing AI for military purposes. This has brought severe security implications for Pakistan's national security and broadened the spectrum of threats coming from India.

In the wake of the upcoming US presidential elections, the purported extension of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) for one year has gained considerable hype at the international level. Since it is the only remaining arms control agreement between the US and Russia which is set to expire in February 2021 there is an incessant debate at the international level about its fate. This is quite apparent from the recent assertions of both the US and Russian leadership in this regard. However, the author views that whatever would be the outcome of such assertions; the fate of New START has become more of a political agenda rather than the issue of international arms control and disarmament. Both the US and Russia, since they hold 90 percent of the world's nuclear arsenals need to act responsibly otherwise the new era of an arms race would be more drastic.

It is hoped that readers will find a good blend of articles focusing on various evolved aspects of the contemporary security discourse in South Asia.

The *SVI Foresight* team invites and highly encourages the contributions from the security and strategic community in the 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 the *SVI Foresight* electronic journal. You can find us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) and can also access the SVI [website](#).

Research Associate

Haris Bilal Malik

Imran Khan's Address at UNGA 75th Session: Exposing India's Fascist Ideology

Sher Bano

On 25th September 2020, Prime Minister Imran Khan virtually addressed the [75th session](#) of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Similar to his last year's address at the [UNGA 74th session](#), this has been a strong projection of Pakistan's appropriate diplomatic discourse on the Kashmir issue given the increased Indian belligerence. The Prime Minister has utilized this opportunity to expose the fascist ideology of Mr. Modi led BJP government's continued atrocities and brutalities in the Indian occupied Jammu Kashmir in front of the international community. In his address, he urged the international community to play its role to stop the oppression of innocent Kashmiris by the Indian state. Likewise, he has also emphasized the investigation of the grave human rights violations by the Indian forces that are involved in state terrorism. Key international countries especially the [US have lauded](#) Prime Minister Imran Khan's efforts for peace. By doing so, Prime Minister Imran Khan has increased his diplomatic stature and his willingness to solve this long-standing issue.

Exposing the RSS inspired "[Hindutva](#)" ideology of the BJP government has been one of the key agendas of his address. The Indian government has turned the whole valley into the largest prison in the world. He exposed that the real objective of BJP and RSS behind their brutal campaign against Kashmiris would likely change the demographic structure of this disputed region through the systematic marginalization of the Muslims. Highlighting the impacts of the global pandemic COVID-19, he said that though it was an opportunity to bring humanity together, it has increased global tensions and fanned nationalism. This has led to religious and racial hatred against vulnerable minorities in different places. This is further evident from the very fact that Muslims in India were blamed for spreading the coronavirus and were deprived of medical treatment. He further elaborated that such trends have also given rise to Islam phobia. In this regard, India is the only country in the world that has state-sponsored Islam phobia originated from the RSS ideology. Unfortunately, in India, the dream of creating a Hindu Rashtra has replaced the secularism of Nehru and Gandhi.

Recalling the events of the past, he said that in [1992](#) Babri Mosque was demolished by the RSS, Muslims were slaughtered in Gujarat in 2002 when Modi was the chief minister there, and in [2007 RSS](#) arsonists burnt alive nearly 50 Muslims aboard the 'Samjhota Express'. Quite recently, over [2 million](#) Muslims in Assam were stripped of their nationality by the adoption of the discriminatory law. He said that such events of the past have made it further evidence that the Hindutva ideology is all about marginalizing nearly 300 million Muslims of India. Fearing the sensitivity of the situation in Kashmir, Prime Minister Kashmir has rightly called it a 'Nuclear

flashpoint'. There cannot be a durable peace in South Asia until the Kashmir issue is resolved through international legitimacy. He further argued that to prevent the disastrous conflict, the UNSC must ensure the implementation of its resolutions like it did in the case of East Timor. He added that apart from the enforcement actions it must take steps to protect the innocent Kashmiris from an impending Indian genocide. The attempt of obliterating the Kashmiri identity is not only a violation of the UN charter but also a violation of the 4th Geneva Convention. It is a war crime to change the demographic structure of the occupied territory by the Indian government.

To further analyze, in state-sponsored Islam-phobia, as in India's case, the state utilizes its maximum resources to suppress the Muslim population. In such a system, even the law and justice system support the government against the Muslims. That is how the Indian government has been spreading hatred against Muslims by using its machinery. In various statements by the Indian statesmen, Muslims have been perceived as aliens and they try to inculcate Hindu nationalism into the consciousness of the Hindu nation. Similarly, through inhumane censorship by the Indian state in the occupied Jammu and Kashmir, India is trying to suppress the voice of innocent Kashmiris. This has been done by a complete communication lockdown to ensure that Kashmiri Muslims do not utter a word against Indian atrocities at any national or international forum. All these belligerent practices show that the BJP's extremist government in India is using Islam-phobia to keep Muslims on the periphery and maintain its monopoly. This fascist propaganda is spreading rapidly like a pathogen that would lead towards the marginalization of millions of Muslims even more. The skepticism on India's claim of secularism and the largest democracy of the world has become more validated. This is primarily because of the overriding fascist regime tendencies and agendas of Hindu supremacy. All these factors combined have been responsible for the perpetuation of religious intolerance and Islam-phobia, especially in recent years.

Summarizing it all, Prime Minister Imran Khan has effectively used the UN platform to expedite his diplomatic efforts to make the world aware of ongoing Indian atrocities in the occupied Jammu Kashmir. These have been further helpful in explaining the real agenda of BJP behind this illegal occupation. It was a great opportunity for him to urge the international community to take punitive action against the war crimes being committed by India. By doing so, he has brought the Kashmir issue as one of the top agenda items of the UNGA 75th session. Furthermore, it has appeared to be the right time to put pressure on India to stop genocide, state terrorism, and bloodshed of the oppressed people of Kashmir. The security environment in South Asia has become more complex especially since the year 2019. This has reduced the chances of one-on-one interaction of leaders of both the countries at the sidelines of such multilateral meetings. At the present, a strong diplomatic discourse at the international forums like the UNGA seems to be a plausible way out to voice against the genocide being carried out by the RSS backed BJP government of India. Even last year after the address of PM Imran Khan at

the UNGA 74th session, the US President Donald Trump had reasserted his concern over the situation of Kashmir. This has served as an acknowledgment of Pakistan's principled diplomatic stance over Kashmir.

<http://southasiajournal.net/imran-khans-address-at-unga-75th-session-exposing-indias-fascist-ideology/>

India's Back to Back Missile Tests and the Contemporary Notions of Nuclear Deterrence Equilibrium in South Asia

Haris Bilal Malik

The dynamics of nuclear deterrence in South Asia have been quite complex since the overt nuclearization of the region initiated by India. It had appeared as more of a strategic compulsion for Pakistan to maintain a credible nuclear deterrent posture to overcome the conventional and unconventional challenges from India. This was aimed at reinstating the balance of power in the region. Under this notion, Pakistan has come up with timely and calculated responses based on the full-spectrum deterrence approach in-line with the minimum credible deterrence. This has primarily ensured the nuclear deterrence equilibrium in the region, which prevails to date as well. However, in recent years, India's provocative and aggressive development of its strategic nuclear and conventional warhead delivery systems having supersonic and hypersonic speeds under its offensive notions of 'preemption' and 'splendid first strike' has been intensified. This has emerged as one of the most destabilizing factors for the regional equation of strategic stability and nuclear deterrence equilibrium. Such Indian notions would ultimately have long-lasting implications for the nuclear deterrence equilibrium in South Asia which over the years has been primarily ensured by Pakistan's credible nuclear force posture.

India's attempt to undermine the strategic stability and nuclear deterrence equilibrium of South Asia is further evident from the rapid augmentation of its missile tests. These include; indigenous developed hypersonic, supersonic, and subsonic speed ballistic, cruise, and anti-submarine missiles. The tests started in September this year with the test launch of the [Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle](#) (HSDTV). The vehicle was powered by an air-breathing scramjet engine. This technology as per the Indian estimates would serve as a key complement for its future hypersonic cruise missiles development. A test of indigenous developed [Anti-Tank Guided Missile](#) (ATGM) was also conducted in the same month but that remains less significant given the Indian offensive nuclear aspirations. Likewise, On September 24, India conducted a successful night test fire of one of its indigenously developed [Prithvi-II](#) short-range nuclear-capable ballistic missile. Subsequently, on September 30, India tested an extended range version of the [BrahMos](#) supersonic cruise missile having a reported range of 450 kilometers. The BrahMos is believed to be one of the fastest supersonic cruise missiles currently operational in the world.

India's obsession with missile tests is apparent in the month of October as well. In this regard, on October 3, India tested an advanced version of nuclear-capable ballistic missile '[Shaurya](#)'. The missile has a reported range of 800 kilometers. This is speculated as a [hypersonic missile](#) capable of achieving a speed of Mach 7.5. The missile is a surface-launched variant of

India's much-hyped [K-15](#) 'Sagarika' submarine-launched missile (SLBM) which has been operational since August 2018. Followed by this, on October 5, India has conducted a test of supersonic anti-submarine missile 'Supersonic Missile Assisted Release of Torpedo' ([SMART](#)). This is aimed at enhancing the stand-off capability of the Indian Navy in anti-submarine warfare (ASW). Indian security experts have been calling it a 'game-changer' in anti-submarine warfare that would significantly boost India's naval strategic capabilities. In the same vein, on October 9, India has successfully test-fired its first indigenously developed 'New Generation Anti-Radiation Missile; ([NAGRM](#)) 'Rudram-1' from a Su-30 MKI fighter jet. The 200 kilometers SEAD (Suppression of Enemy Air Defence) standoff missile can target surveillance and fire control radars of the adversary along with communications sites, and radio frequency emitting objects. Furthermore, it has a reported capability of neutralizing any deployed jamming platform of the adversary and simultaneously preventing its own system from getting jammed. Last but not the least, on October 12, India has tested an indigenously developed intermediate-range subsonic terrain hugging cruise missile '[Nirbhay](#)' having a range of 1000 kilometers. However, as per the Indian media reports the test has failed following some technical issues. Such a number of tests in just 35 days indicate that India has been trying to dominate the regional strategic environment by enhancing its strategic and nuclear capabilities.

To further analyze, India's such aggressive and offensive nuclear posture seems to be an attempt to challenge Pakistan's nuclear threshold in the prevalent regional security environment. As such, this would likely encourage India to carry out an offensive counter force first strike against Pakistan. In the same vein, it would provide India an edge vis-à-vis Pakistan's nuclear capabilities that already cover a broad spectrum of threats coming from India including its conventional superiority. Given the Indian eagerness to deploy these offensive strategic capabilities, Pakistan might not be in a much stronger position to deter India from using these sophisticated weapons in case of any crisis in the future. Also, against the backdrop of India's much-hyped notion of fighting a two-front war against Pakistan and China, India's recent attempt to conduct these tests back to back is quite significant. Thus, India's enhanced strategic nuclear capabilities would likely further undermine regional security and stability.

To sum up all, India's aggressive development of its strategic nuclear capabilities coupled with a broad range of warhead delivery systems has posed a serious threat to Pakistan's security. Notably, Pakistan's credible nuclear deterrence approach which over the years has evolved into 'full-spectrum deterrence' appears to be the decisive factor in the regional equation of nuclear deterrence equilibrium. However, India's offensive modernization of its strategic capabilities would make the region more vulnerable to conventional and nuclear conflicts. Significantly, India's eagerness to deploy these offensive weapons has become a considerable challenge for Pakistan. Though the practicality of this might remain questionable, on paper it would be a matter of just a few minutes for India to initiate a preemptive strike against Pakistan especially in the absence of a sophisticated countermeasure. Such an equation

would likely encourage India to mold the South Asian deterrence equilibrium in its favor. This would ultimately lead to deterrence instability in the region. In this regard, Pakistan needs to come up with the least possible counter measures to further ensure the deterrence stability in the region.

<http://southasiajournal.net/indias-back-to-back-missile-tests-and-the-contemporary-notions-of-nuclear-deterrence-equilibrium-in-south-asia/>

Artificial Intelligence in South Asia and Implications for Pakistan

Ahyousha Khan

Artificial Intelligence (AI) allows any system to perceive, interpret, and reason a given situation by acting physically or digitally. Today AI has wider use in medical, transport, economics, and military technologies. Most significantly, the use of AI in military affairs has gained momentum in recent years. This has brought serious concerns about its future implications on the national security, command and control systems, and strategic stability at the regional and international levels. The most pragmatic [statement](#) in this regard was probably given by the Russian President Vladimir Putin when he stated that whosoever would become a leader in AI would lead the world. This statement reflects that today states are driven towards this technology in a fear of being left out. This has generated a competition and arms race with a special focus on utilizing AI in military strategies. In South Asia, India aspires to dominate the region in this evolved domain as well. In this regard, India has been actively involved in developing AI for military purposes. Such Indian aspirations would ultimately affect the strategic stability in South Asia. This has brought severe security implications for Pakistan's national security and broadened the spectrum of threats coming from India.

One of the reasons behind the utilization of artificial intelligence in military technology is the improvements that it has brought to the existing military systems. For instance, the provision of better precision, intelligence gathering, detection, enhanced target recognition/vision, and deception has helped militaries to operate in an A2/AD environment. In contemporary military strategies, AI has been incorporated in UAVs, LAWS, missile defense systems, submarines, and air-crafts. Furthermore, AI uses big data, mitigates manpower/capability issues, and helps in decision making at much-enhanced speed with lesser dependence on input from humans. Therefore, it can be said that AI does not work alone but rather by combining with other technologies it has enhanced their features and characteristics. From the year 2008-2017, the US alone spent [694 billion on AI](#)-specific technologies. This indicates that the key states intend to improve their economies and military technologies while developing AI.

In the South Asian context, there is no doubt that India is a bigger country with huge market potential. In the domain of AI, [according to some reports and estimates](#), India is an emerging market of venture capital investment in AI-related technologies with a worth of \$ 50.0 billion. To achieve a military advantage in AI, India has already established a [Center for AI and Robotics \(CAIR\) in DRDO](#). It has the mandate to undertake AI in the defense sector. This is aimed at enabling AI-based military systems in decision making, geographical visualization, and information, tracking, and object detection. On the economic front, the estimated annual revenue of AI in India is \$ [180 million](#). Moreover, in India's Land Warfare doctrine of 2018,

there has been a significant emphasis on AI and its integration in military systems. Against the backdrop of the much-hyped notion of a two-front war against China and Pakistan, India has accelerated its endeavors to modernize its military and adopt modern technologies against its adversaries. In this regard, the then Indian [Army Chief Bipin Rawat](#) in one of his addresses in 2019 has emphasized to employ AI in military systems before it is too late. Other than this, India has been developing the Multi-Agent Robotics Framework, which would likely act as a team of soldiers and assist the Indian Army. Moreover, around [200 DAKSH Autonomous Robots](#) are also with the Indian army capable of defusing the bombs in dangerous situations. These have been categorized as Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV). India is also [collaborating with Japan](#) in the field of Robotics and AI and its applications in military systems. In the same vein, India has been working towards the more sophisticated uses of AI in the military as well. These include; image interpretation, target recognition, the objective range, and kill zone assessment of missiles, and utilization of robots in more ungraded forms.

In all, such actions by India under its security imperatives and hegemonic aspirations would have devastating consequences for regional security. After 1998, Pakistan has tried to maintain deterrence stability in the region by qualitative improvement in its strategic capability vis-à-vis India. However, with the emergence of sophisticated technologies like AI and India's huge investment in it, despite its limited resources Pakistan would be compelled to spend on AI. As not doing so might tilt the balance of power in India's favor and affect the deterrence stability in the region as a whole. The reason being, AI-enabled missiles, and satellite systems can visualize, track, and precision strike its targets. Anti-submarine technology and swarms can find submarines and attack them, which reduces the survivability of deterrence stability. Simultaneously it would likely embolden India with a great capability in anti-submarine warfare. Today Pakistan has realized the significance of AI and has started initiatives like 'Presidential Initiative for Artificial Intelligence and Computing' ([PIAIC](#)), National Center of AI ([NCAI](#)), and the [Department of Robotics and Intelligent Machine Learning](#) at the NUST. Yet, there seem to be some hurdles for Pakistan to further excel in this domain. The biggest of all these hurdles is the economic cost of developing AI and its integration with the military systems. This requires more allocation of financial resources and that cannot be achieved without a strong economic backbone. Nevertheless, more resources are needed to be allocated for initiatives and technologies related to AI. At the international level, there is an ongoing debate on the regularization of AI through laws and treaties, though in the pretext of preventing its military use, to safeguard the interests of key international players that have mastered the AI. Pakistan needs to be well aware of this international politico-strategic trend.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/19102020-artificial-intelligence-in-south-asia-and-implications-for-pakistan-oped/>

The Purported Extension of New START: Reality or Political Bluff

Haris Bilal Malik

The [New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty](#) (New START) is the only remaining arms control agreement between the US and Russia. Signed in 2010, the treaty was supposed to reduce the number of deployed strategic nuclear warheads of the two world's largest nuclear weapons states. Under treaty [obligations](#), both the countries are restricted to 1550 warheads, 700 deployed missiles, and 800 deployed and non-deployed launchers. The treaty further allows on-site inspection for verification of compliance. However, over the years the adherence to this treaty and its role in preventing arms race has remained a skeptic. This is further evident from the least interest which in recent years both the countries specifically the US has shown to extend the treaty for another five years. Based on this, it would be of no surprise if the treaty ends up like the [Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces](#) (INF) and [Anti-Ballistic Missiles](#) (ABM) treaties. Furthermore, as the treaty is set to expire in February 2021, there is an incessant debate at the international level about its fate. This is quite apparent from the recent assertions of both the US and Russian leadership in this regard. Specifically, in the wake of the upcoming US presidential elections, the likelihood of its purported extension for one year has gained considerable hype in international media. Whatever would be the outcome of such assertions, the fate of New START has become more of a political agenda rather than the issue of international arms control and disarmament.

Quite recently, on [October 16](#) Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that Russia is willing to unconditionally extend the New START for one year. In this regard, the US has demanded from Russia to freeze its total number of nuclear warheads for an interim period. The US has rejected this Russian proposal by terming it a 'non-starter' and reiterated that any extension would be subject to suspension of all the strategic and tactical nuclear warheads by Russia. Previously, the inclusion of China has been the main condition being emphasized by the US. Subsequently, on [October 20](#) Russia has offered to freeze its total number of nuclear warheads as a 'political obligation' if the US follows the same suit. This has been [portrayed](#) as Russian President Putin's commitment towards extending the last major arms control treaty with the US at least for one year. At the same time, this implies that Russia intends to extend the treaty in the current form until a new arms control agreement is reached. Furthermore, it has been speculated that both countries might agree on a short-term extension of the New START.

To further analyze, it seems that the US has also modified its stance on the extension of the New START. Initially, the US has insisted to include China in a new arms control agreement that would replace the New START. As such, it has appeared as one of the main pre-conditions by the US. This was evident during the first round of US-Russia bilateral nuclear talks being held

in June this year in [Vienna](#). The US had sent an open invitation to China to join the talks. The proposal was rejected by China based on the assertion that its nuclear warheads are quite less in number as compared to those of the US and Russia. Despite this, the US insisted on China to be included in the new agreement. Very unexpected, Chinese flags were being put on the negotiations table in its absence during the meeting. Similarly, the second round of these talks was held in [August](#) this year in Vienna but that too ended without any breakthrough. The obsession of the US to include China in a new nuclear agreement is believed to be one of the reasons that have derailed the nuclear arms control talks.

In such an environment, a new round of negotiations between the US and Russia was held in early [October](#) in Helsinki to discuss the future of New START. This round has been viewed by many as a breakthrough after months of difficult talks. This might narrow the gap between the two sides over the fate of the New START. In the wake of upcoming US Presidential Elections, it seems that the US has backed off from the most emphasized precondition of including China in the agreement. Since then, the major focus of the US has shifted towards urging Russia to freeze its nuclear warheads. These also include the tactical weapons; which are not under the limit by the New START, since it only restricts the strategic nuclear warheads. This indicates that the 'China Factor' is no more dominating the US stance at least for the time being. Furthermore, the challenging re-election campaign has driven Mr. Trump to desire for a foreign policy achievement in the form of a standalone agreement with Russia for a shorter time and then deal with China later on. With just a few days remaining, the projection of such an approach might benefit him in the elections.

Hence summarizing it all, the fate of the New START remains uncertain to date. The recent debate around the purported extension of the New START appears to be more of a political bluff by the Trump administration. In the recent past, the deliberate emphasis of the US to include China in the new arms control agreement seemed more like a delay tactic and least interest to extend the New START with Russia. Furthermore, if both the countries fail to meet an agreement on the extension of this treaty, there would be no legally binding constraint on deployed strategic nuclear warheads, missiles, and launchers for the first time since 1972. Such a situation would likely further intensify the arms race between the two of the world's largest nuclear-weapon states. In the same vein, it might encourage other countries like India to follow the same path which already maintains an offensive nuclear posture. This would serve as a severe setback for the international non-proliferation and disarmament arrangements. Both the US and Russia which hold 90 percent of the world's nuclear arsenals need to act responsibly otherwise the new arms race era would be more drastic.

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