

# **JOURNAL OF SECURITY & STRATEGIC ANALYSES**



**STRATEGIC VISION  
INSTITUTE**

**JSSA**

**Winter 2020**

**Volume VI, Number 2**

## **The Transforming Strategic Cultural Equation Between India and Pakistan**

Dr. Zulfqar Khan and Dr. Nasir Mehmood

## **Counterforce Temptations in South Asia**

Dr. Adil Sultan

## **Flux in the Middle East and Nuclear Israel**

Dr. Rubina Waseem

## **Indian Strategic Doctrinal Transformation: Trends and Trajectory**

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## **Pakistan's Governing Elite and CPEC: An Elitist Perspective**

Dr. Khurram Iqbal

**Journal of  
Strategic Vision Institute (SVI)**

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# Journal of Security and Strategic Analyses (JSSA)

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**SVI Journal**

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

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Strategic Vision Institute (SVI) is an autonomous, multidisciplinary and non-partisan institution established in January 2013. SVI aims to project strategic foresight on issues of national and international importance through dispassionate, impartial and independent research, analyses and studies.

*Journal of Security and Strategic Analyses (JSSA)* is a bi-annual premier research publication of the SVI. It primarily focuses on the contemporary issues of security and strategic studies with a multi-disciplinary perspective.

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## ACRONYMS

AAD	Army Air Defence
AESA	Active Electronically Scanned Array
AEWACS	Airborne Early Warning and Control System
AMD	Air and Missile Defence
ASAT	Anti-Satellite Weapons
ATV	Advanced Technology Vehicle
BECA	Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CAF	Commander of Air Force
CASD	Continuous at Sea Deterrent
CD	Conference on Disarmament
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CMD	Credible Minimum Deterrence
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
CSD	Cold Start Doctrine
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty

CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty Organization
DND	Draft Nuclear Doctrine
DRDO	Defence Research and Development Organization
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FMCT	Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty
FSD	Full Spectrum Deterrence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GWOT	Global War on Terror
HEU	Highly Enriched Uranium
HSTDV	Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IAF	Indian Air Force
IAI	Israel Aerospace Industries
IBGs	Integrated Battle Groups
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
IGDMP	Integrated Guided Missile Development Program
IMI	Israel Military Industries
IOR	Indian Ocean Region

IUHDSS	Integrated Under-Water Harbor Defence and Surveillance System
LAC	Line of Actual Control
LCA	Light Combat Aircraft
LOC	Line of Control
LRSAM	Low Range Surface to Air Missiles
LWD	Land Warfare Doctrine
MENWFZ	Middle Eastern Nuclear Weapon Free Zone
MIRV	Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicle
MRSAM	Medium Range Surface to Air Missiles
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCW	Network Centric Warfare
NEOs	Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations
NFU	No First Use
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSA	National Security Advisor
NSAB	National Security Advisory Board
NSC	National Security Council

NWS	Nuclear Weapon State
OODA	Observe, Orient, Decide and Act
PAD	Prithvi Air Defence
PAF	Pakistan Air Force
PAOs	Pro-Active Operations
PML-N	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)
PTI	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf
RAPID	Reorganized Army Plains Infantry Division
RAW	Research Analysis Wing
RSCT	Regional Security Complex Theory
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SLCMs	Submarine Launched Cruise Missiles
SRBMs	Short Range Ballistic Missiles
SSBN	Submersible Ship Ballistic Missile Nuclear
SSN	Submersible Ship Nuclear
TNWs	Tactical Nuclear Weapons
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UPKC	US-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor



WMD

Weapon of Mass Destruction

WMDFZ

Weapon of Mass Destruction Free  
Zone

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## PREFACE

The *Journal of Security and Strategic Analyses (JSSA)* endeavours to critically analyse the contemporary security and geo-strategic environment at national, regional and global level to offer comprehensive, impartial and unbiased analyses. The SVI brings Volume 6, Number 2 (Vol. VI, No. 2) of its premier publication with an aim to serve as a primary source of discussion and formulation of academic research on the current political, strategic and security discourse.

This issue includes five research papers and two book reviews written by academicians, eminent scholars and skilled researchers. This issue covers significant research areas highlighting the Transforming Strategic Cultural Equation between India and Pakistan, Flux in the Middle East and Nuclear Israel, Counterforce Temptations in South Asia, Indian Strategic Doctrinal Transformation: Trends and Trajectory, and Pakistan's Governing Elite and CPEC: An Elitist Perspective.

The first research paper titled "The Transforming Strategic Cultural Equation between India and Pakistan" explains how the disproportionate sizes and divergent strategic cultural ethos and moorings between India and Pakistan have always kept them at sharp edge. The rationales of both countries to produce nuclear weapons were divergent. The paper argues that the focus of India's war machine has always been Pakistan, hence sustenance of an effective nuclear deterrent is critical for Pakistan's survival. It suggests that Pakistan's response to India on February 27, 2019 was necessary due to the massive concentration of Indian war machine around Pakistan under Cold Start Doctrine. There was no "transitive" or alternative option available for Pakistan, therefore it had to act with "instrumental rationality" that is to implicitly convey to India to back off or face the unforeseen circumstances. The author suggests that it has become necessary for Pakistan to

supplement its economic and military disadvantage vis-à-vis India by having a dynamic and determined nuclear deterrent in order to prevent India from any misadventure.

The second paper of the journal “Counterforce Temptations in South Asia” argues that India’s counterforce temptations are guided by the military, political, technological and ideological imperatives. Looking at the recent statements by senior Indian officials questioning the rationale of maintaining no first use, it is quite evident that India has formally given up its NFU posture and could be considering the option of pre-emptive counterforce strike against Pakistan. The research highlights that Indian military frustrated by the lack of credible military options against Pakistan’s nuclear deterrent is opting for some other options to create space for the limited war fighting doctrine. India’s military modernization along with doctrinal ambiguities has further reinforced the perception that India might be developing nuclear as well as conventional counterforce options in order to deter Pakistan. The author suggests that both states need to resume their stalled process of dialogue that was based on the common understanding that stable nuclear deterrence contributes to peace and stability in the region and there is no space for the conventional war, however “limited” between the two nuclear armed adversaries in South Asia.

The third paper “Flux in the Middle East and Nuclear Israel” highlights the nuclear behaviour of Israel and discusses its impact on the already volatile security environment in the region. The author argues that when one state increases its arsenals, it creates the security dilemma for other regional actors because all the states cannot maximize their security concurrently. Moreover, the article argues that the normalization of relations with Israel by the Arab states would affect Israel’s opacity regarding its possession of nuclear weapons. It suggests that Israel might increase the flux in

already unstable nature of Middle East. The debate in the article covers Israel's nuclear behaviour while keeping in view the international non-proliferation initiatives. It claims that if Israel chose to declare its nuclear status it might force other states to acquire nuclear weapon which would disturb the regional stability.

The fourth paper "Indian Strategic Doctrinal Transformation: Trends and Trajectory" provides an in-depth analysis of India's doctrinal transformations in its strategic thinking over the period of time. The authors address the evolution of this transformation by discussing in detail the major military doctrines such as Nehru doctrine, Sunderji doctrine, Cold-Start doctrine, Indian maritime doctrine, Indian Land Warfare doctrine and Indian Joint Armed Forces Doctrine. According to the authors, the continuous doctrinal transformation aims to seek more synchronized modernization of military, create synergy to fill the operational gaps and enhance agility for swift manoeuvrability under the nuclear overhang. The study leads to the conclusion that the Nehruvian influence over Indian strategic thinking has reduced significantly under the BJP government with the adoption of more hawkish strategies. Such strategies adopted by the BJP are contrary to the behaviour of a responsible nuclear-weapon state.

The last paper "Pakistan's Governing Elite and CPEC: An Elitist Perspective" aims to dissect the trajectory of Pakistan's elite responses to China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The author argues that the CPEC has created friction among the Pakistani elite that have been historically more aligned to the US. The author has used the elite theory to observe why the influential segment of the country's elite class opposes Beijing's ingress in the country's strategic, economic and cultural spheres. The author is of the view that the elite differences over the CPEC are yet to evolve into a conflict. However, sometimes theoretically galvanizing conflicts paves the way for basic settlement among the warring elite

factions. The author suggests that elite settlement may not lead to a durable liberal democracy in Pakistan but can bring order and stability for the smooth implementation of CPEC.

The *JSSA* conforms to the standards of HEC guidelines/rules of publication and seeks to maintain the general quality of the contributions as per the international standards. It is recognized in Y-category by the HEC-HJRS and aspires to become the HEC top ranking journal. The quality aspect remains and will always be the prime concern of the SVI, supplemented by careful selection of manuscripts, wherein the readers will be able to find a collection of well written academically sound research papers that have attempted to methodically examine various strategic and security issues in detail. It is being hoped that the readers will be able to benefit from the analyses presented in this issue. The SVI plans to bring out subsequent volumes of *JSSA* on a regular basis and is looking forward to receiving high quality manuscripts exclusively written for the *JSSA*.

# **RESEARCH PAPERS**





## The Transforming Strategic Cultural Equation Between India and Pakistan

Dr. Zulfqar Khan and Dr. Nasir Mehmood\*

### Abstract

*Indian war machine's focus remains on Pakistan. It sufficiently amplifies the imperative of sustenance of an effective nuclear deterrent posture, which is critical for the very survival of Pakistan. Therefore, any lacklustre Pakistani response would definitely emit wrong signal to the adversary, which would compromise the effectiveness of Pakistan's nuclear deterrent posturing. Pakistan's response on February 27, 2019 to Indian air strikes was absolutely necessary. Although, there was a possibility of something going astray at any time/place. However, in Pakistani viewpoint, this risk was worth taking due to massive concentration of Indian war machine under Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) strategy around Pakistan. Both countries' disproportionate sizes and divergent strategic cultural ethos and moorings have too kept at the sharp edge since their independence. The rationale of India and Pakistan to produce nuclear weapons were divergent. India to end the international "nuclear apartheid" and to enhance its NWS stature. Pakistan to protect its independence and sovereignty from the perceived security threat from*

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*India. Pakistan is compelled to craft a compatible and dynamic military strategy so as to neutralize India's aggressive military posturing. This compels Pakistan to supplement its economic and military disadvantage through a determined and dynamic nuclear deterrent posturing so as to prevent India from any military misadventure.*

**Keywords:** Strategic cultural ethos, Cold Start and Full Spectrum strategies, Nuclear deterrence, Security threat, Regional dynamics.

## **Introduction**

The paper argues that disproportionately stronger forces of one country vis-à-vis the weaker state either lead to induction of coercion or it may drag them toward the very edge thereby generating a spate of instability and crises. It may also subtly push them to craft dangerous annihilation strategies against each other backed by a variety of options to employ conventional and strategic forces. This paper has five sections and sub-sections to unpack the peculiar dynamics of India-Pakistan's conflict trajectory. First section focuses on *Strategy and Strategic Culture* that retraces the dynamics of both countries' strategic, historical, and religious baggage. Second section is titled *The Post-1998 to 2001-2002 Period*; third section is *-The Post-2001-2002 Military Standoff to the CSD and full spectrum strategies*; section four retraces the period from the inception of the *CSD and "Full spectrum" Doctrinal Wrangling to Pulwama-Balakot Crisis*; and the last section is *conclusion*, which succinctly sums up the empirical debate with critical analytical approach.

## **Strategy and Strategic Culture**

In the era of technological innovation and development, the concept of warfare has been dramatically transformed. Since the

time immemorial, the concept of strategy had merely focused on violence and fighting. Now, in the information age, the military weapons and other instruments of warfare, such as nanotechnology, satellites, nuclear and space weapons, artificial intelligence, and communication technologies would too exert immense and far-reaching influence on the crafting of military strategies of all the countries so as to fight a technological-centric warfare. The technological transformation between the “attack and defence’- as technology is equipped to offset the conventional forces equation with the technologically advanced conventional and strategic forces. In spite of military weapons’ lethality and development, strategy still tends to remain “inherently psychological activity”<sup>1</sup> in which the role of rational leader would remain predominant. Since “rationality” is largely influenced through the cultural ethos, deception, and the complex nature of human psychology,<sup>2</sup> it is relevant to mention that, in essence, strategy is crafted not only to fight a war but also “to coerce enemies.”<sup>3</sup> In the context of Indo-Pakistani military dynamics, the elements of coercion and enmity, it is argued, are the major factors. As both countries possess nuclear assets, but with disproportionate economic and military capabilities to annihilate each other “out of all proportion to any numerical input-whether that’s counting combatants or more broadly those that are the kill-chain.” This disproportionate destructive capability irrespective of the “scale of conventional force that any adversary can muster,”<sup>4</sup> has altered, if not nullified, India’s apparent plan to coerce Pakistan due to its disproportionate conventional forces advantage. In such a disproportionate military equation, Pakistan and Israel are two

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Payne, *Strategy Evolution and War: From Apes to Artificial Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2018): 14.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 136.

classical examples <sup>5</sup> – as both countries possess powerful adversaries, but, lack geographical depth to sustain any disproportionate conventional forces’ onslaught. Therefore, nuclear weapon is the power equalizing instrument for them.

### *Technology & Warfare*

With the technological and nuclear revolution, the dynamics of warfare and strategy have too changed. In order to implement such strategy, it is imperative to take countermeasures against the impending nuclear attack. Actually, the Cold War rivals – the United States (US) and the Soviet Union, had possessed assured second-strike capabilities to prevent nuclear attack<sup>6</sup> – as the empty threat of second-strike potentials to employ nuclear weapons would be ineffective and considered bluff. Only the mutual annihilation capabilities of the rivals would be an effective measure to cancel-out each other’s threats of attack, which incidentally, both India and Pakistan too presently possess. Obviously, they are constrained to observe the paradoxical “delicate balance of terror” equation against each other - as Albert Wohlstetter had aptly described it in his 1959 classic article.<sup>7</sup> However, it is imperative to understand: 1) technology is shifting the essence of “balance between scale and violence” between the states, including ideas and concepts of societies; 2) it can change the human “cognitive approach” towards warfare; 3) leads or encourages humans to abstract reasoning; and 4) led to development of some of the most lethal weapon systems, including thermonuclear assets that would further make it difficult to correctly “gauge the intentions” of rival state’s policymakers

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> See Bernard Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1959): 48.

<sup>7</sup> See Albert Wohlstetter, “The Delicate Balance of Terror,” *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 37: No. 2 (January 1959): 121.

minds.<sup>8</sup> In case of India and Pakistan, to correctly gauge their policymakers' minds is very difficult, particularly when they have a huge gulf of religious, cultural, different moral ethos, and historical baggage behind them. This wedge between them has further widened due to score of unresolved disputes, which has also impacted their strategy towards each other. Both have divergent historical inquiry and heritage to fall upon that is influencing their evolving strategies relating to warfare.

### *Strategic Culturally Based Study of International Relations*

In the 1970s, debate over the concept of strategic culture had emerged amongst the international relations academics. For instance, during the Cold War, Soviet Union and the US had started to refine the broader parameters of their nuclear war fighting strategies in which reportedly the US and the Soviet military leadership had exhibited tendency to evolve "a preference for pre-emptive, offensive uses of force that was deeply rooted in Russia's history of external expansionism and internal autocracy."<sup>9</sup> That "US, on the other hand, tended to exhibit a tendency towards a sporadic, messianic and crusading use of force that was deeply rooted in the moralism" and the Western political thought.<sup>10</sup> In case of India-Pakistan, the strategic culture's influence has been of great political and strategic significance. In fact, it has impacted the essential nurturing of the "strategic behaviour" of both countries' policymakers. In essence, "everything a security community does, if not a manifestation of strategic culture, is at least an example of behaviour effected by culturally shaped, or encultured, people, organizations, procedures, and weapons."<sup>11</sup> In fact, strategic

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<sup>8</sup> Payne, *Strategy Evolution*: 91.

<sup>9</sup> Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture," *International Security* Vol. 19: No. 4 (Spring 1995): 32.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>11</sup> Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999): 132.

culture-related complexities happen due to different structures and cultures of various countries. Contemporary scholars have evolved a mixture of definitions so as to cogently explain the dynamics behind states' strategic culture and their policy formulation processes. Jack Snyder writes that strategic culture is "the sum of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour that members of a strategic national community share with regard to nuclear strategy."<sup>12</sup> He further explains that state's behaviour is associated with different emotional responses that in return constitutes a certain environment in which the policymakers and the security establishment perceive threat from the adversary, which then impels them to formulate strategy to convince the adversary desisting from a certain course of action. Strategic culture, an analytical and intellectual tool package, is the sum of ideas that coalesces unique group of values, attitudes, and behaviours pertaining to the use of force, retained by a community and gradually emerged over a long historical period. Moreover, it is "not a permanent or static feature. Rather, a strategic culture is shaped by formative experiences and can alter, either fundamentally or piecemeal, at critical junctures in that collective's experiences."<sup>13</sup>

Johnston explains that strategic culture is the "ideational milieu which limits behaviour choices" from which "one could derive specific predictions about strategic choice."<sup>14</sup> Environment is

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<sup>12</sup> See Jack L. Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Nuclear Options* (Santa Monica.: Rand Corporation, 1977): 8; and Jack L. Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993). 27.

<sup>13</sup> K. Longhurst, "The Concept of Strategic Culture," in G. Kuemmel and D. P. Andreas (eds.), *Military Sociology: The Richness of a Discipline* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2000): 200.

<sup>14</sup> Cited in Jeffrey S. Lantis and Darryl Howlett, "Strategic Culture," in John Baylis, James J. Wirtz and Colin S. Gray (eds.), *Strategy in the Contemporary World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 80.

additionally shaped by the “international military behaviour, particularly those concerning decision to go to war, preferences for offensive, expansionist or defensive modes of warfare, and levels of wartime casualties that would be acceptable,” observes Steven Rosen.<sup>15</sup>

In this context, Johnston explains that strategic culture is essentially determined by strategic community, which is responsible to craft well-calibrated response strategies, which at the end would tend to significantly impact the overall societal thinking, organizational environment, attitudes and behaviour.<sup>16</sup> While some scholars, including Ken Booth and Russell Trood explain strategic culture as amalgam of “habits regarding the threat and use of force which have their roots in such fundamental influences as geo-political setting, history, and culture.” This in their viewpoint “persists over time, and exerts some influence on the formation and execution of strategy.”<sup>17</sup> Therefore, one can safely say that, in case of India-Pakistan, their history and strategic cultural ethics were too ingrained in both countries’ “strategic preferences that are rooted in the early or formative experiences of the state, and are influenced to some degree, by the philosophical, political, cultural and cognitive characteristics of the state and its elites.”<sup>18</sup>

### *Cultural Divide Between India and Pakistan*

The history of both countries was deeply influenced by divergent strategic cultures that had persisted and consequently impacted their policymaking elites’ preferences for foreign and security

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> See J. L. Johnston, K. M. Kartchner and J. A. Larsen (eds.), *Strategic Culture and Weapons of Mass Destruction: Culturally Based Insights into Comparative national Security Policymaking* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): 58.

<sup>17</sup> Ken Booth and Russell Trood, eds. *Strategic Cultures in Asia Pacific Region* (London: McMillan, 1999): 4.

<sup>18</sup> Johnston, “Thinking about Strategic Culture,” 34.



policies. These strategic values were then echoed through the “nation’s traditions, values, attitudes, patterns of behaviour, habits, symbols, achievements and particular ways of adapting to the environment and solving problems with respect to the threat and use of force.”<sup>19</sup> In reality, the strategic cultural ethos have “deep roots within a particular stream of historical experience,” remarked Colin Gray, which is afterward manifested and “provides the milieu within which strategy is debated.”<sup>20</sup> Obviously, all these factors subsequently influence country’s political discourse, military doctrines, defence, and strategic community’s threat perceptions vis-à-vis adversary thereby inspiring the defence organizations at the centre stage of security policy making processes, including determining the very foundation of civil-military relations of the country.<sup>21</sup> All these aspects then generate a state of interdependence between the political and military elites institutions that consequently make them keepers of country’s strategic culture particularly in the foreign relations, crafting of strategies, and defence policymaking processes.<sup>22</sup> It deeply influences the states policy dynamics, which then becomes a predominant factor in implanting institutionalization of military and political elites’ influence upon the defence and security policymaking issues. Such elite’s policymaking then internally and externally influences country’s security architecture vis-à-vis rival(s). The subsequent sections of the paper would briefly

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<sup>19</sup> Ken Booth, “The Concept of Strategic Culture: Implications for Nuclear Options,” in Carl Jacobsen (ed.), *Strategic Power: USA/USSR* (London: Macmillan, 1990): 121.

<sup>20</sup> Colin Gray, “National Style in Strategy: The American Example,” *International Security* Vol. 6: No.2 (Fall 1981): 35.

<sup>21</sup> See Dima Adamsky, *Culture of Military Innovation: The Impact of Cultural Factors on the Revolution in Military Affairs in Russia, the US, and Israel* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010): 34.

<sup>22</sup> For discussion on “interdependent relationship” see Thomas U. Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany and Japan* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998): 1.

recapitulate the doctrinal transformation of both countries after the nuclear tests of 1998.

### **The Post-1998 to 2001-2002 Period**

#### *India*

As argued in the preceding section, the India-Pakistan's strategic cultural ethos were quite deep-rooted and diametrically opposite to each other. For instance, India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, after accepting the partition plan of British India on June 3, 1947, stated that: "For generations we have dreamt and struggled for a free, independent and united India."<sup>23</sup> Nehru also remarked that the "proposal to allow certain parts to secede if they so will is painful for any of us to contemplate."<sup>24</sup> He prophesied: "It may be that in this way we shall reach united India sooner than otherwise."<sup>25</sup> Whereas, Mohammed Ali Jinnah of Pakistan observed that both Hindus and Muslims "neither intermarry nor inter-dine together and, indeed, they belong to two different civilizations...they have different epics, different heroes, and different episodes."<sup>26</sup> This vividly created a clear fault-line that future leadership of India and Pakistan steadfastly followed. In fact, it laid-down the foundation of both countries' hostilities that

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<sup>23</sup> See Pandit Nehru's broadcast on the partition of India, "Indian Independence: Partition Source 7," June 3, 1947, *British Library*, <http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelpregion/asia/india/indianindependence/indiapakistan/partition7/>.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> K Sarwar Hasan (ed.), *The Transfer of Power: Documents on the Foreign Policy of Pakistan* (Karachi: Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, December 1966): 236-237.

<sup>26</sup> The cultural difference between Muslim minority and the Hindu majority in India was thoroughly discussed by K K Aziz. He indicated thirteen factors that had eventually helped the Muslim dominated states of British India to raise their voices in favour of a separate homeland. For further study, see K. K. Aziz, *The Making of Pakistan: A Study in Nationalism* (London: Chato and Windu, 1967); and Stephen Hay (ed.), *Sources of Indian Traditions: Modern India and Pakistan* (New Delhi: Viking by Penguin Books India Ltd., 1991): 229-230.

continue to the present-day. Essentially, the tit-for-tat nuclear testing of 1998, paradoxically, was too a clear reflection of their inimical relationship. Furthermore, their bilateral relations had essentially doggedly traversed on divergent trajectories, which inherently has propensity to “misfire” due to their opposing “beliefs” and foreign and security policy objectives.<sup>27</sup>

The element of “beliefs” and “misfire” also remained a predominant factor behind crafting of their post-nuclearization military and nuclear policy as well. It was clearly a visible influencing factor behind both countries’ opposing nuclear strategies. Moreover, culture is an alternative to a rational approach and conception of reasoning.<sup>28</sup> In 1998, India’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government after conducting nuclear tests, considered it an “inevitable” development and “a continuation of policies from almost the earliest years of independence” remarked India’s then senior advisor on defence and foreign Affairs to Prime Minister Jaswant Singh.<sup>29</sup> He maintained that, “the first 50 years of Indian independence reveal that the country’s moralistic nuclear policy and restraint paid no measurable dividends, except resentment that India was being discriminated against.”<sup>30</sup> It marked the overt nuclearization of South Asia. Singh furthermore unequivocally stated: “if the Permanent Five (P-5) continue to employ nuclear weapons as an international currency of force and power, why should India voluntarily devalue its own state power and national security.”<sup>31</sup> This in his perspective would have been

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<sup>27</sup> Robert Jervis, “Deterrence and Perception,” in Steven E. Miller (ed.), *Strategy and Nuclear Deterrence: An International Security Reader* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984): 59.

<sup>28</sup> Terry Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000): 57.

<sup>29</sup> Jaswant Singh, “Against Nuclear Apartheid,” *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 77: No. 5 (September/October 1998): 41.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

submission to indefinite “nuclear apartheid.” In the same vein, he claimed that now “India is a nuclear-weapon state,” and that it is not “a status for others to grant” rather it is “an objective reality.”<sup>32</sup>

After the nuclear tests of May 1998, India’s National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) was set-up in November under Brajesh Mishra, the first National Security Advisor (NSA) - with intent to strengthen country’s National Security Council (NSC), and to evolve nuclear doctrine for India. In August 1999, India’s “Draft Nuclear Doctrine” (DND) was published - with apparent intent to move away from the recessed deterrence to a credible minimum deterrence. However, it was closely linked to a policy of assured retaliation based on a nuclear triad capability. The DND was taken as India’s official “no-first-use” (NFU) nuclear policy. Albeit, the DND also had a provision to rapidly *transform* from peacetime mode to a deployed status in “the shortest possible time,”<sup>33</sup> which further made NFU less credible in Pakistani perspective. The former Indian Foreign Secretary (2006–09) and National Security Advisor (2010–14) indicated India’s probable intent to further amend the DND, and to add provision of adopting a counterforce pre-emptive strategy along with its apparent plan to fight a limited war against nuclear-armed Pakistan.<sup>34</sup> Since drafting of the DND (1999), it was last amended in 2003.

According to one Indian scholar: “the first generation of India’s nuclear strategists were largely minimalists, valuing deterrence by punishment. Though this deterrence approach made its way into

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 46, 49.

<sup>33</sup> Ali Ahmed, “India’s Nuclear Doctrine: Strategic Direction or Drift?” *South Asian Voices* (December 17, 2018) <https://southasianvoices.org/india-nuclear-doctrine-strategic-direction-or-drift/>

<sup>34</sup> See Shivshankar Menon, *Choices: Inside the Making of India’s Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2016): 67. Also see Prakash Menon, *The Strategy Trap: India and Pakistan under the Nuclear Shadow* (New Delhi: Wisdom Tree, 2018): 42.

the official doctrine intact, in an egregious intervention reportedly by generalist bureaucrats, the term ‘massive’ was inserted into the official doctrine.”<sup>35</sup> The author further elaborated: “while this is aligned with deterrence by punishment, it detracts from credibility in that it is not possible for India to follow through on it, for two reasons.” The first factor was “Pakistan’s vertical proliferation has over time ruled out success of first-strike levels of attack.” The second was “the regional environmental consequences, which militate against deterrence by punishment based on a counter value strike.”<sup>36</sup> The author further elaborates:

Strategic direction requires a shift away from India’s official nuclear doctrine to a strategically sustainable one. India’s nuclear doctrine cannot credibly continue to project that it would retaliate with higher order strikes to any form of nuclear first use against it.... And if indeed there has been a doctrinal shift, that it remains unacknowledged testifies to India’s strategic drift rather than strategic direction. India must shift back to doctrinal transparency to clarify whether it is strategically wise or strategically bereft.<sup>37</sup>

Coming back to 1999, India-Pakistan fought their first post-nuclearization war in the Kargil region of disputed Kashmir; and in 2001-2002 the Twin Peaks crisis erupted. After the Twin Peaks crisis, in 2003, India amended its nuclear policy and added the word “massive” retaliation against the use of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons on its military personnel anywhere in the world.

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<sup>35</sup> Ahmed, “India’s Nuclear Doctrine.”

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

This was a policy departure with apparent option to strike counter value targets.

Ostensibly, India was not inclined to tie its hands with the term “credible minimum deterrence,” which would compromise its nuclear policy, and secondly, it would facilitate it to obstinately focus on its Advanced Technology Vehicle (ATV) programme to develop nuclear ballistic missiles and nuclear-powered submarines so as to establish strategic nuclear triad with objective intent to robustly strengthen India’s doctrine – not only against the regional countries, but, also against the “permanent five” who had sustained a “nuclear apartheid” since the dawn of the nuclear age.

The development of India’s nuclear deterrent policy has gradually evolved from 1998 to 2020 under the stewardship of BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (1999 to 2004), except with the ten-year rule of the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (from 2004 to 2014). This is a clear reflection of the BJP-led government’s approach to transform the very trajectory of India’s foreign and security, particularly, nuclear policies. The under mentioned sub-section of Pakistan would indicate that there is a lack of doctrinal clarity persisting between India and Pakistan, which is making the entire nuclear paradigm of mutually assured destruction dangerously murkier.

### *Pakistan*

In the case of Pakistan, since 1947 it fought three wars with India. The 1971 war had led to separation of the former East Pakistan, which then became Bangladesh. The traumatic experience of 1971 war and the 1974 Indian nuclear test gave impetus to Pakistan’s policy to develop nuclear weapons as a weapon of deterrence in

order to prevent repetition of 1971-type defeat.<sup>38</sup> In 1977, the Republican administration of the former President Ford suspended economic and military assistance to Pakistan for its alleged nuclear weapons program. However, in the late 1970s, the US President, Jimmy Carter clamped the Glenn-Symington Amendment against Pakistan.<sup>39</sup> In 1985, the Pressler Amendment was specifically added as a provision to the US Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, under which, the US president now annually had to certify that Pakistan was not in possession of any “nuclear explosive devices” as a mandatory condition to qualify to receive military assistance.<sup>40</sup> In essence, the Pressler Amendment specified that military assistance to Pakistan would only continue to flow if there was no clear evidence of the production of nuclear explosive devices by Islamabad. However, Pakistan continued to develop its nuclear weapons programme due to India’s consistent efforts to conduct more nuclear tests with intent to declare itself a nuclear weapon state (NWS). Throughout the 1980s to 1998, Pakistan continued to closely monitor India’s nuclear weapons-orientated program, which ultimately led to the end of “nuclear apartheid” in 1998 - to use Jaswant Singh’s terminology.<sup>41</sup> On the other hand, by that time, Pakistan too had produced a sufficient quantity of weapons-grade fissile material and perfected indigenous research and development regarding production of nuclear warheads.<sup>42</sup> However, both Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush’s (senior) administrations had continued to provide military aid to

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<sup>38</sup> For comparative study of Indian and Pakistani nuclear weapon programmes see, Zulfqar Khan, “The Development of Overt Nuclear Weapon States in South Asia,” (PhD Diss., University of Bradford, 2000).

<sup>39</sup> See Rodney W. Jones et al., *Tracking Nuclear Proliferation: A Guide in Maps and Charts* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, 1998): 131.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>41</sup> Jaswant Singh, “Against Nuclear Apartheid,” *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 77: No. 5 (Sept/Oct, 1998): 41-52.

<sup>42</sup> Khan, “The Development of Overt,” 192.

Pakistan until the fiscal year 1989 when the US President refused to certify that Pakistan's activities did not constitute actual production of nuclear explosive device. The US aid to Pakistan remained suspended in the interim period – from 1989 to 1998. After the nuclear tests, sanctions were imposed on Pakistan (The October 1999 military coup again led to invocation of fresh sanctions).

After 1998 nuclear tests, Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee, in a statement in the *Lok Sabha*, claimed that India possessed a “Big bomb,” and declared India a NWS. Vajpayee furthermore remarked: “it is not a conferment we seek nor is it a status for others to grant” to India. Vajpayee also emphasized on granting a *de jure* nuclear weapon state status to India. Certainly, it was not acceptable to the Pakistani policymakers. Furthermore, Pakistan was also repeatedly being threatened by the Indian leadership. Hence, Pakistan considered the “vague promises of enhanced economic support” of the US without any credible “guarantees against conventional or nuclear attack by India,” obviously insufficient to forego its nuclear weapons option. In reaction, Pakistani leadership decided to respond to the Indian tests on May 28 and 30, 1998.<sup>43</sup> In Pakistani perspective, India's aggressive statements and demands for the NWS status was clearly a reflection of BJP's Hindu chauvinism, pride and hatred towards Pakistan. Obviously, Pakistan's non-testing of nuclear weapons would have melted its nuclear deterrence strategy into a “hot air.”<sup>44</sup> The international community had also expressed concern over India's nuclear policy that in their perspective was risky and ambitious, given its stipulation of a nuclear “triad,” and with no *upper-limit*

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 195-199.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 198.



on its nuclear arsenal/capability.<sup>45</sup> This was quite an elusive concept given the level of deterrence that India was ostensibly trying to achieve.

### **The Post-2001-2002 Military Standoff to “Cold Start” and “Full-spectrum” Strategies**

#### *Regional Dynamics*

James Sperling writes that in the post-Westphalian world - the countries' national security cultures are essentially being influenced by four factors: “(1) the worldwide view of the external environment; (2) national identity; (3) instrumental preferences; and (4) interaction preferences,” that would impact the “dynamic of international system.”<sup>46</sup> Hence Pakistan too had to remain cognizant of India's elusive doctrinal moorings. There are many nuclear policy-related concepts such as recessed deterrence, maximum deterrence, and moderate - that are different from each other.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, India's *open-ended* nuclear doctrine was likely to ring alarm bells in Islamabad. India being much bigger in size, economy, military capability, and diplomatic clout vis-à-vis Pakistan, in latter's perspective, it was a perpetual source of threat to its security. The advocates of recessed deterrence would tend to argue that the major threat to India comes from Pakistan and, on

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<sup>45</sup> “US Says India's Nuclear Doctrine not Encouraging,” *Reuters*, August 18, 1999; Ministry of External Affairs of India, “India's Nuclear Policy Draft,” August 18, 1999, <https://mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?18916/Draft+Report+of+National+Security+Advisory+Board+on+Indian+Nuclear+Doctrine>

<sup>46</sup> James Sperling, “National Security Cultures, Technologies of public goods supply and Security Governance,” in Emil J. Kirchner and James Sperling (eds.), *National Security Cultures: Patterns of Global Governance* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010): 11.

<sup>47</sup> For the Indian interpretation of various concepts see Rajesh Basrur, *Minimum Deterrence and India's National Security* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006): 61.

the other hand, proponents of maximum deterrence concept would tend to believe that “it is not necessary to consider the threat of Pakistan in drafting of nuclear policy, but rather that the main threat lies with China.” The latter group also believes that to ensure strategic autonomy, it is necessary to have a deterrent capability against the US and Russia as well. Moderates considered China as the primary threat and Pakistan as a secondary threat.<sup>48</sup> In view of India’s ambiguous nuclear ambitions, Pakistan had to craft proportionate military and nuclear strategies so as to protect its security and sovereignty from a country that in 1971 war had bifurcated it into two parts.

### *India’s Draft Nuclear Doctrine*

The Draft Nuclear Doctrine (DND) had clearly envisioned a concept of strategic triad, which included different ranges of ballistic missiles, warheads and other delivery systems to reinforce its nuclear deterrent forces. Initially, India had subtly distanced itself from its previous stance of minimum deterrence, which seemingly it considered insufficient to meet its future strategic requirements. Hence, India embarked on restructuring of its deterrent forces option - on the concept of triad. However, simultaneously it too harped on its traditional NFU doctrinal posturing in clear contravention to its resurgent strategic triad forces restructuring, therefore, DND’s concept of ‘minimum’ was apparently considered inappropriate for the future strategic requirements of India. Ostensibly, India in parallel also vied for enhancement/procurement of its hi-tech and technological capabilities so as to make its deterrent forces more robust in line with its envisaged triad concept. Zafar Khan observes that India’s

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<sup>48</sup> See Bharat Karnad “A Thermonuclear Deterrent,” in Amitabh Mattoo (ed.), *India’s Nuclear Deterrent: Pokhran II and Beyond* (New Delhi: Har-Anand, 1999): 22.

“broader strategic sufficiency, innovative and sophisticated technology” acquisition policy would “further enhance India’s deterrent forces in terms of accuracy, ranges, penetrability, yield, and survivability.” All this was being done with the strategic collaboration of the US to assist India to develop its ingenious military technological projects with intent to enhance its conventional and nuclear deterrent forces.<sup>49</sup>

It is a clear reflection of India’s quest for power maximization and modernization of its conventional and strategic deterrent forces. Obviously, India’s bid to strengthen its strategic forces was considered by Islamabad a powerful threat to its security, if not, to its very survival. Hence, it further magnified Pakistan’s insecurity, which perforce landed it into a security dilemma cycle due to India’s massive military restructuring program. It became a cause of further friction between the two. In essence, India’s increasing conventional and strategic forces vis-à-vis Pakistan’s credible minimum deterrent posture became a cause of escalation and crises between the two. For instance, primarily, the root cause of conflict between the ancient Athens and Sparta was also premised on such a security dilemma. Thucydides explains: “what made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta. As for the reasons for breaking the truce and declaring war which were openly expressed by each side.”<sup>50</sup> According to ancient classics of Thucydides: “the power that deals fairly with its equals finds a truer security than the one which is hurried into snatching some apparent but dangerous advantage.”<sup>51</sup> Apparently, India’s bid for power maximization and military modernization was expected to evoke a proportionate response

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<sup>49</sup> Zafar Khan, “India’s Strategic Triad: Current Trends and Future Prospects,” *Journal of Security & Strategic Analyses* Vol. 5: No. 1 (Summer 2019): 21.

<sup>50</sup> Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, ed. Rex Warner (London: Penguin Classics, 1954): 49.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

from Pakistan, not necessarily in quantitative terms, but, in qualitative terms - to neutralize India's swiftly expanding modern war machine. For Pakistan, India's massive strategic forces expansion and modernization programme is expected to accord it a clear strategic "advantage," not necessarily to employ the strategic deterrent forces, but to employ them as an instrument of coercion and compellence.<sup>52</sup> Obviously, in such a critical strategic equation, and with a huge gulf of cultural differences, it would be quite a challenge for a country like Pakistan to establish an effective deterrent equation vis-à-vis the bigger and stronger India.

It was in such a strategically and culturally divisive environment that after the military standoff of 2001-2002, that India began to craft a more dangerous and escalatory "Cold Start Doctrine" (CSD) strategy, and in reaction, Pakistan crafted a "full spectrum" nuclear strategy.<sup>53</sup>

### **From CSD and "Full spectrum" Doctrinal Wrangling to Pulwama-Balakot Military Crisis**

As contended, it was with the partition of British India in 1947 that the divergent strategic, religious, and historical moorings of two countries had sparked a war over the disputed region of Kashmir. Fundamentally, Pakistan's quest was for security from India. On the other hand, as observed in the argument, India intended to realize the dream of its reunification, which it believed was arbitrarily partitioned into two nation-states – India and Pakistan. Right from their inception, India-Pakistan's relations remained constrained, if not on a sharp edge, which had led to three wars in 1947-1948, 1965 and 1971, and one conflict of Kargil in 1999 - in addition to

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<sup>52</sup> For further study see Lawrence Freedman, *Deterrence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004): 109-115.

<sup>53</sup> See Zulfqar Khan, "Pakistan's Evolving Strategic Outlook: Strategy and Nuclear Deterrence," *The Korean Journal of Defence Analysis* Vol. 28: No. 1 (March 2016): 103-121.

military crises of Brass-tacks (1986-1987), 2001-2002 Twin Peaks and February 2019 Pulwama-Balakot. Reportedly, from 2004 onwards India had commenced war gaming to fine-tune the strategy of CSD to fight a limited war against Pakistan. Whereas, Pakistan too tried to proportionately evolve a well-calibrated “full spectrum” nuclear deterrence strategy against economically, diplomatically, and militarily much stronger India so as to prevent the operationalization of CSD-related war plan by India under the nuclear overhang.

Essentially, both countries’ existing security matrix was largely influenced by their persisting “rivalry, mistrust and violence.”<sup>54</sup> In fact, the communal violence of partition and the festering dispute over Kashmir had further hardened both countries’ resolve against each other. Above all, this matrix was further complicated with the induction of nuclear weapons, which too kept their relations in perpetual turmoil.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, Indian policymakers also had apprehensions that submission to the concept of plebiscite<sup>56</sup> would have snowballing effects thereby encouraging other states in the Indian Union to demand “for independence.”<sup>57</sup> Rather New Delhi still doggedly continued adherence to the dream of establishment of united India. This deep cultural and ideological divide was amply reflected in both countries’ crafting of conflicting and aggressive military strategies against each other. This has truly made South Asia “a tinderbox filled with tension and danger.”<sup>58</sup> Notwithstanding both Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz’s arguments for and against the possession of nuclear weapons by India and

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<sup>54</sup> Philipp Schweers, “India and Pakistan: Trapped in a Security Paradox,” *DIAS-ANALYSIS* No. 37 (December 2008): 1.

<sup>55</sup> Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003): 89.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

Pakistan,<sup>59</sup> their deep strategic cultural divide has largely been transformed into a neurological rivalry, which is expected to keep their relations on knife's edge - that is expected to further destabilize the security matrix of South Asia with frequent spate of crises from time to time. The Question is: why the deterrent essence of nuclear weapons has not induced them to formulate conciliatory policies against each other? The straight answer is the unresolved dispute of Kashmir, and their deep cultural, religious, and historical divide. The second question is: why crises has frequently erupted between the two nuclear-armed rivals? The subsequent paragraphs would attempt to succinctly answer the second question in the light of empirical data/literature.

### *South Asian "Tinderbox" & Regional Dynamics*

The history of India-Pakistan's series of crises is over two decades old. As argued by Sagan, "the nuclear arsenals" of India and Pakistan are "likely to remain, much smaller and less sophisticated than were the US and Soviet arsenals."<sup>60</sup> But, the question is: whether nuclear technology in the hands of India and Pakistan would remain *frozen* in time and space? The straight answer is no. One, because of the ongoing geostrategic transformation in the Indo-Pacific region, and India's role as the US pivot to contain the economic and military rise of China – would *doubly* qualify New Delhi to receive sophisticated technologies from the West, particularly the US and its allies. This will qualitatively and quantitatively enhance Indian indigenous military, including nuclear, production and research and development capabilities, thereby making Pakistan take similar measures with the cooperative arrangements of China to hold India's military might at bay. Second, Pakistan-China's strategic collaborative framework

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 88-124.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 91.

would also proportionately enhance former's military might and technological capability vis-à-vis India's military and technological prowess. Therefore, Sagan's argument of possession of smaller and less sophisticated nuclear arsenals by India and Pakistan, is not *sustainable* in view of both countries' growing nuclear weapons sophistication and geostrategic equations between the two emerging power blocs – the US and China. Third, Pakistan is geographically enabling China to secure an access to the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) thereby diluting Beijing's acute Malacca Straits Dilemma. Most significantly, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) would enable China a simultaneous access to the Pacific and the Indian Ocean that would play a pivotal role in China's strategic policy to circumvent the apparent China encirclement policy of Washington. In this transformation, apparently, Pakistan would also be *doubly* qualified to access the sophisticated military and nuclear technologies from China as well. Logically, the other factor that is of paramount significance is the deterrence and stability.

### *Deterrence*

The concept of deterrence can be briefly summed up as “a coercive strategy” that has “the potential or actual application of force to influence the action of a voluntary agent,” observes Freedman. Essentially, the concept of deterrence revolves around the “threats of retaliation,” which is a strategic deterrence.<sup>61</sup> Fundamentally, the deterrence theory since the times of Thucydides to Hobbes, Morgenthau to Sagan-Waltz in essence has been state-centric in its approach.<sup>62</sup> Freedman explains:

A controlling strategy still depends initially on judgments concerning the opponent's strategy, but

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<sup>61</sup> Freedman, *Deterrence*, 26-27.

<sup>62</sup> See Franck C. Zagare and D. March Kilgour, *Perfect Deterrence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): 7.

after a point that becomes irrelevant as the opponent runs out of options. A *Consensual* strategy involves the adjustment of strategic choices with another without force or threats of force. Coercive strategies can be divided into the deterrent and the compellent, essentially between persuading another that they must not act for fear of the consequences if they do, and that they must act for fear of the consequences if they do not. Elements of all of these can be in play at the same time either against a single opponent or against several opponents.<sup>63</sup>

Since 1998, both countries have demonstrated tendencies of crafting “controlling” strategies against each other. India by first putting forward the NFU provision accompanied by nuclear “triad” concepts into its DND. On the contrary, Pakistan is wrangling with conceptualization of its nuclear strategy from apparent first use (there is no stated or documented nuclear policy of Pakistan) to “full spectrum” nuclear deterrent strategy to hold India’s conventionally and strategically powerful forces at bay – by proportionately strategizing its conventional and nuclear deterrent forces posturing with the help of crafting of compatible strategies against India. The most significant element of “*consensual*” strategy seems to be missing in both countries’ nuclear lexicons. This is a huge strategic amiss of Indian-Pakistani policymakers. Therefore, continuous eruption of crises from time-to-time is likely to keep their relations on upward escalatory trajectory. In such an environment, the concept of strategic stability is likely to remain a hollow dream in view of both countries’ conflicting policies and divergent strategic cultural ethos.

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<sup>63</sup> Freedman, *Deterrence*, 26-27.



### Stability

Strategic stability's fundamental concept is premised on the notion of rationality. Strategy sans rationality would become an *irrational strategy* particularly if the rivals are carrying divergent historical, cultural, unresolved disputes, and religious baggage in a highly charged strategic environment particularly when both rivals are declared nuclear states. According to Zagare and Kilgour, there are two types of rationality – *procedural* and *instrumental*. Procedural rationality denotes “the work of those who approach strategic behaviour from the vantage point of individual psychology.” It requires “rational decision, then, requires that an actor have an accurate perception of the implications of *all* conceivable alternatives and a well-defined set of preferences over the entire set.” Furthermore, it should have a “decision-maker who can correctly and dispassionately assess the preferences of other relevant actors, their likely responses to his or her choices and, in particular, to concessions or threats.”<sup>64</sup> While the concept of instrumental rationality revolves around the logic of both the *rational* and *psychological* “inferences about the logical connection between preferences – which may, in principle, reflect perceptions (or misperceptions) or beliefs – and actual choice.”<sup>65</sup> “The definition of instrumental rationality is indeed straightforward,” observe Zagare and Kilgour. In fact, it is the “logical structure of actor's preference ordering, are implicit in it. For an actor to be instrumentally rational, he or she must have a *complete* and *transitive* preference ordering over the set of available outcomes.”<sup>66</sup> Whereas the result would be largely determined on the scale of completeness and preferences of pictures and choices. Moreover, the completeness and transitive choices are still

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<sup>64</sup> Zagare and Kilgour, *Perfect Deterrence*, 38-39.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-40.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

“minimal requirements for a definition of rationality.”<sup>67</sup> This makes definition of stability and instability more complex to understand particularly when the rivals are deeply entrenched in their cultural and religious biases and preferences. This brings us to another imperative question that, how to realize peaceful coexistence in view of their huge baggage of unresolved and deep-rooted biases against each other. The answer is, yes, it is doable, provided both countries’ policymakers give space to each other’s genuine demands and resolve their outstanding issues, and to rationally appreciate the available procedural and instrumental choices to them – in the event of non-adherence to the imperative of *coexistence*. If one looks back from the 1980s to 2020, there were a whole series of crises that were apparently triggered due to variety of factors – whether it was Brass-tacks, Twin Peaks or Pulwama-Balakot. Therefore, both countries need to understand that the “tinderbox” is still filled with inherent tension and danger capable of igniting a spark that could lead to eruption of a catastrophe of unimaginable proportion. Before conclusion, it would be appropriate to analyse the unravelling dynamics of Pulwama-Balakot crisis of February 2019.

*Pulwama-Balakot’s Display of “Procedural” and “Instrumental” Procedures*

If the Indian claim of a “nuclear weapons state” status was not for others to confer on India,<sup>68</sup> then, similarly, nuclear-armed Pakistan was also an imperative security requirement. In 1998, Jaswant Singh claimed that “India’s strengthened nuclear capability adds to its sense of responsibility.” He ended his article by prophesying that: “the world still has to address the unfinished agenda of the

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> See Singh, *Against Nuclear Apartheid*,” 49.

centuries.”<sup>69</sup> However, India’s imprudent decision to attack Balakot in an air sortie on February 26, 2019, with “total of 16 aircrafts, six each armed with Spice 2000 and Crystal Maze missiles, flew into Pakistan-occupied Kashmir”<sup>70</sup> and attacked Balakot deep into Pakistani territory; was clearly a violation of nuclear-armed Pakistan’s sovereignty. It was an *irresponsible* act of a conventionally much stronger nuclear India against conventionally weaker nuclear state of Pakistan. From both procedural and instrumental angles, it was an unrestraint behaviour of India, which could have resulted in serious security consequences - had Pakistan not applied restraint - not to attack targets inside the Indian occupied Kashmir. On the following day (February 27, 2019), Pakistan Air Force (PAF) JF-17 shot down Indian Air Force (IAF) MiG-21Bison inside Pakistani administrated Kashmir. While Indian claim of shooting down of one PAF F-16 aircraft was widely refuted by Pakistan, the *TIME* magazine, and other international print and electronic media.<sup>71</sup>

Pulwama-Balakot crisis is a typical reflection of both countries’ policymakers’ procedural rational behaviour. Though, luckily, after the post-Balakot encounters they had behaved in an instrumentally rational manner. However, there is still a danger of eruption of more crises as their bilateral disputes still remain unresolved and strategic cultural divide is also persisting. Additionally, the asymmetrical rise of Indian economic and military power in comparison to Pakistan, would continue to complicate their relations and would act as a “tinderbox” awaiting to be ignited in case of any

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 49, 52.

<sup>70</sup> Snenesh Philip, “How Afghan Intel Helped India Carry Out the Balakot Air Strike,” *The Print*, February 26, 2019, <https://theprint.in/defence/how-afghan-intel-helped-india-carry-out-the-balakot-air-strike/371471/>.

<sup>71</sup> Iain Marlow, “India Never Actually Shot Down Pakistani F-16 in Kashmir Clash, New Report Says,” *TIME*, April 5, 2019, <https://time.com/5564980/india-never-shot-pakistani-plane-kashmir/>.

unexpected incident. Since, in such a tit-for-tat type crisis cycle, there would always be a probability of overreaction by one country against the other. This is more dangerous particularly when power equation between the rivals is asymmetrical, as is the case between India and Pakistan. However, the “fear” that the other side “may react, indeed overreact, is most likely to deter escalation,” writes Herman Kahn.<sup>72</sup> In some cases, some states may deliberately escalate tension either “to threaten the other side with all-out war,” as outwardly was the case behind India’s deliberate act of escalation, or to “provoke it, to demonstrate committal or recklessness, and so forth.” Interestingly, Pakistan’s reaction to Indian Balakot strike was seemingly well-calibrated and determined reaction – ostensibly just short of “committal” behaviour,<sup>73</sup> because, in case Pakistan had not responded or confronted Indian violations of Pakistani air-space, latter’s deterrent posture vis-à-vis India would have been difficult to sustain. Furthermore, it would have given India impetus for operationalization of coercion through the CSD strategy against Pakistan. Third, it would have demonstrated Pakistan’s lack of capability or determination to counter Indian intrusive design. Fourth, it would have paved way for a perpetual Indian coercion. Therefore, Pakistan’s non-response would have emitted negative signal to India, which could have encouraged latter to launch a well-calculated limited war against Pakistan under the rubric of “Cold Start Doctrine” strategy in which India had massively invested since the origin of this concept from 2004 onwards.

### *“Strike RAPID” Concept*

The concept of CSD has a long history stretching back to 1980s when Indian Army conducted a massive military exercise called

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<sup>72</sup> Herman Kahn, *On escalation: Metaphors and Scenarios* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2010): 3.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

“Operation Brass-tacks,” which was reportedly designed for “Strike RAPID” (Reorganized Army Plains Infantry Division) formations. The Strike RAPID was supposed to act as Indian Army’s strike corps particularly trained for a swift urban warfare.<sup>74</sup> From then onwards, India commenced a concerted effort to streamline its war fighting machine into various regional commands, for instance, Indian Army was divided into six operational commands: 1) Northern Command – Udhampur, Jammu and Kashmir; 2) Southern Command – Pune, Maharashtra; 3) Eastern Command – Kolkata, West Bengal;

4) Western Command – Chandi Mandir, Punjab; 5) Southwestern Command – Jaipur, Rajasthan; and 6) Central Command – Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. Three commands are specifically designed against Pakistan. They are the Northern Command, Southern, and Western Command. The Northern command has three Corps, which includes XIV Corps of Leh, Jammu and Kashmir; XV Corps, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir; and XVI Corps at Nagrota, Jammu and Kashmir. In addition, the Southern Command located at Pune is responsible for border areas of Rajasthan. This Command also has XII Corps located at Jodhpur. The XII Corps is equipped with Armour and Mechanised brigades supported by two infantry divisions for swift and quick thrust into Pakistan. The third command which is focused on Pakistan is the Western Command, headquartered at Chandi Mandir, Indian Punjab. This is the most significant command as far as Pakistan is concerned. This command holds extensive strike formations, which includes four Corps: the II Corps, X Corps, IX Corps, and XI Corps.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> V K Kapoor, “Employment of Armour in Urban Terrain,” *SP’s Land Forces* Issue 4 (2012), <http://www.spslandforces.com/story/?id=206>.

<sup>75</sup> “Analyzing the Indian Army,” *Pakistan Defence*, March 21, 2020, <https://defence.pk/pdf/threads/analysing-the-indian-army.100557/>.

In addition to this massive concentration of strike formations in the close vicinity of Pakistan - more than 81 percent of Indian Air Force's bases are also configured against Pakistan. Furthermore, India has earmarked its eight-division size Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs), and seven missile groups specifically organized to counter Pakistan.<sup>76</sup> Shireen Mazari remarked that the CSD is primarily designed to commence pre-emptive strikes against Pakistan for which India has inducted hypersonic cruise missile – BrahMos I-II, which is destined to play a key role in Indian military strategy. Mazari claimed that Pakistan developed Nasr short-range cruise missile, and in August 2019, it test fired the night-launch version of the surface-to-surface ballistic missile (SSBM) Ghaznavi with 290 kilometers range, to signal Pakistan's operational readiness and intent to counter any aggressive venture from India<sup>77</sup> supported by heavy armoured, IBGs, mechanized infantry, and air assets into Pakistani territory in 48-72 hours at the onset of military blitzkrieg.<sup>78</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Indian war machine's formidable focus on Pakistan sufficiently amplifies the imperative of sustenance of an effective nuclear deterrence posture, which is critical for the very survival of Pakistan. Therefore, any lacklustre Pakistani response to an IAF intrusion or further aggression would have definitely emitted wrong signal to the adversary, which would have compromised

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<sup>76</sup> Shireen M. Mazari, "Annexation of Kashmir and India's Nuclear Threat," *The News*, September 1, 2019, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/520385-annexation-of-kashmir-and-india-s-nuclear-threat>.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> See Franz-Stefan Gady, "Is the Indian Military Capable of Executing the Cold Start Doctrine?" *The Diplomat*, January 29, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/01/is-the-indian-military-capable-of-executing-the-cold-start-doctrine/>.

Pakistan's will and effectiveness to maintain nuclear deterrence at any cost. In the prevalent environment, Pakistan's February 27, 2019, response was absolutely necessary. Although, there was a possibility of something going astray at any time/place, in Pakistan's viewpoint, this risk of conflagration was worth taking due to massive concentration of Indian war machine around Pakistan. Ostensibly, there was no "transitive" or alternative option available to Pakistan; therefore, it had to act with "instrumental rationality" that is to implicitly convey to India to back off or to face the unforeseen consequences.<sup>79</sup>

Above all, both countries' disproportionate sizes and divergent strategic cultural ethos and moorings have kept them at the sharp edge. Since the partition of British India, both countries had fought numerous wars and witnessed a series of crises, which even after their overt nuclearization, did not stop. Both countries' rationales to produce nuclear weapons were divergent— for India, it was to end the international "nuclear apartheid" and to establish its NWS stature. Therefore, it was imperative for Pakistan to protect its independence and sovereignty from the perceived security threat from India. Most significantly, India's first Prime Minister Nehru had reiterated his intent to undo the partition and to create a united India again. In 1971, India succeeded in separating the former East Pakistan, and created an independent country - Bangladesh. Moreover, the unresolved dispute of Kashmir is also keeping the entire dynamics of South Asian peace and stability on the razor edge. In addition, most of the Indian military forces are also configured against Pakistan, to which the latter had to craft compatible and dynamic strategies so as to neutralize India's aggressive military posturing, which is amply demonstrated through massive concentration of its war machine, and IBGs

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<sup>79</sup> Zagare and Kilgour, *Perfect Deterrence*, 40.

conceived under the CSD to impose a limited war on Pakistan. This ostensibly constrained Pakistan to proportionately act against the Indian intrusion into Pakistani airspace/territory. It impels Pakistan to supplement its economic and military disadvantage by a determined and dynamic nuclear deterrent posturing so as to prevent India from any military misadventure.



## Counterforce Temptations in South Asia

Dr. Adil Sultan<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

*India's 'No First Use' (NFU) commitment enunciated in its 2003 nuclear doctrine was not 'unconditional,' and retains the option of retaliation with nuclear weapons in response to a non-nuclear attack. The recent statements by India's senior leadership questioning the rationale of maintaining an NFU posture has led many international observers to conclude that India may have formally given up its NFU posture and could be contemplating the option of pre-emptive counterforce strikes against its principal adversary, Pakistan. The doctrinal ambiguities together with the ongoing Indian military modernization, which includes the acquisition of Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system; operationalization of second-strike capability and the recent testing of a Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV) has further reinforced the perception that India could be developing nuclear as well as conventional counterforce options to deter and prevent Pakistan from the early deployment or use of short range ballistic missiles (SRBMs), and create space for India's limited war fighting doctrines of Cold Start or Pro-Active Operations (PAOs). These developments are likely to push the region towards*

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*another cycle of 'instability-stability pendulum'<sup>2</sup>  
with serious consequences for regional as well as  
global stability.*

**Keywords:** Counterforce, SRBMs, Hypersonic weapons, BMD systems, ASAT weapons, Strategic stability

## Introduction

India with its military spending of over US \$70 billion<sup>3</sup> enjoys significant quantitative and qualitative edge over Pakistan but has not been able to fully exploit this advantage. The overt nuclearization of South Asia in 1998, further compounded India's dilemma as it precluded the possibility of a war between the two nuclear armed adversaries. The two major military crises of 1999 and 2001-02 that took place immediately after both countries had formally declared themselves nuclear weapon states, that led to a stalemate, further reinforced the Cold War lesson that nuclear armed states generally do not go to war with each other. This realization helped start a Composite Dialogue process in 2004 with both countries agreeing in their joint statement that the "nuclear capabilities of each other constitute a factor of stability."<sup>4</sup>

Interestingly, while this political consensus was being developed at the leadership level, the Indian military introduced a new war fighting doctrine that could help provide an option of

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<sup>2</sup> "Keynote address by Lt Gen (Retd) Khalid Kidwai," the Seventh IISS-CISS Workshop on South Asian Strategic Stability: Deterrence, Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control, IISS London, February 6, 2020, <https://www.iiss.org/events/2020/02/7th-iiss-and-ciss-south-asian-strategic-stability-workshop>, accessed on October 11, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> SIPRI, *SIPRI Year Book-2020* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), accessed October 11, 2020 <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2020/global-military-expenditure-sees-largest-annual-increase-decade-says-sipri-reaching-1917-billion>.

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, *Joint statement, India-Pakistan Expert-Level Talks on Nuclear CBMs*. June 20, 2004, accessed November 11, 2020 [http://www.nti.org/media/pdfs/26\\_ea\\_india.pdf?\\_id=1316627913](http://www.nti.org/media/pdfs/26_ea_india.pdf?_id=1316627913).

engaging in a limited conventional war without the risk of crossing Pakistan's 'perceived' nuclear threshold.<sup>5</sup> The Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) or its subsequent version known as the Pro-Active Operations (PAOs)<sup>6</sup> strategy posited a credibility dilemma for Pakistan's nuclear deterrence. Responding with countervalue weapons against limited military incursions could have been perceived as disproportionate, and hence not credible; and not responding at all would have discredited Pakistan's nuclear deterrence. In response to these new challenges, Pakistan introduced its short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs)<sup>7</sup> – also called the Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNWs), as part of what is now known as Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD) posture.

The FSD was conceived as a qualitative response and not a quantitative shift from Pakistan's declared policy of Credible Minimum Deterrence (CMD).<sup>8</sup> Over the past few years, however, the FSD seems to have undergone transformation and now includes a commitment to develop a credible triad of land, air and sea-based nuclear forces which could deter "large scale aggression against mainland Pakistan,"<sup>9</sup> besides preventing a limited war with India.

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<sup>5</sup> "Why Gen Bipin Rawat Acknowledged the Cold Start Doctrine," *The Wire*, January 20, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Strategic Vision Institute (2018), *SVI Two Day International Conference on 'Nuclear Deterrence and Strategic Stability in South Asia'*, Islamabad, November 6-7, 2018, accessed December 21, 2020, <https://thesvi.org/svi-two-day-international-conference-report-november-6-7-2018-nuclear-deterrence-and-strategic-stability-in-south-asia/>.

<sup>8</sup> Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), *Press Release No PR-64/2016-ISPR*, February 24, 2016, accessed November 11, 2020, <https://www.ispr.gov.pk/press-release-detail.php?id=3211>.

<sup>9</sup> "Pakistan's Policy of 'Quid Pro Quo Plus': Remarks by Lt Gen Khalid Kidwai (Retd) at the IISS London," February 7, 2020, accessed November 11, 2020, <https://strafasia.com/gen-kidwai-speech-iiss-ciss-workshop-london-6-february-2020/>.

## India's Counterforce Temptations

India is building conventional as well as nuclear capabilities apparently to counter China, but this would also afford India the opportunity to develop a more aggressive posture towards its relatively smaller neighbours, especially Pakistan that remains a major security challenge and India's principal adversary. The recent controversy surrounding India's NFU commitment along with the ongoing military developments that include: the acquisition of ballistic missile defence system, operationalization of a second-strike capability,<sup>10</sup> and testing of hypersonic weapons are being viewed as an effort to develop an option for a pre-emptive counterforce strike against Pakistan.

These capabilities, in theory, could also affect India-China dyad, but China enjoys significant conventional and nuclear advantage thus making it unrealistic for India to contemplate a pre-emptive counterforce strike against a superior military power. India's counterforce temptations, therefore, are more focused towards its relatively smaller neighbour that refuses to accept India's hegemony in the region.

### ***From an NFU to a 'First Strike'***

India's 2003 nuclear doctrine stated that India will maintain a posture of No First Use and "NWs will only be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian territory or on Indian forces anywhere."<sup>11</sup> This commitment was with a caveat that in case of a

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<sup>10</sup> Yogesh Joshi, "Angles and Dangles: Arihant and the Dilemma of India's Undersea Nuclear Weapons," *War on the Rocks*, January 14, 2019, accessed December 21, 2020, <https://warontherocks.com/2019/01/angles-and-dangles-arihant-and-the-dilemma-of-indias-undersea-nuclear-weapons/>.

<sup>11</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, *The Cabinet Committee on Security Reviews Operationalization of India's Nuclear Doctrine*, January 4, 2003, accessed November 11, 2020, <http://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/20131/The+Cabinet+Committee+on+Security+Reviews+peratio nalization+of+Indias+Nuclear+Doctrine>.

use of biological or chemical weapons, “India will retain the option of retaliating with nuclear weapons.”<sup>12</sup> This effectively neutralized India’s NFU commitment, but officially India continues to assert that it will not be the first to use nuclear weapons.

Over the past few years, several senior members of India’s Nuclear Command Authority have openly voiced concerns about their country’s NFU stance terming it as counterproductive in the face of ongoing developments. Amongst the prominent dissenting voices including India’s former Strategic Forces Commander-in-Chief Lt. Gen. B S Nagal, former Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar, and the incumbent Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.<sup>13</sup> India’s former member of the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB), Shiv Shankar Menon, in his 2016 book wrote that India could possibly contemplate a counterforce first strike even if it is threatened with the use of nuclear weapons, and not necessarily their actual use. According to Menon:

There is a potential gray area as to when India would use nuclear weapons first against another NWS. Circumstances are conceivable in which India might find it useful to strike first, for instance, against a NWS that had declared it would certainly use its weapons, and if India were certain that adversary’s launch was imminent.<sup>14</sup>

The threat of ‘first’ use of nuclear weapons is mainly targeted towards Pakistan and not China, as the latter has given

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Vipin Narang, “Beyond the Nuclear Threshold: Causes and Consequences of First Use,” *CEIP Nuclear Policy Conference*, Washington, D.C., March 20-21, 2017, accessed Oct 10, 2020, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/03/20/plenary-beyond-nuclear-threshold-causes-and-consequences-of-first-use-pub-64779>.

<sup>14</sup> Shivshankar Menon, *Choices: Inside the Making of India’s Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2016): 110.

unconditional NFU commitment and enjoys significant military advantage, and has no incentive to engage in a major conventional or a nuclear war with India. There is also a likelihood that India may have developed two different sets of nuclear doctrines to cater for two asymmetric dyads, i.e. India-China and India-Pakistan. This could allow India the option of a 'First Strike' against Pakistan while maintaining an NFU posture against China. This de-hyphenation could lead to serious operational difficulties as no nuclear armed country can afford to maintain two different nuclear postures, and India is no exception. The threat of a nuclear 'First Use' or a 'First Strike' against Pakistan, therefore, seems to be an effort to deter Pakistan from the early use of its nuclear weapons while allowing India's conventional military to engage in a limited war with Pakistan.

### ***BMD System and India's False Sense of Security***

India is developing a multi-layered ballistic missile defence (BMD) system to intercept incoming missiles from Pakistan. It has recently acquired the S-400 air defence system from Russia that would enable it to engage the incoming aircraft, drones, ballistic and cruise missiles at a range of 400 km.<sup>15</sup> In addition, India has also developed its indigenous two-layered missile defence system comprising Prithvi Air Defence (PAD) system<sup>16</sup> and the Advanced Air Defences<sup>17</sup> to intercept ballistic missiles in mid-course and in terminal phase.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> "Russia to deliver S-400 by 2021-end, but will supply missiles and bombs amid LAC tensions," *The Print*, July 1, 202.

<sup>16</sup> "India's ballistic missile shield ready, IAF and DRDO to seek govt nod to protect New Delhi," *The Print*, January 8, 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, "Countering Indian Ballistic Missile Defence & Strategic Stability in South Asia," *Margalla Papers* Vol XXII (2018): 22.

The BMD system that India is in the process of deployment in the first phase will cover only Delhi but may be extended to protect other cities from Pakistan's ballistic missiles. However, due to short flight time of the missiles between the two countries, it would be extremely difficult to guarantee that India's BMD system would successfully intercept all incoming missiles from the Pakistani side, as there is no fool proof missile defence shield that could guarantee protection from all incoming ballistic missiles. Moreover, Pakistan has also developed Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicles (MIRVs)<sup>19</sup> that can carry multiple warheads and deceive tracking radars and the missile defence system that could render India's BMD system as ineffective. The US, which is leading in the BMD technology, has spent more than 30 years and US \$ 500 billion and has yet to perfect a credible and effective missile defence system.<sup>20</sup> India is likely to take several years and more resources to perfect a credible missile defence shield that could provide some degree of assurance against incoming missiles.

Notwithstanding the presumed efficacy of India's BMD system, its acquisition could raise the temptation "to attempt for a splendid first strike based on the assumption that BMD interceptors can successfully intercept any leftover offensive missiles the adversary could then fire in retaliation."<sup>21</sup> This 'false sense of security' amongst India's senior leadership could provide inducement for a pre-emptive 'First Strike' or a 'Counterforce Strike' against Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, especially the SRBMs that have played a pivotal role in deterring India from operationalizing its limited war doctrine during the past several crises.

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<sup>19</sup> Inter Services Press Release (ISPR), No. PR-34/ 2017-ISPR. Jan 24, 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

### ***India's Second-strike Capability***

The acquisition of a credible second-strike capability by one of the two adversaries is likely to create instability as it could provide incentives to the possessor for a pre-emptive first strike. However, if both adversaries possess a credible second-strike capability to inflict unacceptable damage to each other, it enhances deterrence stability.

India is in the process of operationalizing its *Arihant* nuclear submarine which is viewed with concern by the Pakistani military planners as it disturbs the delicate balance of power between the two South Asian adversaries. These concerns are not without merit keeping in view the statements made by India's senior leadership about the possibility of a pre-emptive first strike, which seems to deter Pakistan from the early use of its SRBMs and pave way for India to launch conventional military operations as part of its CSD/PAOs strategy.

India's nuclear submarine programme began in 1996 before it formally declared itself a nuclear weapon state. The desire to acquire nuclear powered submarines had more to do with prestige considerations than a security threat from any of its regional adversaries. India leased (1988-1991), from the Soviet Union, the K-43 nuclear-powered cruise missile submarine, NATO code name *Charlie* I-class. Based on the *Charlie* class SSN, India started its Advance Technology Vessel (ATV) programme that eventually led to the development of the *Arihant* ballistic missile submarine (SSBN). The *Arihant* is capable of carrying strategic weapons with ranges between 750-1000 km which do not cover major Pakistani cities in the central part of the country and definitely cannot reach mainland China.

The *Arihant* SSBN completed its first deterrent patrol in November 2018 with PM Narendra Modi proudly claiming



completion of India's nuclear triad.<sup>22</sup> The statement had more to do with Modi's nationalist agenda and to project India as a technologically advanced country rather than India's security considerations. Ideally, a credible second-strike capability should be able to absorb and survive the adversary's first strike and retaliate to inflict unacceptable damage to the adversary. This would require Continuous at Sea Deterrent (CASD) patrols and at least 3-4 operational submarines capable of carrying intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). Unless India achieves this potential, it cannot claim to be in possession of a credible second-strike capability. India, nevertheless, is on a path to developing longer range missiles of 3,500 km that could hit mainland China, but a credible second-strike capability would entail having a fleet of 8-12 SSBN and SSNs, which according to a former Indian Navy Chief, may take at least 50-60 years.<sup>23</sup>

India's existing sea-based potential may not constitute a classic second-strike capability, but is likely to cause anxiety amongst its adversaries, especially Pakistan as it could encourage India to launch a first strike or a counterforce strike against Pakistan's nuclear inventory. This offensive posturing could be intended at creating space for India's conventional military operations and prevent Pakistan from responding with strategic weapons against India's major cities but is also inherently risky as it could lead to uncontrolled escalation.

India is in the process of developing a command and control system for its second-strike capability. Institutional friction due to involvement of several stakeholders in India's nuclear command and control chain increases the potential of an unauthorized use or

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<sup>22</sup> "INS Arihant completes India's nuclear triad, PM Modi felicitates crew," *Economic Times*, November 6, 2018.

<sup>23</sup> Arun Parakash, "The Significance of Arihant," *The Indian Express*, November 7, 2018.

offensive posturing that can lead to unintended signalling. Deployment of *Arihant* during the February 2019 crisis is one recent example where the nuclear submarine was deployed probably without the authorization of the political leadership and intercepted by the Pakistan Navy.<sup>24</sup>

From a Pakistani perspective, India-Pakistan nuclear competition could be avoided if India's second-strike capability is only aimed at deterring its adversaries and will not be used for a pre-emptive strike. Failure to do so will only heighten the ongoing nuclear competition between the two South Asian adversaries with a potential for miscalculation during a crisis.

### ***Hypersonic Weapons and Counterforce Temptations***

India tested an indigenously developed Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV) and has become the fourth country in the world having acquired this new and complex technology.<sup>25</sup> The HSTDV is likely to be used for launching hypersonic cruise missiles that India's Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) claims would be ready in another 4-5 years.<sup>26</sup>

Hypersonic weapons, due to their speed, precision and manoeuvrability are believed to be more suited to target mobile ground-based missiles such as the 'Nasr' SRBMs of Pakistan, which have 'shoot and scoot' capability and can be moved at a relatively short warning time. India's hypersonic weapons are likely to carry

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<sup>24</sup> Adil Sultan, "Pulwama Crisis: Causes, Implications, and Lessons for the Future," *Strafasia*, April 10, 2019, accessed October 4, 2020, <https://strafasia.com/pulwama-crisis-causes-implications-and-lessons-for-the-future/>.

<sup>25</sup> "India successfully test-fires hypersonic missile carrier, 4<sup>th</sup> country to achieve the feat," *The Print*, September 07, 2020.

<sup>26</sup> "India can have complete hypersonic cruise missile system in 4-5 years: DRDO," *The Economic Times*, October 14, 2020.

conventional warheads,<sup>27</sup> which from the Indian perspective, once employed against Pakistan's SRBMs, would make it difficult for Pakistan to retaliate with nuclear weapons thus affording Indian military the option of engaging in a limited war with Pakistan as part of its CSD/ PAOs strategy.

Hypersonic weapons fly at speeds in excess of 6 to 7 times the speed of sound (300 + meters per second),<sup>28</sup> and could take a fraction of time as compared to subsonic cruise missiles that are in India's inventory. The speed, precision and manoeuvrability characteristics of hypersonic missiles are likely to cause significant shock and awe impact thus compressing the adversary's OODA (Observe, Orient, Decide and Act) cycle which could lead to incorrect interpretation and result into early use of nuclear weapons to prevent 'lose it or use it' dilemma. The threat of a pre-emptive or a counterforce strike would also push the target country to take steps that may include putting its missiles on a higher alert level of launch on warning or launch under attack; increasing the mobility and numbers, besides other measures that may adversely affect crisis and strategic stability.

### ***Ideology as a Driver for India's Doctrinal Shift***

In 2014, India's right wing Hindu nationalist party BJP in its election manifesto promised to 'revise and update' India's nuclear doctrine to "make it relevant to challenges of current time."<sup>29</sup> This commitment led to a widespread speculation that India might give up its NFU pledge and adopt a more aggressive posture to deal with its Pakistan "challenge". After coming into power, the BJP

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<sup>27</sup> Vivek Raghuvanshi "Watch India test its new hypersonic homemade vehicle," *DefenceNews*, September 9, 2020.

<sup>28</sup> "India can have complete hypersonic cruise missile system in 4-5 years: DRDO," *The Economic Times*, October 14, 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Rajesh Rajagopalan, "India's Nuclear Doctrine Debate," *CEIP*, June 30, 2016, accessed October 16, 2020, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2016/06/30/india-s-nuclear-doctrine-debate-pub-63950>.

leadership denied any such change, but statements made by India's senior leadership left sufficient ambiguity about India's nuclear use doctrine in a future military crisis with Pakistan.

The initial desire to shift from a NFU posture may have been driven by security imperatives and the need to create usable military options against Pakistan; however, the recent rise in 'militant nationalism' under PM Modi seems to have given new impetus to the ongoing debate amongst India's strategic elite. Many hardliners amongst India's political and military leadership are pushing for the revision of NFU stance, especially against Pakistan, which is seen as a major hurdle impeding India's rise as a Hindu nationalist state.

The anti-Pakistan rhetoric witnessed during the February 2019 military crisis when PM Modi threatened Pakistan with "Qatal Ki Raat" (the night of massacre) and ordered mobilization of missiles was the most recent example of ideologically driven nuclear brinkmanship against another country. The excessive use of religious card by PM Modi against Pakistan may have pushed the BJP leadership towards a commitment trap, and there is a likelihood that in a future crisis India's senior leadership may not be able to bear the burden of their own anti-Pakistan rhetoric and is forced to take the extreme step of launching a counterforce strike against Pakistan.

### **Possible Options for Pakistan**

Pakistan views India's nuclear modernization efforts as part of the strategy to shift strategic equilibrium in its own favour thus forcing it to develop responses that could help restore the balance without engaging in a costly arms competition with its neighbour. In response to these ongoing technological and doctrinal developments within India, Pakistan could possibly consider developing a 'tit for tat' response and build its own version of

hypersonic weapons. It could also review its FSD; enhance the mobility of its SRBMs; build own ASAT capability to disrupt and deny the requisite information to the adversary for launching a counterforce strike; and build a credible second-strike capability that could reduce the incentive for the adversary to contemplate a first strike against Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.

### ***Can a 'Tit for Tat' Capability Prevent Counterforce Temptations?***

The use of 'conventional' hypersonic weapons by India could bring pressure onto the Pakistani side for retaliating with nuclear weapons mainly to avoid 'use it - lose it dilemma', since not responding at all could discredit Pakistan's nuclear deterrence. Pakistan could possibly consider developing its own hypersonic weapons with conventional warheads to provide a proportional response. This, nevertheless, could encourage India to test Pakistan's resolve and engage in a limited war fighting doctrine without risking nuclear retribution from the other side. Developing a 'tit for tat' response, therefore, could push Pakistan towards a costly arms race with no meaningful outcome.

### ***Reviewing the FSD Posture***

Pakistan's FSD posture was meant to deter the entire spectrum of 'threats' ranging between limited military conflict to an all-out war. Over the past decade FSD seems to have undergone some transformation and now includes the commitment to develop the entire spectrum of 'capabilities.' Speaking at the IISS in London, the former head of Pakistan's Strategic Plans Division (SPD) defined the FSD concept as comprising "a large variety of strategic, operational and tactical nuclear weapons, on land, air and sea, which are designed to comprehensively deter large scale aggression against mainland Pakistan."<sup>30</sup> While the main objective seems to deter

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<sup>30</sup> "Pakistan's Policy of "Quid Pro Quo Plus": Remarks by Lt Gen Khalid Kidwai (Retd) at the IISS London," February 7, 2020.

large scale aggression, if the FSD also intends to cover the entire spectrum of threats then it must also have options that could deny India the incentive to launch a conventional or a nuclear first strike against Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.

In response to the threat of a pre-emptive strike, Pakistan could possibly consider the option of a disproportionate punitive response, which could include the possibility of nuclear retaliation even against a conventional counterforce strike using hypersonic delivery systems against Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. This may appear stretching the limits of nuclear deterrence with a greater risk of deterrence breakdown but is likely to provide protection against India's counterforce temptations.

### ***Increasing the Number and Mobility of SRBMs***

Hypersonic weapons fly at very high speed and can target missile batteries in a relatively short time and with precision given real time accurate targeting data. In a future India-Pakistan crisis, if Pakistan decided to deploy its SRBMs very early in the crisis, these may become vulnerable to India's counterforce conventional or nuclear strike. On the other hand, reluctance to use SRBMs may open a space for India's conventional military operations. To address this dilemma, Pakistan could work to increase the inventory and enhance mobility of its SRBMs with an adequate mix of conventional as well as nuclear warheads so as to reduce the incentive for India to launch a pre-emptive counterforce strike.

### ***Developing an ASAT Capability***

For hypersonic weapons to work most efficiently and reach their intended targets, they would need accurate information and coordinates through satellites. India has an extensive network of satellites and has also signed bilateral agreements with the US that would help it to gain access to sensitive information about India's adversaries, including Pakistan. To deny access to real time

information about own assets, one of the possibilities could be to neutralize the adversary's satellites through kinetic or non-kinetic means. This nevertheless would require access to new technologies and resources to build anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons. In South Asia, India has already achieved this technological advantage and Pakistan is yet to embark on the journey. It could take several years before Pakistan could credibly threaten India's space-based assets that are being used for offensive military purposes.

### ***Building a Credible Second-strike Capability***

If one of the two adversaries have acquired a second-strike capability, it may provide incentives for a pre-emptive counterforce strike against the other and is therefore considered as destabilizing. However, if both adversaries have a credible second-strike capability and the capacity to inflict unacceptable damage to the other side after having absorbed the first strike, it would reduce pre-emptive counterforce temptations and thus enhance stability. To deny India the incentive for a pre-emptive counterforce strike, Pakistan must consider building its own version of a second-strike capability. This nevertheless would take considerable time and resources during which Pakistan may have to consider alternative options to deny its adversary the incentives for a pre-emptive first strike.

### **Conclusion**

India's counterforce temptations are guided by the political, military, technological and ideological imperatives. The desire by India's political leadership to assert its nationalist credentials for domestic politics, and also to project India as a credible power externally, is pushing India to adopt aggressive military postures against its neighbours, especially Pakistan. Frustrated by the lack of credible military options against Pakistan's nuclear deterrent, the

Indian military is contemplating options that could 'arguably' help create space for its limited war fighting doctrine.

India's scientific community, mainly the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO), is working on a completely different trajectory and is building new systems that do not necessarily support India's existing nuclear doctrine of 'NFU' but could provide the option of carrying out a pre-emptive counterforce strike against Pakistan. All these factors combined together with the current wave of Hindu nationalism enhances the prospects of India becoming more aggressive in its military posturing towards its neighbours, especially Pakistan.

In response to these developments, Pakistan could consider options to maintain credibility of its deterrence posture and achieve the primary objective of preventing a major war with India. This action-reaction cycle, which is a South Asian characteristic, is likely to exacerbate regional arms competition with increased possibility of miscalculation between the two nuclear armed adversaries in a future military crisis.

Both India and Pakistan have experienced a number of crises in the post nuclearization period and have learnt an important lesson that nuclear armed states cannot afford to engage in a major war. India's persistent efforts to build options that could allow a limited war with its nuclear armed adversary and shift the balance of power in its favour could lead to miscalculation and trigger an uncontrollable escalation to major or all-out war with catastrophic consequences for regional as well as global security.

It is therefore imperative that both India and Pakistan, despite current differences over Kashmir, work to find the modalities to resume their stalled composite dialogue process that was based on a common understanding that stable nuclear deterrence contributes to peace and stability in the region, and that there is no



space for any conventional war, however “limited”, between the two nuclear armed adversaries in South Asia.

## Flux in the Middle East and Nuclear Israel

Dr. Rubina Waseem\*

### Abstract

*The article discusses the impact of policy and practice of Israel's nuclear opacity on the already volatile security environment of the region. Besides geographical rivalry that led to several Arab-Israel wars, the Israel nuclear opacity is a key cause of insecurity for other regional actors such as Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia. On contrary, there is a possibility that a nuclear Israel may increase the flux in an already unstable Middle East, along with a number of regional wars fought with the Arab states. It is important to note that Israel is considered as the main hurdle in establishing the Middle Eastern Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (MENWFZ) that could ensure security for the entire region. Moreover, important developments such as recognition of Israel by several Arab states have in recent past to normalise Arab-Israel relations raise a question – how the normalization of relations between Israel and Arab states may affect Israel's opacity regarding its possession of nuclear weapons. To explore this question, the article studies Israel's nuclear behaviour keeping in view the international non-proliferation initiatives and its stance towards nuclear weapons acquisition. The article draws*

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*empirical claim that if Israel chose to declare its nuclear status then this behavior may indulge other states of the region to develop their nuclear weapon programme and thus multiplying the regional security challenges.*

**Keywords:** NPT, CTBT, FMCT, Non-proliferation, Nuclear weapons, Israel, Opacity, MENWFZ, RSC.

## Introduction

Israel maintains an ambiguous status of a nuclear-armed state as it has not overtly tested its nuclear device unlike India and Pakistan to declare its nuclear weapons programme. It is not recognized as NWS under the NPT unlike the US, Britain, France, China and Russia. Yet, it is considered a nuclear weapon state due to its nuclear programme infrastructure—uranium enrichment and reprocessing capabilities, refusal to join NPT as a NNWS and a clandestine test. Yet this assumption of nuclear testing about Israel is not widely accepted, as the flash over the Indian Ocean, away from the coastal area of South Africa is still inexplicable. The US suspects the flash to be a joint atomic test by Israel and South Africa.<sup>1</sup> Yet, it is not officially accepted by the state of Israel; therefore, no primary source can verify this claim. According to a report, Israel “is generally suspected of having a nuclear arsenal ranging from 100 to 200 nuclear warheads.”<sup>2</sup> Geographically situated in an unstable and conflict-prone region of Middle East,

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<sup>1</sup> Yossi Melman, “US Suspected Israeli-South African Nuclear Test Behind Mysterious “Flash”,” *The Jerusalem Post*, December 8, 2016, accessed June 8, 2020, <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/US-suspected-Israeli-South-African-nuclear-test-474765>

<sup>2</sup> “Arms Control and Proliferation Profile: Israel,” *Arms Control Association*, July, 2013, accessed January 6, 2020, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/israelprofile>

Israel has been sustaining its nuclear weapons programme under secrecy with hardly any substantial evidence before 1986. Since 1948, the country fought several wars with its Arab neighbours and has been experiencing troubled relations with its neighbours since its inception. However, in recent years Arab countries such as Bahrain and the UAE have agreed to build normal diplomatic relations with Israel that will help in easing off Israel's isolation in the region. Other states are still reluctant to normalize their relations. There are news reports, which are officially denied,<sup>3</sup> about Israeli Prime Minister's meeting with Saudi prince indicating the possibility of building diplomatic relations covertly.

Given the strained regional dynamics, the article argues that it is imperative for Israel to maintain its nuclear weapons programme under secrecy because if Israel reveals possession of nuclear weapons, it would destabilize the region and lead to a nuclear arms race. Currently, Israel has no peer/competitor in the region in terms of nuclear technology but future prospects can be different because Israel's nuclear weapons may create a security dilemma for the other regional states to develop their nuclear weapons to ensure their security. Although during the last five decades these weapons have not led to horizontal proliferation, the recognition of Israel as a state by some regional states will likely create security dilemma for other rival states especially Iran. Iran has pointed out Israeli threat in its 2013 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) address.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, Israel expressed its reservations about Iranian nuclear programme. Thus the argument this article puts forth is

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<sup>3</sup> Ben Hubbard, David M. Halbfinger and Ronen Bergman, "Israeli Reports Say Netanyahu Met Saudi Crown Prince. Saudis Deny It," *The New York Times*, November 23, 2020, accessed November 26, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/23/world/middleeast/netanyahu-mohammed-bin-salman.html>

<sup>4</sup> "Netanyahu Speech at UN in 3 Minutes," *The New York Times*, October 1, 2013, accessed November 22, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RsG88a6IPi0>

that any revelation of Israel's nuclear weapons programme could create security dilemma for Iran.

The recent developments such as two Arab states' recognizing Israel can bring change in latter's nuclear policy however, this article is focused on the possibilities and prospects of Israel's decision to sustain its opacity. Israel's policy is "that it will not be the first country to introduce nuclear weapons in the Middle East."<sup>5</sup> Yet, the NPT failed to establish the Middle East as a nuclear weapons/WMD free-zone<sup>6</sup> and Israel is the main hurdle despite the fact that it participated in NPT Review Conference's negotiations. Israel's behaviour is complicating the security environment of the region which can be explained through Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT). According to this theory it is not the region but the multifaceted relationships between the regional actors which need to be determined.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, the regional actors are already in a volatile relationship with each other and if one state increases its power (by acquiring nuclear weapons), it will further complicate regional security.

The article attempts to assess how Israel's nuclear weapons and its nuclear behaviour has aggravated regional insecurities. The descriptive research design of the study delves into the problem, its causes and prospects in detail. The Middle Eastern region is already volatile due to terrorism concerns and Israel's influence on the great power politics is further complicating regional security

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> "2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons," Draft Final Document, Distr.: Restricted, *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom*, May 21, 2015, accessed June 10, 2020, <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/documents/Disarmamentfora/npt/revcon2015/documents/DraftFinalDocument.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Barry Buzan & Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003): 564.

dynamics. Neo-Realism argues that the “relative distribution of power in the International system is the key to determine the independent variables for understanding important international endings such as war, alliances, peace, politics and balance of power.”<sup>8</sup> In this anarchic world, structure of the system creates insecurity; hence, states prefer reliance on the self-help system. This argument proves that nuclear Israel may cause insecurity for the other regional actors among which Iran is a potential threat and the international community led by the US considers Iran to have suspicious motives to acquire nuclear weapons.

In order to assess the impact of Israel’s nuclear weapons programmes and its nuclear behaviour on regional security, this article seeks answers to following questions: 1) how did Middle Eastern geo-political environment evolve with the advent of nuclear weapons?; 2) why has Israel decided to acquire nuclear weapons?; 3) why Israel’s *nuclear opacity* policy was introduced?; and 4) how has Israel’s nuclear behaviour and its posture towards nuclear non-proliferation evolved?

### **The Geo-Political Environment of Israel**

Since 1948, Israel has been facing an intense geo-political environment that led to several Arab-Israel wars. In 1949, the borders were declared to be insecure and indefensible for the state of Israel; particularly Golan Height in the northeast, which was under Syrian control and the barrier in the north. The state of Israel is not recognized by the majority of the Arab states. Faced with intense regional rivalry, Israel with a small territorial possession and lack of strategic depth opted for nuclear weapons – a tool to be

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<sup>8</sup> John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens, *The Globalization of World Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011): 92.

used in order to attain security and its foreign policy goals.<sup>9</sup> However, the possession of (undeclared) nuclear weapons by Israel and regional rivalry are also threatening other states' security in the region. Israel is considered to be an aggressor state by the Muslim world due to its forced occupation of Palestine and utilization of unjust techniques to violate the due rights of the people of Palestine; Israel and Palestine have remained and still are in a state of flux for a number of years. Regardless of Israel's policies and posture towards neighbouring states, Israel's quest for nuclear weapons was not as opposed by the non-proliferation supporters as it is, in case of Iran. The reason being Israel is a non-NPT state. But, it is also believed by the scholars that Israel proliferated and acquired nuclear weapons with the help of the US, Britain, France and Canada.<sup>10</sup> All these states under the NPT statutes were not allowed to transfer nuclear weapons technology to non-nuclear weapons state under the Article-I of NPT.<sup>11</sup> Although the

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<sup>9</sup> Main techniques of Israel for attaining the goals of its foreign policy is evidenced by a number of historical examples such as: Israel's concern about "British withdrawal from its Suez Canal base, in accordance with the Anglo-Egyptian treaty 1954, the opportunity of an Egyptian-American reconciliation under this consideration Israel conducted a covert operation (Operation Susannah) to damage these alarming developments." See Bennett, Jeremy, *The Suez Crisis*. BBC Video, n.d. Video cassette (Check this reference) and Dan Raviv and Yossi Melman, *Every Spy a Prince, The Complete History of Israel's Intelligence Community* (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990): 63-69.

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth Waltz, "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Better," *Adelphi Papers*, Number 171 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981): 43.

<sup>11</sup> Fact Sheet: Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)," *Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation*, updated April 14, 2017, accessed August 10, 2020, <https://armscontrolcenter.org/fact-sheet-nuclear-non-proliferation-treaty-npt/>; Daryle Kimball and Kelsey Davenport, "The Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) at a Glance," Fact Sheets and Briefs, *Arms Control Association*, updated August 2017, accessed August 10, 2020, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/NSG>; Kelsey Davenport, "The Missile Technology Control Regime at a Glance," Fact Sheets and Briefs, *Arms Control Association*, updated July 2017, accessed August 10, 2020, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/mtcr>

technology was acquired under the cover of civilian/peaceful nuclear technological agreements.

In order to assess geo-political environment confronted by Israel, it is important to study the Palestinian/Arab point of view about Israel as an aggressor state. This should be seen in comparison with the US and Israel's belief that Israel needs protection for sustaining its identity and existence. Israel fought at least one major war in every decade since 1948 – “the 1956 Suez war in the 1950s, the 1967 Six-Day war and the 1969-1970 war of attrition in the 1960s, the 1973 war in the 1970s and finally, the 1982 war with Lebanon in the subsequent two decades.”<sup>12</sup> Resultantly, Israel occupied Palestinian territory for religious reasons that left Israel isolated in the region. Besides political and religious reasons for going to war with its Arab neighbours, the key insecurity for Israeli planners (especially from military viewpoint) emanates from country's lack of strategic depth. In 1948, Ben-Gurion proposed a way to resolve the concerns of lack of strategic depth by transferring “war into the enemy territories.”<sup>13</sup> The military and political elite of Israel developed an offensive military doctrine. This solution is relatable and convincing for the Israelis but equally destructive and volatile for the Middle Eastern security calculus.

In 1967, after the six-days war, Israel refused to withdraw from the occupied territories and claimed that those territories are significant for the security of Israel. This denotes the hegemonic

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<sup>12</sup> Amr Nasr El-Din, “Israeli Nuclear Deterrence: The Failure of a Concept: How did the Change in Israel's Strategic Context Affect the Usefulness,” *American University in Cairo*, October 21, 2012, accessed August 4, 2020, <http://dar.aucegypt.edu/handle/10526/3276>

<sup>13</sup> Zeynep Civik, “The Israeli Security Policy: Changes and Continuities,” *Masters of Science, Middle East Technical University*, December 2004, accessed August 4, 2020, <https://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12605756/index.pdf>



intention of Israel and indicates that Israel was not dependent on nuclear weapons to counter its challenges. This argument for a self-evident conclusion revealed that Israel's conventional capabilities remained adequate to counter regional states. Therefore, possession of nuclear weapons although claimed to be for the sake of security, was more of an issue of prestige than security. In that case Israel will utilize every situation to fulfil its hegemonic motives. A counter argument can be that the fewer the enemies Israel has in the region, lesser the pressure it would feel to become a nuclear power. Keeping in view the previously discussed argument, Israel consider nuclear weapons a matter of prestige and thus normalization of relationship with the Arab states will provide Israel a chance to enhance its prestige. These hegemonic designs of Israel are affecting security of the region.

### **Nuclear Weapons Programme of Israel**

Israel started its nuclear programme in 1948 when many talented Jewish scientists immigrated to Israel in the early 30s and 40s. In 1949 the Weizmann Institute of Science supported the nuclear programme "with Dr. Bergmann heading the chemistry department, this programme offered many scholarships to Israeli students to study nuclear engineering and technology."<sup>14</sup> The civilian division of atomic energy was founded secretly in 1952 and was placed under the Ministry of Defence. A French scientist Dr Francis Perrin visited Weizmann Institute in 1949 later revealed in 1986 that there were many Israeli scientists working at Los Alamos national laboratory who "may have brought the technology at home [Israel]. Israel and France had vital cooperation while enhancing and developing the nuclear technology. In constructing G-1 plutonium reactor and UP-1 production reprocessing plant at

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 223.

Marcoule (France).”<sup>15</sup> Israel and France enjoyed close cordial relations during early 1950s and 60s when Israel provided intelligence to France about French colonies in the Middle East. The rivalry with Egypt was one of the reasons for the alliance/partnership of France and Israel. During the six days before the Suez Canal crisis, Israel convinced France to help build its nuclear reactor; Canada also participated in helping Israel.<sup>16</sup>

The Suez crisis undoubtedly alarmed Israel against the Soviet threat. As a result, Golda Meir (the then Foreign Minister of Israel), Shimon Peres (the Israeli Defence Minister) and Christian Pineau (French Foreign Minister) had a secret meeting and France found Israel as an ally against Egypt.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, Israel needed assistance for acquiring nuclear technology and in the meeting Peres convinced the French to assist Israel in acquiring nuclear deterrent. After several meetings between the foreign ministers of both countries “the agreement was reached for an 18-megawatt thermal research reactor of EL3 type. Both countries signed the agreement in 1957.”<sup>18</sup>

During the 1967 war, France stopped uranium supply to Israel however it did not stop Israel from developing its nuclear programme. French colonies such as Gibbon, Niger and Central

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<sup>15</sup> Shlomo Aronson and Oded Brosh, *The Politics and Strategy of Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East, the Opacity Theory, and Reality* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992): 20.

<sup>16</sup> Zachary Keck, “The inside Story of How Israel Build Nuclear Weapons,” *The National Interest*, April 4, 2018, accessed June 10, 2020, <https://nationalinterest.org/the-inside-story-how-israel-built-nuclear-weapons-25210>

<sup>17</sup> Ian Black and Benny Morris, *Israel's Secret Wars: A history of Israel's Intelligence Services* (New York, New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991): 418-419.

<sup>18</sup> William Burr and Avner Cohen, “The US Discovery of Israel's Secret Nuclear Project,” *Nuclear Proliferation International History Project*, April 2015, accessed June 12, 2020, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/the-us-discovery-israels-secret-nuclear-project>

African Republic were utilized for the uranium supply. The Operation Yellow Cake helped obtain uranium oxide held in a stock pile in Antwerp. In Operation Yellow Cake, Israel used "West German front company and high seas transfer in the Mediterranean Sea from one ship to another. Smugglers named the 560 sealed oil drums as plumbat, from which it received the name 'Operation Plumbat'." <sup>19</sup> This nuclear quest shows Israel's commitment towards nuclear weapons acquisition however Israel from the very beginning has the policy of opacity about its nuclear weapons.

Although Israel has not officially tested its nuclear device, empirical evidence indicates that it had mastered the nuclear weapons technology by the late 1960s due to the close collaboration with countries like France, South Africa, the UK and the US and possesses sufficient nuclear weapons,<sup>20</sup> which is now widely accepted as well.<sup>21</sup> Notably, it was in October 1986, the (British Newspaper) *Sunday Times* provided pictures as well as evidence regarding Israel's implicit nuclear program, citing the worker/nuclear technician named Mordechai Vanunu, who was working in the top-secret nuclear reactor Dimona complex, as its source.<sup>22</sup> The revelations were precise and comprehensive, for the first time providing verifiable proof that made it difficult for Israel to continue claiming not having nuclear weapons. The consequence of that revelation was an eruption of academic work examining the

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<sup>19</sup> Avner Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998): 16.

<sup>20</sup> Hans M. Kristensen, Robert S. Norris, "Israeli Nuclear Weapons," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 70: Issue 6 (November 2015): 97-115.

<sup>21</sup> Louis R. Beres, "Israel's Bomb in the Basement: A revisiting of 'Deliberate Ambiguity' vs. Disclosure," in Karsh, *Between War and Peace*, 113-133.

<sup>22</sup> Greg Myre, "Israeli Who Revealed Nuclear Secrets is Freed," *The New York Times*, April 2014.

consistency of Israel's stance and options available for Israel's nuclear program.<sup>23</sup>

The available information on Israel's stockpile of fissile material and its production is minimal. According to a report published in 2014, almost 800 kilograms of weapons-grade plutonium was possessed by Israel and roughly 300 kilograms of HEU stockpiles were reported with less certainty due to the lack of information.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, the Global Fissile Material Report of 2015 indicates that Israel is producing weapon grade plutonium through Dimona (50 years old) which is a plutonium production reactor built by France. The reactor is estimated to solely producing Lithium-6 and Tritium at this point.<sup>25</sup> According to some reports, Israel has 860 kg of plutonium capable of producing nuclear weapons.<sup>26</sup> The reports indicate that in 2016, the HEU stockpile of Israel was about 300 kg with the apprehension that this stockpile may have been supported by the US in 1960s, but certainly was not overtly acknowledged by either government.<sup>27</sup> Israel reportedly possesses 80 nuclear weapons and among these, 50 nuclear weapons are for the Jericho II medium-range ballistic missiles, which are supposed to be situated in caves along with the mobile launchers at Jerusalem's

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<sup>23</sup> Alan Dowty, "Nuclear Proliferation: The Israeli Case," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 22: No. 1 (March, 1978): 79-120; Efraim Karsh (ed.), *Between War and Peace: Dilemmas of Israeli Security* (London, England: Frank Cass, 1996): 82-90.

<sup>24</sup> Cited in Daryl G. Kimball, "Israel Indicates Support for CTBT," *Arms Control Association*, May 2014, accessed September 20, 2020, [https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2014\\_05/Israel-Indicates-Support-for-CTBT](https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2014_05/Israel-Indicates-Support-for-CTBT); Mounzer Sleiman, "Shutting down Dimona: Israel's nuclear programme, arsenal and environmental threat," *Contemporary Arab Affairs* Vol. 3: Issue 4 (November 2010): 437-479.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> "Arms Control and Proliferation Profile: Israel," Fact Sheets and Briefs.

eastern military base, and almost 30 are gravity bombs for delivery by aircraft.<sup>28</sup>

### Israel's Delivery Systems

Israel possesses the capacity of having delivery means with the capability to carry a nuclear payload and is capable to attack any regional state.<sup>29</sup> Reports further specify that Israel has achieved the nuclear triad with the capacity to deliver nuclear warheads.<sup>30</sup> Israel developed land-based Jericho ballistic missiles – Jericho I, II and III. These missiles are road and rail mobile based on a technology provided by France. Jericho-I was a short-range missile with a 500 kilometres range, deployed in the 1970s but later became obsolete and retired from service in 1990s. Jericho II with 1,500 kilometres range was launched in 1980s and can cover all the Arab states.<sup>31</sup> Jericho-III with estimated range of 4,800-6500 kilometres entered into service in 2011. Reports indicate that Jericho-III was first tested in 2008 and later in 2011 and, is categorized as an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).

The available information on Israel's Submarine-Launched Cruise Missiles (SLCMs) and submarines is negligible and ambiguous. There are doubts regarding Israel's capability to launch

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<sup>28</sup> Shannon N. Kile and Hans M. Kristensen, *SIPRI Fact Sheet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, July 2017), accessed August 3, 2020, [https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2017-06/fs\\_1707\\_wnf.pdf](https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2017-06/fs_1707_wnf.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> In 1981, Iraqi reactor was bombed by the Israeli Air Force, which was perceived as a threat by the Israel government. Likewise, in 2007, when the Syrians failed to provide accurate information about their reactor to the IAEA, Israeli Air Force again launched an air strike on the Syrian reactor. Moreover, Israeli government officially threatened Iran government about attacking Iranian facilities in order to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Ian Black, "Israeli threat to attack Iran over nuclear weapons," *The Guardian*, June 7, 2007, accessed June 13, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/jun/07/israelandthepalestinians.iran>

<sup>30</sup> Fetter, Ballistic Missiles and Weapons of Mass Destruction.34.

<sup>31</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, *Peace and War: The Arab-Israeli Military Balance Enters the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (London: Library of Congress, 2002): 521.

sea-based nuclear weapons, yet it is widely believed that Israel has this capability. The three Dolphin-class nuclear submarines were launched in the early 2000s, which were acquired from Germany for Israel's Navy. Recent reports illustrate that Israeli Navy will deploy more Dolphin-class submarines soon. It was announced in April 2017 that the progress of the submarine deal will accelerate.<sup>32</sup>

Moreover, Israel is believed to have retro-fitted the vessels of the Dolphin-class and indigenously developed a dual-capable system of SLCM with approximately 1,500 kilometres range. Regarding the capability of these missiles as delivery means for nuclear weapons, the German company ThyssenKrupp announced that it is not allowed to retrofit the submarine with the nuclear-armed SLCMs for Israel.<sup>33</sup> The reports of British paper *Sunday Times* specified that off the Sri Lankan coast in June 2000, Israel tested its nuclear version of this missile; however, these reports were denied by the Israeli government.<sup>34</sup> Some reports also claim that Israel's SLCM in question is an advanced version of the Harpoon (anti-ship cruise missile), which was either supplied by the US, or was an air-launched Popeye Turbo Israeli missile.<sup>35</sup>

There is very little information available about strategic bombers and air-based nuclear forces of Israel. According to some estimates, Israel possesses 30 nuclear gravity bombs that can be

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<sup>32</sup> Barbara Opall-Rome, "Israeli Navy backs Netanyahu's submarine scheme," April 19, 2017, accessed September 20, 2020, <https://www.defencenews.com/naval/2017/04/19/israeli-navy-backs-netanyahus-submarine-scheme/>

<sup>33</sup> Josh Breiner and Amos Harel, "Israel's Submarine Affair: Tale That Goes From Netanyahu to Gas Fields to Iran," Haaretz, November 9, 2018, accessed December 15, 2018, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-israel-s-submarine-affair-a-tale-of-bibi-gas-fields-germany-and-iran-1.6636630>;

ThyssenKrupp was responsible for the construction of the Israeli submarine.

<sup>34</sup> *Arms Control and Proliferation Profile: Israel*, Arms Control Association.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

transported by aircraft.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, more than twenty F-15 Eagle and F-16 Falcon aircrafts are operated by the Israeli air force out of which some are believed to be specialized to deliver nuclear payload.<sup>37</sup>

Table 3.1. Israel Missile Account

Missile	Range	Status
Jericho III	4800-6500	Operational
Jericho II	1500-3500	Operational
Jericho I	500	Obsolete
Lora	280	Operational
Gabriel	35-400	Operational
Delilah	250-300	Operational
Harpoon	90-240	Operational

Source: "Missiles of Israel," Missile Threat, CSIS Missile Defence Project.<sup>38</sup>

### Israel's Nuclear Policy

The broad contours of Israel's nuclear policy can be understood from different officials' statements. For instance, in 1968 the Israeli ambassador to the US, Yitzhak Rabin, said that "he would not consider a weapon to be a weapon until it is tested."<sup>39</sup> Later in 1974, President Ephraim Katzir stated that "it has always been our intention to develop a nuclear potential...we now have that potential."<sup>40</sup> According to Israel's doctrine, the Samson Resort,

<sup>36</sup> Kile and Kristensen, *SIPRI Fact Sheet*.

<sup>37</sup> Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, "Israeli Nuclear Weapons, 2014," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* Vol. 70: No.6 (2014): 97-115.

<sup>38</sup> Missiles of Israel, "Missile Defence Project, Missile Threat, *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, published June 14, 2018, last modified June 15, 2018, accessed August 5, 2018, <https://missilethreat.csis.org/country/india/>

<sup>39</sup> Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, "Israeli Nuclear Weapons," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (October 13, 2016), accessed July 13, 2020, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0096340214555409>

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

Israel will use nuclear weapons in crisis which poses threat to the very identity and acceptance of the state of Israel. It happened somewhere in the war of Yom e Kippur where Israel was willing to use nuclear weapons but did not use them due to the US pressure.<sup>41</sup> Cohen identifies that Israel restrained itself once it was able to repulse Syrian advances in the Golan Heights and demonstration of detonation was considered as a warning, not actual use against Arab forces or cities. Israel's will to use nuclear weapons in case of a threat to its recognition as a state of Israel can be reviewed in changing regional political dynamics wherein two Arab states (Bahrain and the UAE) have recognized Israel thus setting the pace for ending Israel's isolation in future. Given the regional security dynamics and (growing) Arab-Israel rivalry and between few Arab states and Iran, a declared nuclear Israel could either aggravate tensions in the region or act as a strong deterrent to Iranian aggression against both Israel and its five Arab allies.

Israel's claim, that the decision to opt for nuclear weapons was based on providing a decisive deterrent and "the quest for nuclear capability was prompted by the basic asymmetries, in terms of population resources, strategic depth, territory and other attributes of power, between Israel and the Arab world,"<sup>42</sup> needs a reconsideration. One can argue the relevance of Israel's assumption for acquiring nuclear deterrence in the absence of any nuclear weapons in the region. Nonetheless, the dynamics of deterrence need to be explored within the broader paradigm in Middle East. For instance, Israel is stronger than Palestine due to its influence in the international system, despite being the major

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<sup>41</sup> Shmuel Tzabag, "Termination of the Yom Kippur War between Israel and Syria: Positions, Decisions and Constraints at Israel's Ministerial Level," *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol. 37: No. 4 (October 2001): 182-205.

<sup>42</sup> Sharad Joshi, "Israel's Nuclear Policy: A Cost-Benefit Analysis," *Strategic Analysis* (2000), accessed August 2, 2020, <https://www.idsa-india.org/an-mar00-6.html>



human rights violator. Israel claims that Arabs' threat since 1948 has created a dilemma for the state that made it necessary for Israel to acquire nuclear weapons as a guarantee for its security. Israel wanted to increase the cost for Arab states to refrain from the war. Unfortunately, this high response from Israel to a conventional threat introduced nuclear weapons in the region, although theorists believe that "states act with less care if the expected costs of war are low and with more care if they are high,"<sup>43</sup> and thus, Israel needs to be conscious regarding its nuclear policy. Few Arab states have formed diplomatic and trade relations with Israel which made other states further insecure who already had reservation against Israel. Hence, this dilemma could trigger a high response from these states. Therefore, within the context of Middle Eastern region it is argued that nuclear weapons may play a significant role in making the region more volatile.

### **Nuclear Behaviour of Israel**

Israel consistently maintains its long-standing policy of 'nuclear opacity,' keeping its nuclear posture restricted to an equilibrate viewpoint that appeals for restraint and caution. The Holocaust is a crucial element in understanding Israel's nuclear resolve. Israel believes that it needs to build its potential for inflicting the terror of nuclear war like that of Hiroshima against its enemy. It believes that in order to prevent another Auschwitz Camp (where millions of Jews were killed by Nazis); there is a need to build nuclear weapons.<sup>44</sup> The geographical vulnerabilities of Israel depict that an attack like Hiroshima might be considered as another holocaust for the population of Israel, therefore, another Auschwitz was unthinkable for the Israeli nation. However, this logic does not

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<sup>43</sup> Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons*. 54.

<sup>44</sup> Martin van Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive: A Critical History of the Israeli Defence Force* (New York, New York: Public Affairs, 1998): 174.

provide ground for Israel to create a holocaust for the Palestinians and rest of the region.

Besides Israel's nuclear opacity, international community showed little concern to address this issue. The 1986 Mordechai Vanunu's revelations about Israel's nuclear programme followed by limited political reaction by major states indicated international community's lack of political interest in interfering in Israel's nuclear affairs. Norway, however, was the sole exception, where the government was forced by the opposition to take action and 'slowed if not stopped'<sup>45</sup> the heavy water export, which in the late 1950s was supplied to Israel. Otherwise, no significant official political reaction was observed after the Vanunu's report especially from the Western governments. Even the Arab's official reaction was relatively muted.<sup>46</sup> But the consideration of the Arab world cannot be ignored and consequently reports of Iran's nuclear ambitions were evident to prove that it increased the complications for the region.

### ***Amimut (Nuclear Opacity)***<sup>47</sup>

Secrecy and lack of acknowledgment are the key ingredients in the amimut policy of Israel. It has been in Israel's interest to make sure that nuclear weapons are not introduced into the Middle East<sup>48</sup> hence to keep its nuclear programme under secrecy and undeclared. However, the changing security and political dynamics of Middle East could compel other states to develop nuclear

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<sup>45</sup> Gary Milhollin, "Israeli A-Bombs and Norwegian Heavy Water: Arms Control through Public Pressure," *Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control*, June 17, 1993, accessed July 17, 2020, <https://www.wisconsinproject.org/israeli-a-bombs-and-norwegian-heavy-water-arms-control-through-public-pressure/>

<sup>46</sup> Cohen, *The Worst Kept Secret*, 48.

<sup>47</sup> The Hebrew word for nuclear opacity or ambiguity is amimut. The term used by Avner Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb*.

<sup>48</sup> Cohen, *The Worst Kept Secret*, 34.

weapons to ensure their security which would in turn make Israel more insecure. Once the Arab-Israeli conflict is elevated to the nuclear level, Israel's security predicament would quickly worsen.<sup>49</sup> According to Avner Cohen, instead of choosing between resolve (proliferation) and caution (non-proliferation), Israel has adopted a posture that incorporates both. Although senior officials have made the point, always off the record, that the continuity of amimut is not automatic; it is not a dogma that can be taken for granted.<sup>50</sup> Rather, amimut is a policy that the Israeli government reviews occasionally, based on international developments. But each of these reviews has concluded that this policy is still the best response to Israel's nuclear situation, still future is uncertain.

Israel's position on nuclear affairs is quite different than that of India and Pakistan (non-NPT nuclear states). Israel maintains its ambivalent position about nuclear weapons. India's abandonment of opacity was motivated by nationalistic ideology and its desire for great-power status and Pakistan's abandonment of opacity was in response to India's nuclear test. For Israel, however, such a step can be predicted in the future. Israel's policy of nuclear opacity worked in the past, but this needs to be revised keeping in view changing dynamics of the nuclear club and region.

### ***Israel and the non-Proliferation Treaties***

The US provided Israel a great deal of diplomatic cover under the

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid. This argument was articulated for the first time in the early 1960s, soon after the nuclear project had become known, by the leaders of the Achdut Ha'avodah Party, Israel Galili and Yigal Allon, as well as by a small group of antinuclear Israeli scientists and intellectuals. Their basic argument was that if Israel was to initiate a nuclear-weapon project, it would inevitably lead to similar nuclear-weapons projects on the Arab side in reaction, which would make Israel's security drastically worse.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

Nixon-Meir deal<sup>51</sup> and many western and non-western states have been persuaded to treat Israel as an exceptional case. According to some experts, Israel's reason for not being part of NPT is due to treaty's ineffectiveness<sup>52</sup> as some regional countries such as Iran, that joined the NPT, could not be deterred from acquiring nuclear weapons. Israel has taken a different path altogether: while it has left little doubt about its nuclear resolve, it has remained reluctant to disclose its nuclear weapons, because for Israel it is not a national priority to declare its nuclear weapons rather nuclear weapons are its shield against the rival Arab states.<sup>53</sup>

With regards to the CTBT, Israel is the signatory, however, just like the US, it did not ratify the treaty. Israel maintains that it hasn't tested its nuclear weapons, and hence by signing CTBT the chances for future testing would be nullified. Although Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO in 2016, after his visit to Israel, announced that Israel is quite positive regarding the ratification of CTBT and there are chances of ratification among the eight countries having nuclear weapon technology.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, Israel has two fully operational seismic stations and a radionuclide laboratory; and is among those 90 countries which host the CTBTO monitoring stations. Yet after discourse analysis, the possibility of Israel ratifying the CTBT any time soon seems very remote, because states give statements in order to gain positive image on media and

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<sup>51</sup> Amir Oren, "Newly Declassified Documents Reveal How U.S. Agreed to Israel's Nuclear Program," *Haaretz*, August 30, 2014, accessed August 15, 2018. <https://www.haaretz.com/.premium-how-the-u-s-let-israel-go-nuclear-1.5262274>

<sup>52</sup> Chen Kane (Director, Middle East Nonproliferation Program, Middlebury Institute), interviewed by the researcher, Washington DC, September 10, 2017.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Yossi Melman, "Nuclear Official to "Post": Israel will Ratify CTBT," *The Jerusalem Post*, June 20, 2016, accessed June 3, 2020, <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Nuclear-official-to-Post-Israel-will-ratify-CTBT-457287>

among the other actors, but it does not mean that they comply with those positive statements. For instance, Lassina Zebro's (Executive Secretary of the CTBTO) statement is not the policy of Israel, he believes that "Israel could be the next" state among the eight key holdouts to ratify the treaty."<sup>55</sup>

Israel participated in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), before the Iran deal, and objected to the fissile material cut-off Treaty (FMCT) negotiations, arguing that it needs sufficient nuclear material to safeguard from the suspected development of nuclear weapons by Iran. In the CD 2012, Israel didn't discuss the FMCT and insisted to focus on other issues rather than the four core issues that are in a stalemate: negative security assurances, the FMCT, nuclear disarmament, and prevention of an arms race in the outer space. Israel has always opposed the FMCT as it will directly impact its nuclear policy of *opacity*.<sup>56</sup> Israel also believed that it will not be an effective measure against the regional nuclear proliferation and considered it an inadequate safeguard against the Iranian nuclear development capability. Therefore, Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu continually refused to sign the FMCT.<sup>57</sup> However, despite having concerns, Israel didn't block the negotiations on the FMCT. Yet, in 2015 in the UNGA, Israel refrained from a consensus resolution urging the CD to start the FMCT negotiations.

### ***The US and Nuclear Israel***

Many Israeli nuclear scientists received nuclear training and technological assistance under Eisenhower's *Atoms for Peace*

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<sup>55</sup> David Horovitz, "Israel "probably" next to ratify nuke test ban treaty- top official," *The Times of Israel*, March 19, 2014.

<sup>56</sup> "WMD-Free Middle East Proposal at a Glance," Fact Sheets and Briefs, *Arms Control Association*, June 2015, accessed January 10, 2020, [www.armscontrol.org](http://www.armscontrol.org)

<sup>57</sup> "Israel Banning the Production of Fissile Material for Nuclear Weapons: Country Perspectives on the Challenge to Fissile Material (Cutoff) Treaty," *Global Fissile Report 2008*, accessed January 10, 2020, [www.fissilematerials.org](http://www.fissilematerials.org)

programme and utilized the supplied materials for weapon development purposes. The NPT in 1968 created a rift between US-Israel relations on the nuclear issue. Some analysts believe that till the 1969 deal,<sup>58</sup> the nuclear programme of Israel remained a source of frustration and friction between the US and Israel. The deal though allowed the US to accept the nuclear-armed Israel and restricted Israel to keep its part of the deal. Israel gave the US assurances of commitment about its nuclear conduct – no test, no declaration, no transfer to others (Western and non-Western states alike) – with the belief that the world can live with an Israeli bomb that is kept invisible.

While the details of the Nixon-Meir agreement<sup>59</sup> remained confidential for many years, the United States defended Israel's nuclear programme in the international arena. Egypt started peace negotiations with Israel in 1977 under the shadow of Israel's bomb. It was the United States during the Camp David phase of negotiations that told Egypt straightforwardly that any effort to introduce nuclear issues into the peace negotiations, particularly Egypt's demand for Israel to join the NPT, would be futile. Egypt thus abandoned the efforts.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, nuclear weapons always remained non-negotiable and classified for Israel. The only time that the US has challenged Israel on a nuclear issue was in the context of the American global effort to advance the FMCT.<sup>61</sup> The collaboration between the US and Israel increased under Trump administration thus provided Israel an opportunity to reconsider its nuclear posture.

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<sup>58</sup> Amir Oren, "Newly Declassified Documents Reveal How U.S. Agreed to Israel's Nuclear Program."

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Cited in Cohen, *The Worst Kept Secret*, 49.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 54.

## The Debate on the Middle East NWFZ and Israel

The idea of Middle East Nuclear Weapon Free Zone was first taken up by an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) technical study in 1989,<sup>62</sup> which established the geographical delimitation of a future Middle East NWFZ. It was proposed to include the region extending from Syria in the north to Yemen in the south and from Libya in the west to Iran in the east in this MENWFZ. Furthermore, the UN study expanded the span by including Israel, Iran and all the League of Arab states. This UN study delimitation was endorsed by the Arab League, to which even Israel did not raise any objection.<sup>63</sup> Yet, Israel is the only state in the region possessing nuclear weapons. The discourse analysis of the debate indicates Israel is the only hurdle in the way of the Middle East NWFZ.

In 1995, the debate on Middle East NWFZ or Weapon of Mass Destruction Free Zone (WMDFZ) remained an integral part of the NPT Review Conference (Rev Con) when the decision was made to extend NPT for an indefinite period. Furthermore, in the 2010 NPT Rev Con, the states decided to establish such a zone by 2012, but this meeting was suspended due to the disagreement on the agenda. Later, in 2012, Israel contributed in a series of discussions with the Arab Group and Finnish coordinator Jaakko Laajava. This discussion, however, was halted after the 2015 Rev Con, which failed to produce a final document to extend Laajava's mandate (WMDFZ).<sup>64</sup> Israel announced in the UNGA that "it remains

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<sup>62</sup> Sameh Aboul-Enein and Hassan El-Bahtimy, "Towards a verified nuclear weapon free zone in the Middle East," *Vertic Brief*, April 11, 2010, accessed April 10, 2020, <http://www.vertic.org/media/assets/Publications/VB11.pdf>

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Paolo Foradori and Martin B. Malin (ed.), "A WMD-Free Zone in the Middle East: Regional Perspectives," The Project on Managing the Atom, *Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs*, November 2013, accessed October 10, 2019, <https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/files/awmdfreezon einthemiddleeast.pdf>

committed to a vision of the Middle East developing eventually into a zone free of Chemical, Biological, and Nuclear weapons as well as ballistic missiles.”<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, it similarly recognizes the need for direct negotiations between the regional states and the directly concerned states while applying step by step approach to freely arrive at some agreed upon arrangements.<sup>66</sup>

### **Israel's Emerging Status and Nuclear Weapons**

In the recent scenario, recognition of the state of Israel by Arab states especially, Bahrain and the UAE, and its growing influence in the region due to the US support is considered to be its political/diplomatic success. These Arab states were united on this issue for several decades and the punitive action was taken against the Egypt in 1979 when it recognized Israel. But the current the stance of Arab states has been changed which will obviously affect the region. Conscious that it had played pivotal role in the Middle Eastern Politics, Israel aspired to claim its place as one of the significant players in the region. Therefore, there are possibilities that Israel after getting recognition may rethink its nuclear posture and which may be detrimental for the regional peace and security.

### **Conclusion**

Israel never admitted to possessing nuclear weapons nor is it a party to the NPT. The official stance of Israel remained that “it will not be the first country to introduce nuclear weapons in the Middle

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Director General, “Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East Report,” GOV/2012/38-GC(56)/17, *Board of Governors General Conference*, August 27 2012, accessed April 3, 2020, [https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/gc56-17\\_en.pdf](https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/gc56-17_en.pdf)



East.”<sup>67</sup> Israel’s policy remained ambiguous due to these reasons: first, Israel always expresses its intention to make Middle East Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NWFZ) but is not willing to join international formal and informal efforts to make the region a nuclear free zone. Second, Israel always resisted the US and the international community to halt its nuclear programme and eventually reached an informal pact with the US, according to which, Israel will maintain a policy of *nuclear opacity* and will not declare itself a nuclear weapon capable state. Third, Israel is still the sole nuclear weapon state in the Middle East, which creates deep concerns for the other Middle Eastern states because the US is already asserting pressure over Iran through economic compulsions to suspend its nuclear program.

Israel, in view of its perceived geo-political threats, environment felt compelled to develop its nuclear weapons programme. However, by doing so Israel not only ensured its security vis-à-vis its Arab rivals and Iran but also made them insecure in the process. Insecure Arab neighbours or Iran could indulge into nuclear arms race to address their security needs. Under such circumstances, the recent development of its diplomatic relations with Bahrain and the UAE raises alarm – will it compel Israel to forego its nuclear weapons programme or declare its nuclear weapons. Inevitably, a declared nuclear-armed Israel could instigate nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

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<sup>67</sup> Backgrounder by Lionel Beehner, “Israel’s Nuclear Program and Middle East Peace,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, February 10, 2006, accessed September 3, 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/israels-nuclear-program-and-middle-east-peace>

## Indian Strategic Doctrinal Transformation: Trends and Trajectory

Dr. Summar Iqbal Babar and Dr. Muhammad Nadeem Mirza<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

*From being one of the biggest proponents of non-alignment to becoming a state aspiring to be a regional hegemon, India has gone through a huge doctrinal transformation in its strategic thinking. This paper addresses evolution of this transformation while detailing major military doctrines such as Nehru doctrine, Sunderji doctrine, Cold-Start doctrine, Indian Maritime doctrine, Indian Land Warfare doctrine, and Indian Joint Armed Forces doctrine. This continuous doctrinal transformation aims at seeking a more synchronized modernization of the military, creating synergy to fill operational gaps and enhance agility for swift manoeuvrability under a nuclear overhang. The study concludes that under the present BJP government, Nehruvian influence over Indian strategic thought has reduced significantly and therefore ultimately led to the design and adaptation of more hawkish strategies – such as Land-Warfare Doctrine 2018, hybrid warfare, surgical strike stratagem – which are contrary to the behaviour of a responsible nuclear-weapon state.*

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**Key Words:** Land Warfare, Maritime, Nuclear, Surgical strike, Cold-Start Doctrine, BJP.

## Introduction

Coupled with massive military modernization, the Indian strategic outlook has undergone a rapid transformation with the ultimate objective to alter the power equation in South Asia. Pakistan's development of tactical nuclear weapons for establishing a strategic parity to avoid any military confrontation has failed to prevent India from adopting offensive behaviour. Furthermore, Indian hybrid warfare strategy,<sup>2</sup> "surgical strike" capability,<sup>3</sup> Land-warfare Doctrine 2018,<sup>4</sup> enhancement of its defence budget and arms procurement, and ongoing conventional military build-up have endangered the existing deterrence in the region.<sup>5</sup> Indian plans to invest heavily in buying satellites and Airborne Early Warning Systems (AEWACS) 'eyes in the sky' from Israel and Russia,<sup>6</sup> acquisition of Rafale fighter jets from France,<sup>7</sup> signals intelligence, nuclear submarines, latest high range artillery guns, and reconnaissance assets to strengthen conventional asymmetry may invite conventional as well as a non-conventional arms race in

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<sup>2</sup> Summar Iqbal Babar and Muhammad Nadeem Mirza, "Indian Hybrid Warfare Strategy: Implications for Pakistan," *Progressive Research Journal of Arts and Humanities*, Vol. 2, No.1 (2020): 22.

<sup>3</sup> Ankit Panda, "India's 2017 Joint Armed Forces Doctrine: First Takeaways," *The Diplomat*, April 28, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Masood-Ur-Rehman Khattak, "The Indian Army's Land Warfare Doctrine 2018: A Critical Analysis," *IPRI Journal*, Vol. XX: No. 1 (Winter 2020): 105-134.

<sup>5</sup> Walter C. Ladwig III, "Indian Military Modernization and Conventional Deterrence in South Asia," *Journal of Strategic Studies* Vol. 3: No. 5 (29 July 2015): 729–72.

<sup>6</sup> Ajit Kumar Dubey, 'IAF's Plans to Acquire Planes from Israel, Russia on Hold Due to Price Hike', *India Today*, September 11, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Manu Pubby, "India to Buy 36 Rafale Jets in Fly-Away Conditions from France; Deal to Be Worked Out," *The Economic Times*, July 14, 2018.

the region.<sup>8</sup> India recently signed a geospatial intelligence-sharing agreement, “Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA)” with the United States that has undermined strategic stability in South Asia.<sup>9</sup> Given the conventional asymmetries, prolonged animosity due to unsettled territorial disputes, this bolstering strategic transformation in Indian doctrines has created security predicaments for Pakistan. Continuous violations along the Line of Control (LoC), disputes over water resources and diplomatic offensive to isolate Pakistan further add fuel to fire in a strategically volatile region that can have adverse effects upon the stability of the South Asian region.

Willingness and lobbying by the western states, specifically the United States to fast track transfer of military equipment and technology to India and Indian eagerness to strategically modernize itself have cultivated strategic disparity in South Asia. Pakistan’s efforts to maintain strategic stability in the region have been strained because of the US support for Indian permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council, Indo-US nuclear deal, and facilitating the special waiver from the Nuclear Suppliers Group – while refusing to address Pakistan’s apprehensions.

Given the enhancement in military prowess, the Indian military has been tempted to flex its muscles, remaining below the perceived nuclear threshold. Balakot attacks in February 2019 by the IAF was a concrete proof of prevailing Indian strategic

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Bracken, “The Problem From Hell: South Asia’s Arms Race,” *The Diplomat*, November 29, 2012, accessed December 02, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> Strategic Vision Institute (2020), *SVI Webinar on 'India-US Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA): Implications for the South Asian Region,'* Islamabad, November 11, 2020, <https://thesvi.org/webinar-on-india-us-basic-exchange-and-cooperation-agreement-beca-implications-for-the-south-asian-region-published-in-dawn/>.

ambitions.<sup>10</sup> A whopping increase in defence budget further substantiates Indian hegemonic designs. But the question remains that why and how has India embarked upon such a track to modernize its military, revolutionize its strategic thinking and enhance strategic capabilities? And what are the key features of this offensive doctrinal transformation? This paper traces the evolution of this transformation while detailing major military doctrines such as Nehru and Indira Doctrines, Sunderji Doctrine, Cold-Start Doctrine, Indian Land Warfare Doctrine, and Indian Joint Armed Forces Doctrine.

### **India's Strategic Thinking**

India has evolved different perceptions of the strategic environment and challenges to its national security over the years. It has gradually drifted away from Nehru's approach to view national security as a political matter, and to manage threats politically rather than militarily. It has always kept the economy as its foremost priority in which a major share of the resources was allocated for economic development. Prime Minister Modi's India is far more different and hawkish in its strategic outlook, the pursuit of power, and policy objectives than any of the previous governments. India is diversifying its resources to build its military muscle and to expand its political influence for strategic purposes. This hawkish approach has disturbed regional stability and raised alarms about any possible Indian military adventure. This has compelled Indian elites to rethink and allocate more for the defence budget that has reached 63.9 billion-dollar, becoming the fifth largest spender on the military by 2018.<sup>11</sup> India's grand strategy is a by-product of offense-defence calculations, political objectives of the state, and geographic, technological, economic,

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<sup>10</sup> Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, *India's Surgical Strike Stratagem: Brinkmanship and Response* (Islamabad, Khurshid Printers, 2019): 15.

<sup>11</sup> SIPRI, *SIPRI Yearbook 2018* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018): 6.

and political constraints as well as opportunities. The military doctrine framework translates the strategic understanding into tactical, operational, and theatrical domains. This study elaborates on the evolution of Indian military doctrines starting from Prime Minister Nehru's.

### ***Nehru and Indira Doctrines***

Nehruvian strategic thinking revolved around non-alignment and an effort to keep the Indian Ocean "Indian" dominated. To keep the great powers out of the Indian Ocean, it tried to dominate the regional states and prevented them from letting great powers establish bases in their territories.<sup>12</sup> India in the post-colonial era focused on building an indigenous military-industrial complex to keep itself free from international pressures, with the primary focus on economic advancement.

The regional challenges emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in the form of 1962 war with China and the 1965 and 1971 wars with Pakistan. During the Sino-Indian 1962 conflict, it requested and received the US military assistance, which also exposed its inherent internal weaknesses.<sup>13</sup> Subsequently, a five-year defence plan (1964) was launched that doubled the defence spending and

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<sup>12</sup> Robert Potter, "India's Monroe Doctrine Is Dead," *Australian Institute of International Affairs*, 21 March 2016, <http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/indias-monroe-doctrine-is-dead/>; Baljit Singh, "Nehru's Idea of Indian Security," *South Asian Survey*, Vol. 19: No. 2 (1 September 2012): 207–20, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0971523114539599>; A. Z. Hilali, "India's Strategic Thinking and Its National Security Policy," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 41: No. 5 (2001): 737–64.

<sup>13</sup> Muhammad Nadeem Mirza, "Pak-US Relations: Legacy of Unrealistic Expectations and Disillusionments," in Zafar Nawaz Jaspal (ed.), *Indo-US (Re) Alignments in South Asia: Contemporary Trends and Future Trajectories (Forthcoming)*, 2021.

focused on expansion and modernization of the military through foreign weapons procurements.<sup>14</sup>

Indira Doctrine was more aggressive and significantly changed the defence outlook of India. It was aimed at achieving a hegemonistic status in the region and to have the liberty to interfere in the internal matters of other regional states. Indira Gandhi favoured military expeditions and was not afraid of waging war against Pakistan in 1971 despite the US's opposition. Later on, India also deployed forces in Sri Lanka and Maldives in 1980s.<sup>15</sup> The Indo-Soviet 'Peace, Cooperation and Friendship' treaty was signed in 1971 which established a framework for Soviet military support and established them as India's primary suppliers of defence equipment. At the regional level, visit of President Nixon to Beijing in 1972 altered the wider context of Indian security which perceived the past policy of the US-Pakistan cooperation against communism being replaced by the US-China competitive cooperation against the Soviet Union.<sup>16</sup>

### ***Sunderji Doctrine***

Indian defence industry could rarely fulfil the demand of indigenous systems for its military forces. This resulted in doctrinal

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<sup>14</sup> From 1954 to 1962 India spent an average 560 million dollars on defence and from 1962-63 the defence spending increased to 750 million dollars. The target was set to increase troops from 0.5 million to 0.8 million and air force squadrons to 45. Maharaj K. Chopra, "Indian Defence at the Crossroads," *Military Review*, Vol. 44 (1964): 17.

<sup>15</sup> Bilveer Singh Bilveer, "Operation Cactus: India's Prompt Action in the Maldives," *Asian Defence Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 89 (1989): 30–33; David Brewster, "Operation Cactus: India's 1988 Intervention in the Maldives," in *India's Ocean: The Story of India's Bid for Regional Leadership*, 2014; V. P. Malik, *Operation Cactus: Drama in the Maldives* (Harper Collins, New Delhi, 2013); Bryan Pfaffenberger, "Sri Lanka in 1987: Indian Intervention and Resurgence of the JVP," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 28: No. 2 (1988): 137–47.

<sup>16</sup> Henry A. Kissinger, "Memorandum for President: My Talks with Chou En-Lai," (US Government, 14 July 1971); Henry A. Kissinger, *White House Years* (Simon & Schuster, 2011).

development and an expert committee headed by General K. Sunderji was tasked to develop a 20-years plan for the army.<sup>17</sup> Indira Gandhi carried out the recommendations with maximization of India's research and development capacity to reduce dependence on imports. The Army Air Defence (AAD) was made airmobile and could move to battlefields, scores of miles away, in a single day.<sup>18</sup> India's external debt by 1991 had soared to US \$70 billion and the idea had to be shelved. Yet, as part of India's efforts to produce technologically advanced and sophisticated weapons, an Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGDMP) was launched to develop ballistic missiles.<sup>19</sup>

### ***Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) 2004***

Since full scale conventional wars are not possible between India and Pakistan, therefore limited tactical conflicts can be generated and thus carried out in targeted territories with specific goals and to do so India should first enhance its specific conventional capabilities (offensive and more mobile) and bring about some reforms into its military strategy.<sup>20</sup> A limited war could be the result of a border dispute or Pakistan's political support to Kashmir struggle, could easily escalate towards a conventional conflict in the future. Also, Indian failure to rapidly mobilize troops against Pakistan during operation Parakram (2001) following the Indian Parliament attacks<sup>21</sup> prompted it to launch the CSD. The military

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<sup>17</sup> Shekhar Gupta, "General Krishnaswamy Sundarji, Soldier of the Mind Who Rewrote India's Military Doctrine," *The Print*, February 8, 2018; Ali Ahmed, "In Tribute: Recalling the Sundarji Doctrine," *USI Journal*, Vol. 138: No. 571 (2008): 22; Amit Gupta, "Determining India's Force Structure and Military Doctrine: I Want My MiG," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 35: No. 5 (1995): 441–58.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Sannia Abdullah, "Cold Start in Strategic Calculus," *IPRI Journal*, Vol. 12: No. 1 (2012): 1–27.

<sup>21</sup> John F. Burns and Celia W. Dugger, "India Builds Up Forces as Bush Urges Calm," *The New York Times*, December 30, 2001.



objectives were to destroy Pakistan's Army Reserve Divisions (North & South). India Corps I, II, and XXI are divided into eight Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs).<sup>22</sup> Similarly, many integrated groups will present monitoring and intelligence challenges and pose smaller targets to nuclear weapons. Another challenge would be to perceive India's limited objectives that could include slicing Pakistan's territory or holding it for negotiations. The CSD is aimed at dividing the cohesive strength of Pakistan and creating confusion.

CSD is based on five pillars:<sup>23</sup> The first is preparedness to fight a two-front war at the western and north-eastern border. The second is the strategic consideration of both military (conventional, sub-conventional, and nuclear) and non-military factors into outlining objectives. The third is the capacity to take war into the enemy's territory while protecting India's interests in the region and the littoral states surrounding the Indian Ocean. The fourth is developing interconnectedness between the three branches of the Indian Army. The fifth is the feasible degree of technological advancement required to pursue a limited-objective war.<sup>24</sup> CSD aims at setting objectives well below the nuclear threshold levels.<sup>25</sup>

There are doubts about the CSD's operational capabilities and the heightened output expectancy against Pakistan due to latter's Credible Minimum Deterrence policy and short-range tactical nuclear weapon TNW, Hatf Nasr. Pakistan has categorically warned India of its ambitious misadventure at any time, and that in case of

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<sup>22</sup> Walter C. Ladwig III, "A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army's New Limited War Doctrine," *International Security*, Vol. 32: No. 3 (Winter 2007): 49.

<sup>23</sup> Yagesh Joshi, "The End of the Cold Start Doctrine," *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 13 October 2010.

[http://www.ipcs.org/comm\\_select.php?articleNo=3258](http://www.ipcs.org/comm_select.php?articleNo=3258)

<sup>24</sup> Zafar Khan, "Cold Start Doctrine: The Conventional Challenge to South Asian Stability," *Contemporary Security Policy* Vol. 33: No. 3 (1 December 2012): 577–94.

<sup>25</sup> Ladwig III, "A Cold Start for Hot Wars?", 158-190.

violation Pakistan reserves the right to protect its territory by launching the tactical nuclear weapon within its territory which would be enough to destroy IBGs. Pakistan believes to plug in all the strategic, operational and tactical gaps to shatter Indian dreams of operationalizing the CSD. Furthermore, Pakistan views Nasr as less provocative and more defensive in nature that leaves little justifiable options for any Indian military adventure.

### **The Network Centric Warfare (NCW)**

Capabilities based on shock and awe tactics (rapid dominance) seek to exploit the situational awareness during a time of crisis and decapitate the Observation, Orientation, Decision and Action (OODA) loop of the decision-makers.<sup>26</sup> The NCW also allows for the integration of military/battlefield strategy in a result-oriented framework with the real-time reorientation of goals in an empowered self-synchronized manner which takes input from intelligence gathering, reconnaissance aircraft, and satellite monitoring.<sup>27</sup> However, the conversion of defence corps into strike corps presents a challenge of a counter strike by Pakistan as well as the reliance of Pakistan on nuclear deterrence to deter Indian designs.<sup>28</sup>

### **Indian Maritime Doctrine 2015**

India maintains the ambitions to build its military capabilities to achieve its own 'manifest destiny' to wrest control of the Indian

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<sup>26</sup> Carlo Kopp, "Understanding Network Centric Warfare," *Australian Aviation*, February 2005; Martin Révay and Miroslav Liška, "OODA Loop in Command Control Systems," in *2017 Communication and Information Technologies (KIT)* (2017 Communication and Information Technologies (KIT), IEEE Xplore, 2017): 1–4, accessed August 11, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.23919/KIT.2017.8109463>.

<sup>27</sup> Kopp, "Understanding Network Centric Warfare"; Révay and Liška, "OODA Loop in Command Control Systems".

<sup>28</sup> Baqir Sajjad Syed, "Nasr Pours Cold Water on India's Cold Start Doctrine: Bajwa," *Dawn*, July 6, 2017.

Ocean,<sup>29</sup> and achieve regional hegemony. While taking inferences from the Monroe Doctrine, Holmes and Yoshihara have developed three force models to measure Indian capabilities from 2004 and 2007: free-rider, constable, and strongman models.<sup>30</sup>

Free-Rider Model requires the naval capability to neutralize low-level maritime threats such as illegal trafficking, sea-based terrorist activities, piracy, and the like. It is the least aggressive model in posture which focuses on safe trade transit and sea lanes. This model does not diversify resources for expensive military apparatus. It seeks the presence of some other powerful maritime power to guarantee smooth sailing and maritime security in the region. It is an approach to avoid exhausting resources in mere muscle build-up as those can be utilized more in economic resources, multiplying trade, and maintaining a good image as well.<sup>31</sup> India, in this model, seeks the United States as dominant maritime force to play as guarantor and help in its economic endeavours. Furthermore, the United States works as a balancer against China, given the account of its assertive policies and comparative military prowess in the region, thus relieving India of threats emanating from the Oceans.<sup>32</sup>

In the Constable Model, a state seeks political restraint not to allow maritime access to any state forcefully. It requires dominant maritime security, better equipped and military capable to go for

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<sup>29</sup> James R. Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara, "India's "Monroe Doctrine" and Asia's Maritime Future," *Strategic Analysis* Vol. 32: No. 6 (23 October 2008): 997–1011.

<sup>30</sup> James R. Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara, "Strongman, Constable, or Free-Rider? India's "Monroe Doctrine" and Indian Naval Strategy," *Comparative Strategy* Vol. 28: No. 4 (1 October 2009): 332–48. Also see David Brewster, "An Indian Sphere of Influence in the Indian Ocean?" *Security Challenges*, Vol. 6: No. 3 (Spring 2010): 1–20.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Iskander Rehman, *India's Aspirations of Naval Doctrine*, Carnegie Endowment 2009, [https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Indias\\_Aspirational\\_Naval\\_Doctrine.pdf](https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Indias_Aspirational_Naval_Doctrine.pdf)

denial operations. This model requires sufficient capacity to not let any conflict being provoked prematurely.<sup>33</sup>

The Strongman Model requires a state capable of denying any external threat emanating from the ocean. For this, a state has to build its capacity, develop the latest military hardware, and acquire advanced technologies to respond to any sort of maritime threat.<sup>34</sup> Holmes and Yoshihara believe that India at the time is following the Free Rider Model and aspires to reach to the Constable Model to develop its naval and military capabilities to be able to conduct denial operations. It is evident in the Indian Ministry of Defence' 2014-15 annual report that deliberates on maritime sovereignty of the state and full use-of-sea.<sup>35</sup> It elaborates that the prime objective of the Indian Navy is to deter any maritime threat and dissuade acts against its national interests. Statistics display massive Indian defence purchases that aim at building its image as a major power, and leveraging its political influence in the region.<sup>36</sup> Holmes and Yoshihara noted that the Indian military modernization drive is reciprocal to its continuously growing economy so it can allocate more budgets to expand its strategic clout in the region.<sup>37</sup> To establish its power, India requires aircraft carriers for its Navy. Holmes and Yoshihara found that those carriers will have the capacity to execute traditional and non-traditional maritime roles such as air-to-air combat, air-ground attack, sea denial, anti-submarine, anti-surface warfare, mine and counter-mine, anti-piracy, and non-combatant evacuation operations (NEOs).<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> James R. Holmes, *Indian Naval Strategy in the Twenty-First Century*, 24.

<sup>35</sup> MOD India, *India Ministry of Defence - Report* (Government of India, 2015), 32.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Holmes and Yoshihara, "Strongman, Constable, or Free-Rider?," 340–45.

<sup>38</sup> Ashley J. Tellis, "Making Waves: Aiding India's Next-Generation Aircraft Carrier," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (22 April 2015): 6–9, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2015/04/22/making-waves-aiding-india-s-next-generation-aircraft-carrier-pub-59872>.

Looking at India's ambitions, it would require at least three aircraft carriers in its east and west coast fleets, with a third in a training cycle.<sup>39</sup> This behaviour is not only evident in maritime domain but also in the overall Indian strategic thinking represented in this paper through a doctrinal transformation.

### ***The Joint Indian Armed Forces Doctrine 2017***

Various arms of the defence forces have individual doctrines that are cognizant of the nature of operations and their respective mediums of operation. The perspectives and attitudes are acquired as the individual grows within the service.<sup>40</sup> A doctrine tries to streamline those perspectives and attitudes; it aims at prioritizing activities rather than platforms or services involved in the execution. The Joint Indian Armed Forces Doctrine (2017) lists the following national interests and security objectives:<sup>41</sup>

- a. To preserve sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of India
- b. To preserve democratic, secular and federal character of the India
- c. To safeguard India's existing and emerging strategic, political, economic, and military goals

India's National Security Objectives are:

- a. Maintain a credible deterrent capability to safeguard national interests
- b. Ensure defines of national territory, air space, maritime zones including our trade routes and cyberspace

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<sup>39</sup> Shishir Upadhyaya, "Projecting Power... and Politics? Carriers in the Indian Ocean," *IHS Jane's Navy International*, Vol. 11 (2015): 9.

<sup>40</sup> Johnson Chacko, "Indian Military Doctrine: An Analysis," *Indian Defence Review*, vol. 32: No. 4 (December 2017): 7.

<sup>41</sup> "Joint Operational Doctrine For Army, Navy, Air Force Unveiled," *The Economic Times*, July 12, 2018.

These interests and objectives are relevant in a larger strategic perspective which entails the following:

- a. India's aspirations for a greater role in the New World Order do not allow it to remain detached from global developments and it has to harness all aspects of national power and influence the world through its geography
- b. Effective deterrent capabilities to protect strategic interests in regions along Northern, Western and Eastern borders and sensitivities across the LOC and the LAC
- c. Addressing concerns of instability and radicalism in the immediate and extended neighbourhood which arises from geopolitical rebalancing, assertiveness by emerging powers and regional instabilities
- d. The centrality of land borders and Indian Ocean Region to India's growth and security as land and sea routes are vital for trade. Cooperative security and strategic partnerships in this regard are also crucial.

The Joint Armed forces doctrine (2017) focuses on the following aspects:<sup>42</sup>

- a. Jointness – a high-level of cross-domain synergy for the optimized capability to engage in Joint-War fighting. Joint Military Objectives and resource allocation for cross-domain requirements while keeping in mind the uniqueness and special attributes of each service.
- b. Other elements of integration are Joint Strategic Military Education, integrated logistics structure, integrated human resource development structure, integrated procurement, integrated perspective planning and emerging 'triad' to the traditional mediums of Land, Sea and Air, wherein future

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

wars are likely to be fought, viz. in the domains of Space, Cyber and Special Operations.

The doctrine tasks the establishment of synergy between three wings of the armed forces which is based on the notion that the application of joint force yields better results than the cumulative effect of the three wings applied individually.<sup>43</sup>

The notion of strength of defence suggests that 'any chain is as strong as the weakest link in it,' and in modern warfare, such a weak link in the airpower target system will be the pilots as they are the hardest to replace in real-time.<sup>44</sup> A Special Force tasked to neutralize the adversary's pilots will render its airpower futile. The multiplicity of roles in the Air Force warrants flexibility for bogies and similarly the perception related to the nature of theatres varies in Army and Air Force calculations. Military doctrine tried to operationally optimize the use of integrated force across the military forces.<sup>45</sup>

Execution of operations along the Army, Navy, and Air Force requires an integrative military authority for coordination of functions, rendering a change in the structure that would aid the prioritization of objectives and utilization of available resources in a timely, efficient, and cost-effective manner. The task of training, administration, and support including as a function to aid civil government would have to be performed by the existing military organizations.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, military divisions need to be placed in such operational settings which resemble their operational preparedness and need. Peacetime will be utilized for training,

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<sup>43</sup> Bratton and Smith, "India's Joint Doctrine: Hopeless Muddle or the Start of the Strategic Articulation," *War Room United States War College*, 2017, accessed June 29, 2020, <https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/articles/indias-joint-doctrine-hopeless-muddle-start-strategic-articulation/>

<sup>44</sup> Chacko, "Indian Military Doctrine: An analysis."

<sup>45</sup> Bratton and Smith, "India's Joint Doctrine."

<sup>46</sup> Chacko, "Indian Military Doctrine."

maintenance and administration of the units. And the units will be placed within military regions with a special focus on the possible need to neutralize an impending threat. The military authority in individual regions for these divisions will be supplemented by senior support staff from the three services to enhance interconnectedness.

The commander of the Air Forces would require command over aerial assets even belonging to other organizations. Similar integration mechanisms will be worked out at lower level military regions and subsequently at the integrated task force levels within the region.<sup>47</sup>

This is quite an incoherent approach, more army-centric and unable to provide joint mechanisms with other force instruments. Furthermore, it is a manifestation of hyper-nationalism spearheaded by the BJP too. This doctrine exhibits Indian strategic thinking to induce strategic imbalance through acquisition of Rafale and S-400 anti-ballistic missile systems, induction of more sophisticated and disruptive technologies to outsmart Pakistan in limited conventional warfare means. Though, presently India has not achieved its listed objectives but with the ambitions that go beyond conventional military imperatives, it can endanger strategic stability and peace in the region.

### **Land Warfare Doctrine 2018**

Indian Army has long been propagating its doctrine of engaging in a two-front war,<sup>48</sup> which is, against Pakistan and China. Ever since the partition, India has been involved in an armed conflict, directly or indirectly with Pakistan mainly over the Kashmir issue. Furthermore, since the 1962 war with China, India found itself in

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> N. C. Vij, R. K. Dhowan, K. K. Nohwar and Krishan Varna, "Two-Front War: What Does it Imply?" *National Security* Vol. I: No. I (August 2018): 1-20.



hot waters from the second front as well. To deal with this security dilemma, India felt a need to devise a doctrine that could compensate for its geopolitical vulnerability.



Figure 4.1. Main Features of India's LWD-2018.<sup>49</sup>

The 2018 Land Warfare Doctrine (LWD) is an extension of the Indian military strategy based on a wide range of threats. The striking features of this doctrine can be summarized into three groups: the multi-front environment, hybrid warfare (contact or non-contact confrontation) and the introduction of new technologies in the battle.<sup>50</sup> Analysis of these features highlight modernity in the strategic thinking of India. The previous Army doctrines lacked the strategies of fighting a two-front war.

<sup>49</sup> Khattak, "The Indian Army's Land Warfare Doctrine 2018," 105-134.

<sup>50</sup> Yasir Hussain, "India's Pakistan-Specific Land Warfare Doctrine: An Overview," *South Asian Voices*, March 15, 2019, accessed December 1, 2020, <https://southasianvoices.org/indias-pakistan-specific-land-warfare-doctrine-an-overview/>.

Furthermore, they also lacked the approaches of tackling the non-state actors.

First major feature of the LWD includes detailing explicitly two regions, that is, Northern Border (China) and Western Border (Pakistan). In an overall security of the region, India faces threats from the aforementioned states while other states being smaller in size, are either incapable of challenging India militarily or are dependent upon it in the economic and military terms. Hence, India has to focus all of its energies towards Pakistan and China. India also feels uneasy with the growing cooperation between Pakistan and China; thus, complexity of the situation compels it to treat threats emanating from them in a singular manner.

While the main focus on the China border is aimed at securing the frontiers through deterrence, the LWD classifies Pakistani border as an area where swift damage should be imposed<sup>51</sup> through directing the forces towards the gravity of the adversarial operations. It is explicitly evident that through the multi-layered forces, India tries to de-escalate tensions with China while focusing more on Pakistan.

The second major feature is combating non-state actors through hybrid warfare which includes cyber, space, and communication along with the other arenas irrespective of the battleground.<sup>52</sup> This also signifies importance for Pakistan<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> "Land Warfare Doctrine 2018," *Indian Army document*: p. 5.

<http://www.ssri->

[j.com/MediaReport/Document/IndianArmyLandWarfareDoctrine2018.pdf](http://www.ssri-j.com/MediaReport/Document/IndianArmyLandWarfareDoctrine2018.pdf); Ali

Ahmed, "Understanding India's Land Warfare Doctrine," *South Asian Voices* (blog), 26 February 2019, <https://southasianvoices.org/understanding-indias-land-warfare-doctrine/>; Younis Chughtai, "Indian Land Warfare Doctrine-2018: What It Means for the Region," *Daily Times*, January 10, 2019; Joy Mitra, "India's Land Warfare Doctrine 2018: Hoping for the Best, Preparing for the Worst," *The Diplomat*, January 3, 2019.

<sup>52</sup> "Land Warfare Doctrine-2018," 6.

considering the Indian posture in Kashmir, where it accuses Pakistan of funding and supporting the groups fighting for their independence. The term “non-contact war” also signifies the Indian strategy of inflicting damage on Pakistan from within the territories.<sup>54</sup> This can be argued in the form of developing the spy-network within the territorial limits of Pakistan.

Finally, the last strategy which Indian military has adopted is the inclusion of advanced technologies in the form of artificial intelligence, nanotechnology and hypersonic missile systems. In the pursuit of this objective, India has already strengthened its ties with Israel which range from the economic domains to being the strategic allies. India has also ventured through into space collaboration with Israel along with the defence systems and missile technology.<sup>55</sup>

It is quite evident that LWD is Pakistan centric. Even though the Indian strategic calculations of threat perception have always skewed towards Pakistan and China, there is a lesser possibility of conventional warfare between India and China. Chinese conventional forces have a vivid edge over India. There are also geographical complexities between both which combined with the nature of outstanding disputes, would keep the escalation level low. Owing to these reasons, the overt and covert focus of the Land Warfare Doctrine is evidently towards Pakistan.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Babar and Mirza, “Indian Hybrid Warfare Strategy: Implications for Pakistan.”

<sup>54</sup> Jaibans Singh, “Land Warfare Doctrine – 2018: An Assessment,” *Indian Defence Industries*, 30 January 2019, <https://indiandefenceindustries.in/land-warfare-an-assessment>; Mitra, “India’s Land Warfare Doctrine 2018”; P.K. Mallick, “Indian Army’s Land Warfare Doctrine 2018: Questions and Concerns,” *The Wire*, 3 January 3, 2019.

<sup>55</sup> Mumtaz Ahmad Shah and Dr. Tabraz, “India’s Israel Policy: From Nehru to Modi,” *Journal of Critical Reviews*, Vol. 7: No. 9 (2020): 872-878.

<sup>56</sup> Khattak, “The Indian Army’s Land Warfare Doctrine 2018,” 105-134.

This doctrine has various features. The most important among them is the formation of the IBGs. The rapidness and responsiveness at the time of escalation are desired from these groups. Since the chances of nuclear or full-fledged war are not possible, India has been preparing to fight a limited yet decisive war with Pakistan.<sup>57</sup> It has the aspiration to fight with a full-scale victory under the umbrella of nukes.

The Indian Army recognizes its inability and is committed to improving rapid mobilization of troops. In 2018 multiple small and active groups were formed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of IBGs. In each IBG, there has to be a clear synergy between the air and land forces. In this regard, every IBG would have 4-6 battalions, Armoured Personnel Carriers, and highly sophisticated helicopters. Currently, the Indian Army has been planning to raise around 9 IBGs. In every IBG, the staff of 8,000 to 10,000 would be included. They would also be given additional air support and modernized firepower. These are not the ends but means to achieving operational and long-term objectives.

In addition to this, force modernization is a decisive aspect of the LWD. Every state tries to enhance the capability and capacity of its forces. Indian armed forces are also working on this track. It has been trying to fight and win the limited war with Pakistan. Imbalances in the three services are also being reduced. In this regard, India is trying to acquire modern T-90 tanks, Russian S-400 missile defence system, Apache and Chinook helicopters, Rafale, and SU-30. These acquisitions would make the Indian army aligned with a winning army.<sup>58</sup>

Moreover, the LWD also intends to take punitive actions. Any terrorist attack on the Indian soil and forces would be

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

responded through proper action. The rebuttal and rebuke would be given at a specific time. The possible insurgency threats and terrorism would be responded through cross-border actions. The option of surgical strikes is also given precedence in the LWD.<sup>59</sup>

Similarly, hybrid warfare is also part of the new doctrine. Along with the conventional use of force, new avenues would also be explored. India would utilize its technological power to attack the targets of the enemy. Internal tensions through propaganda and lobbying would also be created. It would weaken Pakistan internally. The exploitation of ethnic and religious differences through cyber means would give an edge. Several practical examples and instances have also been witnessed. Moreover, India has constantly been trying to exploit and sabotage the CPEC.

Besides, India has been using all the possible avenues to explore alliances with the major powers. It is working to enhance cooperation with the US, France, and Israel and has been acquiring new weapons from these countries. It would give impetus to Indian security. Its reputation at the international level would also witness a significant edge. Indian joint exercise with other countries is also becoming a norm. So, at every front, the Indian Army has inched towards its desired objectives.

The LWD is inevitably a point of concern for Pakistan. The challenges ahead are colossal. The options are limited to respond. The response ought to be calculated and incremental. Pakistan does not have similar resources or the ability to tackle these challenges at a proportionate level.

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<sup>59</sup> "Land Warfare Doctrine 2018," p. 5.

## Conclusion and Possible Future Trajectory

Indian doctrinal shift in the strategic arena suggests that it considers itself capable enough of carrying a limited operation under the nuclear threshold.<sup>60</sup> The Cold-Start Doctrine is another indicator of such Indian intentions but Pakistan's preparations against the Cold-Start Doctrine and adoption of Credible minimum deterrence has jeopardized Indian plans. Pakistan has created a more mobile, well-equipped, and trained force to counter such possible future endeavours of India. Indian doctrines delineate a two-front situation in which China and Pakistan are considered major threats. The June 2020 Sino-Indian military engagement in Laddakh confirms Indian fears of facing unprecedented threat from China.<sup>61</sup> But for the time being India has found it more convenient to de-escalate the situation.<sup>62</sup> But it continues to show a highly provocative attitude vis-à-vis Pakistan. It is aggressively following a hybrid strategy of surgical strike, across the LOC and the international border and an enhanced diplomatic campaign to isolate Pakistan. Pakistan has always maintained that it will respond to such attacks come what may.<sup>63</sup> For Pakistan, competing and matching Indian conventional hardware is not a feasible option due to fragile economy and the much lesser budget than that of India. Pakistan's strategic posturing is overwhelmingly dependent upon its nuclear capability. However, Pakistan must also devise ways to counter the limited-conventional warfare vis-à-vis its eastern neighbour – India – while simultaneously delineating strategies to

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<sup>60</sup> Jaspal, "India's Surgical Strike Stratagem," 15.

<sup>61</sup> "India-China Dispute: The Border Row Explained in 400 Words," *BBC News*, September 10, 2020.

<sup>62</sup> Ashok Sharma, "'The Most Important Step': India, China to de-Escalate Border," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 11, 2020, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2020/0911/The-most-important-step-India-China-to-de-escalate-border>.

<sup>63</sup> News Desk, "PM Imran Offers India Probe into Kashmir Suicide Attack," *The Express Tribune*, February 19, 2019.

deal with the hybrid warfare which now is an important component of Indian strategic thought.

Indian acquisition of Rafale, signals intelligence, induction of nuclear submarines, and reconnaissance assets would revamp the Indian military's overall war fighting capabilities, fill the operational gaps and enable India to operationalize the CSD under nuclear overhang against Pakistan. But limited war envisaged by the Indian military may not remain limited for Pakistan. Pakistan's quid pro quo response may push India to escalate the conflict which may endanger the deterrence stability in South Asia. Pakistan's hot pursuit of tactical nuclear weapons under its efforts to achieve the Full Spectrum Deterrence has, for now, checkmated the Indian Cold Start Doctrine as it leaves India with little room to punish Pakistan at the lower end of the conflict spectrum. Therefore, the Indian CSD is not a threat to the regional peace and stability. India needs to consider shunning such types of strategies and resort to peaceful negotiations with Pakistan to resolve all outstanding issues for long term peace and stability in South Asia.

Furthermore, the Full Spectrum Doctrine of Pakistan might seem to be an active provocation of war yet given the limited choices Pakistan has, it is a feasible solution to limit the conflict through peace-oriented deterrence. Moreover, the Indian military adventurism and the support it gained by the US is actually to contain China. However, as the Kashmir issue is the conflicting point between Pakistan and India, any military build-up by India against China would definitely have a crippling effect on Pakistan's security. Hence, within the security environment marked by distrust, the interconnectivity of the security problems is bringing the deterrence threshold to a minimum level, evoking the possibility of a conflict.

## Pakistan's Governing Elite and CPEC: An Elitist Perspective

Dr. Khurram Iqbal \*

### Abstract

*This paper seeks to dissect the trajectory of Pakistan's elite responses on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a lynchpin of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It is argued that CPEC has created frictions within the Pakistani elite, which historically has been more aligned to the US. Using Elite theory, the paper attempts to ascertain why an influential segment of the country's ruling class opposes Beijing's increasing role in the country's strategic, economic, and cultural spheres. Apparently, Pakistan's polity seems euphoric on the rise of China, but a deeply entrenched colonial legacy and a long history of association with the United States still holds sway in Pakistan's governing elite, media houses and civil society organizations. This could possibly hinder Chinese long-term ambitions in Pakistan.*

**Key Words:** Elite theory, Belt and Road Initiative, CPEC, China-Pakistan relations, Elitism.

### Introduction

The existing body of literature on CPEC is broad and multi-dimensional. Scholars have covered the topic from multiple angles including its impacts on economy,<sup>1</sup> inter-provincial harmony,

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<sup>1</sup> E. Hussain and M. F. Rao, "China–Pakistan Economic Cooperation: The Case of Special Economic Zones (SEZs)," *Fudan J. Hum. Soc. Sci.* Vol. 13 (2020): 453–472.



centre-province relations,<sup>2</sup> socio-economic welfare of the people,<sup>3</sup> energy optimization,<sup>4</sup> environmental security,<sup>5</sup> terrorism landscape, geo-politics and conventional security of Pakistan.<sup>6</sup> But the elite theory has thus far received little or no attention in the context of mega-development in Pakistan. Methodologically, the most relevant study in relation to this paper is being conducted by a team of researchers associated with S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), which surveyed Asian opinion-makers on the BRI.<sup>7</sup> The sample, composed of 1200 participants from 26 countries including Pakistan, rightly defines policymakers, academics, business and media practitioners in category of opinion leaders. Authors, however, provide no information about selection criteria of the 'opinion makers' surveyed for the study and whether the opinion-makers were drawn from local or national elite. There are often situations where local elites' views are not in congruence with national elite and the latter's set of opinion matters more in

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<sup>2</sup> Zahid Shahab Ahmed, "Impact of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor on Nation-Building in Pakistan," *Contemporary China*, Vol 28: No. 117 (Nov 2018): 400-414.

<sup>3</sup> Rashida Haq and Nadia Farooq, "Impact of CPEC on Social Welfare in Pakistan: A District Level Analysis," *The Pakistan Development Review* (2016): 597-618.

<sup>4</sup> Yousaf Ali, Zaeem Rasheed, Noor Muhammad & Salman Yousaf, "Energy optimization in the wake of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)," *Journal of Control and Decision*, Vol. 5: No.2 (2018): 129-147.

<sup>5</sup> See for example G. Nabi, S. Ullah, S. Khan and et al., "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): Melting Glaciers — A Potential Threat to Ecosystem and Biodiversity," *Environ Sci Pollut Res*, Vol. 25 (2018): 3209–3210.

<sup>6</sup> Khuram Iqbal, "CPEC: A Corridor for Minimising Political Fault Lines in South Asia," in Conference Proceedings: *Changing Security Situation in South Asia and Development of CPEC* (Islamabad: Islamabad Policy Research Institute, 2018): 91–111. <http://www.ipripak.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/cp1842018.pdf> and F. Hussain and M. Hussain, "China Pak Economic Corridor (CPEC) And Its Geopolitical Paradigms," *International Journal of Social Sciences, Humanities and Education*, Vol 1: No 2 (2017): 1-17.

<sup>7</sup> Pradumna Bickram Rana, Chia Wai-Mun, and Jason Ji Xianbai, "China's Belt and Road Initiative: A Perception Survey of Asian Opinion Leaders," *RSIS Working Paper* (Singapore: RSIS, November 25, 2019), <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/WP325.pdf>.

the implementation of developmental projects of national scale. Participants may be proximate to the powerful but not in possession of power to influence outcomes at a national level, a prerequisite to be defined as 'governing elite'. Findings of the study reflect divided opinion among Pakistani opinion-makers on items such as China using BRI as debt-trap diplomacy, its negative impacts on the environment and likely risks associated with the project. Polarity of views and concerns expressed by Asian opinion-makers reflect divergent elitist perspectives, hence supporting the key assumption of this study that the CPEC has created frictions within the Pakistani elite, which historically has been associated, ideationally and materially, with the West in general and the US in particular.

The CPEC helped boosting Pakistan's economic profile in the aftermaths of devastating "War on Terror". In 2015, the country started to become the next economic success story,<sup>8</sup> while it was considered one of the 'the world's most dangerous country' back in 2007.<sup>9</sup> In January 2017, *The Economist* highlighted some indicators that showed that Pakistan went ahead of Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, and Egypt to become the world's fastest-growing Muslim economy.<sup>10</sup> The Economist's forecast was not the only one with such an outlook towards Pakistan's economy. An article for Bloomberg, written by Tyler Cowan declared Pakistan as one of the most underrated economies of the world for the year 2017. But the CPEC-driven growth, which was also expected to quell the Baloch insurgency, produce 2.3 million jobs, boost the country's GDP by a

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<sup>8</sup> Daniel Runde, "Pakistan: The Next Colombia Success Story?," *Forbes*, August 3, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> David Blair, "Pakistan: The World's Most Dangerous Country," *The Telegraph*, November 6, 2007; Ron Moreau, "Pakistan: The Most Dangerous?," *Newsweek*, October 20, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Wali Zahid, "Pakistan Predicted to Be World's Fastest-Growing Muslim Economy in 2017," *The Express Tribune*, January 10, 2017.

2.5 percentage-point and elevate Pakistan's global stature,<sup>11</sup> was scaled back immediately after Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) came to power in 2018.

To explore the set of factors that might have led to the scaling down of CPEC, the article poses the following questions;

1. How has CPEC created frictions within the Pakistani elite?
2. Whether the country's ruling class's orientation is in congruence with mass attitude which is generally very supportive and favorable towards China and the CPEC?
3. If not, which factors explain this dichotomy?
4. Do gridlocked pro-Western and a nascent pro-China elite portend a bleak future for the CPEC?

This paper first outlines the methodology adopted to answer the above-mentioned questions, followed by factorial analysis of the apparent slowdown in CPEC. The third section offers an "Elitist" explanation of the scaling down of Chinese-funded mega developmental projects in Pakistan and how a long history of elite's association with the US might have served as one of the defining factors in the shift from euphoria to pragmatism. In the following part, the paper discusses how, in the backdrop of CPEC, some sections of Pakistani elite rationalize the notion of striking balance between the country's need for development and security without antagonizing the US.

### **Consideration of Methodology**

The elite theory postulates that every society maintains a ruling minority with solid control of critical sources of power. Not only do they control but also dispute the critical sources of power. Pareto's

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<sup>11</sup> Mehtab Haider, "CPEC Helps in Turning around Pak Economy: Report," *The News*, March 23, 2018.

definition of 'Elites' includes all individuals who excel in various walks of life, including but not limited to arts, intellect, economy, military and politics.<sup>12</sup> He also distinguishes between the ruling and non-ruling elite. According to Mosca, the latter is quantitatively larger and is termed as 'second strata' in which elites are embedded socially and from which the ruling or governing elites are typically recruited.<sup>13</sup> Studies into elite structures also suggest that members of this class are often well-connected through intermediaries, enabling them 'to impose their influence on many and to quickly gather, process, and spread information'.<sup>14</sup>

Hoffman-Lange identifies three methods of elite identification: positional, decisional and reputational.<sup>15</sup> For this study, positional method is employed that assumes individuals in formal leadership positions in a broad range of political, business, military, media and various civil society organizations hold power to influence outcomes at a national scale. Individual members of the elite observed for this study were selected from four policy domains related to the CPEC; politics, economy, media and military. Snowball sampling was used to access important actors in the strategic policymaking community of the country. The author first drew inferences through informal interactions from the knowledge of elites' political orientation and supplemented it through archival research aimed at collecting important information such as

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<sup>12</sup> Vilfredo Pareto, *The Mind and Society: A Treatise on General Sociology*, Edited by Athur Livingston, trans. by Andrew Bongiorno and Arthur Livingston (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1935): 3.

<sup>13</sup> Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class*, trans. Arthur Livingston (McGraw Hill: Andesite Press, 1896; McGraw Hill: Andesite Press, 1939): 5.

<sup>14</sup> Bernat Corominas-Murtra, Benedikt Fuchs, and Stefan Thurner, "Detection of the Elite Structure in a Virtual Multiplex Social System by Means of a Generalised K-Core," *PLoS ONE*, Vol. 9: No. 12 (December 26, 2014): 5.

<sup>15</sup> Ursula Hoffmann-Lange, "Methods of Elite Identification," in Heinrich Best and John Higley (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Political Elites* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2018): 79–92.

educational/training background and family connections in the West. This background information was subsequently used to deduce their motives and beliefs about the US and China in general and the CPEC in particular. Official records and documents (available in open source), media reports and direct observation helped in enlisting the names of important participants of decision-making processes on the CPEC.

### **Factorial Analysis of the Shift from Euphoria to Pragmatism**

Publicly, both China and Pakistan attempted to play down any such impression. For instance, a media interview of Imran Khan's advisor on commerce, industry and investment, in which he hinted at putting the CPEC 'on hold' is often cited as evidence. However, in February 2020, prime minister Imran Khan clarified that news items indicating possible review of the CPEC by his government were false.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Yao Jing, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, also ruled out slowdown, stating 'CPEC is running according to our satisfaction and there is no slowdown in CPEC.'<sup>17</sup> Circumstantial evidence suggests otherwise. Many of these statements were intended for damage control, caused by initial stance of the PTI government on the CPEC. Throughout his election campaign, Imran Khan had accused Nawaz Sharif of massive kickbacks in CPEC-related projects, often dragging China for political point-scoring. Therefore, the frequency of Chinese officials visiting Islamabad declined considerably after Imran Khan replaced Nawaz Sharif as the Prime Minister of Pakistan in July 2018. Planning Commission stopped approving any new CPEC projects with massive cuts in funding. For almost a year, the word CPEC disappeared from media and policy discourse. This was in contrast to the officially

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<sup>16</sup> "PM Imran Says Fake News Being Run against Him," *The News*, February 15, 2020.

<sup>17</sup> "Chinese Envoy Rules out Slowdown in CPEC," *The News*, September 30, 2019.

constructed social media discourse during Nawaz Sahrif's era. Ahmed et al in their research monograph mapped the social media discourse on the CPEC during January-June 2015 and find out that the government officials and institutions were actively projecting the CPEC and Chinese goodwill.<sup>18</sup> PTI's ministers, however, adopted a skeptic tone on mainstream and social media. It was only after September 2019 that the frequency of statements expressing PTI's 'firm commitment' to the project started to rise.

Official, media and academic accounts point to a set of factors that interrupted the momentum of the CPEC. First, this was mainly because of the Khan administration's structural reforms intended to reign in huge capital spending incurred by the previous regime, which resulted in a serious fiscal deficit and a heavy debt service burden. Teng Mengshi, a Pakistani expert at Peking University in China, noted that "the capacity to provide supporting funds for CPEC construction has declined sharply and it is no longer feasible to expand infrastructure construction. Pakistan's new government wants to rein in huge capital spending, especially on projects that require large amounts of foreign exchange."<sup>19</sup>

Second, long before the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, the Chinese economy had started to show signs of a slowdown, which seriously hampered Chinese will and capacity for outbound investments including the CPEC. In 2018, the value of new Chinese-funded projects across 61 countries fell 13 percent, with the figure

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<sup>18</sup> Zahid Shahab Ahmed, Silada Rojratanakiat & Soravis Taekasem, *The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor in Social Media: A Critical Discourse Analysis* (US Centre on Public Diplomacy Paper 3, October 2019) [https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/sites/uscpublicdiplomacy.org/files/CPEC\\_Twitter\\_Discourse\\_Analysis\\_China\\_Pakistan\\_Ahmed\\_Rojratanakiat\\_Taekasem.pdf](https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/sites/uscpublicdiplomacy.org/files/CPEC_Twitter_Discourse_Analysis_China_Pakistan_Ahmed_Rojratanakiat_Taekasem.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Tang Mengsheng, "Past Five Years of CPEC in Review," *The Express Tribune*, May 6, 2019.

falling further to 41% in 2019.<sup>20</sup> Third, terrorism continues to affect Chinese investments in Pakistan adversely. A consistent and noticeable decline in incidents of terrorism conveys a strong sense of optimism about country's overall situation. However, Balochistan province, the lynchpin of CPEC, continues to witness deadly waves of nationalist and religious terrorism. In 2018, a total number of 115 hit the province, causing maximum number of casualties compared to other provinces of Pakistan.<sup>21</sup> The trend continued in the following year with a high-profile terrorist attack targeting the Chinese consulate in Karachi. An indigenous threat coupled with external interferences in the form of political patronage, moral, financial and technical support by India could further complicate the threat to Gwadar Port and CPEC. Fourth, bureaucratic hurdles have long been cited as one of the major irritants in the mega project's smooth implementation.<sup>22</sup> Pakistan has tried to overcome the issue by forming one organization after another, a flawed approach that could only be defined as treating the problem of red tape with even more red tape.

### **How Elite Theory Explains the Shift?**

Finally, one of the least researched factors stalling the pace of CPEC is elite discordance over China's ever-expanding footprints in Pakistan. Socio-political and economic development depends heavily on two critical factors; a receptive society and choices made by the elite. Findings of the study conducted by the RSIS reflect divided opinion among Pakistani opinion-makers on the BRI. Polarity of views and concerns expressed by Pakistani opinion-

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<sup>20</sup> Cissy Zhou, "Why Is China's Belt and Road Initiative Slowing down?," *South China Morning Post*, October 10, 2019.

<sup>21</sup> Muhammad Amir Rana and Safdar Sial, "Overview of Security in 2018: Critical Challenges and Recommendations," *Conflict and Peace Studies*, Vol. 11: No. 1 (June 2019): 19.

<sup>22</sup> Agencies, "'Hurdles in CPEC Implementation Frustrating Chinese,'" *Daily Times*, July 18, 2016.

makers reflect divergent elitist perspectives, hence supporting the key assumption of this study that the CPEC has created frictions within the Pakistani elite, which historically has been associated, ideationally and materially, with the West in general and the US in particular.

To appreciate Pakistani elite's diverse views vis-à-vis China and the US, it is of paramount importance to first understand the country's history of association with the two global powers and how the ruling elite's perceptions evolved over time.

### ***History of Pakistani Elite's Orientation Towards China and the US***

Bilateral relations between Pakistan and China have gone through some difficult phases during their statehood's formative years in the late 1940s.<sup>23</sup> The majority of the top leaders of the Pakistan movement were educated in the West and hence subscribed to a Western capitalist world view. Resultant Pakistani tilt towards the US-led Western alliance and Communist China's inclination towards a Socialist India kept both neighbours at bay. But despite its membership of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), Pakistan always advocated détente between the Eastern and Western blocs, also making it clear that the Islamic Republic will never join any military campaign against China.<sup>24</sup> Both countries continued to engage in low-politics areas such as trade, people-to-people contacts and high-profile ceremonial visits.

The Indo-China war of 1962 came as a breakthrough for China-Pakistan relations. A common enemy made ideological differences

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<sup>23</sup> For an in-depth understanding of historical evolution of China-Pakistan relations see Hafeez-ur-Rahman Khan, "Pakistan's Relations with the People's Republic of China," *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. 14: No. 3 (Third Quarter 1961): 212–32..

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.



irrelevant. For decades mutual apprehensions towards Indian territorial designs constituted the bedrock of Sino-Pakistan strategic relations with little economic substance. Today, China is Pakistan's largest trading partner however the overall trade is much lower than the mutual trade between New Delhi and Beijing. According to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2013-2014, China and Pakistan's trade volume was mere US\$ 4.1 billion in FY 2006-07.<sup>25</sup> It only started to pick up momentum during the last decade with a 400 percent increase in Pakistan's exports to China.<sup>26</sup> However, still, bilateral trade between Pakistan and China remains under-utilized. One of the major objectives of the CPEC is to bridge this gap by linking Pakistan's economy with the Asian giant.

Efforts to bring public opinion into closer alignment with the official relationship have largely been successful, especially in Pakistan, where China's public perception continues to improve. A survey conducted by Pew Research Centre in July 2014 found that 78 percent of respondents view China favourably.<sup>27</sup> This public goodwill persisted as a survey conducted in October 2017 reflected widespread public support for CPEC as 72 percent of people believed that the CPEC will bring benefits to Pakistan. The data also indicated that the majority of Pakistanis consider China a more trustworthy partner than the US, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Iran.<sup>28</sup> However, widespread public support is yet to translate into elite consensus on the CPEC and strategic alliance with China. The

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<sup>25</sup> Mubarak Zeb Khan, "FTA's Hurting Pakistan's Trade Balance," *Dawn*, November 2, 2016.

<sup>26</sup> INP, "Pak-China Trade Reaches \$16 Billion," *The Nation*, March 20, 2015.

<sup>27</sup> "How Asians View Each Other," *Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project* (blog), July 14, 2014, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2014/07/14/chapter-4-how-asians-view-each-other/>.

<sup>28</sup> Iqbal and Rizvi, "Understanding Pakistani Public Opinion on China and CPEC," *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. 72: No. 2 (April 2019): 39–61.

colonial legacy and history of the Pakistani elite's association with the US continue to the detriment of CPEC.

### ***American Tutelage of Pakistani Elite and the CPEC***

Pakistan has always been governed by a power triad consisting of elites in political, bureaucratic and military sectors. Mass media and academia have generally been subservient to this troika. The civil society largely composed of human rights organizations has only existed as a demonstrative elite, with little or no impact on national-level policymaking. At the top of this triangle sits the military establishment. The national political elite does not possess autonomy of a great deal when its actions in the international arena are concerned, such as supporting the US-led Jihad against the Soviets, the decision to join the global War on Terror, or strategic relations with major powers. Whereas political, business, bureaucratic and media elite is divided along the ethnic, sectarian, political and other lines, leaders of the military establishment often act as a cohesive entity to pursue goals set forth by the top leadership.

What binds different factions of the national elite together is Western patronage. Nearly all of the national-level leaders, both from civilian and military domains, owners of big media houses, business executives and heads of non-governmental organizations are Western-educated. They maintain dual citizenship and often have overseas properties in one of the Five-Eyes countries. Those who can ill afford properties in the West opt for Gulf, which as a region serves as an intermediary connecting national hubs with the US and its major allies. According to the 'tutelary model' of Elite studies, this tutelage often leads to considerable cohesion among the elite members.

However, changes in global power structure have always impacted elite cohesion and consensus in Pakistan. For instance, during the peak of the Cold War, the Pakistani elite came to reflect strong leftist tendencies emphasizing closer relations with China and the USSR. This shift was led by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a graduate of the University of California, Berkley, who wanted to free Pakistan from American influence. Two important factors led American-educated Bhutto to prioritize the Communist bloc at the cost of Pakistan's relations with the West; first, America's failure to assist Pakistan in the 1971 war against India led to the country's dismemberment; and second, Bhutto's close personal ties with the Pakistani left. Prominent leftist activists such as Sheikh Rasheed (Father of Socialism in Pakistan), J.A Rahim and Dr. Mubashir Hassan helped Bhutto to establish Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP). The PPP guided Pakistan into a socialist direction, even after Bhutto was executed by a military court in 1979. Bhutto is often credited with laying strong foundations for China-Pakistan relations.

With the Soviet Union's disintegration, the left-oriented segment of the Pakistani elite either faded away or radically recalibrated their outlook and rebranded themselves as the vanguard of Western political and cultural dominance. The PPP went from supporting an anti-Imperial agenda to a pro-American party. Socialist leaders were purged by the British-educated elite. Dr. Mubashir Hasan, one of the four founders of the party, once lamented 'Bhutto's PPP was a socialist and anti-imperialist party. Today, it is neither of the two; it has become like all the other parties — a pro-capitalism party.'<sup>29</sup> Remnants of the left then largely regrouped in Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), ironically funded by the same capitalists they once fought.

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<sup>29</sup> Adnan Adil, "'Benazir and Bilawal Have Turned the PPP Upside down.' Dr Mubashir Hasan," *Newsline*, November 2017.

Traditionally, the West has induced civil society through unaccountable donations.

The Global War on Terror (GWOt) created another opportunity for the Pakistani elite to forge strategic convergence with the US. The decision was bitterly opposed by the masses as the majority of Pakistanis saw the US-led intervention in Afghanistan as a part of global anti-Muslim crusade declared by George W. Bush.<sup>30</sup> But Gen. Pervez Musharraf, the then military ruler of Pakistan, took an unpopular decision by joining the international coalition and resultantly Islamabad became a non-NATO major ally in the fight against transnational terrorism. In return for Pakistan's efforts to fight Al-Qaeda and its local allies, the United States reciprocated through financial, diplomatic and military support. Pakistan became the third-largest recipient of American aid after Egypt and Israel. According to a US congressional report, since 1948 more than US \$30 billion in direct aid to Pakistan was pledged by the United States, about half of which was for military assistance, while more than two-thirds was appropriated in the post-2001 period.<sup>31</sup> Not only that Pakistani elite prospered and benefitted enormously from its relations with the US during the GWOt, for the second time in the history of Pakistan,<sup>32</sup> the dividends also trickled down to the masses with the country showing considerable improvement on most accounts of Human Development Index (HDI) between 2001-2007.

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<sup>30</sup> C. Christine Fair, "Pakistan's Own War on Terror: What the Pakistani Public Thinks," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 63: No. 1 (Fall/Winter 2009): 39–55.

<sup>31</sup> Susan B. Epstein and K. Alan Kronstadt, *Pakistan: U.S. Foreign Assistance* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, July 1, 2017).

<sup>32</sup> The first time ordinary Pakistanis enjoyed economic benefits of US aid was during the military regime of Gen. Ayub Khan (1958-1969). Mega developmental projects led to double-digit growth in Pakistan's industrial and agricultural sectors. For a critical overview of uneven economic development during Ayub era see S. Akbar Zaidi, "A Reformer on Horseback," *Dawn*, September 6, 2017.

The US influence in Pakistan started to wane in 2010-11. Incidents such as the killing of Osama bin Laden in the garrison city of Abbottabad, jailing of a CIA contractor in Pakistan, the US accusations of Pakistani involvement in an attack on the US embassy in Kabul, the NATO's attack on a Pakistani check-post that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers and Islamabad's retaliation by blocking the NATO and the US' supply route from the Arabian Sea all led to an unprecedented deterioration in US-Pakistan relations. For the first time in the last four decades, Pakistan's military elite vocally resonated public disapproval of the United States policies. The former Pakistan Army Chief Ashfaq Kiyani went to the extent of accusing the US of 'causing and maintaining a controlled chaos in Pakistan ... to de-nuclearize Pakistan'.<sup>33</sup>

The global financial crises of 2007-08, costly wars in Afghanistan and parts of the Middle East and the election of a nationalist president in 2016, all adversely affected American will and capacity to maintain a global patronage network. As the US retreated from center-stage interesting shifts started to occur not only in the composition of the Pakistani elite but in their political tendencies as well. Anti-American voices that have been historically on the fringe became mainstream in the national-level elite circles. NGOs, media houses and academics, those who have lobbied for pro-American policies in Pakistan, found them in a tight corner with a systematic state-crackdown on foreign funding and policies to discourage client-patron personal interactions.

### ***The New but a Short-lived Consensus over China as an Exclusive Patron***

It was under these circumstances that China, with the largest reserves of surplus and a strong will to strengthen Pakistan vis-à-vis

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<sup>33</sup> David Ignatius, "David Ignatius: Pakistan, U.S. Have a Neurotic Relationship," *The Washington Post*, July 13, 2012.

increasingly powerful India, presented itself as a new patron and Pakistan's political and military elite embraced it unhesitantly. Pakistan saw CPEC-led development as a Godsent opportunity to cope with internal and external shocks such as terrorism and the resulting loss of international goodwill and investments. Considering the potential of CPEC to transform a terror-hit Pakistan, a new elite contract evolved that would only last until the Trump administration tried with greater force to insert itself into South Asia to counter Chinese presence.

### **How China-Sceptics in Pakistani Elite Rationalise the Slowdown**

Various factors affected the shift in elite's behaviour on the CPEC, including American tutelage, disagreement over the share of economic dividends, and high-cost, high-interest Chinese projects.

#### ***American Pressure and Inducement***

The US induced and coerced Pakistan back to its sphere of influence. It offered to accommodate Pakistan's military interests in Afghanistan and threatened the country with sanctions and international isolation. The US grew more vocal in opposition to BRI. The former Defence Secretary of US, James Mattis, stated at the Senate Armed Services Committee in October 2017 that the US 'too' believes the CPEC passes through a disputed territory — originally an India claim intending to disrupt the development plan.<sup>34</sup> Alice Wells, the top US diplomat for South Asia, also warned Pakistan in November 2019 that CPEC would only benefit China.<sup>35</sup> The statements indicated an evident departure from the earlier American approach towards CPEC under the Obama administration, which planned to compliment the China-Pakistan

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<sup>34</sup> Anwer Iqbal, "CPEC Passes through Disputed Territory: US," *Dawn*, October 7, 2017.

<sup>35</sup> AFP, "US Warns Pakistan of Risks from China Infrastructure Push through CPEC," *Gulf News*, November 22, 2019.

Economic Corridor with the US-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor (UPKC). The UPKC initiative sought to produce a highly educated and skilled workforce with the US assistance to successfully complete CPEC projects by providing scholarships for up to ten thousand Pakistani students in American universities. Daniel S Marky, the author of 'No Exit from Pakistan: America's Tortured Relationship with Islamabad' and a renowned American expert on South Asia, remarked at a conference at National Defence University in Islamabad in February 2016 that a dominant majority of policymakers in Washington supported Chinese efforts for economic rejuvenation and stability in Pakistan.

The Trump administration's tilt towards India gave rise to the fears in Islamabad that liberalism is only used as rhetoric and the US will never give up on the security-centric approach towards Pakistan. Opposition to CPEC by the Trump Administration was perceived as a repetition of events of the 90s when Pakistan supported America in the Afghan Jihad against the Soviet Union. However, instead of acknowledging Islamabad's role in defeating the Soviet Union, Washington punished Pakistan with the Pressler Amendment.<sup>36</sup> Pakistan declared American concerns over the CPEC unfounded and urged the United States not to look at the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) from the perspective of India but rather as an economic plan to bring about stability and peace in South Asia.<sup>37</sup> But many believe that differences had started to emerge between military and political elite over Pakistan's newly found strategic alignment, with the former willing to accommodate

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<sup>36</sup> Invoked in 1985 by the US Congress, the Pressler Amendment banned most economic and military assistance to Pakistan unless the American president certified on an annual basis that "Pakistan does not possess a nuclear explosive device.

<sup>37</sup> "US Concerns on CPEC Unfounded: Ahsan," *The Nation*, October 15, 2017.

American concerns over the CPEC in return for a US-endorsed political settlement in Afghanistan favoring Pakistan.<sup>38</sup>

### ***Differences over Distribution of Patronage Flows***

Patronage flows, distribution of state resources and dividends of mega developmental projects are integral to ensure elite cohesion and consensus in any country. Besides exogenous pressure, internal differences over the distribution of patronage flows also affected the elite consensus on the CPEC. As long as the military and political elite were 'on the same page,' projects linked to the CPEC continued unabatedly. During Sharif's tenure (2013-17), Beijing stepped up its presence in Pakistan. Through CPEC contracts, Sharif planned to centralize patronage flows into the hands of cronies, thus paving the way for a single-party rule, free of military interference. In doing so, the PML-N cultivated bureaucracy and local elites through political patronage and financial incentives. The military on its part wanted a larger share of the cake, and some generals advocated for a balanced approach between Beijing and Washington. As elite divisions deepened, the military establishment barred the PML-N plan to reclaim power through the local elite in the general elections held in 2018.<sup>39</sup> Perceptions still thrive that the PTI-led regime change was commenced and controlled by entrenched Pakistani elite to scale down the CPEC either on American behest or to expand their share of the pie in multi-billion dollar projects.<sup>40</sup> The CPEC projects partly scaled down due to the 2018 financial crisis as well. Huge imports under CPEC also added

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<sup>38</sup> Since the outset of ongoing Afghan conflict in 2001, Pakistan has advocated a negotiated settlement between the US and Taliban. The February 2020 Doha Agreement, which gives Afghan Taliban a strong political role, is thought to be an official endorsement of Pakistani perspective by the US.

<sup>39</sup> Azeem Samar, "'Nawaz Ousted as Punishment for CPEC,'" *The News*, January 9, 2018.

<sup>40</sup> Waqar Gillani, "The long, winding road to CPEC," *The News*, November 01, 2020.



to the deficit, resulting in a slowdown of the projects.<sup>41</sup> Sharif's ouster restored elite cohesion. In November 2019, the PTI-government appointed a retired general as the chairman of the CPEC authority.<sup>42</sup>

### ***High-Cost, High-Interest Chinese Projects***

China-sceptics also maintain that Chinese funded projects are often more costly, financially and environmentally. The reported interest rate on Chinese projects ranges from 5-7 percent annually. However, according to Chinese sources, by the end of 2018, 22 projects under the CPEC were preliminarily finished or near completion with a gross investment of US \$18.9 billion, out of which the US \$6.017 billion debt included concessional loans of US \$5.874 billion offered by China to Pakistan at a compound interest rate of about 2 percent on 20 to 25 years loans.<sup>43</sup> Chinese private companies invested US \$12.8 billion in energy projects in Pakistan, including US \$9.8 billion from commercial banks with an interest rate of about 5 percent.<sup>44</sup> Although the interest rate is much lower than what Pakistan pays to Western financial institutions, other competitors like Japan offer much more competitive rates. For instance, compared to the Chinese loan to Pakistan with a composite interest rate of about 2 percent payable in 20 to 25 years, Japan offered US \$12 billion loans for a high-speed train in India bearing 0.1 percent interest, repayable in 50-60 years. Indian

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<sup>41</sup> Daniel F. Runde and Richard Olson, "An Economic Crisis in Pakistan Again: What's Different This Time?" CSIS, October 31, 2018, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/economic-crisis-pakistan-again-whats-different-time>

<sup>42</sup> Amir Yasin, "Asim Bajwa Made Chairman of Newly Created CPEC Authority," *Dawn*, November 27, 2019.

<sup>43</sup> "Latest Progress on the CPEC," Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, December 29, 2018, <http://pk.chineseembassy.org/eng/zbqx/t1626097.htm>

<sup>44</sup> "Chinese Embassy Refutes Misleading Reports That Pakistan Owes \$40 b to China," *Global Times*, January 1, 2019.

media and opposition parties still called the loan a 'rip off'<sup>45</sup> and vowed to review the project after claiming victory in Maharashtra state elections.<sup>46</sup> Against this backdrop, an 'all-weather friend' deserved a better deal from Beijing.

## **Conclusion**

Despite widespread public goodwill for China and the CPEC, a competing narrative exists in some segments of the Pakistani elite, which has been wholly aligned to the US in the past. During the formative years of their inception, the Communist Government of China and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan followed competing policies in the global arena and believed in different systems of international order. It was initially the fear of Indian territorial expansion and later the recent US retreat from the global stage that bounded these two ideologically opposed nations together. The set of credible policy options available to Pakistan was further constrained by the American appeasement of India, which is now seen as a lynchpin in the new American global strategic objective of containing China and Russia. The resultant power disparity between India and Pakistan in military, economic, technological terms expanded manifolds and pushed Islamabad to seek avenues for external balancing exclusively with China.

Chinese engagement with Pakistan, however, is not without challenges. As opposed to commonly held notions on Pak-China relations, diversity of views continues to prevail in Islamabad's China policy, mainly due to an entrenched Western-oriented elite, which seeks to strike a balance between Beijing and Washington for all the ideational and pragmatic reasons. China-sceptics in

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<sup>45</sup> Bishwajit Bhattacharyya, "How the Japanese Loan for India's Bullet Train Is a Rip Off," *The Wire*, October 31, 2017.

<sup>46</sup> Kiran Sharma, "India's Japan-Funded Bullet Train Project Risks Delays," *Nikkei Asian*, December 4, 2019, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Transportation/India-s-Japan-funded-bullet-train-project-risks-delays2>

Pakistani elite point to three problems with over-enthusiasm on the expanding role of Beijing: 1) China-led growth may serve to entrench factional struggle within the elite by aligning beneficiary business elite and the new middle class with new political forces, then pitting this coalition against the military-led status-quo; 2) Islamabad's failure to allay American concerns over security aspects of the CPEC could strip Pakistan of crucial American support on issues such as Kashmir and Afghanistan; and 3) it is unwise to put all eggs in one basket given the availability of competitive developments partners.

The elite difference over CPEC is yet to evolve into conflict, but theoretically, galvanizing crisis sometimes paves the way to a basic settlement among warring elite factions.<sup>47</sup> Terms of elite cohesion and consensus must be recalibrated should Pakistan desire to draw maximum benefits in the evolving world order. Any meaningful engagement with China will require long-term changes in the composition and orientations of the Pakistani military, political, bureaucratic, intellectual and business elite. Efforts to accommodate factions of the elite must also consider bridging sub-national regional inequalities through the CPEC-led development. Failure to do so will expose the Pakistani governing elite to continuous ingress by ambitious leaders concentrated in constituencies ready-made for popular mobilization. Elite settlement in these testing times may not lead to durable liberal democracy in Pakistan but order and stability to ensure smooth implementation of the CPEC.

This must also be noted that the characteristics and orientations of any elite keep evolving with time. Longitudinal research with more rigorous methodology may help ascertain how

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<sup>47</sup> Michael Burton and John Higley, *Elite Foundations of Liberal Democracy* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006): 22.

Pakistani elite thinking on China and the CPEC is likely to evolve in the future. There is a need for a detailed study that takes into account comprehensive personality profiles and structured interviews of elites positioned at the top in political, military, bureaucratic, judicial, academic, clergy media sectors of Pakistan to analyze their views on changing world order.



## **BOOK REVIEWS**



**Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia: New Technologies and Challenges to Sustainable Peace**

Rizwana Abbasi and Zafar Khan (New York: Routledge, 2020, 227 pages)

**Reviewed by Dr. Attiq ur Rehman\***

The nuclear politics of South Asian region always remained a gravitational point of international academic circles. By examining an unending strategic competition between New Delhi and Islamabad, the academic communities from different parts of the world always tried to maintain their varying arguments on the nuclearized subcontinent. The book under review is an attempt by two Pakistani authors who have tried to provide a fresh overview of the South Asian strategic culture, which is fundamentally reflecting an awful picture of India-Pakistan rivalry under the nuclear shadows. Both authors, Rizwana Abbasi and Zafar Khan, are the renowned figures of Pakistani strategic community parallel to having global recognition through introducing their ideas at various international forums. The current book is a unique joint venture of both writers as they have examined the main challenges to the South Asian versions of sustainable peace and strategic stability in the book.

Apart from a brief introduction and a detailed conclusion, the book is divided into six chapters. The debate in all chapters mainly tried to explore the growth of South Asian security environment under the influence of great power politics. The power politics at the global level primarily shape the strategic behaviours of South Asian nuclear contestants because the decades-long India-Pakistan rivalry cannot be separated from the US-China competition. The writers call it a broader systemic security dilemma in which the

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hostile designs of South Asian politics cannot be divorced from the US-China geopolitical competition in Asia. The debate starts in the first chapter from the systemic security dilemma structured on an exceptional interaction of four nuclear powers, US-China-India-Pakistan. The subsequent chapters continue the debate by examining three different designs of competition between New Delhi and Islamabad, Washington and Beijing, and New Delhi and Beijing. Apart from the US-China competition for global dominance, Pakistan wants to peacefully settle Kashmir issue which disturbs India, and the Indian leaders are determined to hegemonize the region which upsets Pakistani authorities. Thus, the New Delhi's anti-neighbourhood policy has resulted in a hostile framework of foreign relations with the territorially adjoining states, China and Pakistan. In order to keep New Delhi against Beijing, the American state officials are committed to empowering India in the South Asian politics which has resulted in Indian opposition to Pakistan and China. The American quest for preventing the emerging Chinese role in world politics has led Washington to finalize various strategic projects with New Delhi under a broader agenda of bilateral strategic partnership.

After introducing the main idea of the study in the initial two chapters, the writers provide a comprehensive summary of Indian and Pakistani strategic assets and their roles in the national policies of the states. The persistently swelling defensive capabilities of New Delhi with the help of Washington have compelled the Indian policymakers to augment their belligerent role in the regional politics through altering their doctrinal features for managing Indian nuclear weapon status (pp.73-76). In reaction to New Delhi's defence against Beijing, Islamabad feels insecure, and the security experts of Pakistan prefer to take countermeasures for keeping the region strategically stable and balanced. According to Abbasi and Khan, the contemporary strategic arrangements of the Indo-US

bilateralism are mainly hampering the notion of a strategically stable South Asian region because the American officials have ignored the hardcore realities of India-Pakistan conflict while pursuing their geopolitical interests in Asia. Even, the signing of a nuclear deal with a strategic partner from Southern Asia has posed a serious question on the American support to the international non-proliferation regime which encourages the states to subscribe to the NPT before initiating any bilateral strategic venture. The US' support to India has encouraged the New Delhi to stretch its strategic muscles over the territorial and maritime affairs of nuclearized subcontinent through counterbalancing China. Parallel to mentioning the Indian role in global politics, the book explains the Indian aggressive position in the nuclearized subcontinent. In addition to reconsidering its policy of No First Use, the Indian security establishment has introduced a plan for launching a limited war in the form of Cold Start Doctrine (p.137).

The interesting part of the book comes in the last two chapters where authors try to explain the South Asian crisis in the pre and post nuclearization period. The discussion on the Indo-Pak crisis explained the impact of Pulwama episode on the larger South Asian region which was a reflection of Modi's extremist ideology and an attempt by New Delhi for fracturing the notion of regional strategic stability. In the last chapter, both authors summarized the whole debate by articulating a few practical steps from ensuring the role of bilateral measures for appropriately balancing and stabilizing the region. In this way, the book tries to analyse the complex features of South Asian deterrence, and the inclusion of various interviews of leading strategic commentators of Pakistan in the book explains Islamabad's position in the regional arms race. In short, the central theme of the book mainly revolves around the interconnectedness between the South Asian regional sub-system and the international system. Furthermore, the ongoing patterns of power politics

between Washington and Beijing are the main drivers of South Asian nuclear politics. The involvement of extra-regional players in the nuclearized subcontinent needs serious attention.

**The Inevitability of Tragedy: Henry Kissinger and His World**

Barry Gewen (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2020, 452 pages)

**Reviewed by Tahir Mehmood\***

This book is a reminder that the ideas of Kissinger are more relevant today. He is more than a figure of history; he is a philosopher of international relations. For this reason, the book is more about the ideas of Henry Kissinger (p. xvii). The author attempts to contextualise the ideas of Kissinger vis-à-vis international politics by detailing the ideas of three other German-Jewish emigres to the United States: Hans Morgenthau, Leo Strauss, and Hannah Arendt. These three political scientists provide window to the world of Kissinger. Escaping the persecution of Nazi Germany, they all share something common in relation to their worldview: pessimistic view of history, distrust of democracy and incredulity in the idea of progress. However, the author believes that Kissinger's thinking is discomfoting to the adherents of liberal hegemony. To think in Kissinger's line is to be un-American (p. xiv). This book essentially invites readers to rethink and be un-American.

The book is divided into seven chapters with a prologue in the first person. The first chapter demonstrates the Kissinger's brand of Realism where national interest coupled with balance of power calculation has predominance over abstract moralism and wishful thinking. The case study is coup d'état of 1973 against Salvador Allende, the democratically elected president of Chile. Chile had, in the author's view, no importance for the security of America until Fidel Castro of Cuba entered the scene. Castro brought the Cold war into the Western Hemisphere. Allende considered Castro as his ideal and said that "Cuba in the Caribbean and a Socialist Chile in

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the Southern cone will make the revolution in Latin America” (p. 12). This was a disturbing sign for the policymakers of America who were resisting the Castro’s Cuba, the satellite state of Soviet Union. The formula was simple: Allende=Castro=Communism=Soviet domination (p. 20). To Kissinger, Allende will seek to eliminate the US influence in South America while increasing the influence of Cuba and the Soviet Union (p30). Therefore, resisting Allende in Chile was the official policy of America after 1963. Millions of dollars were poured in by America for propaganda and to strengthen opposition and army against Allende. The result was a coup d’état by a faction of Chilean Army against Allende on 11 September 1973. However, Barry Gewen tries to establish that the United States had no ‘direct involvement’ in September 11 episode (pp. 33-34). The authoritarian Allende marginalized the opposition, judiciary and army through his extraconstitutional methods, and thereby, paved the way for coup d’état against himself. However, it is an established fact that America did help in ousting democratically elected Allende through covert means or to say diplomacy by violent means. For Kissinger, the reason was provided by Allende himself who wanted ‘a diminution of American power and a corresponding increase in Soviet power’, and that in the Cold war (p. 43).

The second chapter deals with the rise of Nazism and portrays Hitler as a pope of secular religion. Hitler was able to provide Germans what other religions could no longer provide: the belief in a meaning to existence beyond the narrowest self-interest (p. 89). Hitler rose within a democratic set-up and he often proclaimed that ‘we National Socialist are the better democrats” (p. 54). It is true that violence was a favourite tool of Hitler for advancing political interest. However, Hitler, later abandoned violence and resorted to legalism. He was a democrat but a democrat with quotation marks. The rise of this democrat with quotation marks proved painful not

only to Kissinger family but also taught two lessons to Henry Kissinger. First, that democracy by itself is no safeguard against the rise of a tyrannical fanatic. Second, intentions matter little in international politics. The optimistic policy of appeasement by Western democracies failed because it was a foreign policy built on quicksand that disregarded actual power relationship and relied on prophecies of another's intentions. Kissinger family, with the help of a cousin, escaped to the United States in August 1938 (p. 58).

Other two German-Jewish escapees to the United States were Leo Strauss and Hannah Arendt. In the author's view, Strauss and Arendt (Kissinger's first cousins), were existential political thinkers whereas Kissinger is an existential political statemen (pp. 114-115). Freethinking individualism defines the contours of their outlooks, opposed tyranny but suspicious of democracy, they were against quantitative method of empiricism in modern social science that American social scientists cherished in 1950s. Moreover, in Gewen's view, it would be better to call them a democrat, nondemocrat or at worst undemocratic but not antidemocrat (p. 110). The principal cause in their suspicion against democracy was the rise of Hitler. They had watched the rise of Hitler within democratic set-up; it was a democracy, in their view, that facilitated the rise of Hitler. To Strauss: 'Hitler was the empirical refutation of the idea of progress' (p. 120). The Nazi movement was a moral protest against the open societies. The whole third chapter summarizes the ideas of Arendt and Strauss.

But the thinker who profoundly influenced Henry Kissinger was Hans Morgenthau, another German-Jewish emigre to the United States. Morgenthau himself felt toward Kissinger like a brother. To Gewen, Morgenthau was the bridge between Kissinger and Leo Strauss and Hannah Arendt: 'He was Kissinger's mentor, Strauss's colleague, and Arendt's friend' (p. 175). Kissinger believes that

teachers of international relations had to begin with Morgenthau's ideas (p. 167). Morgenthau belongs to an old school of international relations. He disapproved the behaviourism or dictates of mathematics to the subject international relations. Certainty in international relation is rare. Political perspective is shaped and influenced by values and goals; therefore, it cannot be quantified (p. 180). The totalitarianism taught Morgenthau a different lesson that people not only strive for freedom but also for order as well (p. 189). Human existence is shaped by biological impulses and spiritual aspiration together with reason. Reason could never dictate alone. The purpose of Morgenthau's argument is to show the limit of reason, and not to abandon it. Morgenthau learned another lesson from his favourite anti-philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. The lesson was that the drive to dominate is universal in time and space (p. 204). The idea of balance of power is as old as political history itself. Construction of balance of power, however, require human agency; it is a function of diplomats to make careful arrangements for successful balance of power (p. 213). And lastly, ideology must not dictate the solution to specific problems of international politics.

The episode of Vietnam War, however, soured the intellectual relationship of Henry Kissinger and Hans Morgenthau. The disagreement became sharpest after Kissinger had entered government service. Morgenthau opposed the war, whereas Kissinger's position was ambiguous. In public, he supported the war, in private gatherings he opposed it. Gewen writes "by 1968, everyone knew where Morgenthau stood on the war. The same couldn't be said about Kissinger" (p. 260). Albeit, too late, but the arguments of Morgenthau were accepted in relation to Vietnam War. Morgenthau criticized the Vietnam policy of United States for two reasons. First, an abstract 'Domino Theory' was applied to actual conditions of Vietnam episode (p. 239). Where it was

thought that the fall of Vietnam to communists will not be limited to Vietnam alone but Japan, Philippines, and even Australia would be threatened to 'Red Menace'. Second, the American policy makers saw communism as a monolithic force and overlooked the division within communist world (p. 248). He was against Vietnam War, not for moral considerations, but for strategic and political reasons. To Morgenthau, naked power bereft of legitimacy would do no good. Nonetheless, in the early 1970, Nixon's government issued a report on US foreign policy—Kissinger was the author—where the polycentric character of communism was acknowledged. 'One could hear Kissinger but also Morgenthau in those words' (p. 258).

The last two chapters present the ideas of Kissinger in power and out power. Kissinger during Nixon administration wanted to achieve global stability. This could be possible with détente. This policy argued for co-existence of two rivals of Cold war; it was the Realists' balance-of-power strategy by another name (p.319). This policy was a process and not a goal—a pragmatic concept of coexistence (p. 320). The purpose of détente to produce stability by accepting the legitimate interest of the rival. This policy, however, was hard to fathom by conservatives and leftists Americans. The neoconservatism, the Wilsonian idea of steroid, believing the superiority of democracy, however, was antithetical to détente. The adherents of neoconservatism, they rose to prominence after Kissinger, wanted to spread democracy by military force (p. 341). Ronald Reagan, the hardliner representative of neoconservatism, ended the policy of détente (p. 345). This approach, championed by Reagan, however has no limits. It will turn America into a hegemon and hegemony, Kissinger argued, is not in the American interest (p. 363). Balance of power, and not hegemony, should define the foreign policy of America (p. 365).



The book, however well written, devotes one third of its space to other thinkers than Kissinger. The readers would want to hear about Kissinger and his ideas. The Kissinger himself, ironically, declined to be interviewed for the book. The author failed to observe that realists have the element of moralism in their thinking, just their definition of morality is different from liberals; and morality always serve power. The chapter on Chile is drawn from, for the most part, secondary sources; the primary sources are rarely touched. However, few demerits aside, the author has brilliantly presented the thoughts of Henry Kissinger and its implications for international politics. The policymakers, scholars, academicians, historians, and general history enthusiast will find the book interesting.

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