



# VISION

VISIONARY INSIGHTS INTO THE STRATEGIC INQUESTS OF NATIONS

## SVI FORESIGHT

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 2021

Compiled & Edited by:  
Haris Bilal Malik

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

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

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

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

## **SVI Foresight**

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

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## *Editor's Note*

As the administration has changed in Washington, pundits see changes vis-à-vis the US policy towards different regions. The Afghanistan war is one of the to-do lists issues Biden has to resolve. Though an agreement with the Taliban for a future road map to peace was laid last year, many hurdles exist in the way to reach a durable settlement. If the new administration hopes to sustain chances of achieving peace and especially the output of the US-Taliban peace process that took almost ten years to reach the Doha deal, it needs to track vibrant diplomacy vis-à-vis the issue. Moreover, it has been opined that Pakistan's commitment to regional peace and appropriate regional security strategy has ensured a conducive environment for a peace deal to be agreed upon between the U.S and the Taliban. However, with the increase in violence in Afghanistan and change in the White House the dynamics of the region have considerably changed. Many believe that incumbent President Joe Biden is a friend of Pakistan. He has announced the review of the Afghan peace deal inked by his predecessor. What does it mean for Pakistan, how would it impact U.S-Pak relations? What more can Pakistan do to accommodate both parties. These recent developments do put Pakistan in between a rock and a hard place. The Biden administration needs to revisit the U.S-Pak relations with a broader regional context to allow Pakistan the tactical and strategic space to maneuver in Afghanistan.

One of the articles attempts to analyze Barnett Rubin's Open Letter to the Taliban. Barnett Rubin, a well-known expert on South Asia and Afghanistan in an open letter to the Taliban discusses what steps the Taliban needed and what options the Biden administration has to cope with the situation. The light of the ongoing deadlock between the U.S. and the Taliban on one hand and the Taliban and the Afghan government on the other has made the environment grim for meaningful dialogue or inching towards the solution of the Afghan quagmire. The author maintains that it can be a guide for the Taliban as well as the Biden administration – if they want to reach a peaceful settlement. Otherwise, the prospects of peaceful settlement of the Afghanistan issue might become even more difficult with disastrous consequences for the whole region. Similarly, since Mr. Biden was sworn in, policymakers in Islamabad took a sigh of hope. After the contentious Trump presidency, Islamabad was hoping for a reset of its relation with the US. Though the U.S and Pakistan have long-standing strategic relations, it won't change the fact that their relations have always been transactional. In order to reset U.S-Pakistan relations, both countries would have to reevaluate regional and strategic dynamics and come up with a new set of policy tools to engage. This could be achieved by restarting the U.S-Pakistan Strategic dialogue.

Another article focuses on Space cooperation between China and Pakistan which dates back to over two decades. The bilateral cooperation between the two countries in space

has created new outlooks in the scientific and socioeconomic spheres. With Pakistan's strategic rival India having a substantial presence in space and continuously enhancing its surveillance and situational awareness capabilities, Pakistan has left with no choice but to strengthen its space program. Nevertheless, the space cooperation between the two countries in the present time is mutually beneficial and timely

Coming to South Asia, where in recent years, there has been witnessed a profound development of the nuclear-capable missile systems. In this regard, India is involved in an all-encompassing modernization of its nuclear warhead delivery systems. These include; land, sea, and air-launched ballistic missiles and cruise missiles that are capable of delivering nuclear warheads. In response to this, Pakistan's development of missile systems is in-line with the posture of credible minimum nuclear deterrence. The recent test of the Ghaznavi missile has further vindicated the full spectrum deterrence within the ambit of credible minimum nuclear deterrence. Similarly, Pakistan has conducted a successful flight test of Shaheen-III ballistic missile, capable of carrying both nuclear and conventional payloads. Likewise, on 11th February, Pakistan has successfully tested its short-range surface-to-surface launched subsonic cruise missile Babur 1A. The recent test of Babur surface-to-surface launched cruise missile was the third missile test Pakistan has conducted this year. The author opines that the Missile tests affect the country and its adversary's threat perception, strategy, military, and operational preparedness. The presence and testing of nuclear and conventional missiles, whether ballistic or cruise missiles, is more of a fact and reality in the contemporary South Asian security environment. In this regard, the development of the Babur cruise missile and its different variants by Pakistan are in-line with the existing principle of credible minimum nuclear deterrence.

February 2021 marks the completion of two years of the Pulwama-Balakot crisis which had resulted in a short-lived military engagement between the nuclear-armed rivals of South Asia. In this volume of the *SVI Foresight*, a very timely analysis is provided in this regard. The author maintains that since then, many factors have emerged as the destabilizing factors for the South Asian Strategic Stability. This crisis has further complicated the South Asian security dynamics. In this regard, the region is now regarded as more prone to military escalation than ever before. The prevalent security environment of the South Asian region even two years after the Pulwama-Balakot crisis remains in a state of influx. This is mainly because of the Indian aggressive politico-strategic thinking and its provocative war strategies against Pakistan.

One of the articles deliberates on how India has been involved in the manipulation of International media against Pakistan. The conspiracy of undermining Pakistan by developing fake news content has been put out internationally by the EU DisinfoLab report of 2020. The report has revealed the largest ever fake media and disinformation network against any



country to date. As per the report, India has tried to malign Pakistan with the introduction of fake media outlets which worked in collaboration with each other, for spoiling Pakistan's image across the world. The report titled "Indian Chronicles" has unleashed the Indian propaganda, which is actively working for more than 15 years, spread across 119 countries, involving European Union and the United Nations as well.

Similarly, in January 2021 Pakistan proposed an action plan at UNSC (United Nations Security Council) to combat the extremist Hindutva ideology. While pointing out a neo-fascist group 'RSS' (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) which has a strong foothold in India, it is opined that this violent extremist group poses an existential threat to the nearly 200 million Muslims living in India. In order to halt the increase in violent terrorism Pakistan's envoy urged the UNSC to take immediate steps. Furthermore, it is high time for the international community to intervene and takes steps to eradicate the Indian state terrorism in the occupied Kashmir by prosecuting the Indian military and civil personnel that are involved in this heinous crime against humanity. Pakistan has always stood with the international community to fight the threat of terrorism. Owing to its principled stance of a non-discriminatory approach to deal with terrorism, it has proposed this action plan. This would help identify the real threats of terrorism for regional and international peace and security. There is a need for the realization within the international community to expand the scope of its counter-terrorism strategy as in the present world these threats are posed by different manifestations and emerging forms of terrorism.

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

The *SVI Foresight* team invites and highly encourages the contributions from the security and strategic community in the form of opinion-based short commentaries on contemporary political, security, and strategic issues. Any suggestions for further improvements are welcome at our [contact address](#). Please see [here](#) the copy of the *SVI Foresight* electronic journal. You can find us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) and can also access the SVI [website](#).

Research Associate

Haris Bilal Malik

## ***Future of Afghan Peace Process under President Biden***

***Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai***

As the administration has changed in Washington, pundits see changes vis-à-vis the US policy towards different regions. The Afghanistan war is in one of the to-do lists issues Biden has to resolve. Since Obama's first term, winding up the Afghan war has been a key objective in US South Asia policy. Though an agreement with the Taliban for a future road map to peace was laid last year, many hurdles exist in the way to reach a durable settlement. However, the question of how the new administration in Washington that has recently taken charge looks at the Afghan peace process and the US-Taliban despite the objective of disengagement from Afghanistan will remain the same.

President Biden who has spent nearly [five decades](#) in the Senate and various administrations has a detailed history of advice and opinion on the Afghan affairs that makes him a president who can amicably resolve the Afghan quagmire soon. He has the desire to keep a small counterterrorism force and reach an agreeable settlement with the Taliban. However, if this opinion shapes his future policy, how long the small counterterrorism force should be maintained? And will it be acceptable to the Taliban who has according to many won the table talks with the US where the agreement was labeled almost favorable to them, not the US? This is a challenge to the new Biden administration how it goes with the deal the Trump administration made with the Taliban in February 2020.

The Doha agreement is under threat from many sides. Many deadlines specified in the deal have been missed due to the late start of the intra-Afghan talks. There is no specific development between the Taliban and the Afghan government due to disagreement on the agenda of the negotiations and then probably their eyes were towards the new administration to take charge and what changes it made in the agreement that has to define the future of the process. The Taliban a couple of days showed their willingness for a ceasefire if the complete withdrawal of the US troops and the future Islamic state in Afghanistan was guaranteed. If the White House and Pentagon are calculated in their steps vis-à-vis the peace process, the Taliban also ensure quite vigilantly.

In its initial announcement, Biden administration want to [review the Doha deal](#) made with the Taliban. However, the Taliban on the other hand is strongly against revising the deal which gave them an upper hand. The Biden administration can have two main options vis-à-vis dealing with the said issue. One, the deal made by the previous administration can be implemented in its original form. The prospects of which seem very less likely. However, the



Doha deal was mostly favorable to the Taliban and emboldened them by giving them international legitimacy and internal morale boost that can be questioned by the new team in the White House. On the other hand, if the intra-Afghan talks got momentum and the Taliban agreed to a ceasefire, the Biden administration can proceed with the Doha deal. President Ashraf Ghani's administration was waiting for the new president if he reversed the Doha deal where the Afghan government was not a party, a condition of the Taliban while dealing with Washington. A couple of days before, the Taliban said in a statement that they are ready for a ceasefire if the US troops' withdrawal and the future Islamic state were guaranteed. This option is viable once both the parties to the agreement: the US and the Taliban abide by the Doha deal and the intra-Afghan talks succeed.

The second option can be renegotiating the Doha deal to change some of its parameters in order to make it favorable for the US. It will depend on the new administration's team how they prioritize policy objectives and handle the situation vis-à-vis the Afghan peace process and the US withdrawal. The administration can put a premium on how to change the course of the deal by adding additional understanding to the agreement that could provide for a small counterterrorism force until the settlement of the issue between the Taliban and the Afghan government. For withdrawal of the US forces, [May 2021](#) is the deadline for the complete withdrawal and had to reduce its troops level to 2500 till January 2021 that has been met before Trump left the White house. The current number of US troops in Afghanistan is the lowest in the last two decades. However, the Biden administration would likely try to extend the troops' withdrawal deadline with the Taliban as many of the provisions of the agreement remain unfulfilled by the parties due to the delay in the intra-Afghan talks output. Yet, any changes in the Doha deal would certainly need the Taliban's willingness.

However, the new administration should put a premium on how to nudge the Taliban and the Afghan government sitting in Doha for negotiations to reach any settlement. It seems quite obvious that the Taliban will not compromise on its core demands and concerns at any cost. Besides, the Taliban are reluctant to renegotiate the Doha deal or make any concessions. The parties can be in hot waters especially in the US if the deadline of the deal is reached and no progress was achieved. If the new administration hopes to sustain chances of achieving peace and especially the output of the US-Taliban peace process that took almost ten years to reach the Doha deal, it needs to track vibrant diplomacy vis-à-vis the issue.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/01022021-future-of-afghan-peace-process-under-president-biden-oped/>

## ***In Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Afghan Peace Deal and Pakistan***

### ***Khawaja Dawood Tariq***

Over the years, the U.S-Pakistan relations have always been contingent on the changing geostrategic developments. In the '50s and '60s, it was the cold war that brought two countries together. In the '70s and '80s, it was to lay the bear trap for the Soviets in Afghanistan and in post 9/11 it was to fight the war on terror. Many believe that it has been a mutually beneficial relationship; it has allowed Pakistan to modernize its military and security apparatus. However, the drawback of such a transactional relationship is that policymakers in Washington have come to access U.S-Pak relations as primarily Afghan centric. The Trump administration was adamant in its desire to conclude a deal with the Taliban that would bring an end to the longest armed conflict in American history. To achieve that, relentless pressure was exerted on Pakistan by the US throughout. Regardless of this, Pakistan's commitment to regional peace and appropriate regional security strategy has ensured a conducive environment for a peace deal to be agreed upon between the U.S and the Taliban. However, with the increase in violence in Afghanistan and change in the White House the dynamics of the region have considerably changed. Many believe that incumbent President Joe Biden is a friend of Pakistan. He has announced the review of the Afghan peace deal inked by his predecessor. What does it mean for Pakistan, how would it impact U.S-Pak relations? What more can Pakistan do to accommodate both parties. These recent developments do put Pakistan in between a rock and a hard place.

A [peace agreement](#) was signed by the U.S and Taliban on February 29, 2020. The agreement was signed after an initial week-long period which required a reduction in violence. However, unfortunately, since the peace deal was signed the violence has only increased. [Governors](#), law enforcement officials, judges, politicians, and civil society members have been targeted in succeeding months. An attack on Kabul University, targeted killing of [female judges](#), and journalists in Kabul, [bomb blasts](#) targeting military and government installations across Afghanistan have taken place in the last couple of months. Troubled by this, [President Ashraf Ghani](#) and leading members of his administration have urged the Biden administration to revamp pressure on the Taliban and not rush to withdraw troops from Afghanistan.

Pakistan has called on all the parties to adhere to the spirit of the peace agreement. However, Pakistan is not the only regional power that exerts influence in Afghanistan. The absence of top leadership from the intra-Afghan talks in Doha has created doubts over the direction of intra-Afghan dialogue and the future of the Afghan peace process. In recent days while the intra-Afghan dialogue is ongoing in Doha, reportedly, the Taliban's chief negotiator



[Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar](#) was in Tehran and [Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai](#), the Taliban's political chief was leading a delegation to Russia.

The U.S-Taliban peace deal was a four-point agreement. The first point was preventing the use of Afghan soil by any group against the security of the U.S and its allies. The second was the mechanism and timeline for the withdrawal of U.S troops. As per the deal, the U.S troops are set to withdraw by the May of 2021 but the increase in violence has jeopardized the possibility of withdrawal by this time. National security adviser, [Jake Sullivan](#) recently said that "What we're doing right now, is taking a hard look at the extent to which the Taliban are complying with those three conditions, and in that context, we make decisions about our force posture and our diplomatic strategy going forward," [Pentagon spokesman John Kirby](#) told reporters "Without them meeting their commitments to renounce terrorism and to stop the violent attacks on the Afghan National Security Forces ... it is very hard to see a specific way forward for the negotiated settlement, but we're still committed to that,". Even when the deal was signed, the Trump administration was criticized for hastily agreeing on a deal with the Taliban while conceding too much. The recent announcement by the Biden administration to review the deal can have dual implications. First, the Biden administration is trying to ramp up the pressure on the Taliban and Afghan National government to conclude the intra-Afghan dialogue before May 2021 (the deadline for withdrawal of the U.S' forces). Second, the Biden administration wants to review the impact of the recent diplomatic outreach by the Taliban.

Now that the intra-Afghan peace process is not quite up to start, Pakistan's role is again under scrutiny. Pakistan has been accused by many in Washington of playing a double game in Afghanistan but it is impossible to disconnect the level of threat Pakistan perceives from hostile elements using Afghan soil against Pakistan. The question is what more can Pakistan do to facilitate the Afghan peace process. Pakistan has to ensure how it protects its own interests as well. If the first point of the U.S and Taliban peace deal is to ensure that the Afghan soil won't be used to target the U.S and its allies; how can the same rationale not be extended to Pakistan? The limit of Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan and its national security concerns vis-à-vis India would create a very delicate situation for all parties concerned. The Biden administration needs to revisit the U.S-Pak relations with a broader regional context to allow Pakistan the tactical and strategic space to maneuver in Afghanistan.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/15022021-in-between-a-rock-and-a-hard-place-afghan-peace-deal-and-pakistan-oped/>



## *Pakistan-China Space Cooperation*

### *Sher bano*

Space cooperation between China and Pakistan dates back to over two decades. Pakistan's first indigenously developed satellite [Badar-1](#) was launched from China in 1992. The Badr-1 satellite was an indigenously developed satellite that weighed 115 lbs. China has played a significant role in modernizing Pakistan's satellite program. In the year 1991 '[SUPARCO](#)' (Pakistan's Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission) launched an experimental satellite 'Badr' and in the year 2001 launched another satellite '[Badr B](#)'. The satellite was initially planned to be launched from the US' Launchpad but was eventually launched by the Chinese Launchpad. The program was decommissioned in the year 2012 as both the satellites had completed their lifespan. Moreover, the Badr program is now replaced by Pakistan's Remote Sensing Program. The bilateral cooperation between the two countries in space has created new outlooks in the scientific and socioeconomic spheres. This has resulted in the enhancement of the historically cordial relations in the other fields as well.

Space cooperation with China holds immense significance for Pakistan at the strategic level since SUPARCO works closely with key strategic organizations. In the contemporary international security environment, navigation systems through satellites are significant for guiding missile systems along with commercial and communication purposes. With such cooperation, it would become more feasible for Pakistan to further develop its Space Program. As per [SUPARCO Vision 2040](#), Pakistan intends to build, launch and operate remote sensing, communication, and navigation satellites and develop their spin-off technologies and applications for socio-economic development and national security. Pakistan has also sought China's assistance in the development of 'PRSS' (Pakistan Remote Sensing Satellite). The '[PRSS-1](#)' (Pakistan's Remote Sensing Satellite-1), an optical and earth observation satellite was launched in space in 2018 through a Chinese facility. The purpose of remote sensing is to gather data through satellites in space that is to be used for meteorology, mapping, and urban planning. In this regard, the PRSS-1 would provide Belt and Road projects with remote sensing information in the region. Whereas according to the SUPARCO officials, work on two other satellites is also in progress.

Along with PRSS-1, another indigenously developed satellite '[Pakistan Technology Evaluation Satellite-IA](#)' was also launched from a Chinese vehicle back in July [2018](#). In the same year, SUPARCO bought a communication satellite from China that was already in orbit. It has been named as [PakSat Multi-Satellite](#). The purpose of this satellite is to improve communication networks and internet connectivity all across the country specifically in the northern areas. In order to make up for the decades of stagnation, China has big plans to provide significant advantages to Pakistan's space program. In this regard, the Chinese [BieDou](#)

navigation system would prove to be an alternative for Russia's Global Navigation Satellite System, European Galileo systems, and GPS. Other than that BieDou satellites would also provide SAR capabilities that can allow the data analyst to improve the image accuracy.

To further enhance space cooperation, in [2019](#), a series of space exploration agreements were signed between Pakistan and China at the second 'Belt and Road Forum'. One such agreement would likely pave the way for Pakistan to send its first ever astronaut to space. It would also provide a framework for space and science exploration and training of Pakistani astronauts along with the development of Sino-Pakistani space committees to oversee future joint ventures in space. Furthermore, China has also proposed to build the '[Space Silk Road](#)' and convert CPEC into a three-dimensional project including land, water, and space. The space Silk Road would help in the navigation from aircrafts to submarines through China's [Biedou](#) satellites to connect BRI countries. All such agreements show growing cooperation between 'SUPARCO' (Pakistan's Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission) and 'CNSA' (China National Space Administration).

Summarizing it all, with Pakistan's strategic rival India having a substantial presence in space and continuously enhancing its surveillance and situational awareness capabilities, Pakistan has left with no choice but to strengthen its space program. In order to meet its increasing demand in the military as well as civilian domains, Pakistan needs to work rigorously on its indigenous space program. In pursuit of this, Pakistan would require the latest technology and resources which are not available currently; hence Pakistan can overcome this gap in the space domain by expanding its cooperation with China. In this regard, various initiatives are already in progress between both countries. Furthermore, more communication and earth observation satellites would be launched by China for Pakistan. To further bridge the gap, there is a need for enhanced cooperation in the civilian spheres. Nevertheless, the space cooperation between the two countries in the present time is mutually beneficial and timely. China needs a market for its developing expertise in space and Pakistan needs assistance in developing its indigenous space program. This cooperation would further strengthen their robust relationship in the years to come.

<http://southasiajournal.net/pakistan-china-space-cooperation/>



## ***Pakistan's Test of Ghaznavi Missile: Vindicating Minimum Deterrence Posture***

***Haris Bilal Malik***

In recent years, there has been a profound development of the nuclear-capable missile systems in South Asia. This is mainly initiated by India since it has been maintaining an offensive nuclear posture vis-à-vis Pakistan. In this regard, India is involved in an all-encompassing modernization of its nuclear warhead delivery systems. These include; land, sea, and air-launched ballistic missiles and cruise missiles that are capable of delivering nuclear warheads. India has operationalized some of the advanced ballistic and cruise missiles having short, medium, and long ranges. For instance, the [Nirbhay](#) cruise missile and the most advanced [BrahMos](#) supersonic cruise missile launch-able from air, land, and sea are among the others. Furthermore, various versions of the [Prithvi](#) missile are India's operational short-range ballistic missiles. The Agni series ballistic missiles have ranges of medium to intermediate and most notably the Agni-V and Agni-VI are reportedly the 'Inter Continental Ballistic Missile' (ICBMs). Likewise, the different versions of [K-series](#) missiles are the much-hyped submarine-launched ballistic missiles in the Indian inventory. The presence of a diverse type of warhead delivery system in the Indian nuclear arsenal has significantly added to the threat spectrum of Pakistan. Consequently, it has compelled Pakistan to develop its nuclear warhead delivery system to a minimum and credible level that would deter India.

Pakistan's development of missile systems is in-line with the posture of credible minimum nuclear deterrence. This covers a broad spectrum of threats coming from India including its conventional and unconventional military modernization and its offensive nuclear posture against Pakistan. At the present, Pakistan's missile inventory includes a diverse type of missiles that are capable of delivering conventional and nuclear warheads at various ranges. These include; tactical or battlefield ballistic missiles 'Nasr' and 'Abdali', short-range missiles 'Ghaznavi' and Shaheen-1, medium-range Gauri-I and Gauri-II, Shaheen-II and Shaheen-III and Ababeel ballistic missiles. Pakistan also has advanced cruise missiles like Babur and Ra'ad that can be launched from air, land, and sea. Pakistan frequently conducts tests of its missiles to assess the operational readiness and accuracy of these delivery systems.

Very recently, on [February 3, 2021](#), Pakistan conducted a test of its short-range ballistic missile Ghaznavi. The missile can deliver both nuclear and conventional warheads within the range of 290 kilometers. The latest test of Ghaznavi was a night training launch test as part of the annual exercise in the field. Training launch refers to that the nature of the test is meant to evaluate the missile under various parameters of accuracy since the missile is already in



operational mode. In this case, the test launch was aimed at assessing the handling and operational readiness of the missile specifically at night time. The Ghaznavi missile is one of the oldest and accurate solid-fueled and road-mobile short-range delivery systems in Pakistan's inventory. It is a guided missile that is equipped with a terminal guidance system that makes it one of the complex missile systems for delivering a nuclear warhead.

Furthermore, the Ghaznavi missile system, specifically since its tests in recent years has been speculated to have 'multiple independent reentry vehicle' (MIRV) capabilities. Regardless of such speculation, many experts maintain that Pakistan needs to have a MIRV capable short-range ballistic missile. This has become more significant especially considering the Indian counterforce aspirations vis-à-vis Pakistan. India's offensive nuclear posture and counterforce military modernization highlight that it has been shifting its posture more towards a counterforce nuclear doctrine. The Indian much-hyped notions of 'surgical strikes' that can also include a '[splendid first strike](#)' further suggest India's counterforce temptations against Pakistan. Furthermore, India's development of advanced air defence systems ingeniously and the acquisition of some of the most advanced air defence systems like the Russian [S-400](#) would likely provoke Pakistan to maintain a least possible countermeasure. In this regard, given the accuracy and short range of the Ghaznavi ballistic missile, its prospective MIRV capability could become a reliable platform in the short-range delivery systems that can penetrate India's advanced air defence shield. This provision in turn along with the [Ababeel](#) medium-range MIRV capable ballistic missile would further add to Pakistan's deterrence posture against India's provocative air defence shield.

It is notably important to know that Pakistan's nuclear capability and its nuclear doctrine are meant to ensure the security and preserve the sovereignty of the country. It is aimed at deterring India from any kind of aggression. In this regard, the development and up-gradation of nuclear warhead delivery systems are all in line with the principle of [credible minimum nuclear deterrence](#). The development of tactical, short, and medium-range missiles and the provision of an ensured second-strike capability have significantly added to Pakistan's deterrence posture. Consequently, they have denied the space for a limited and low-intensity conflict initiated by India. This has also ensured the regional equation of the nuclear deterrence equilibrium.

Summarizing it all, the prevalent security environment of the South Asian region which India aspires to dominate with its provocative war strategies and offensive nuclear posture poses a serious threat to Pakistan's security. This is further evident from its ongoing extensive military modernization both at the conventional and unconventional levels. Such Indian aspirations are aimed at undermining the pre-existing regional deterrence equilibrium that has been ensured by Pakistan's nuclear capability over the years. In this regard, Pakistan needs to preserve the nuclear deterrence equation while staying within its existing deterrence posture.

The recent test of the Ghaznavi missile has further vindicated the full spectrum deterrence within the ambit of credible minimum nuclear deterrence. This seems to be an appropriate manifestation of Pakistan's resort to respond.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/15022021-pakistans-test-of-ghaznavi-missile-vindicating-minimum-deterrence-posture-oped/>



## *Pakistan's Successful Test of Shaheen-III Missile: Achieving Full Spectrum Deterrence*

*Ahyousha Khan*

Quite recently, in January 2021, Pakistan has conducted a [successful](#) flight test of Shaheen-III ballistic missile, capable of carrying both nuclear and conventional payloads. It was [first](#) tested in 2015 and said to have a range of 2,750 kilometers. This enables it to reach the farthest points of India specially the Nicobar and Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal. These Islands hold great strategic significance for India since they are believed to provide assured land-based second-strike options to India. Similarly, they are also critical for Indian missile testing. Shaheen-III is a medium-range surface-to-surface two staged solid fueled missile equipped with Post Separation Altitude Correction ([PSAC](#)) system. Being a solid-fueled missile enables rapid response capability and PSAC allows it to have better trajectory and accuracy with the capability to evade the deployed ballistic missile defence (BMD) systems. Moreover, it can be launched through "[Transporter Erector Launcher \(TELs\)](#), which can move and hide. This makes the launcher more survivable as compared to the fixed launchers. As of now, the missile has not been operationally deployed.

This particular test was conducted by Pakistan to evaluate the [design and technical parameters](#) of the Shaheen-III weapon system. Moreover, the Arabian Sea was the point of impact. It was reiterated by Pakistan after the successful test that Pakistan's nuclear capability is India-centric and the objective of its strategic capability is only to deter "any aggression" against the "sovereignty of Pakistan". Missile tests in South Asia are routinely exercised as both countries are improving their capabilities of delivery vehicles to maintain the credibility of their deterrence forces. Moreover, they serve the purpose of "signaling" and "readiness" of forces. Just last year, India has conducted [17 missile tests](#), amid its growing tensions at its northern borders while Pakistan conducted only two missile tests. However, to avoid inadvertent escalation and accidents both countries have the agreement on informing each other before missiles tests. Moreover, Pakistan believes in peaceful co-existence in the region.

Defence analysts [believe](#) that the Shaheen-III missile system's development started in the early 2000s and initially, it was envisaged as a "Space Launch Vehicle (SLV). Therefore its successful tests and flights open up the possibility of space exploration for Pakistan as well. It is also believed that Ababeel, a Multiple Independently re-entry targeted Vehicle (MIRV) missile, is also compatible with the designs of Shaheen-III and II. Ababeel, a three-staged, solid-fueled, medium-range surface-to-surface missile was tested by Pakistan back in January [2017](#).



Successful tests of the Shaheen-III missile system would likely enable Pakistan to acquire MIRV technology to maintain a credible deterrence force vis-à-vis India. To ensure the effectiveness and accuracy of different re-entry vehicles going in different directions, Pakistan has bought large-scale "optical tracking and measurement systems" from China. These systems would allow Pakistan to record high-resolution images of the whole process of missile launch till its impact (launch, stage separation, tail flame, re-entry, and impact).

It is worth mentioning here that Shaheen-III and other missile systems have been developed by Pakistan under its policy of "Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD) which is in line with credible minimum deterrence. Since Pakistan's nuclear deterrent posture is India-centric, the development of the Shaheen-III missile appeared as a compulsion for Pakistan that would enable it to target any part of India's territory. This is very significant given the Indian development of Tri-services command in Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANC). Furthermore, the absence of the Shaheen-III missile would have given India a decisive edge to launch a land-based second strike after absorbing the first strike. Moreover, India is aggressively pursuing BMDs; therefore Pakistan must develop a weapons system that can penetrate these defenses to maintain the element of mutual vulnerability.

Unfortunately, some international commentators have linked the test with the [bid for attention](#) from Biden's administration. This only reflects the lack of understanding of deterrence dynamics of the South Asian region by the west. The recent test was not something entirely new or threatening; it was an attempt to ensure the element of credibility in its deterrence capability by Pakistan.

Summarizing it all, Pakistan's policy of full-spectrum deterrence, along with other components, aims at the provision of response options at all three levels; tactical, operational, and strategic that would cover the Indian full landmass and its outlying territories. The Shaheen-III missile system is in-line with this posture. It further aims at keeping Pakistan's deterrence posture robust in face of growing threats from India. The latter, in its attempts to achieve the status of the regional hegemon and global power, is in a constant state of denial vis-à-vis the existence of mutually assured destruction. In pursuit of this, India is constantly acquiring and building technologies that are not favorable for deterrence stability in the region. In this regard, one of the former top officials of Pakistan has rightly said that the responsibility of maintaining deterrence and stability in South Asia lands on Pakistan's shoulders. A strong manifestation of deterrence capability would likely remain a plausible option for Pakistan.

<http://southasiajournal.net/pakistans-successful-test-of-shaheen-iii-missile-achieving-full-spectrum-deterrence/>

## ***Barnett Rubin's Open Letter to the Taliban: An Assessment***

***Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai***

It's almost been a year; the U.S. and Taliban signed an agreement in Doha to pave a way for a peaceful settlement in war-torn Afghanistan. The U.S.-Taliban [agreement](#) included a number of provisions; yet an important one was the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan by May 1, 2021. Likewise, the Taliban agreed to cut their ties with Al-Qaeda and do not allow the Afghan soil to be used against the U.S. or its allies. The May 1 deadline has about two months to reach nevertheless, the U.S. complete withdrawal does not seem possible albeit the troops' level is at its lowest: twenty-five hundred, since the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.

The light of the ongoing deadlock between the U.S. and the Taliban on one hand and the Taliban and the Afghan government on the other has made the environment grim for meaningful dialogue or inching towards the solution of the Afghan quagmire. [Barnett Rubin](#), a well-known expert on South Asia and Afghanistan recently wrote an [open letter](#) to the Taliban advocating for the best possible solution to the current stalemate. Barnett Rubin discusses what steps the Taliban needed and what options the Biden administration has to cope with the situation.

On January 28 U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken called [Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani](#) to tell him "that the United States is reviewing the February 2020 U.S.-Taliban agreement" and examining "whether the Taliban are living up to their commitments to cut ties with terrorist groups, to reduce violence in Afghanistan, and to engage in meaningful negotiations with the Afghan government and other stakeholders." Such intentions led to suspicion among the Taliban that the Biden administration can scrap the deal or at least try to make it in their favor.

Rubin considers the six-month delay in the intra-Afghan talks a cause provided for a situation where the commitments made in the Doha deal were not easy to fulfill. The Afghan government wanted to delay the intra-Afghan talks hoping that the Biden administration might pull back from the Doha deal. However, that seems impossible due to the challenging circumstances on hand and the no available viable option on the other hand.

Prof. Rubin has advised the Taliban to reduce violence and realize the need for a ceasefire. He put, if the Taliban want to be more certain that the Biden administration would keep its commitments to withdraw troops, it should place a proposal for a political roadmap and a ceasefire on the table." However, the Taliban while closely monitoring the new Biden administration have warned if the U.S. troops do not withdraw by the deadline, they would start attacking them and in that case, the US would be responsible for breaking the Doha deal.



Since the delay of the intra-Afghan talks, the Taliban have increased their operations against the Afghan security forces. Critics are blaming the Taliban for increasing violence nonetheless; there is no reduction in violence in the deal with the Afghan government. If the Afghan government wants to reduce the violence, it should reach an agreement with the Taliban.

Furthermore, he states to the Taliban, “I hope you would keep an open mind about renegotiating the timeline to assure that the agreement is implemented as intended.” The priority of the Taliban would likely be to go with the Doha deal without any changes. Nevertheless, neither the implementation nor the troops’ withdrawal seems possible on the specified deadline then changes are mandatory to make. Thus, neither the U.S. can go completely back from the Doha deal nor the Taliban would be in a position to reject the re-negotiation of the Doha deal.

In such a situation, where there is a stalemate not only between the Afghan government and the Taliban but also between the U.S. and the Taliban, Pakistan’s role would be crucial. Earlier during the Doha talks, Zalmay Khalilzad was on an off to Islamabad to consult with the Pakistani political and military leadership to pave a way for the settlement in Afghanistan. It seems like that the Taliban would push the Biden administration to go with the deal. At the same time would try to strike a good deal with the Afghan government as they did with the U.S. last year. The Afghan government would likely push the Biden administration to alter the Doha deal at any cost where the Taliban are in a strong position although on paper. In the same vein, the Biden administration would pressurize the Taliban to renegotiate the deal and ask Pakistan to push the Taliban for the same. The Afghan government also seeks Islamabad’s support to have a better bargain with the Taliban. In such a situation, Barnett Rubin’s open letter can be a guide for the Taliban as well as the Biden administration – if they want to reach a peaceful settlement. Otherwise, the prospects of peaceful settlement of the Afghanistan issue might become even more difficult with disastrous consequences for the whole region.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/25022021-barnett-rubins-open-letter-to-the-taliban-an-assessment-oped/>

## ***Hoping for Best: Future of U.S-Pakistan Relations under Biden Administration***

### ***Khawaja Dawood Tariq***

As Mr. Biden was sworn in, policymakers in Islamabad took a sigh of hope. After the contentious Trump presidency, Islamabad was hoping for a reset of its relation with the US. President Biden was awarded Pakistan's second-highest civilian award back in 2008 in recognition of his continued support. Though the U.S and Pakistan have long-standing strategic relations, it won't change the fact that their relations have always been transactional. It has always been about what Pakistan can contribute to help secure U.S interests and how Pakistan can extract concessions from the former to secure such interests. The long-standing U.S-Pakistan relations have deteriorated under Obama and Trump administrations. The Trump administration not only stopped financial aid earmarked to Pakistan but unceremoniously and unprecedentedly also blocked the Pakistani military's access to U.S military institutes. In order to reset U.S-Pakistan relations, both countries would have to reevaluate regional and strategic dynamics and come up with a new set of policy tools to engage. This could be achieved by restarting the U.S-Pakistan Strategic dialogue.

Afghanistan remains the most pressing area of concern for both the US and Pakistan. Being committed to promoting peace in the region, Pakistan has played an instrumental role in creating a conducive environment for the peaceful settlement of the Afghan issue. However, the recent increase in violence and the Biden administration's decision to review the withdrawal agreement would likely have an adverse effect on the success of the intra-Afghan dialogue. Both the countries would have to find concrete confidence-building measures on a rather urgent basis to ensure that the Afghan conflict can finally be resolved.

Pakistan's economy cannot withstand any economic blowback that comes with getting blacklisted by FATF. Pakistan has already complied with the demands placed by FATF. However, the US has used FATF as a tool to exert influence on Pakistan to manipulate its strategic direction. Now that the Afghan peace process is towards its conclusion, given that all sides can keep their end of the bargain. The US would have to create an environment for Pakistan to exit out of the FATF grey list so that it may start to rebuild its economy. Unfortunately, keeping Pakistan occupied in FATF would only delight the Indian policymakers. This would ultimately let the region remain unstable. Given the significance of Pakistan for regional peace and stability, an economically strong Pakistan would be in a much better position to play its positive role in this regard.



Indo-U.S relations have come a long way since the days of the cold war. The two have developed a very robust strategic partnership over the last decade. India is being considered a regional bulwark against the rise of China. India features heavily in U.S designs to contain China. Policymakers in Pakistan believe that the U.S is empowering India at Islamabad's expense to contain China. Such favoritism is very dangerous for the strategic stability of the region. Both sides need to find a comprehensive balance that could address Pakistan's concern vis-à-vis the US' Indo-Pacific policy in which India has been given a major role by the US. In this regard, a good start would be to exert pressure on the Indian government to allow international media and human rights observers' access to Illegally India Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJ&K).

President Biden in his maiden foreign policy speech asserted that "America is back. Diplomacy is back at the center of our foreign policy". He was referring to democratic values-based diplomacy that is cherished by the State Department. These values include human rights, rule of law, and democracy. Indian actions in Kashmir are a stringent rebuke to these values. Similarly, India's slide into extremist society and an authoritarian regime should be of grave concern to the US.

In the same vein, the Sino-Pakistan strategic partnership is of concern to the US. The latter has tried pressuring Pakistan to distance itself from China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). A reset process can allow Pakistan the opportunity to address concerns raised by Washington. A comprehensive dialogue would not only clear such concerns, but it might also end up in the development of a mechanism for the U.S to become part of CPEC. At the very least, the US' business firms should take advantage of the free trade agreement between China and Pakistan and use Pakistan as a regional base of operations for their trade with China. The US and Pakistan had long enjoyed strong economic relations. The former used to be Pakistan's largest trading partner since overtaken by China. Even today, the U.S is one of the biggest markets for Pakistani exports. The new administration has to devise a strategy to once again develop strong economic ties between both countries. Strong economic relations with the U.S in turn would likely allow Pakistan to balance its relations with both the economic superpowers.

The change of guard in Washington is always considered an opportunity for a reset in U.S-Pakistan relations. Mr. Biden is believed to be an old foreign policy hack. Owing to its geostrategic location, Pakistan would continue to play an important part in regional and international politics; and no one knows this better than POTUS himself. The US has long used Pakistan to secure its interest and left Islamabad to dry when it was of no use. Given this approach of the US, policymakers in Islamabad are very rightly reluctant to trust the US again and again. The mutual distrust needs to be resolved and there might not be a more suitable administration than the Biden to carry out this task.

<https://foreignpolicynews.org/2021/02/25/hoping-for-best-future-of-u-s-pakistan-relations-under-biden-administration/>

## ***Two Years after Pulwama-Balakot Crisis: The Evolved Destabilizing Factors for the South Asian Strategic Stability***

***Haris Bilal Malik***

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of February in 2019, a young Kashmiri individual attacked a convoy of the Indian Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). This suicide attack reportedly killed [44](#) personnel of the CRPF. As part of its traditional blame game, without any undeniable evidence, India blamed Pakistan for backing the attack. This is further evident from the very fact that Pakistan probed India to provide solid evidence. However, since the broader Indian aim was to deliberately create war hysteria against Pakistan, the latter's offer wasn't considered. Enthused by this, on [February 26, 2019](#), as reported, India entered Pakistan's airspace with its Mirage-2000 fighter jets. This intrusion was referred to as a 'surgical strike' by India under its self-proclaimed 'new normal' in South Asia. Pakistan, on the other hand, was left with no choice but to give a befitting response to India. On [27<sup>th</sup> February 2019](#), in an aerial fight, Pakistan downed two Indian jets and managed to capture an Indian pilot alive. This has been acknowledged by the international community since Pakistan provided undeniable evidence of the whole operation i.e. '[Operation Swift Retort](#)'. Contrary to this, the Indian claims of destroying a militant camp in Balakot and downing an F-16 jet of Pakistan remain [suspicious](#) to date. However, later on, Pakistan released the captured Indian pilot as a show of peace gesture and commitment towards regional peace and conflict settlement. February 2021 marks the completion of two years of the [Pulwama-Balakot](#) crisis which had resulted in a short-lived military engagement between the nuclear-armed rivals of South Asia. Since then, many factors have emerged as the destabilizing factors for the South Asian Strategic Stability.

Security analysts around the world believe that this crisis has further complicated the South Asian security dynamics. In this regard, the region is now regarded as more prone to military escalation than ever before. The volatility of relations between the arch-rivals India and Pakistan has been significantly enhanced. During this period, the Indian atrocities in the disputed Kashmir region have further acknowledged the relevance of Kashmir as a 'nuclear flashpoint' between India and Pakistan. Based on this, there remains a continuous fear of conflict in the region which would likely have the potential of turning into a nuclear conflict. Likewise, in [August 2019](#), India changed the special constitutional status of the disputed Kashmir region with the revocation of Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian constitution. The international community openly condemned the Indian political annexation of the disputed Kashmir region. Despite this, a considerable time has passed and the Indian imposed lockdown and communication blackout remains partially applicable to date. This unilateral Indian move has more significance in view of the Pulwama-Balakot crisis in particular. It further implies that



India aspires to dominate the escalation ladder of the region with its provocative and offensive policies.

At the military front, India has been actively involved in an extensive and all-encompassing military modernization drive. This is in the larger part aspired by the Indian long-held desire to dominate the region militarily. By doing so, India wants to readjust the regional military equation in its favor. This has emerged as one of the most destabilizing factors in the region. Likewise, other factors such as; an asymmetric conventional military balance of the region, and the Indian aggressive nuclear policies vis-à-vis Pakistan are also quite significant. In this regard, India's development of advanced Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) Systems, its agreement with Russia for the acquisition of the S-400 anti-missile system, provision of advanced nuclear-powered submarines, and the acquisition of Rafale fighter jets from France are also worth considering. Furthermore, India's development of supersonic and hypersonic missiles especially during the last two years also implies that its military modernization program is aimed at becoming a regional hegemon. This Indian attempt to readjust the military balance of the region in its favor has further added to the instability of the South Asian region.

Moreover, India's self-proclaimed notion of 'counterforce preemptive surgical strike' which it hopes would remain under the nuclear threshold of Pakistan is significantly important. Especially against the backdrop of the Pulwama-Balakot crisis, these have emerged as the most destabilizing factors that have affected the regional strategic stability. This has become more apparent from the way the Indian political and strategic elite has been involved in threatening Pakistan with such notions time and again. Consequently, the prospects of war and escalation in South Asia have significantly increased. In case of any provocative future entanglement, while India hopes that the intensity of conflict would remain conventional or even at the sub-conventional level, this however cannot be guaranteed. Contrary to such Indian assumption, the evolved dynamics of conflict would likely further challenge the threshold of Pakistan's nuclear capability that already provides deterrence against various spectrums of threats coming from India.

Hence at the present, the prevalent security environment of the South Asian region even two years after the Pulwama-Balakot crisis remains in a state of influx. This is mainly because of the Indian aggressive politico-strategic thinking and its provocative war strategies against Pakistan. Given the absence of an appropriate regional crisis stability mechanism, the emergent security dynamics of the region have become more of a global security concern. Determined by such a regional environment of instability, Pakistan's threat perception would likely remain more inclined towards India. In this regard, Pakistan's nuclear capability, while being a credible and reliable deterrent force, would likely play the decisive role of holding the burden of strategic stability in the region.

<http://southasiajournal.net/two-years-after-pulwama-balakot-crisis-the-evolved-destabilizing-factors-for-the-south-asian-strategic-stability/>

## ***Pakistan's Successful Test of Babur Cruise Missile and Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia***

***Ahyousa Khan***

Very recently, on 11th February, Pakistan has [successfully](#) tested its short-range surface-to-surface launched subsonic cruise missile Babur 1A. It can engage targets at land and sea with 'high precision'. It has a reported range of 450 kilometers, within which it can deliver both conventional and nuclear warheads. Its other variant, Babur-3 can be launched from submarines/seaborne platforms as well. The Babur series cruise missiles have better maneuverability and terrain hugging capability. Because of their capability to make a flight at low altitudes, high maneuverability, and [pre-programmed flights](#) cruise missiles are considered important in evading the deployed early warning systems and missile defence systems. This particular test missile was launched from a '[multi-tube missile launch vehicle](#) (MLV)', a mobile launcher that can shoot and scoot as well. Thus, MLVs act as major force multipliers from which more than one missile can be launched simultaneously. Furthermore, the mobility of MLVs gives them an edge of having better chances of survivability. It is said that the successful test-firing of the Babur missile reflected the proficient "[standard of training and operational preparedness](#)" of the missile weapon system that fulfills all training parameters.

The recent test of Babur surface-to-surface launched cruise missile was the third missile test Pakistan has conducted this year. Earlier, Pakistan has conducted tests of medium-range Shaheen-III and short-range Ghaznavi missiles. All these missile tests are of the surface to surface launch missile systems that can target the adversary at land and sea. These tests ensured the military and operational preparedness of Pakistan's strategic forces for targeting adversaries at different ranges. This further ensures Pakistan's policy of 'Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD)' in-line with the credible minimum nuclear deterrence. The policy of FSD was adopted by Pakistan to spread its nuclear deterrence at tactical, operational, and strategic spectrums of the threat that are coming from India. Furthermore, the Babur cruise missile has three variations; Babur-1A which is of 450 km range, improved version of the same system is Babur 2/1 B has a range of 700 km and Babur-3 (submarine-launched) has a range of 450 km. Along with these, Pakistan has two other cruise missiles; Ra'ad (air-launched cruise missile) and Harba (ship-launched cruise missile) in its inventory.

Missile tests are considered a strong manifestation of a country's military resort. Since these delivery systems affect the country and its adversary's threat perception, strategy, military, and operational preparedness. Presence and testing of nuclear and conventional missiles, whether ballistic or cruise missiles, is more of a fact and reality in the contemporary



South Asian security environment. These tests are developments of delivery vehicles that are associated with the element of 'credibility' to sustain nuclear deterrence. Successful missile tests ensure the concept of mutual vulnerability, which detains states from taking any adventurous actions against each other. Moreover, missiles, when they are equipped with nuclear weapons, provide options of survivable nuclear force; and when they are equipped with conventional warheads they can balance the conventional militaries capabilities. However, with the rapid technological developments missile systems are also contributing to increasing uncertainty. These delivery systems are also igniting deterrence instability and threats of preemptive strikes. This has become more significant because of the blurring of lines between nuclear and conventional weapons, increased speed of delivery systems (supersonic and hypersonic weapons), and the resultant less time to respond to such threats.

Security experts believe that the development and testing of missile systems in South Asia is primarily based on the action-reaction model between the arch-rivals India and Pakistan. However, this assessment is not true since India is developing and testing these technologies to become a regional hegemon and global power. Pakistan, on the other hand, has been compelled to maintain a balance of power at the minimum level. This is further aimed at providing a credible nuclear deterrence to enhance its security and protect its sovereignty vis-à-vis Indian threats. Pakistan's rationale for the development of cruise missiles also lies in this logic, where the development and acquisition of BMDs and cruise missiles by India have undermined the efficacy of mutual vulnerability between both countries. Therefore, to maintain deterrence stability in the region, the condition of mutual vulnerability or mutually assured destruction must prevail. This would likely decrease the threat perception and a growing asymmetry in South Asia.

The development of the Babur cruise missile and its different variants by Pakistan are in-line with the existing principle of credible minimum nuclear deterrence. This appears to be aimed at ensuring that the Indian advanced missile shields are not formidable and can be penetrated while staying within the existing deterrence posture. Resultantly, this technology would likely make nuclear deterrence and the strategic stability of the region more stable. It can be said that the role of cruise missiles in maintaining strategic stability has become more essential in South Asia. But, one significant factor in this regard is that unlike norms and CBMs related to ballistic missiles to avoid inadvertent escalation are missing in the case of cruise missiles. Since cruise missiles are an important part of the deterrence/nuclear postures of both countries and both states would likely invest in this technology in the future. In this regard, norms to avoid inadvertent escalation are to be established that would deal with the cruise missiles. The least, both countries could do is to sign an agreement on pre-notification of cruise missile (sub, super and hypersonic) tests to each other.

<http://southasiajournal.net/pakistans-successful-test-of-babur-cruise-missile-and-nuclear-deterrence-in-south-asia/>

## *India's Manipulation of International Media Divulged In EU*

### *Disinfo Lab Report*

*Amber Afreen Abid*

National security objectives in the contemporary era are molded more by the war of words and narratives, than by the traditional means of weapon use and on-ground fighting techniques. The integration of communication technology has revolutionized the pursuance of national objectives and opened a new era of warfare i.e. the war of narratives. Today India is not only propagating a deceitful picture against Pakistan but is doing it in culturally engaging ways. European Union, for instance, is interested in democracy and human rights; the negative strategic communications by India in Europe are focused on issues related to democracy and human rights. Indian hawkish National Security Advisor Ajit Doval back in 2014 stated that India should use a strategy like “[defensive-offensive](#)” insinuated against Pakistan. This assertion entails the arrangements encompassing the possible vulnerabilities of Pakistan; it could be domestic, economic, political, or be international isolation, in whatsoever way, disturbing the political stability and undermining the international image of the country.

The true face of India has been exposed. India, in its endeavor to discredit and malign Pakistan internationally, has been involved in a serious operation against Pakistan. The conspiracy of undermining Pakistan by developing fake news content has been put out internationally by the [EU DisinfoLab](#) report of 2020. The report has revealed the largest ever fake media and disinformation network against any country to date. As per the report, India has tried to malign Pakistan with the introduction of fake media outlets which worked in collaboration with each other, for spoiling Pakistan’s image across the world. The report titled “Indian Chronicles” has further exposed how India misrepresented the members of the European Parliament who support the minority rights and women-related issues, in order to serve the geopolitical interests and provide a platform to the influential, who want to attain such objectives.

According to the above-mentioned report, India has been involved in its malicious activity of defaming Pakistan, by developing over 750 fake websites, resurrecting the dead scholars, think-tanks, and NGOs, and propagating the news further to the international community. It has introduced malevolent content against Pakistan with the provision of a large network of fake media outlets. These include; fake press agencies, PR distribution, and online fake media posing as real local media. Several fake media outlets were used to bring together and republish the content against Pakistan, for voiding the country’s image. Moreover, they have worked to re-package and boost India’s positive image in the international arena. The



report has unleashed the Indian propaganda, which is actively working for more than 15 years, spread across 119 countries, involving European Union and the United Nations as well.

The presence of Fake websites, news agencies, and NGOs has created smoke screens of organizations, with often an online presence only, which can cross-reference each other. Examples of the sites mentioned in the report include EP Today (.com; .eu; .org and their declination such as europeanparliamenttoday.com). Moreover, Indian nationals and organizations are playing a significant role in attaining the objectives of strategic communications and narrative building. An example of this was given in “Indian Chronicles”, where the obscure Srivastava Group (SG) and its subsidiary Aglaya, a small New Delhi-based company have played a huge part. The EU DisinfoLab has revealed many cases in which Asian News International (ANI), the largest wire service of India, re-published counterfeit articles of the European Parliamentarians, which were originally published by the EU Chronicle, one of the subsidiaries of SG. These organizations are not only offering hacking/spy tools but also information warfare services. India principally operated to build the narrative against Pakistan at the International level and to influence UNHCR and European Parliament in its decision-making process.

Indian strategic communication and narrative building are not just based on creating a false narrative against Pakistan. India is also actively involved in terrorist and separatist activities, sabotaging CPEC, targeted killings of prominent important Pakistani citizens, and subverts Pakistan’s economic progress. In this regard, a particular cell for targeting CPEC has been active; according to Pakistan’s dossier of irrefutable evidence, which Pakistan has provided to UNSC.

For countering the Indian malicious acts, Pakistan needs to closely monitor the adversary, and should primarily focus on the use of soft power for countering the deceitful actions. The use of public diplomacy, moreover, could play an effective role in countering India’s game. Cyber diplomacy could also help in countering the real-time reaction to the relevant content since a timely response is the most effective response. Furthermore, Pakistani scholars should play a key role in disseminating against the malevolent and vindictive propaganda for securing Pakistan’s position from deceiving news.

Hence summarizing it, to achieve the national policy objectives, India is using proxies, terrorists, and extremist factions to create internal instability in Pakistan. Subsequently, these acts of instability are used to spread false information against Pakistan. This information is disseminated to targeted groups nationally and internationally through carefully chosen mediums, according to the interests of these groups. For instance, as exposed in the EU Disinfo Lab Report, firstly the fake news is taken up by the ANI then other fake organizations join in and take from ANI. Pakistan needs to formulate a grand strategy vis-à-vis Indian strategic communication to counter it on one hand and build a strong case for issues like Kashmir,

nuclear non-proliferation, arms race, and the Hindutva radical policies under the Modi led extremist government of BJP.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/26022021-indias-manipulation-of-international-media-divulged-in-eu-disinfo-lab-report-oped/>



## ***Pakistan's Action-Plan at UNSC Urges Outlawing Extremist Nationalist Groups***

*Sher bano*

In January 2021 Pakistan proposed an action plan at UNSC (United Nations Security Council) to combat the extremist Hindutva ideology. The purpose of this action plan is to counter the recent growth of extremist ideologies e.g. Hindutva ideology and highlight the role of Pakistan in the global campaign to fight terrorism. These nationalist groups are becoming a huge threat to global peace and security. While addressing the 15 member Council that met to review the global cooperation to combat terrorism in 20 years, Pakistan's representative to the UN [Ambassador Munir Akram](#) said that UNSC must outlaw the violent supremacist groups like all the other terrorist groups. He said that such violent extremist and racist groups would ultimately breed violence. This would endorse the narrative of globally declared terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda and Daesh/ISIS. While pointing out a neo-fascist group 'RSS' (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) which has a strong foothold in India, he maintained that this violent extremist group poses an existential threat to the nearly [200 million](#) Muslims living in India. Even the international observers have appraised the world about the potential genocide against Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir.

In order to halt the increase in violent terrorism Pakistan's envoy urged the UNSC to take immediate steps. Firstly, all the states must declare the acts of such violent nationalist groups, for instance, white supremacists, Hindutva militants, and all the other ethnically and radically motivated groups, as terrorism, as was done in the case of ISIS and Al-Qaeda, and other related groups. Secondly, take immediate domestic steps to curb the propagation of the ideologies, financing, and recruitment in such groups. Furthermore, as a concrete step, a plan of action must be presented by the UN Secretary-General. This would help defeat and confront these extremist organizations and their fascist ideologies. The [1267 Sanctions Committee](#) mandate must be expanded and nationalist terrorist groups such as RSS must be included in it. He further asserted that for years Pakistan has been the victim of sponsored terrorism that was financed by India while always remaining at the forefront in the global campaign to fight terrorism. It's impossible to defeat terrorism without eradicating its root causes such as inequality, foreign intervention and occupation, and economic and political injustice. While especially referring to the situation of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir' (IIOJK), where India has been involved in state terrorism, he said that there is a need to address some other manifestations of terrorism as well. State Terrorism is a situation in which the state military forces conduct war crimes by terrorizing the occupied people and forcing them to submit. He stressed that state terrorism needs to be addressed effectively and urgently.

The 'RSS' even fits in the [United States](#) definition of terrorism according to which terrorism is an act that includes the calculated use of threat of illegal violence or use of illegal violence to spread fear; for the purpose to intimidate societies or governments to achieve goals that are religious, ideological or political. Even according to the statement made by [Digvijaya Singh](#) (Congress leader), all the Hindu terrorists that have ever been caught had some linkage with the RSS. He added that the person who killed Mahatma Gandhi was related to RSS and bomb blasts such as Mecca Masjid, Samjhauta express, Malegaon blast, etc. were all done by the people that were influenced by [Sangh Ideology](#). Hence RSS had a long history of conducting violence against Muslims in particular and minorities in general. This appears to be a blatant and grave violation of the United Nations Charter, International Humanitarian Law, and UN Declaration of Human rights. Now the RSS-backed BJP government after the revocation of articles 370 and 35A has launched a military siege in IIOJK. This is further aimed at changing the demography of the region by killing innocent Kashmiris and allowing Hindus from other parts of India to settle in the disputed region of Kashmir. It is high time for the international community to intervene and takes steps to eradicate this state terrorism by prosecuting the Indian military and civil personnel that are involved in this heinous crime against humanity. More than that there is a need to identify and eradicate the root cause behind such barbaric actions of BJP that is its nationalist extremist ideology. The world needs to recognize RSS fascist agenda being propagated by BJP.

Pakistan has always stood with the international community to fight the threat of terrorism. Owing to its principled stance of a non-discriminatory approach to deal with terrorism, it has proposed this action plan. This would help identify the real threats of terrorism for regional and international peace and security. There is a need for the realization within the international community to expand the scope of its counter-terrorism strategy as in the present world these threats are posed by different manifestations and emerging forms of terrorism. Last but not the least, there is a need to eliminate terrorism in its all forms and manifestations without any discrimination of either being conducted by states or terrorist organizations.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/26022021-pakistans-action-plan-at-unsc-urges-outlawing-extremist-nationalist-groups-oped/>