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Compiled & Edited by:
Haris Bilal Malik

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Strategic Vision Institute (SVI)

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SVI Foresight

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

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Editor's Note

Multiple statements have been made by Pakistani civilian and military leadership that hint towards Pakistan's Strategic Shift from Geo-politics to Geo-economics. While Pakistan is offering a hand of peace to the region, it is incumbent on the regional powers and other stakeholders to reciprocate. It must be understood that this shift to geo-economics is in Pakistan's national interest and national security which are very much contingent on economic stability. One of the articles attempts to deliberate on Pakistan's Commitment towards Non-Proliferation and Thrust for Fissile Material Treaty (FMT). The author maintains that FM(C)T at its current stage would just be a non-proliferation measure and would not contribute to disarmament. If the focus of the treaty is actual disarmament, existing stockpiles in addition to banning future material must be added to the scope of the treaty. Only, if FMT is negotiated and adopted with points of concern being properly addressed it would be a significant contribution towards non-proliferation at regional and international levels. In the same vein, the Ratification of TPNW is analyzed from Pakistan's perspective. The author opines that having ignored the on-ground strategic and military realities, TPNW, just because of the numbers of ratification seems to put forth something that is nothing but just a moral victory. Especially, when the nuclear-weapon states both NPT and non-NPT are not even part of this treaty, its relevance for the international non-proliferation regime becomes even more indeterminate. However, the fact remains that Pakistan has always been in favor of the test bans and the only reason behind not signing the NPT was its discriminatory nature and the complex regional dynamics that compel Pakistan to maintain a credible and reliable nuclear deterrence posture.

The 15th meeting of the Turkey-Pakistan 'High-Level Military Dialogue Group' (HLMDG) was held in Ankara, Turkey from 22-23rd December 2020. The group is referred to as the biggest institutional set up between the two countries that has the mandate to make policies and plans of actions to enhance the defence ties between both countries. It is opined that the west and India are quite uncomfortable with the enhanced strategic ties of Turkey and Pakistan. Since both the countries are Islamic, being in an unbreakable bond, they have been cooperating on matters of mutual interest over the years. Both the west and India have found nothing in it so unfortunately, they intend to blame both countries for nuclear weapons proliferation. Similarly, India has been trying to malign Pakistan, Turkey, and China in proliferation and safety-related issues of nuclear technology. The articles published in India's online magazine about China, Turkey, and Pakistan's unholy nuclear nexus are proof of such malicious acts. It is opined that nuclear proliferation is a bluff and propaganda being deliberately crafted by India, in its mere endeavor to conceal its apprehensions of Pakistan's relations with China and Turkey. The alliance between Turkey and Pakistan is inclined towards a new dimension, both are eager to cooperate and both support the strategic advancement of

China. India since Nehru's time has been trying to put itself on the path of a major player in the region on one hand and attain a global position on the other. India's major role in Afghanistan has always been suspicious for Islamabad for several reasons. The author deliberates upon how India by using its soft power in Afghanistan against Pakistan on one hand and making Pak-Afghan relations sour on the other. Indian financial aid to post-Taliban Afghanistan is roughly \$3 billion in the form of developmental projects, scholarships, infrastructure projects, food packages, roads, medical, and institutional building. Keeping in view the above-mentioned projects, it cannot be said the Indian aid is based on humanitarian grounds at all. India's major concern is to counter Pakistan in Afghanistan and destabilize Pakistan by in-filtering rebels to Balochistan. The Indian strategies in Afghanistan are in disarray following the US-Taliban Doha deal. India considers if the Taliban become part of the Afghan government, it would not enjoy the leverage they have had over the Afghan government following the US invasion. Another article focuses on Hybrid warfare and hybrid threats that are emerging modalities in the changing nature of warfare. Pakistan has also been the victim of hybrid warfare. Since its inception, India has waged wars or indulged in conflict with Pakistan, in one way or the other. Even now, India is sparing no effort to target Pakistan at the domestic level which encompasses all the political, social, economic, and religious factors. In this regard, it has left no stone unturned in defaming and maligning Pakistan in the international arena through its fake propaganda. Presently, Afghanistan's history is once again witnessing an uncertain and bleak situation due to the changing dynamics of the war-torn country. The US-drafted new proposal suggests an interim government that has to include the Taliban in the Afghan parliament by expanding it or even suspending it till the election or any other suitable solution. The Biden administration took enough time to pressure Kabul to be serious and accelerate the face of the intra-Afghan talks which delayed the start of the intra-Afghan talks for six months. The author questions how much making a new workable set-up is possible is still uncertain where there are sharp differences among the views of the parties concerned; the US, the Ghani administration, and the Taliban.

One of the articles analyzes that very recently Turkey brought the Kashmir issue to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. The recent Turkish position on Kashmir in the UN Human Rights Council is a continuation of its principled stance on Kashmir that considerably endorses Pakistan's diplomatic stance. It is opined that Turkish leadership while acknowledging Pakistan's diplomatic efforts is openly criticizing the Indian brutalities in Kashmir on humanitarian, political, and diplomatic grounds. This in turn would further strengthen the bilateral relationship of both countries and further vindicate Pakistan's principled stance on Kashmir.

After nearly a decade of inactivity, quite recently 'Quadrilateral Security Dialogue' (Quad) has somehow created considerable hype in the international arena. Quad has been

transformed from an informal consultative forum to a structural strategic mechanism with a particular focus on Indo-Pacific security. Author views that the revamping of Quad would have serious regional strategic implications if a novel institutional structure is developed. There already exist multiple militarized conflicts scattered across the region but institutionalizing a massive military and economic bloc against China would compel Beijing to respond with force. Furthermore, a multilateral alliance operating in this region undermining Chinese interests would likely have implications for Pakistan as well. If Quad develops an institutional framework, Islamabad, being a Chinese ally would likely become a target.

In this volume the *SVI Foresight* a very significant analysis on Indian offensive military modernization is provided. Very recently, the Indian government has decided to buy 30 predator drones from the US amid growing tensions with China and Pakistan. These predator drones have the endurance to fly for about 48 hours and can carry a payload of about 1700 kilograms. Against the backdrop of the recent border crisis with China and Pakistan which proved to be an embarrassment for India at the military level, all three tri-services of India agreed to procure armed drones. The author holds that this Indian quest is seemingly in-line with its much-hyped military doctrine of “Cold Start” and ideas of “surgical strikes” and a deliberate attempt towards acquiring more options for so-called “preemption”. Similarly in October 2020, India secretly commissioned its first nuclear missile tracking vessel ‘VC-11184’. However, this information was made public very recently in March 2021. With this, India has become the fifth country in the world along with China, Russia, France, and the US to have acquired such capability. Even though the acquisition of such a vessel would enhance India’s overall ballistic missile defence shield, its employment during a crisis would deteriorate the delicate strategic balance in the region. The enhancement in the Indian missile defence shield specifically at sea would likely undermine the effectiveness of Pakistan’s delivery systems especially the ballistic missiles.

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

From Geo-politics to Geo-economics: Pakistan's Strategic Shift?

Khawaja Dawood Tariq

Something seems changed in Islamabad. Multiple statements have been made by Pakistani civilian and military leadership that manifests this change. Quite recently, Pakistan's Foreign Minister has asserted that "[Pakistan has shifted its priorities from geo-politics to geo-economics.](#)" This statement should be taken in the context of recent developments in the region. Likewise, Pakistan and India have released a joint statement reaffirming [their commitment to](#) observing the bilateral ceasefire agreement of 2003. This reaffirmation becomes more significant in the context of the completion of two years of the Pulwama-Balakot crisis of 2019. Furthermore, regarding the Afghan issue and prospects of its peaceful settlement, Pakistan's [Military official spokesperson](#) has stated that it is not the Afghanistan of the '90s. These statements, if analyzed, hint towards certain policy and priority shifts. Why the need for the shift in priorities? What could be the reasons that have compelled the Pakistani leadership to deliberate such changes in policy statements? And would the policy shift translate into a change in substance?

In February 2021, the Chief of Army Staff said "[it is time to extend a hand of peace in all directions.](#)" The later joint statement issued by the militaries of both countries to ensure the observation of the 2003 ceasefire agreement can be considered a practical manifestation of the Chief's statement at least from Pakistan's perspective. At the same time, this might be perceived by many as an exit from Pakistan's [stated policy](#) of not engaging with India until it restored the status quo in Kashmir. Modi government has been adamant that any dialogue with Pakistan would be based on addressing the issue of terrorism. Likewise, a shift in Indian policy can be observed as well at least for the time being. Now that New Delhi is engaging Pakistan on other issues rather than its traditional rant of blaming Pakistan for sponsoring terrorism. The flexibility shown by both states does create hope that the regional environment might become a little bit stable.

The hand of peace was not only extended to India alone. There is a visible shift in Pakistan's Afghan policy too. Pakistan has been calling on all stakeholders to engage and develop a framework for the peaceful future of Afghanistan. Pakistan used pretty much all of its good offices to bring the Taliban to the table and ensured a propitious environment for the Doha agreement. Even then the US and Afghan leadership have been demanding that Pakistan exert more pressure on the Taliban to ensure the success of the intra-Afghan dialogue. However, that is not primarily Pakistan's responsibility; all of its efforts are meant for ensuring a long-lasting peace in the region. In this regard, a significant deliberation came from Pakistan's military official spokesperson that "It's [impossible for the Taliban to recapture Kabul and that](#)

[Pakistan would support them](#). It isn't going to happen." This is nothing short of a policy statement and it more or less reflects a strategic shift in Pakistan's security policy.

It does make one wonder what is behind the shift in Pakistan's priorities. What made an inherent security state reconsider its policies? Certain aspects could perhaps explain the necessity for the change in Pakistan's priorities. The deteriorating economic condition of the country is one of the foremost factors. Since a strong economy is a prerequisite for attaining wide-ranging national interests and national security. In this regard, Pakistan's willingness to engage in dialogue with India shows its commitment towards regional peace and stability. This would likely allow Pakistan to focus on economic prosperity which already is very much affected by the outbreak of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Similarly, Pakistan has been at war with internal and external adversaries for the last two decades. The economic loss of this cannot be compounded. It has lost decades of social and industrial development. It has to borrow more money just to repay the earlier loans, add to that the serious threats to its security; which compels Pakistan to spend a significant budget for its national security and defence. During the last few years, while being on the FATF grey list has further exuberated this situation. Pakistan cannot sustain its economy and ultimately ensure its national security without addressing its disconnectedness with the international political economy.

DG ISPR's presser was a signal to the Taliban and must be seen in the wider regional context. One of the core reasons Pakistan needs a friendly regime in Kabul is to deter and counter New Delhi's designs against Islamabad. Pakistan cannot allow the presence of hostile adversaries on both its eastern and western borders anymore. It just cannot afford to. Pakistan has long maintained Indian involvement in the terror-related insurgency. It also maintains that India is actively sabotaging peace and development in Baluchistan through its consulates and massive network of operatives that are based in Afghanistan. For Pakistan to change its line with the Taliban and to create political space for other groups in Afghanistan there must be a verifiable mechanism to ensure and guarantee that the Afghan soil would not be used as a base camp to sabotage peace and development in Pakistan.

On Pakistan's end, this makes total sense. Pakistan is already very close to achieving FATF-mandated targets. These demands included dismantling money laundering and terror financing infrastructure among others from the country. While, Pakistan has successfully achieved major targets, it is incumbent that same rules should be applied to other countries in region especially India. Achieving these targets would further provide Pakistan with much-needed access to the international economic system.

Similarly, Pakistan and India are neighbors, and whether they like it or not one can't change their neighbors. There seems to be a realization in New Delhi's serious strategic circles

that India is not capable enough to fight a two-front war. Its conflict with Pakistan stands in the way of its global aspirations. Regardless of this, any substantial progress in the Indo-Pak stalemate would be a legacy-defining moment for Prime Minister Modi. He appears to have already eclipsed every prime minister in Indian history probably except Jawaharlal Nehru in defining his domestic legacy. An Indo-Pak peace agreement would be the feather in his cap.

While Pakistan is offering a hand of peace to the region, it is incumbent on the regional powers and other stakeholders to reciprocate. It must be understood that this shift to geo-economics is in Pakistan's national interest and national security which are very much contingent on economic stability.

<http://southasiajournal.net/from-geo-politics-to-geo-economics-pakistans-strategic-shift/>

Pakistan's Commitment towards Non-Proliferation and Thrust for Fissile Material Treaty (FMT)

Ahyousha Khan

The proliferation of fissile materials that can be used for developing nuclear weapons has remained a key concern of the international non-proliferation regime. Fissile material is referred to as a material that can “sustain an explosive fission reaction”; that is necessary for any nuclear explosion. Thus, to control the spread of nuclear weapons, it was necessary to have control not only on the technology but also on the material which is required in the making of nuclear warheads. Efforts to control nuclear technology and nuclear materials started right after the world witnessed their first use by the US. In 1953, US [President Eisenhower](#) called for their elimination in his famous “Atoms for Peace” speech before the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). However, that ban on nuclear fissile material could not become reality during the Cold War and renewed efforts started on it after the Cold War. In 1993 UNGA passed [Resolution 48/75L](#), which called upon member states to have a “non-discriminatory multilateral and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and nuclear devices”.

Hence, the ‘Fissile Material Treaty’ FM(C)T was proposed to ban the production of highly enriched uranium (HEU) and plutonium (Pu). The United Nations [Conference on Disarmament \(CD\)](#), comprising 65 members was established as the only multilateral negotiation medium/forum on disarmament. It began its discussions in 1994 to provide a framework for the negotiations. For that purpose Ambassador Gerald Shannon was appointed by the CD as special coordinator to coordinate/determine the opinions/views of member states on the future scope of any multilateral treaty/agreement to prohibit the production of fissile material to be used in nuclear weapons. In this regard, one important point is that [Non-nuclear weapon states \(NNWS\)](#) of the [Non-proliferation Treaty \(NPT\)](#) are prohibited from pursuing HEU and Pu and 5 de-jure nuclear weapon states (NWS) have already announced unilateral moratoriums on fissile material productions. However, a significant quantity of fissile materials that could be utilized in making thousands of nuclear weapons was already possessed by these states.

Fissile material production is important for those states that are in the process of building nuclear technology because their security is dependent on their nuclear deterrence vis-à-vis their adversary. Based on that, Ambassador Shannon was supposed to provide a framework that would cover all fissile materials in the treaty. These include; not only the cutoff of future production but also existing stockpiles. However, unfortunately, [Shannon Mandate](#) produced on 25 March 1995, as CD document 1299 (CD/1299) did not explicitly discuss or describe the scope of negotiations regarding the fissile material and called for the

establishment of the [AD-HOC Committee](#) to discuss fissile material treaty within the CD. Afterward, CD had hardly a few breakthroughs in the negotiation of the fissile material treaty.

In the same vein, the two core concerns regarding banning fissile material remain; the inclusion of existing stockpiles and the verification mechanism adopted for ensuring fissile material production is stopped in countries. In absence of including existing stockpiles in the treaty, the asymmetries between states would freeze at current levels. This in turn would likely put many states in a position of permanent advantage and many in a position of permanent disadvantage vis-à-vis their security concerns. Specifically in the South Asian context, such a scenario would severely damage the strategic stability of the region. It would put Pakistan in a disadvantageous position vis-à-vis India since the latter has been rapidly augmenting its conventional and unconventional military capabilities over the years. While being concerned by this, Pakistan adopted the position on FMT in CD that it is necessary to address the issue of existing stockpiles. Furthermore, Indian fissile material and its existing stockpiles are also significant given India's nuclear deals with countries like the US. Similarly, the NSG waiver and India-specific IAEA safeguards further add to the relevance of this concern. This would have direct consequences on nuclear balance in South Asia since ["every pound"](#) of uranium India gets to import would let it use that pound of uranium for increasing the number of its nuclear warheads. Moreover, India is also not transparent about its fissile material, a critical issue in this regard is the Indian civilian resources of Plutonium (Pu) that are outside the safeguards of IAEA but are [designated](#) as "strategic reserve". It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistani officials have time and again asserted that Pakistan does not want nuclear parity with India. But growing and existing Indian unsafeguarded and [weapon usable stockpiles](#) are a matter of great concern for Pakistan. This would likely have a direct impact on the minimum sufficient numbers of nuclear assets that Pakistan might need for its security.

Hence, FM(C)T at its current stage would just be a non-proliferation measure and would not contribute to disarmament. If the focus of the treaty is actual disarmament, existing stockpiles in addition to banning future material must be added to the scope of the treaty. Any such treaty would eliminate the existing gaps between the capabilities of states and the international non-proliferation regime might become non-discriminatory in nature. Many states raise the question of the verification process if existing stockpiles are to be made part of the fissile material ban treaty; which also raises the question of how serious these states are towards disarmament. Only, if FMT is negotiated and adopted with points of concern being properly addressed it would be a significant contribution towards non-proliferation at regional and international levels. Likewise, this would further contribute towards enhancing the strategic stability of the various regions including South Asia.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/19032021-pakistans-commitment-towards-non-proliferation-and-thrust-for-fissile-material-treaty-fmt-oped/>

Ratification of TPNW: A Pakistani Perspective

Sher bano

In [October 2016](#), more than 120 countries at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) decided to ban nuclear weapons. Based on that, in [July 2017](#) 'TPNW' (Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons) was agreed upon and opened for signature in September the same year. However, it was till the end of the [year 2020](#) when the treaty got 50 ratifications which was a prerequisite for it to be entered into force. Since January 2021, after a 90 days completion of 50 ratifications, the treaty is now entered into force. According to the terms and conditions of the treaty the countries that had ratified the treaty are not allowed in any circumstances to test, manufacture, develop, acquire or produce any kind of nuclear weapons. Neither India and Pakistan nor the other nuclear-weapon states have signed the treaty. The occasion that was being considered a major landmark by the United Nations lacked the participation and consent of major nuclear powers of the world. Pakistan believes that it is not bound by the obligations of the TPNW as it is vital to take into account the security concerns of all the states before taking any measure on nuclear disarmament.

Soon after the treaty entered into force on 22 January 2021, Pakistan's [foreign office](#) stated that the treaty was not within the disarmament negotiating forums established by the United Nations. Other than that, it has failed to take into account the interest of the prime stakeholders as it lacked participation from any major nuclear-weapon state including Pakistan. The foreign office also pointed out that, in 1978 during the first session of UNGA that was dedicated to nuclear disarmament, a consensus was drawn regarding the implementation of disarmament measures. According to that consensus, it was agreed that during any disarmament process, the right of security to all the states would be kept in mind. In this regard, the ultimate objective should be to limit the military forces and arms acquired by the states in a way that does not undermine its security. Pakistan is of the view that the only way to achieve this prime objective is through non-discriminatory international cooperation and by undertakings that are agreed upon universally. For the states to acquire undiminished and equal security, it is necessary to have a process that is based on consensus by all relevant stakeholders.

The treaty is not in any manner the part of international law and neither does it contribute to the formation of any new customary 'IL' (International Law). Moreover, the only pertinent body to address matters related to nuclear disarmament is the 'CD' (Conference on Disarmament). Pakistan is wholeheartedly committed to the motive of having a nuclear-weapons-free world through a non-discriminatory, comprehensive, universal, and verifiable convention on nuclear weapons. The objective of any nuclear disarmament measure must be to

promote stability, peace, and security at both the global and regional levels by including the legitimate interests of all the states.

One of the reasons based on which the nuclear-weapon states are quite reluctant to adopt TPNW apparently is that for most of these states nuclear weapons ensure deterrence that is necessary to prevent a war or a conflict. The sole reason behind the acquisition of nuclear weapons by these states was to deter the enemy from attacking or to avoid any armed conflict that would result in massive destruction. Furthermore, the concept of 'Mutually Assured Destruction' (MAD) is also significant in this regard. It is argued that nuclear disarmament cannot be separated from nuclear deterrence. Especially in the South Asian region, where India and Pakistan have a history of troubled relations, nuclear deterrence is believed to be a key component to maintain a strategic balance. Even for [NATO](#), the credible deterrence is based on the mix of conventional, nuclear, and missile defence capabilities. TPNW does not cater to these security concerns of 'NWS' (Nuclear Weapon States) for which nuclear deterrence is an important aspect of their security policy. All these states argue that nuclear weapons would continue to enhance their security even in the foreseeable future hence the treaty seems a little unrealistic. Moreover, any reduction in nuclear arsenals cannot be acquired by forcibly banning it; but can be attained through a step-by-step and a legitimate process over the course of time.

Hence having ignored the on-ground strategic and military realities, TPNW, just because of the numbers of ratification seems to put forth something that is nothing but just a moral victory. Especially, when the nuclear-weapon states both NPT and non-NPT are not even part of this treaty, its relevance for the international non-proliferation regime becomes even more indeterminate. However, the fact remains that Pakistan has always been in favor of the test bans and the only reason behind not signing the NPT was its discriminatory nature and the complex regional dynamics that compel Pakistan to maintain a credible and reliable nuclear deterrence posture. It has also proposed to sign the 'Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty' (CTBT) if India is also willing to do the same. Hence, there is a need for a non-discriminatory and unbiased international non-proliferation mechanism that would incorporate the security concerns of all states. Given the complex and ever-changing dynamics of the South Asian strategic and security environment, there are very less chances that both India and Pakistan would sign any such treaty especially at the cost of undermining the deterrence equilibrium.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/19032021-ratification-of-tpnw-a-pakistani-perspective-oped/>

India Suspicious of Pakistan-China-Turkey Axis

Amber Afreen Abid

The right to use safe nuclear technology is of immense significance for the states which possess nuclear technology. It requires safe practice of nuclear technology and nuclear-related technologies and materials with complete public confidence. The nuclear safety and security hold great significance for Pakistan, as it is in the national interest of the country. Pakistan has always proved itself to be a responsible nuclear weapon state by adhering to the international practices of nuclear safety and security. In this regard, it has taken strong measures to ensure the safety of its nuclear arsenal by implementing international guidelines and security protocols for nuclear safety and to ensure non-proliferation. This is also imperative for the growth and sustainability of nuclear power. Pakistan has a safe civilian nuclear power program, which it is running for around fifty years.

Our neighboring country, while ignoring its domestic destabilization, pretends to be concerned about the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons. India, whose media credibility has a facade in [EU DisinfoLab Report](#), is writing malicious content in order to defame Pakistan. The article published in India's online magazine about China, Turkey, and Pakistan's unholy nuclear nexus is proof of such malicious acts. In the article, the author tries to malign Pakistan, Turkey and China in proliferation and safety-related issues of nuclear technology. India is trying to divert the attention of the international audience from its terrorist activities in Kashmir. Furthermore, it is trying to deprecate Pakistan through its false reporting and media propaganda, and is waging a hybrid war against Pakistan for years.

India's panic of Pakistan's relation with Turkey and China is also evident in the article. The unconditional support of Turkey, in the case of the Kashmir conflict, also generated a wave of anxiety in the neighborhood. Turkey supported Pakistan's stance which infuriated India. On the other hand, China, whose relations with Pakistan are time-tested and entrenched, as proved through the years, is a demonstration of relations between two states in the contemporary world. They have cooperated on a number of projects that are mutually beneficial for their all-weather strategic partnership. The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) under which the mega project of CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) which encompasses the economic, political, strategic, and social dividends is a huge cause of concern to many states, especially India. Taking that into consideration, India wants to malign the two countries for the devious allegations, deteriorating their image in the international community.

Moreover, the nuclear plant being established by China for the peaceful use of nuclear energy, also sparks concern in Pakistan's eastern neighbor. Pakistan has the inalienable right to

use civil nuclear energy for its growing economy. Pakistan has well maintained the safety and security of its civil nuclear power plant for decades, which are all placed under IAEA, so any allegations of insecurity or proliferation, are all negated. In order to reduce the burden on the current resources and as an alternative to clean and sustainable energy, Pakistan needs to utilize civil nuclear energy to meet the requirements of the burgeoning economy.

Pakistan has well maintained the safety and security of its nuclear program. The institutional Command and Control System is there, which guarantees that the nuclear assets and nuclear facilities are under strict regulatory control of the state, and to ensure non-proliferation. The fact remains that nuclear security and nuclear non-proliferation hold immense significance to Pakistan. Even in the years of severe internal security issues, the nuclear facilities of Pakistan remain invulnerable to any kind of threat, related to proliferation or security. This shows Pakistan's stronghold and commitment to the security of nuclear weapons and indicates the extraordinary nuclear safety policies and guidelines implemented by Pakistan, which caters for both outside and inside threats.

Pakistan submits the report to the UN Security Council 1540 on a regular basis, on control of all sorts of transfer of nuclear technologies and nuclear-related materials, and the measures being taken for nuclear and radiological security. Moreover, Pakistan is a party to significant conventions on nuclear security, the nuclear policy of Pakistan is regularly being updated in adherence to the international practices of nuclear safety and security and under IAEA's beam. Furthermore, IAEA appreciated the nuclear program of Pakistan, to be systematic and operationally, in a [visit](#) of DG IAEA in 2014. Pakistan has also linked to the nuclear security contact group by adhering to INFCIRC/899, which demonstrates the country's pledge to nuclear security. Pakistan has long maintained that the safety of the nuclear arsenals is the state's responsibility, and the steps are taken at the national level to strengthen the security complements the nuclear security at the international level.

Hence, nuclear proliferation is a bluff and propaganda being deliberately crafted by India, in its mere endeavor to conceal its apprehensions of Pakistan's relations with China and Turkey. The alliance between Turkey and Pakistan is inclined towards a new dimension, both are eager to cooperate with each other and both support the strategic advancement of China. The rail network project to create a direct rail link between China and Turkey via Pakistan and Iran (ITI- Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad) is also in progression. The three countries are fervently inclining towards each other and hence creating a new venture. The Turkey-China-Pakistan Axis appears to be the powerful alliance on the global chessboard, as it already has started spreading fears of anxiety amongst the Indian strategic thinkers.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/20032021-india-suspicious-of-pakistan-china-turkey-axis-oped/>

Turkey-Pakistan Increasing Defense Ties: Western and Indian Rant About Nuclear Proliferation

Haris Bilal Malik

The 15th meeting of the Turkey-Pakistan 'High-Level Military Dialogue Group' (HLMDG) was held in Ankara, Turkey from [22-23rd December 2020](#). The group is referred to as the biggest institutional setup between the two countries that has the mandate to make policies and plans of actions to enhance the defence ties between both countries. The key areas for military cooperation that have been discussed during the meeting hold immense significance in view of the enhanced cooperation between the two countries. These include mutual cooperation in; military training, education, counter-terrorism, and prospects of joint production and procurement in the defence industry. Both the countries have openly supported each other on matters related to the prevalent regional security environment in the Middle East, South Asia, and Afghanistan. On the other hand, there have been widespread insinuations and hype in the Western countries and India that both Turkey and Pakistan are cooperating with each other on nuclear weapons. Specifically, Pakistan has been accused of sharing nuclear and missile technologies with Turkey.

Both the West and India are involved in disseminating that the popular Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan desperately wants to have nuclear weapons capability. Based on such dynamics, analysts around the world would remain highly curious about the matter. Particularly, considering how the West and India have been propagating it in the larger part of the screenplay of sharing nuclear weapons capability. The recent meeting has nevertheless created considerable hype in both the Western and the Indian media. India has been spreading propaganda against the backdrop of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and missile technologies. In this regard, India has alleged Pakistan of agreeing to provide support and the recent meeting was in-line to discuss the technical aspects of the transfer of nuclear technology. This was all based on insinuations rather than any undeniable evidence. Though Pakistan's delegation visited various Turkish defence companies and has met with the officials to discuss prospects of defence cooperation, this does not mean that the visit was intended to discuss the transfer of nuclear cooperation.

If we go back to history, in the '70s and '80s when Pakistan was left with no choice but to develop a nuclear capability given the existential security threats from India. This quest was referred to as the 'Islamic Bomb' by both the West and India. The rationale behind this whole rhetoric was that nuclear capability which is to be acquired by Pakistan (an Islamic country) would ultimately be the weapon of the whole Islamic world as a shared asset. The propaganda

went to an extent that the nuclear capability of Pakistan was termed as a 'nuclear sword' which would be used to wage 'jihad' against the west and India. This whole conspiracy theory was further augmented in the pretexts of nuclear proliferation, globalization, and the resurgence of Islam. Such conspiracies were more inclined towards creating a fearful idea that would be applied to the nuclear policies of any Muslim state. In this regard, Pakistan's nuclear capability that is purely defensive in principle was generalized as a much-hyped phenomenon that would encompass the whole Muslim world in between the South Asian region, Middle East, and North Africa. Ever since that, the term has been ironically used to create fear in the world by linking Islamic states, the militant groups, and all the proliferation networks in the world in just one frame.

In the same vein, since many terms have already been linked with the Islamic world, this specific Indo-West originated term of Islamic bomb now in the form of Turkey-Pakistan nuclear cooperation is more about the 'Islam phobia' that has spread across the globe rather than deliberating on how and why the nuclear technology has spread. Representing the same aggressive and jingoistic approach, both India and the West are involved in anti-Islam posturing. In fact, their recent attempt to build an international narrative against Pakistan and Turkey, there appears to be nothing new at all.

Inspired by such notions and in a typical fashion, the recent meeting of high military officials of Turkey and Pakistan Turkey is insinuated as 'nuclear weapon cooperation'. No evidence would support this baseless allegation. How come a formal meeting between the delegates of both countries provides evidence of nuclear collaboration between them? At the same time, it has been reported that the meeting also involved discussion on cooperation in the field of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). As part of getting the benefit of their enhanced strategic ties, both countries have the right to cooperate in emergent defence technologies like the UAVs. This has nothing to do with the transfer of nuclear technology between the two countries. Linking all with this nuclear weapons proliferation would not justify the western and Indian propaganda. The Western and Indian thinkers just wasted a little time in blaming Pakistan for sharing nuclear weapons capability with Turkey. Furthermore, it appears to be in-line with the grave western and Indian agenda to sabotage the ever-increasing and enhanced strategic relations of both countries.

This further supports the discriminatory approach of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime as well which has given India a free hand for nuclear trade. The fact remains that the NSG was formed in response to the Indian so-called peaceful nuclear explosion of 1974 that paved the way for the nuclearization of the South Asian region later on. Since then, Pakistan has been accused of nuclear proliferation and the recent allegations of helping Turkey to develop its nuclear weapons are nothing new for Pakistan. Nonetheless, India

remains the biggest proliferator of nuclear weapons in the region, while Pakistan's nuclear capability is purely in response to the Indian threats.

Hence, it is quite apparent that the west and India are quite uncomfortable with the enhanced strategic ties of Turkey and Pakistan. Since both the countries are Islamic, being in an unbreakable bond, they have been cooperating with each other on matters of mutual interest over the years. Both the west and India have found nothing in it so unfortunately, they intend to blame both the countries for nuclear weapons proliferation. This is further evident from the deliberations in western and India as; if Turkey does not get nuclear weapons from Pakistan, at the least, it could learn from Pakistan how to acquire nuclear weapons. By such deliberations, it appears quite comprehensible that both the west and India are desperate to accuse Turkey and Pakistan of nuclear proliferation at any cost. In this regard, both countries need to remain vigilant of the widespread western and Indian propaganda.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/20032021-turkey-pakistan-increasing-defense-ties-west-and-indian-rant-about-nuclear-proliferation-oped/>

Analyzing the Indian Strategy in Afghanistan

Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai

India since Nehru's time has been trying to put itself on the path of a major player in the region on one hand and attain a global position on the other. Besides China, Pakistan is a state which challenges India in many ways that irk the former to a large extent. As a rising power, India wants to enhance its role and ensure its presence in a fragile state Afghanistan in the post-9/11 era where Pakistan had a greater role earlier. For the said purpose, the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and the subsequent policies Washington adopted provided a favorable ground for Delhi to adopt a proactive policy vis-à-vis Afghanistan.

India's major role in Afghanistan has always been suspicious for Islamabad for several reasons. Since Pakistan's inception, India was using tactics to destabilize Pakistan by supporting the elements who wanted to have a greater Afghanistan or Pashtunistan. Likewise, India is now supporting the unrest in Balochistan by using Pakistan's North-Western borders. This article deliberates upon how India by using its soft power in Afghanistan against Pakistan on one hand and making Pak-Afghan relations sour on the other.

Following the overthrow of the Taliban regime and formulation of the new political setup in Afghanistan, India's engagement with Afghanistan became multidimensional as the new administration in Kabul had cordial relations with India. Soon after the installation of the interim authority in late 2001, the Indian Liaison Office was converted to a full-fledged embassy in Kabul. Since then, India has continued to pursue a policy of high-level engagement through humanitarian, financial, and project assistance to have clout in Kabul to counterbalance Islamabad's influence in Afghanistan. Likewise, back in the 1990s, India was supporting the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance as Pakistan was supporting the Taliban, a natural choice for India. Most of the core members of the Northern Alliance were holding key positions in the new setup.

Indian [financial aid](#) to post-Taliban Afghanistan is roughly \$3 billion in the form of developmental projects, scholarships, infrastructure projects, food packages, roads, medical, and institutional building. Thus, India has become one of the top six donors to post-Taliban Afghanistan. India has done a number of projects in Afghanistan: 1) Afghan parliament in the capital having a library, 2) building educational institutions and provided them with aid 3) construction of energy projects like dams, 4) construction of dams and water supply channels, 5) electricity supply lines, 6) construction of health care facilities, 7) building an agriculture university, 8) energy power station in Kabul city, 9) Sports facilities, 10) cold storage in various cities, 11) telephone lines in various parts of the country, 12) television network system, 13)

construction of wells and channels in many areas, 14) and rehabilitation of several water reservoirs.

Keeping in view the above-mentioned projects, it cannot be said the Indian aid is based on humanitarian grounds at all. India's major concern is to counter Pakistan in Afghanistan and destabilize Pakistan by in-filtering rebels to Balochistan. A former strategic adviser to the U.S. commander in Afghanistan Mr. [Zachary Constantino](#) maintains that India and Pakistan pursue mutually exclusive objectives in Afghanistan and leverage sharply different tools to achieve their respective goals. Furthermore, the US officials also believe that Pakistan has utilized militant groups, including the Afghan Taliban, as strategic proxies, while India places considerable weight on its soft power influence among Afghans. However, such narratives seem to hold no more weightage especially in the contemporary regional environment, where India has been evidently involved in waging proxies against Pakistan by utilizing its operatives in Afghanistan.

The Indian influence has caused a huge hatred in the minds of the Afghans for Pakistan both on a governmental and non-governmental level. Even the Afghans cannot tolerate any Pakistani visiting any of Afghanistan's cities while they, on the other hand, do businesses in Pakistan, receive education on Pakistani scholarships in the country, and enjoy the best health care facilities in Peshawar and Islamabad.

Hence, the biggest threat India feels in Afghanistan is the Taliban over whom Pakistan, as many believe still has leverage. The Indian strategies in Afghanistan are in disarray following the US-Taliban Doha deal. India considers if the Taliban become part of the Afghan government, it would definitely not enjoy the leverage they have had over the Afghan government following the US invasion. Any difference or trust-deficit between Pakistan and the Taliban might benefit India in the future which should be avoided. Nevertheless, the inclusion of the Taliban in the Kabul administration would likely bring peace to the war-torn country and ultimately make Afghanistan's policy balanced towards the neighboring countries.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/737416/analyzing-the-indian-strategy-in-afghanistan/>

The US Ambivalent Afghan Policy

Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai

Presently, Afghanistan's history is once again witnessing an uncertain and bleak situation due to the changing dynamics of the war-torn country. If one reminds the late 1980s when a superpower, the Soviet Union was preparing to withdraw from Afghanistan after a decade, future plans were underway. Now another superpower US is going to withdraw from Afghanistan, after a continued war of two decades. How much making a new workable set-up is possible is still uncertain where there are sharp differences among the views of the parties concerned; the US, the Ghani administration, and the Taliban.

Earlier this month, Zalmay Khalilzad, the US special envoy for Afghanistan presented a [draft](#) outlined by Washington proposing an interim government till the settlement of the existing conflict. Khalilzad shared the proposal with President Ghani, other political leaders of Afghanistan, the Taliban, and the civil society leadership. The proposal has come out at a time when the US troops deadline May 1, agreed in the Doha deal last year is looming. In any major development vis-à-vis Afghanistan's future political set-up, the Doha deal is quite decisive. The [Doha deal](#) had provided a solid roadmap although difficult but quite possible only if the administration in Kabul took it seriously and started the intra-Afghan talks in time. However, President Ghani delayed the release of the Taliban prisoners which eventually delayed the peace process to reach any settlement.

The US-drafted proposal suggests an interim government that has to include the Taliban in the Afghan parliament by expanding it or even suspending it till the election or any other suitable solution. The new proposed set up which would have the Taliban representation as well is supposed to curb any terrorist activity on Afghan soil. The proposal further suggests the Taliban would have to cut military ties with other countries and abandon its sanctuaries in the neighboring countries. Even though Pakistan has played a positive role while providing all of its good offices for the negotiations in recent years; some of the insinuations in this proposal are perhaps signaled towards Pakistan. It is believed by many in the US that Islamabad has long been supporting the Taliban even when Pakistan was a frontline state in the war on terror.

The plan is all set in Washington's favor. If implemented, it would be easy for the US to withdraw by the May 1 deadline which is quite close — an objective Washington has in hand vis-à-vis Afghanistan. Besides, the plan provides for a broad-based 'executive administration' where members from various ethnic groups in addition to women would be included. While to maintain peace, a ceasefire would be observed and monitored by a board appointed by the interim President, and both the parties while the three-member international groups would be on board.

The Biden administration's latest plan is quite significant and intends to guide any future development in Afghanistan or at the very least it would have a role in it. However, the real question is how the concerned parties — the Taliban and the Afghan government look at this proposal which is almost impossible to implement without their consent. The Taliban, as well as President Ghani, both have opposed the US' proposal. The Taliban spokesperson, Muhammad Naeem, told the reporters that when we look at the past in our country, we have seen many representative governments made during various times, however, no one has succeeded or could solve the problem. Thus, we want to have an Islamic system that would solve the issues of the country. This implies that the Taliban want to impose their own interpreted Islamic government where they could have a dominant position. The Taliban does not seem to get back from their core demands.

On the contrary, the Ghani administration also [dismissed](#) the idea by saying, "We would not accept an interim set-up through a conference or a political deal." Ghani since the US-Taliban Doha agreement is of the view: I am an elected leader by the people and I would complete my term. When Ghani last year on March 1 refused to release Taliban prisoners, the Taliban made it clear he is struggling for his own vested interests rather than that of the Afghans. Taliban view: If he was honest to the people, he would go for a solution but he just needs to rule the country no matter how much violence increases by the delay of the intra-Afghan talks and the subsequent agreement.

Washington haste is clearly evident from the announcement — they expect the UN to engage and arrange peace talks having a dozen of countries on board, including Iran, China, Pakistan, India, and Russia. It's not clear whether the regional countries having stakes in Afghanistan can find a common ground in Afghanistan and set aside using Afghan soil for their own interests or not. The Biden administration believes they have an opportunity to end their longest war and withdraw from Afghanistan in any possible way that could be at least face-saving for them. The US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken's letter to president Ghani was in a quite blunt language dictating Ghani: come in line with the US plan.

The Trump administration did not put considerable pressure on President Ghani to release the Taliban prisoners which was a condition for the start of the intra-Afghan talks. And then the Biden administration took enough time to pressure Kabul to be serious and accelerate the face of the intra-Afghan talks which delayed the start of the intra-Afghan talks for six months. If there was enough pressure on Kabul from Washington to abide by the Doha deal, the situation would be different and the Biden administration would have time to settle the Afghan quagmire in the best possible way, not in haste that appears a plan for now.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/739023/the-us-ambivalent-afghan-policy/>

Hybrid Warfare: A New Face of Conflict in South Asia

Amber Afreen Abid

Hybrid warfare and hybrid threats are emerging modalities in the changing nature of warfare. In the nuclear era, more attention has been given to the sub-conventional conflicts, because of the lethality of nuclear weapons; the deterrence being created by the nuclear-weapon states prevents other nuclear-weapon states from engaging in total war. Furthermore, international legal bindings prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons have eliminated the probability of an all-out war. Thus, the thrust of war has been envisioned by revisionist actors in the form of a new kind of warfare, predominantly through cyber-attacks and subversion, fake news campaigns, sponsoring of proxy forces, and through economic blackmail. Hybrid warfare is a challenge, which brings into play an array of tactics and strategies thereby inflicting harm to the adversary, whilst exploiting the revolution in technological affairs. It targets the vulnerabilities of any society, with the aim to divide and dissuade the population, undermines the key institutions, and even deteriorates the bond between the states and international organizations. In a nutshell, hybrid warfare is a full-spectrum of war, which encompasses both physical and psychological aspects of the adversary.

Pakistan has also been the victim of hybrid warfare. Since its inception, India has waged wars or indulged in conflict with Pakistan, in one way or the other. Even now, India is sparing no effort to target Pakistan at the domestic level which encompasses all the political, social, economic, and religious factors. In this regard, it has left no stone unturned in defaming and maligning Pakistan in the international arena through its fake propaganda. Pakistani society is an amalgam of ethnic groups, sectarian factions, and cultural blocs, which are being exploited by India and used as a fault line and a grey-zone in conflict. India is operating radicalized militant groups in Pakistan and is fueling the unrest in Balochistan. In pursuit of this, Afghanistan's land is being exercised by India in its endeavor to destabilize Pakistan by operating terrorist organizations to fulfill its hybrid agenda against Pakistan.

Considering the spillover of untrue and fallacious information, the complexity of warfare has tremendously been increased. India is involved in various operations against Pakistan to defame and discredit the country, in its pursuit to isolate it internationally as well. Its conspiracy of defaming and maligning Pakistan has also been put out in the EU DisinfoLab Report of 2020. According to that report, India is operating the largest ever fake media network, with 750+ fake media websites, and resurrecting the dead scholars, and propagating the false news in the international media. The report has further revealed that it has misused the politicians of the EU parliament who genuinely wanted to defend human rights and provided a platform to far-right politicians when convergent objectives were pursued. Furthermore, India is also involved in terrorists' activities and trying its level best to sabotage

the economic project of Pakistan the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which apparently is a headache for it. Hence, India is using a variety of subversive tactics of hybrid warfare, to destabilize Pakistan both externally and internally. Even though Pakistan has encountered many security challenges successfully, the non-traditional security challenge-the hybrid warfare, waged by India. Therefore, in the contemporary state of affairs, Pakistan must identify and efficiently counter the gradually escalating non-traditional threats such as the hybrid threats.

Hence summarizing it all, there is a need for Pakistan to pen down a grand strategy for countering all the traditional and non-traditional threats including the hybrid war posed by India. In this regard, it would be appropriate for Pakistan to develop Hybrid Warfare and Stratagem Centre that would address policymakers; develop metrics to get a grip on events, and make them susceptible to the threats and cognizance for curbing them in the future. Media, on the other hand, is seen as one of the lethal and sophisticated weapons to target the enemy's will and exploit its weaknesses. It is used to target the opponent population by changing their perception regarding their government. Therefore, the media has to play a pivotal role in curbing the fake news propaganda and misinformation, as it is the most significant tool used in propagating bogus information; besides, the media should strictly promote Pakistan's narrative in fighting against this ubiquitous threat. Furthermore, the law enforcement agencies are needed to expand their cooperation with each other and be further equipped to fight against the abstract threat of hybrid warfare. In pursuit of this, smart utilization of Artificial Intelligence would further add to the purpose. Last but not the least, the government must provide adequate awareness and vigilance to the local population of the country, in order to make them aware of the actions and ill-will of the adversary in its attempt to dissect the society. Hence, the cautious and observant society is the first and foremost step in the line of defense against this new challenge, and the entire country needs to play a crucial role in curbing the spiteful act of the foe.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/29032021-hybrid-warfare-a-new-face-of-conflict-n-south-asia-oped/>

Turkey Urges India To End Curbs In Kashmir: Endorsing Pakistan's Diplomatic Stance

Haris Bilal Malik

The contemporary regional security dynamics of South Asia have become more complex during the last two years. This is primarily because of the core issue of Kashmir between India and Pakistan that remains unresolved for decades. In August 2019, India revoked the special constitutional status of the Kashmir region through the controversial "[Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act](#)". It involved the termination of Articles [370](#) and [35A](#) of the Indian constitution that have previously granted special constitutional status to the disputed Kashmir region. This was a unilateral move and a political annexation of the already disputed region. Under this annexation, India has forcefully made the Kashmir region part of its union by dividing it into two new union territories i.e. '[Jammu](#)' and '[Ladakh](#)'. Despite the criticism from all around the world, India had also imposed a brutal lockdown in the region which reportedly remains partially imposed to date. Since then, the tensions between the two nuclear-armed rivals in South Asia have only intensified. The situation in the region has become even worse than ever before. Moreover, prominent countries have criticized Indian unilateral actions and emphasized its peaceful resolution. This appears as an endorsement of Pakistan's diplomatic stance on Kashmir.

Very recently, on [February 23, 2021](#), Turkey brought the Kashmir issue to the [United Nations Human Rights Council](#) in Geneva. While addressing the 47-member council, Turkish Foreign Minister Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu urged for the resolution of this long-held issue under the UN resolutions and the will of Kashmiri people that include their legitimate right of 'self-determination'. He further reiterated that the Indian government must ease the restrictions in Kashmir while emphasizing the peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue under the UN resolutions. Given the worsening situation in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), this position maintained by Turkey holds significant weightage for Pakistan's diplomatic stance on this long-held issue. This significantly adds to the value of endorsements that are pouring into Pakistan's principled stance on Kashmir. Furthermore, Pakistan's diplomatic efforts of highlighting the Kashmir issue ever since the Indian imposed brutal lockdown are acknowledged by the international community. During the year 2020 and even now in 2021, this has become a manifestation of Pakistan's appropriate foreign policy approach vis-à-vis the settlement of the Kashmir issue.

Many significant developments have further internationalized the Kashmir issue and the recent Turkish urge appears to be in-line with it. For instance, the significance of the Kashmir

issue is evident from the very fact that it was one of the crucial agenda items during the last two sessions of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) i.e. [74th Session](#) and [75th Session](#) that were held in 2019 and 2020 respectively. During these sessions, some prominent leaders of the world had openly criticized the Indian atrocities in the occupied Kashmir and deliberated on the peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue. In this regard, Turkish president [Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan's](#) speech at the UNGA 74th session was quite impactful. He maintained that Kashmir is the main issue in South Asia and the peace and stability are linked with its peaceful settlement. He also criticized the international community for not paying attention to this long-held issue. Moreover, this stance was [reiterated](#) during his official visit to Pakistan in February 2020. While addressing the joint session of Parliament, he maintained that the situation in Kashmir is alarming and once again criticized India's annexation. Further, the dispute can only be settled through peaceful means and dialogue. The recent Turkish position on Kashmir in the UN Human Rights Council is a continuation of its principled stance on Kashmir that considerably endorses Pakistan's diplomatic stance.

The great powers like China, Russia, and the US have also shown their concerns over the Kashmir region and the worsening situation there. Specifically, China remains the country that has brought the Kashmir issue to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and UNGA time and again. Similarly, there has been a considerable shift in the Russian stance on the Kashmir issue since it has offered to mediate between the two countries against the backdrop of the recent crisis. The US, being the sole superpower seems to be deeply concerned with the Kashmir issue. In this regard, it has also [offered](#) to mediate between India and Pakistan. In the same vein, the UN Secretary-General [Mr. Antonio Guterres](#) also showed his apprehensions while he was on an official visit to Pakistan in February last year. He urged both the countries to hold maximum restraint. Such realization within the international community and the mediation offers of the great powers like the US and Russia further endorse Pakistan's diplomatic stance on Kashmir. However, as opposed to this, India propagates Kashmir as its internal matter and has been negating any third-party mediation for decades now. This is even further evident from the recent letter of the Indian Prime Minister Modi to Prime Minister Imran Khan in which he desired cordial relations with Pakistan based on an environment of trust among others. However, unfortunately, there wasn't a single mention of the real bone of contention between the two countries i.e. the resolution of the Kashmir issue.

Hence in all, it is quite apparent that Pakistan's principled diplomatic stance on Kashmir has been acknowledged by the international community. Even though the OIC as a whole and the Gulf States are quite reluctant to openly support Pakistan and criticize India, the former succeeded to get firm support for its principled stance on Kashmir. Unfortunately, it is the other way around since the Gulf States are enhancing their relations with India. Whereas, the Turkish leadership while acknowledging Pakistan's diplomatic efforts is openly criticizing the Indian brutalities in Kashmir on humanitarian, political, and diplomatic grounds. This in turn would

further strengthen the bilateral relationship of both countries and further vindicate Pakistan's principled stance on Kashmir.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/29032021-turkey-urges-india-to-end-curbs-in-kashmir-endorsing-pakistans-diplomatic-stance-oped/>

Revamping the Quad: What It Means For Regional Security?

Khawaja Dawood Tariq

After nearly a decade of inactivity, quite recently ‘Quadrilateral Security Dialogue’ (Quad) has somehow created considerable hype in the international arena. It has been flaunted by many as something resembling an attempt at make-believe Asian NATO, created to counter China. Quad has been transformed from an informal consultative forum to a structural strategic mechanism with a particular focus on Indo-Pacific security. The primary purpose of Quad is [to uphold U.S supremacy in Indo-Pacific](#) while containing China. Since Quad is among the multilateral mechanisms that are being used by the US to counter the rise of China. There is a realization in Washington that in the short term Beijing wants to change the regional order in Indo-Pacific by overthrowing U.S supremacy and that cannot be allowed. The Trump administration resurrected Quad back in 2017 and envisioned it as a multilateral forum to engage China’s neighbors without directly antagonizing Beijing.

The Biden administration not only seems to share its predecessor's Chinese apprehensions but also even taking it a notch up. From being an informal consultative forum, Quad has been transformed into a comprehensive strategic platform. It was former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe who came up with the idea that four major democracies in the Indo-Pacific region (U.S, India, Australia, and Japan) need to proactively engage with China to dissuade Beijing from tinkering international order. On paper, Quad has existed for over a decade but its first leaders’ summit took place just this month. Before 2021, only two foreign minister-level meetings were held in over a decade.

But now, there appears a real shift in Quad’s pace. In the recently concluded virtual summit, a blueprint to establish an institutional framework for Quad has been deliberated. An in-person leaders’ summit has been scheduled before the end of this year. Further, it has been decided that ministerial-level meetings would be held annually, and working groups of experts would meet regularly. [The leaders’ summit further announced](#) the creation of three joint working groups dealing with COVID-19, climate change, and critical and emerging technologies. A very crucial agenda item during the summit was ‘vaccine diplomacy’ which seemingly is dominated by China. In this regard, it has been announced that a billion doses of American vaccines would be manufactured in India with Japanese funds. Also, these would be delivered through Australian logistical expertise.

It is quite noteworthy that the national security experts in D.C think that global political order is under threat from revisionist powers. [National Security Strategy 2017](#) and [National Defense Strategy 2018](#) termed Russia and China as a revisionist power. Post World War II, liberal rules-based international order had been established. The U.S had enjoyed a sustained

period of global hegemony. There is a realization in Washington that this hegemony and power comes from its ability to develop a strong and diverse coalition of allies, which can only be sustained by ensuring that the U.S can safeguard its interests. Now, these revisionist powers are challenging the US's ability to safeguard the interests of its allies. Without this ability, the U.S won't be able to sustain its alliances. The fact that China is now in a position to target the underlying tool of U.S hegemony appears to be an immense concern for the U.S security apparatus.

To assess what impact Quad can have on regional strategic stability, it is important to question what institutional framework would it take. The Indo-Pacific region is one of the most contentious regions in the world. There are two opinions as to what shape Quad can take. First, Quad would be an informal strategic arrangement to coordinate strategic alignment between member states. Among all the members of Quad, only India shares a land border with China. Even with the ongoing border dispute on LAC, India is the only member of Quad which has opposed the creation of ministerial-level joint working groups. Similarly, Australia and China are caught in the middle of nasty trade-related sanctions. An alliance without institutional coherence would not be able to make any serious attempt at containing China. Second, that Quad has to be institutionalized to fully leverage the economic and military might of the member states. Both these scenarios would have a diverging impact on regional strategic stability.

The revamping of Quad would have serious regional strategic implications if a novel institutional structure is developed. There already exist multiple militarized conflicts scattered across the region but institutionalizing a massive military and economic bloc against China would compel Beijing to respond with force. This would seriously challenge the fickle strategic balance of the region. Furthermore, a multilateral alliance operating in this region undermining Chinese interests would likely have implications for Pakistan as well. Since Pakistan is already facing Indian hostilities across both the eastern and western border. China is also Pakistan's biggest economic partner. If Quad develops an institutional framework, Islamabad, being a Chinese ally would likely become a target. The exact institutional structure of the Quad is yet to be decided. But the framers would have to take into consideration that any military alliance in the Indo-Pacific region would further stroke the fire of hostilities and destabilize the strategic stability of the entire region and even beyond.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/29032021-revamping-the-quad-what-it-means-for-regional-security-oped/>

India's Acquisition of 30 Predator Drones and Strategic Stability in South Asia

Ahyousha Khan

Quite recently, on March 12, 2021, the first-ever leaders' [summit of the Quadrilateral Framework](#) was virtually held. During this high-level summit, the leaders from the US, India, Japan, and Australia discussed the policy regarding Indo-Pacific; a region where all these four nations consider China as their common adversary. Discussion on emerging technologies, technological exchange, maritime security, and resilient supply chains also took place. This summit has set the template for the Biden Administration regarding China and its Indo-Pacific strategy as well. In particular, it seems that in the future US-India cooperation under the Indo-Pacific strategy would grow significantly. Moreover, with growing political commitments in the US and India, the security and strategic relationship between the two countries would likely grow further. Recently, both states have concluded the ["foundational defense agreements"](#), which solved the legal issues in the operationalization of defense cooperation. These agreements and subsequent technological transfer from the US to India would create an adverse impact on the strategic stability of South Asia. Specifically, this becomes even more relevant when the regional security environment of South Asia is very much affected by the Pulwama-Balakot crisis and the revocation of articles 370 and 35A by India in 2019. Even though both states have recently agreed to adhere to the ceasefire on LOC, the core issue of Kashmir is still unresolved.

After the Quadrilateral Summit, [US Defense Secretary, Lloyd Austin visited](#) India and both countries agreed to further increase their military cooperation. It is quite noteworthy that both the countries have already signed military cooperation agreements such as LEMOA, COMCASA, and most recently BECA to eliminate the legal and operability challenges in the military, defense, and security cooperation. Furthermore, India has been granted [STA-1 status](#) by the US so that it could access dual-use technology from the US. India is the first South Asian and third Asian nation to ever have that status. Under these agreements, India would be able to procure military dual-use technologies from the US. This in turn would give it a significant technological edge over its regional counterparts. In this regard, India's acquisition of drone technology from the US is quite significant. Very recently, the Indian government has decided to buy 30 predator drones from the US amid growing tensions with China and Pakistan. With China, India was involved in serious border clashes last year; India is also competing with China in the Indian Ocean.

The \$3 billion worth drone procurement would be approved next month; as per the deal, India would acquire [30 armed MQ-9B Predator drones](#), built by General Atomics of the US.

These predator drones have the endurance to fly for about 48 hours and can carry a payload of about 1700 kilograms. Furthermore, they can be equipped with laser-guided ammunition in addition to air-to-surface missiles and can carry sensors. According to the Indian media reports, the drones once acquired would be used by both the Indian Navy and Indian Army. The navy would use it to monitor the movement of Chinese vessels in the South Indian Ocean, while the Indian Army would use it to engage the targets along the disputed border between Pakistan and India. Previously, the US offered India sea guardian drones, which were not armed and to be used for intelligence and surveillance. However, during the recent border crises with China and Pakistan which proved to be an embarrassment for India at the military level, all three tri-services of India agreed to procure armed drones, where 10 of these would be distributed among them.

Furthermore, with China; it seems that India's only aim is surveillance due to fear of reprisal. However, vis-à-vis Pakistan ceasefire at the LOC does not reflect any serious commitment; rather India is interested in engaging with Pakistan along the LOC. This Indian quest is seemingly in-line with its much-hyped military doctrine of "Cold Start" and ideas of "surgical strikes". Such technological advancements also imply that India is continuously and deliberately moving towards acquiring more options for so-called "preemption". India is adamant on these views that it can exploit the levels below the nuclear threshold, whenever it wants. In this regard, Pakistan has always voiced its apprehensions over the transfer of armed drones to India, with concern that India is only playing "China Card" and ultimately it would use this technology against Pakistan.

Hence, to ensure its security and maintain strategic stability in the region, Pakistan would be compelled to acquire or build different emerging technologies such as hypersonic weapons, armed drones, submarines, and 5th generation air crafts. Procurement of armed drones and ISR assistance under the agreements like BECA would further enhance India's ability to go for a preemptive strike under the sense of overconfidence. This would further impact the already fragile strategic stability in the region. Moreover, Pakistan's goal is not to acquire strategic parity with India but just to maintain strategic balance in the region, which is tilting in India's favor due to constant support from the US. Last but not the least, in the case of future technologies, like drones it appears more of a compulsion for Pakistan to invest in them after a clear analysis of its resources and objectives.

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India's Commissioning of Nuclear Missile Tracking Vessel: Security Implications for Pakistan

Sher bano

Just a few months ago, in [October 2020](#), India secretly commissioned its first nuclear missile tracking vessel 'VC-11184'. However, this information was made public very recently in March 2021, while all the trials and tests were conducted last year. The commissioning was postponed on account of the COVID-19 global pandemic. With this, India has become the fifth country in the world to acquire such capability. Though acquisition of such a vessel would enhance India's overall ballistic missile defence shield, its employment during a crisis would deteriorate the delicate strategic balance in the region. The enhancement in the Indian missile defence shield specifically at sea would likely undermine the effectiveness of Pakistan's delivery systems especially the ballistic missiles. Other than that, it could raise the chances of Indian miscalculation and would increase India's temptation to go for a 'splendid first strike' based on assumption that the missile tracking vessel would detect any incoming missile being fired in retaliation.

Currently, only [four](#) other countries China, Russia, France, and the US have been operating the same vessels that can detect the missiles launched at the sea. VC-11184 can detect missiles from a much longer range or one can say unlimited range because it has the ability to navigate in the ocean. The vessel has [15,000 tons](#) displacement and consists of three 'dome-shaped antennas' with sensors and other electronic warfare equipment. Power of about [14 MW](#) would be generated by the ship in order to provide power to its tracking radars and sensors. However, as of now most of the information pertaining to the capabilities of the vessel is being kept secret by the Indian Navy. As per reports, the vessel would be jointly operated by India's 'DRDO' (Defense Research and Development Organization), 'NTRO' (National Technical Research Organization), and the 'Indian Navy'.

Indian acquisition of such an offensive and aggressive capability at sea would likely have serious implications for the strategic stability of the region. It would provide India with a greater sense of security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). This would likely undermine the effectiveness and viability of Pakistan's cruise and ballistic missiles in a crisis situation. The probability of absorbing the opponent's retaliatory strike undermines the deterrence capability of the state that aims to deter the enemy through its ballistic and cruise missiles. Hence this deterrence instability would result in the subversion of strategic stability between the nuclear-armed rivals in South Asia by decreasing the vulnerabilities of the state having ballistic missile defense. Moreover, India's enhancement of ballistic missile defence would also threaten the nuclear deterrent stability leading to strategic instability. One other destabilizing factor would

be the intensification of the arms race between the two states. The Indian leadership having the false sense of confidence that they are invulnerable to any retaliation by Pakistani strategic forces might go for an offensive strike whenever there is a crisis situation. Furthermore, the Indian missile defence shield would complement the counterforce and surgical strike temptations of the hawkish Indian leadership. Hence such deployment by India would push both the states towards pre-emption.

In light of India's growing naval modernization and enhancement of its ballistic missile defence system at sea, Pakistan needs to re-think about its counterbalance strategy. In this regard, it might be more feasible for Pakistan to increase the size and further modernize its ballistic missile force. Pakistani missile designers can increase the speed of missiles and further enhance their effectiveness to penetrate the Indian missile defenses. Furthermore, Pakistan needs to arm its missiles with advanced technologies that could defy the 'ISR' (Intelligence, surveillance, and tracking system) of the Indian defensive weapons. In this regard, Pakistan can also utilize its [MIRV](#) (Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicles) technologies in order to make the Indian missile defence overwhelmed by ballistic missiles flurry. MIRV can launch weapons directed at different targets which can also be used against missile defence. While simultaneously it can also destroy or disrupt the radars. Pakistan may also improve its missile efficacy by employing and developing chaff, jamming, decoys, thermal shielding, warheads that have a low infrared signature, evasive trajectories.

The fragile strategic balance of the South Asian region being threatened by India's ambitions to become the regional power and enhancement of its offensive capabilities have made it obligatory for Pakistan to develop its sea-based nuclear capability. There would be very less incentive for any state to go for the first strike if both states have the invincible second-strike capability. Moreover like India, Pakistan might also need to develop an early warning system that can monitor and detect the Indian missiles. Lastly, since the South Asian region does not consist of any arms control measure that could resist any crisis leading to assured destruction, it's high time for a conflict resolution and arms control mechanism that could restrict the use of offensive capabilities by the nuclear adversaries.

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