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Compiled & Edited by:
Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai

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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-around 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

Pakistan has been the prime target of India's cyber-espionage as various Indian cyber-space groups have attempted a number of attacks on the official websites of various government institutions. Hence cyber-space has emerged as one of the key security challenges for Pakistan in recent times. Similarly, in South Asia, it has become necessary to build a stable environment in information space in order to avoid certain large scale cyber-attacks that can lead towards inadvertent war. As cyber space is the area that does not have any legally binding obligations, the only way to control malicious cyber behavior is by building effective "Confidence building measures" between India and Pakistan.

South Asia is regarded as one of the most hostile regions of the world primarily because of the troubled relations between the two nuclear states. In this regard, India has been involved in the development of advanced missiles and delivery system and improvement in the existing delivery system. Recently on 28TH June 2021, India has successfully tested an advanced variant of its Agni missile series namely Agni Prime. Agni prime is nuclear capable cannisterized ballistic missile which is insinuated as Pakistan-centric. These developments will would likely further provoke an action-reaction spiral and would increase the pace of conflict in South Asia. However, the credibility of the capability of the Indian cruise missile is being envisaged after the failure of BrahMos Supersonic Cruise missile test. The failure of the test at a point where India is pursuing hypersonic cruise missiles, questions the credibility and the deterrence posture of India.

Indian Ocean is considered as 'bedrock' of the economic activity of the 21st century. However, in recent years, due to increasing economic competitions and security concerns, importance of Indian ocean for security and military purpose has increased many folds. One of the regional power adjacent to Indian Ocean is India which is a nuclear power and aspire to have dominance in Indian Ocean. So, to achieve result faster and in coordinated manner, India is appointing a National Marine Security Coordinator. Indian growing interests in IOR points boiled down to one fact, which is that India considers itself as 'net-security provider' in IOR. Therefore, it cannot bear the idea of co-existence where it cannot have the dominant role. However, oceans like skies and space are common goods which play a pivotal role in economy and transportation throughout the world, growing competition and rivalry in the region has

forced more and more IOR littoral states to develop aggressive naval policies, which ultimately would hamper the ‘free and secure sue of sea and oceans.

This volume of the *SVI Foresight* provides a very thought-provoking insight on a diverse issue of Security, Defense, maritime security, Indian missile system, and Pakistan’s relations with Uzbekistan that is reaching new heights in recent years. Similarly, G7 announced Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative days before the NATO summit that has to provide \$40 trillion to the developing states by 2035 that will severely challenge the Chinese global clout.

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 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](#).

Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai

Senior Research Associate and author of the forthcoming book “*The Troubled Triangle: US-Pakistan Relations under the Taliban’s Shadow*” (Routledge).

<https://twitter.com/yousafzaiZafar5>

India's growing cyber espionage activates: Security implications for Pakistan

Sher Bano¹

For decades espionage has been used by the states to gather confidential or secret information regarding their adversaries but in the past few decades, the states have entered into a new realm of spying called cyber espionage. Cyber espionage is an attempt to steal confidential information by penetrating through the computer systems or networks or by transiting through these networks and systems. This newly emerged form of espionage has not only affected the political and security relations among the states but has also changed the shape of modern warfare. For the past few years, Pakistan has been the prime target of India's cyber-espionage as various Indian cyber-espionage groups have attempted a number of cyber-attacks on the official websites of various government institutions.

Hence, cyberspace has emerged as one of the key security challenges for Pakistan in recent times. Specifically, this becomes more significant given the fact that the digital infrastructure of any state is vulnerable to cyber-attacks and disruptions which can be easily organized but are difficult to trace because of their asymmetric nature. India has been expanding its cyber capabilities by building various hacking groups to commit cyber espionage. Even every other day there comes news that Indian hackers attempted to deface Pakistani websites and then there is retaliation from Pakistan's side. The most recent example is the cyber-attacks conducted by India to halt the investigation of Lahore's Johar Town blast. While conducting the press conference on 4th July 2021, the National Security Advisor Dr. Moeed Yusuf disclosed that it was quite evident that the Indian state was behind the incident. Moreover, on the day the blast took place, surprisingly, there were thousands of cyber-attacks on the 'investigation infrastructure' of Pakistan. The purpose was to divert attention so that the country fails to identify the Indian networks.

Likewise, they also wanted to provide the terrorists sufficient time to disperse. However due to the timely action by Pakistan's intelligence and security agencies and strong cyber security measures they were successful in unearthing the entire network. Dr. Yusuf further added that there is no doubt in the fact that the cyber-attacks and the Johar Town incident were inter-

¹ Sher Bano is Research Affiliate at Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad.

linked. The cyber-attacks of such magnitude make it obvious that there is state involvement. The above incident is not unique, similar incidents of cyber espionage conducted by the Indian state were reported last year. In a statement issued by the ISPR, it was intimated that the country's intelligence apparatus has identified a major cyber-attack conducted by the Indian intelligence agencies. The attack involved the hacking of gadgets and mobile phones of military personnel and government officials. The purpose of the attack was a deceitful fabrication. Even though it was timely intercepted, it has increased the risk of the Indian propaganda war against Pakistan through digital sabotage.

Similarly, there was an incident back in 2019 when the mobile phones of two dozen senior intelligence and defence officials were compromised using the spyware called Pegasus. A very alarming fact is that the Pegasus was made by an Israeli spyware company called the NSO group. India has been enhancing its cooperation with Israel in the cyber field as Israel is among the countries with enhanced cyber warfare capabilities. Hence India aspires to gain a lot from Israel's advanced cyber capabilities. India's further enhancement of cyber capabilities through the acquisition of more sophisticated and advanced cyber tools from its strategic partners would further challenge Pakistan's cyber security and ultimately the national security. In order to counter this emerging cyber threat from India Pakistan needs to have a broader counter measure. In this regard, the cyber departments of the state agencies need to have a national-level cyber command or comprehensive cyber warfare doctrine so that they can pre-empt or defend the country's cyberspace frontiers. It is difficult to manage risks at both national and international levels due to the absence of regulations and limitations in cyberspace.

Hence what could be done is to rethink the government's role in policy formulation and legislation regarding the digital infrastructure and security of cyberspace in Pakistan. As part of this initiative, the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication has also drafted a 'National Cyber-Security Policy 2021'. The guiding principle of this policy is to regard any sort of cyber-attack as an act of aggression towards the national sovereignty of the country. The draft of the policy also proposes the development of resilient and secure cyber networks and systems for national cyber security response. Even though the implementation mechanism of this policy would require some time to become fully operational, it is a great initiative towards having a stringent cyber security mechanism. Moreover, Pakistan also needs to secure the country's cyber environment by making significant efforts towards innovation.

US B3W: A new level of strategic competition with China?

Haris Bilal Malik²

The US and China are the two of the great powers that have tremendous politico-diplomatic, economic influence, and strategic outreach in the international arena. Their bilateral relations were quite complex till the 70s and 80s due to various factors. Among these, the most important factor was that both the countries were part of two opposing blocs of the then bi-polar world. Then in the subsequent years, both the countries came closer to each other, especially in the post-cold war era. Ultimately both the countries enhanced their trade relations and then there was a time when their bilateral trade was considerably enhanced. However, during the last few years specifically, the relationship between the US and China has deteriorated more than ever before.

There are various determinants of the world's most crucial great power relations. These include; economic interdependence of the US on China, their strategic interests in the pacific region, and most important is the ever-increasing rivalry to expand their influence in almost every part of the world. This has resulted in an increase in mutual inclination of threat perception vis-à-vis the other side; based on which both the countries regard each other as the potential adversary. In this regard, both countries have been involved in a strategic competition against each other in various forms and dimensions.

There is a dominant viewpoint within the discourse surrounding the international community that the US and China are now in a de-facto cold war of which economic confrontation is an important component, whereas many on the other argue that the notion of a new cold war is out of the question. However, they are in tough geo-strategic competition. Regardless of both perceptions, it is quite comprehensible that the bilateral relations of both countries have become more problematic and troubled than ever before.

The B3W project

The recent meeting of G-7 countries that was held last month from 11th to 13th June 2021 in Carbis Bay England has created considerable hype vis-à-vis the international discourse surrounding the great power politics. The US came up with an ambitious and what is known as a

² Haris Bilal Malik, Research Associate, Strategic Vision institute, Islamabad.

new model of its economic imperialism. The B3W (Build Back Better World) project proposed by the US is referred to as an initiative that is supposed to compete with the Chinese BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) announced back in 2013.

Since the official figures of this proposed initiative are not publicly available as of now, however, as per the media reports, the US would help the developing countries with the provision of an estimated amount of above 40 trillion dollars in terms of investment. This would be utilized by the developing countries till the year 2035. Specifically, against the backdrop of the US-China ever-increasing tensions and the notions of a great power rivalry, now the announcement of B3W by the US is quite significant. With this, the strategic competition between the US and China would likely reach a new height probably in the years to come.

China's bid for economic integration

To further analyze, a very important dimension of this strategic competition which now appears as a preference of both the US and China is their focus on economic integration by offering socio-economic incentives to their respective allies and also to the relatively poor third world countries. For instance, China announced its model of economic integration in the form of BRI a few years ago. Under this initiative, various projects worth trillions of dollars have already been implemented by China.

These include a vast network of interconnected economic corridors passing through Asia, Europe, and Africa along with mega infrastructure, energy, communications, and social projects to boost up Chinese trade with the rest of the world. This is also aimed at the revival of the ancient silk route of trade. The US and its allies perceive BRI as a Chinese attempt to expand its economic foothold in the rest of the world. The US also propagates it as a Chinese debt trap that would make the majority of the third world countries economically dependent on the latter in the longer term. China however rejects this propaganda and asserts that the BRI initiative is purely a project of economic integration that would benefit each of the involved countries in the longer term.

US attempt to defame China's BRI project

The recently announced B3W project by the US can also be analyzed in the same context. Specifically, when the focus is on investment in socio-economic development projects like for instance health care, technology, and infrastructure, etc., the intentions of the US can be easily analyzed to an extent even though there is no clear timeline of implementation. Moreover, the name 'Build Back Better World' itself appears as a deliberate attempt to defame Chinese BRI as

a project and that the B3W would bring back a better world. This further implies that the US wasn't comfortable with the economic rise of China. Deeply concerned by this, the US has opted for the economic integration model yet with a discriminatory approach by labeling Chinese BRI as a debt trap and terming B3W as a return to a better world. So, all in all, the US and China are evidently involved in a strategic competition where the US feels threatened by the Chinese economic rise. In this regard, the US, after seemingly losing some of the key military campaigns in recent decades as part of its superpower projection is now inclined towards the economic model of power projection to revamp its economic imperialism which was once its core element to engage with the rest of the world.

Last but not the least, whether the B3W and the BRI both are debt traps for the poor countries would remain debatable. However, it appears quite obvious that the launch of B3W would likely emerge as a new height in the US-China strategic competition in the years to come.

<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/us-b3w-a-new-level-of-strategic-competition-with-china/>.

NATO'S pivot to China

Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai³

The leaders at NATO summit last month declared China as a constant security threat that could undermine world order that is a matter of serious concern. "We recognise that China's growing influence and international policies present both opportunities and challenges that we need to address together as an Alliance," NATO's [declaration](#) read. Similarly, G7 announced Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative days before the NATO summit that has to provide \$40 trillion to the developing states by 2035 which flash back the Marshall Plan in our minds at the start of the Cold War in late 1940s.

Washington and its western allies are quite concerned of China's rapid military and economic growth and especially their expansion through economic initiative's in different parts of the world. The western concern is deepening since the launch of the Belt and Road initiative by Xi Jinping in 2013. By BRI, China has signed various rail, road, ports, and other infrastructure developmental projects with over hundred countries that means it would put various regions in Chinese net which seems a serious threat to the west. China's economy was smaller than Italy four decades before yet it is the second global economic power at the moment

³ The author is Senior Research Associate at Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad and author of the forthcoming book "The Troubled Triangle: US-Pakistan Relations under the Taliban's Shadow" (Routledge).

that bothers the west. This article examines how China could threaten the western interests in different parts of the world.

Although the Chinese growing investments are not a direct military threat to NATO or the west but it could hamper their influence in various regions. The Chinese investments in port facilities and telecommunication in Europe could weaken NATO's diplomatic influence. China possess ten percent ownerships of all European ports which complicates the situation for those countering China. Moreover, Huawei's close relationship with the Chinese Communist Party is a serious concern for the west. China is also rapidly expanding its strategic influence in Africa by investments and providing them low-interest loans with a loose schedule of return that has boosted the Chinese clout in Africa. By overtaking America, China is the largest foreign direct investor in Africa now. The question is why substantial Chinese investments goes to Africa?

Africa is inhibited by a population of 1.3 billion with the age of 19.7 that would provide China a low-cost labor force. By next year, China would become a deeply aged society and by 2050, the maiden age in China is expected 51. Moreover, by 2060, one third of the Chinese citizens would have crossed 65. In addition to this, China is no longer a low-cost country vis-à-vis labor. Thus, Africa can not only provide low-cost but young labor as well.

Similarly, Africa has 30,500 km coastline that provide vast trade opportunities with the outer world. After geopolitical tension with the US, China is diverting its agriculture imports to Africa and invest in agriculture technology in Africa, that serves the Chinese purpose of trade and strategic goals. Likewise, Africa possess a fast-growing consumer market that best suits to Chinese interests. Chinese companies exploring new areas of investment and apply Chinese models, use its technology in this emerging market.

Alike, Chinese military reach is expanding and getting closer to Euro-Atlantic, another serious concern for the western allies. The Russia-China joint military exercises in Baltic and Mediterranean Sea were signal of close military cooperation between Moscow and Beijing. Beside China's rise, the resurgence of Russia under president Putin is also a concern for the west. Moreover, China and Russia are investing in natural gas projects in Arctic in addition to a transport corridor known as "Polar Silk Road". China is in addition developing modern nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers that could have serious implications for the western allies.

Hence, the concerns showed by the NATO leaders carry weight. Earlier, Trump administration was putting considerable pressure on NATO to put China on its top agenda items. Though there is convergence between the western allies and the United States about China,

however, there would need a coherent strategy vis-à-vis China. The Biden administration has not that aggressiveness as that of Trump for China. Biden want to accumulate collaboration and competition, a more balanced approach that could challenge the Chinese threat quite slowly. Similarly, an aggressive strategy that could directly hinder the Chinese influence is not possible as China do not pose a classical security threat to the west and United States. Nonetheless, this fact cannot be denied: China is a long-term strategic challenge for the US and its allies in the decades to come.

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/788913/natos-pivot-to-china/>

Anatolian Eagle-2021 Exercise: Pakistan Improving Defense Synergies

Amber Afreen Abid

The art of winning the war is to know the enemy. It is vital to be aware of the enemy's moves, expertise, and capabilities while increasing one's own strengths and overcoming the weaknesses. Military exercises are a key component of sharing knowledge, abilities, expertise and enhancing the training level for joint operations between the militaries of two or more countries. Various countries in the world conduct joint military exercises regularly as part of their military cooperation with one another. The Turkish military exercise "Anatolian Eagle" is an international military exercise that is held every year in Turkey. It is aimed at improving the capabilities of mutual support between forces through various tactics and techniques in a real combat environment.

The latest Pakistan-Turkey joint military exercise "[Anatolian Eagle 2021](#)" was held between 21st June and 02nd July 2021. Pakistan's Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer ud Din Babur also visited the third main jet-base in Konya to view the multinational air exercises. This year's exercise also included the participation of Azerbaijan and Qatar and NATO AWACS also participated in the exercise. The exercise has further contributed towards the development of defence synergies and cooperation between the two states. Many of the countries were there in the observer status as well. It includes the participation of JF-17 Thunder, Turkish F-16 C/D, Qatar's Rafale, Azerbaijan MIG-29 and SU-25, and NATO E-3A AWACS aircraft.

The exercise was conducted in a real scenario, in order to improve the capabilities and training skills of various combat forces, it gives a platform to perform joint combat missions and understand and compare the operational procedures of various aircrafts, thus maximizing the vision, and enhancing mutual support between the forces. The training aids such as Post Mission

Analysis System and Air-Combat Maneuvering System were also used, which gives a clear understanding and comparison of the combat forces and inculcates an advanced training environment for the preparation of actual combats. The significance of air training and operations for the actual deployment of forces in a real setup is further augmented through such exercises.

Pakistan apparently has shifted its focus from conducting military training in one country, earlier, to now developing alliances for its military buildup and capacity building. Pakistan conducted “Ataturk-XI 2021” exercise with Turkey earlier this year, with a focus on counter-terrorism operations; the “Aman 2021” exercise was also conducted along with 45 countries, with a number of observer countries as well, to enhance the maritime skills. Such kinds of exercises are essential for the capacity building of the states. By indulging and involving with the defence capabilities of the other states, the true potential of one’s own state comes out.

The Anatolian-Eagle 2021 also aims at enhancing the interoperability between the participating forces. As many other states are also participating with their hi-tech air platforms, it is an opportunity for Pakistan to look and observe the capabilities of those platforms. The aircrafts such as Qatar’s Rafale also took part in the exercise, hence it gives an advantage to Pakistan to envisage and get a clearer picture of the capabilities of aircrafts that are owned by Pakistan’s regional counterpart India with a great hype. The JF-17 Thunder and Dassault Rafale flew together at the Anatolian Eagle, which gave clearer insight and a better understanding of the two aircraft in comparison to each other.

Moreover, the relations with Azerbaijan have also improved significantly. Pakistan also fully supported Azerbaijan in its Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and extended its support for rehabilitation in the post-Karabakh scenario as well. Turkey, on the other hand, stood by Pakistan on all the important forums, whether it’s supporting the conundrum of NSG, raising voice in favor of the Kashmiri people alongside Pakistan on international forums, to the financial issues and FATF. The enhanced relations between the two Muslim countries in the region would have a positive impact on regional peace and stability, as well.

Turkey has always been on Pakistan’s side, and both countries speak together on various common issues and agendas. Now the military-to-military cooperation of the two states would further enhance the relations. The Chinese project of One Belt One Road, in which Turkey also has a key role, shows the enhancing relations between the three countries. Pakistan has a robust relationship with China; the two countries are mutually dependent on various economic forums

and bear militarist and economic importance for one another. Russia, on the other hand, has also made a shift in its geostrategic calculus and Pakistan has to play rigorously to enhance its relationship with Russia.

Thus, Pakistan is looking at other sides and is expanding its horizon for military and capacity building of its forces. Pakistan has to further go for such alliance buildups, in order to deal with the emergent threats. The geostrategic environment is changing and Pakistan seeks to enhance its defence and diplomatic ties to deal with the threats within and outside the country.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/12072021-anatolian-eagle-2021-exercise-pakistan-improving-defense-synergies-oped/>

Test of Agni Prime Missile and India's Counterforce Temptations

Ahyosha Khan

South Asia is widely regarded as one of the most hostile regions of the world primarily because of the troubled relations between the two nuclear arch-rivals India and Pakistan. The complex security dynamics have compelled both the countries to maintain nuclear deterrence vis-à-vis each other. India is pursuing an extensive and all-encompassing military modernization at the strategic and operational level. In this regard, India has been involved in the development of advanced missiles as delivery systems and improvement in the existing delivery systems as well. Pakistan's nuclear deterrent and delivery systems are [solely aimed at India](#); however, India aspires to fight a ['two-front war'](#) against Pakistan and China. Therefore, the size and capability of its nuclear deterrent and delivery systems are aimed at countering both threats. However, most of the recent missile delivery systems made by India appear to be more Pakistan-centric. One recent example in this regard is the recently tested [nuclear-capable connectorized ballistic missile Agni Prime](#), which is insinuated as Pakistan-centric. These developments would likely further provoke an action-reaction spiral and would increase the pace of conflict in South Asia, which ultimately could result in the intensification of the missile arms race.

Just quite recently, on [28th June 2021](#), India has successfully tested an advanced variant of its Agni missile series, namely Agni Prime or Agni (P). The missile has a range between 1000-2000 kilometers. Agni Prime is a new missile in the Agni missiles series, with improved accuracy and less weight than Agni 1, 2, and 3 missiles. It has been said that the Agni-P weighs [50 %](#) less than the Agni-3 missile. As per the various media [reports](#), this missile would take the place of Agni 1 and 2 and Prithvi missiles, however [officially](#) no such information is

available. This new missile and whole Agni series is developed as part of the missile modernization program under the Defence Research and Development Organization's (DRDO) integrated guided missile development program.

Agni-P is a short missile with less weight and ballistic trajectory, the missile has a rocket-propelled, self-guided strategic weapons system capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear warheads. Moreover, the missile is cannisterized with the ability to be launched from road and rail. The DRDO claimed that the test flight of the missile was monitored by the telemetry radar stations and its trajectory met all the objectives of the mission successfully with [high level of accuracy](#). Agni-P missile because of its range of 1000 to 2000 km is considered a weapon against Pakistan because within this range it cannot target China. Although, India already has different missiles in its inventory with the same range as the newly developed and tested Agni-P missile, so the question arises what this missile would achieve.

Since the last few years, it has been deliberated within the international security discourse that India's force posture is actually more geared towards [counterforce options](#) rather than counter-value options. Although, India's nuclear doctrine after its operationalization in 2003, claims "[massive retaliation](#)" and "nfu" but in reality with developing cannisterized weapons like Agni-P, Agni 5, and testing of hypersonic demonstrative vehicles, India actually is building its capability of "counterforce targeting" or "[splendid first strike](#)". This reflects that India's nuclear doctrine is just a façade and has no real implication on India's force modernization.

These developments by India where it is rapidly developing offensive technologies put the regional deterrence equation under stress by increasing ambiguity. In a region like South Asia, where both nuclear rivals are neighbors and distance between both capitals are few thousand kilometers and missile launch from one side would take only a few minutes in reaching its target, ambiguity would increase the fog of war and put other actors, in this case, Pakistan in "[use it or lose it](#)" situation, as its nuclear deterrent would be under threat.

In such a situation, where Pakistan maintains that nuclear weapons are its [weapons of last resort](#) and to counter threats emerging from India, its nuclear deterrence has to hold the burden of covering all spectrums of threat. It might be left with no choice but to go for the development of a new kind of missile delivery system, probably the connectorized missile systems as an appropriate response option. However, as Pakistan's nuclear deterrence is based on principle of "CMD" which allow Pakistan to seek deterrence in a [cost-effective manner](#) and also

by not indulging in an arms race. Therefore, other than the threat of action-reaction dynamic developments like Agni P by India, would make weapons more accurate and lethal, subsequently conflict would be faster, ambiguous, and with less time to think. In such a scenario, as chances of miscalculation increase, the escalation dynamics would become more complex; thus, further undermining the deterrence stability in South Asia.

India's counter-force temptations and development of offensive weapons are affecting the deterrence equilibrium in South Asia. The deterrence equation is not getting affected just because India is going ahead with the development of offensive technologies but because of its continuous attempts of negating the presence of mutual vulnerability between both countries. Acknowledgement of existence of mutual vulnerability would strengthen the deterrence equation in the region and help both countries to move forward from the action-reaction spiral and arms race. The notions such as the development of offensive or counterforce technology or exploiting the levels below the nuclear threshold to fight a war would not be fruitful in presence of nuclear weapons. As nuclear weapons are weapons to avert the war and not to fight the war.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2021/07/16/test-of-agni-prime-missile-and-indias-counterforce-temptations/>

Appointment of National Maritime Security Coordinator: Indian and its attempts of Naval Dominance in IOR

Ahyosha Khan

The Indian Ocean is considered as “bedrock” of the economic activity in the 21st century, but in recent years due to increasing economic competitions and security concerns, importance of Indian Ocean for security and military purposes has increased many folds. Indian Ocean adjacency to Middle East, South Asia, Africa and South East Asia, make it important geographical space for major powers as a lot of oil and petroleum transport of world goes through the ocean. Major powers (US, Britain, France and now China) always had their presence in the Indian Ocean, but due to increasing competitions between major powers, such as US-China and raising competition between regional and major powers, such as India-China, the region is becoming focus of regional and major powers maritime policies.

One of the regional power adjacent to Indian Ocean is India, which is a nuclear power and aspire to have dominance in Indian Ocean. India even considers Indian Ocean as its “backyard” and its policy makers considers that owing to its dominance in Indian Ocean, it

would be able to exert power on not only regional countries but other countries adjacent to Indian Ocean. Therefore, in recent years India is procuring naval equipment such as UAVs, radars, helicopters missiles and other weapons; building arms, weapons, vessels, SSNs and SSBNs. Moreover, it is also seeking refuge in pacts, arrangements and alliances, to facilitate the process further India recently decided to do a bureaucratic change as well by deciding to appoint a “National Maritime Security Coordinator”. As, Indian bureaucracy is slow, corrupt and lack coordination, it is norm that their projects, procurements and initiatives rarely complete on time. So, to achieve results faster and in coordinated manner, India is appointing a NMSC, who probably will be serving or retired Vice Admiral and will report to NSA.

Like all other countries, Indian maritime economic and security fragments are handled by different organizations, but it has been observed that due to their lack of coordination quicker decision making was not possible. It has been reported in India newspapers that the recommendation to create this position was given by the apex committee of Kargil War. But the reason this decision came now can be found in several reasons. First of all, though India always wanted to have naval dominance and nuclear triad, but it is the recent years in which aggressively increased its commitments in the Indian Ocean. Secondly, today India is supported and facilitated by many countries (QUAD, Italy, France and etc.) in pursuing aggressive policies because of their own geopolitical conflicts and interests. Thirdly as today government in India is more hawkish, it is naturally to assume that it would adopt the policies which will facilitate more aggressive outlook.

Fourthly, in recent deadly border conflict with China where Indian land forces are in very tight position and have no alternative to coerce PLA to withdraw from recently acquired positions along disputed LAC, development of strong naval force, building of naval alliances would help India in creating a pressure on China. As Chinese oil and petroleum and other exports go through the Indian Ocean, India with help of alliances wants to create a tougher situation for China to have some bargaining chip. Last but not the least is India consider the IOR as its backyard, it is impossible for it to bear the competition in the region, therefore to further invigorate its diplomatic front it is establishing a post dedicated solely for naval and maritime coordination and relations.

In these attempts, India even established center known as “Fusion-Information Center” in 2018 to monitor traffic and track any development in Indian Ocean Region. This center would also serve the purpose of creating linkages and partnerships with like-minded states on issue of

same concern. Other than the appointment of NMSC and establishment of FIC, to increase the process naval military modernization India has started the program “Make in India” which is Indian attempt to build indigenous military naval requirements for making Indian navy actual “blue- water” navy. In last five years India even gave its maritime security strategy, where it recognizes that focus of major powers and their conflict is shifting from “Euro-Atlantic” to “Indo-pacific” thus, Indian navy should be formulating a strategy which enabled its navy in multi-dimensional ways. To increase its naval diplomacy with states littoral to Indian Ocean, Modi government presented a so-called strategy to provide security to all regions named “SAGAR” in 2016. India has also signed agreements with US which would facilitate its naval and maritime surveillance capacity.

However, these all initiatives and points boiled down to one fact, which is that India consider it-self as “net security provider” in Indian Ocean Region, therefore it cannot bear the idea of co-existence, where it cannot have the dominant role. Oceans, like skies and space are common goods which play pivotal role in economy and transportation throughout the world, growing competition and rivalry in the region has forced more and more IOR littoral states to develop aggressive naval policies, which ultimately would hamper the “free and secure use of seas and oceans”. Thus, it is necessary that major powers which are not littoral to IOR, but have massive interests in the region stop facilitating India’s aggressive role and also try to negotiate on their own geopolitical conflicts, so that this massive militarization of the Indian Ocean could be stopped.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/28072021-appointment-of-national-maritime-security-coordinator-india-and-its-attempts-of-naval-dominance-in-ior-oped/>

Credibility of India’s Supersonic BrahMos Missile: Recent Failure

Amber Afreen Abid

During a test firing on Monday, July 12, 2021, India’s BrahMos supersonic cruise missile fell quite shortly after the takeoff on Odisha Coast. The missile can target up to the range of 450km. the test, according to the reports, failed because of the glitches with propulsion system. However, the conjoint team of scientists from Brahmos Aerospace Corporation and DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organization are working to ascertain the exact cause of failure, which is still unknown.

The Brahmos missile consists of two-staged missile; the first stage comprises of the solid propellant booster engines, which gets separated after boosting it to the supersonic speed. The second stage, which comprised of the ramjet engine, then pushes the missile to nearly the speed of Mach 3, in the cruise phase. Supersonic cruise missiles had earlier been used to hit targets below the range of 300km, which is inducted in to the Indian armed Forces; but now they have been upgraded to the speed of 450km with the claim of supersonic speed. Many other versions of the missile had been earlier developed by Brahmos Aerospace Corporation in a Joint Venture with Russian NPO Mashinostroyeniya (NPOM). The BrahMos missile is principally designed against the ships and land-based targets. The BrahMos is named after two rivers of India and Russia, the Brahmaputra river of India and Moskva river of Russia, as it is Joint Venture of two states.

The failure of India's Brahmos cruise Missile bosom signals of the credibility of India's nuclear deterrent. According to the Indian official nuclear doctrine, India maintains the nuclear posture of No-First Use (NFU) and credible minimum deterrence, moreover, India intends to respond massively and aggressively against the nuclear first strike. But, here comes the question of credibility! The credibility with which, a country wants to respond and tries to create deterrence, has to be assured of its capability and its force postures. A country which maintains the posture of no-First Use has to be assured of the functionality and robustness of its arsenals in order to signal a high score of credibility to its adversary.

The failing of Brahmos supersonic cruise missile test at this point, where India intends to develop the hypersonic missiles, the Brahmos II, which according to India would be an advanced version of this supersonic cruise missiles, with the speed more than it, of Mach 5, which is almost five times the speed of sound. It raises concerns about the efficacy of Indian technology, and weakens its deterrence posture, as concern are there about the robustness of India's technological capability and hence its deterrence. The failure of the test indicates that Indian arsenals are not much reliable, may it be a single test or the in the delayed process of building SSBM, even a minor fault and such delay in the making of missies and other technology indicates the incredibility at India's part. India also claims to develop the missiles indigenously, whereas, almost all of its technology is imported from other countries. Well, the failure of the Brahmos cruise missile test could also be because of any key error in design and control of technology. This, indeed, is a great cause of worry for the Indian scientists and establishment.

The development of missiles is quite expensive and before incorporating into service proper time and tests should be conducted to ensure its reliability. Without being assured of one's technology and capability, it is futile to incorporate for use in the military complex, as it leads to the weakening of deterrence posture in the longer run. A state is required to make watchful and cautious steps and considerations, in order to ensure the longer shelf-life of missiles and other technology.

As according to the Indian nuclear doctrine, if India wants to maintain a posture like NFU, its capability is required to be credible else the communication of such failures of the already inducted technology, which India is trying to further advance becomes an anecdote of failure and weakens credible minimum deterrence posture of India. For a credible posture a country should have a strong command and control infrastructure and greatly requires a high level of missile preparedness, which India is lacking as seen in the failure of BrahMos cruise missile test.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/29072021-credibility-of-indias-supersonic-brahmos-missile-recent-failure-oped/>

Future of information of space CBMs in South Asia

Sher Bano

In the present world cyber warfare is considered to be the most formidable means of non-kinetic war fighting. In South Asia the probability of eruption of an unintentional war as the result of cyber-attack has also increased many folds. Hence it has become necessary to build a stable environment in information space in order to avoid certain large scale cyber-attacks that can lead towards inadvertent war. Pakistan has been the main target of India's cyber-attack in the past few years and it aspires to further militarize cyberspace. As cyber space is the area that does not have any legally binding obligation, the only way to control the malicious cyber behavior is by building effective "Confidence Building Measures (CBMs)" between India and Pakistan.

Building the information space CBMs was first discussed at the WSIS Summit in 2005 at Tunis. Everyone agreed that in order to strengthen the trust framework it is essential to build network security, consumer protection, information security, authentication and privacy that are considered to be the prerequisite to develop an Information society. It can only be achieved by building a cyber-security culture globally that would ensure the protection of privacy and data.

Similarly having some credible cyber space CBMs between both Pakistan-India can ensure cyber security in South Asia. The prerequisite of having an effective CBM between the two states is to have effective national cyber-security practices and policies in order to protect the critical infrastructure. As all the countries are linked digitally, it has also increased their mutual interdependence. Hence the implications of the national cyber activities can be both international and national meaning having weak cyber infrastructure could weaken the cyber defenses collectively. It is in the interest of all the individual users, businesses and governments that have larger capacity to assist those businesses and governments that do not have such capacity. These steps will develop the trust and confidence among the states and will globally strengthen cyber security.

The first step in institutionalizing the CBMs in information space between Pakistan and India is by creating the basic awareness among common man, governments and organizations to understand this concept. At present the policy makers are not fully aware of the vulnerabilities of the ICT tools that are used for management and governance. One can request assistance from the local NGO's or international organizations in this regard. The roadmap of building cyber CBMs between India and Pakistan must include increased cyber contact among the technical societies of both states that are working on the issues related to cyber security. These societies must collaborate to create a regional hub that would determine the ground rules related to cyber security in South Asia. The governments must support such societies by organizing international and local workshops.

Both India and Pakistan are not the signatories of "Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime". Both can collectively agree to sign CEC agreement and also can have bilateral agreements on Cyber Space among themselves in order to minimize the transnational cybercrime. They can work mutually in organizing seminars and workshops and build capacities of policy experts in building effective cyber laws. In order to strengthen the 'military information CBMs' India and Pakistan must predefine redlines that could initiate a response. One can define areas where cyber operations are not permitted. A cyber hotline could be created that would allow the policy makers and professionals to immediately react if there is an alarming situation and make the political leadership to quickly take the de-escalatory measures.

The next step would be strengthening cyber security through cyber treaties among two states. Both states can efficiently fight against cyber-crime by signing bilateral treaties. Such treaties would help building trust and will enable them to fight cybercrime collectively. A joint

cyber space monitoring cell can also be created that can monitor any malicious cyber activity and both countries can also share important information. Lastly, both the states must refrain from hostile propaganda against each other. Social media is one of the major platforms that is used for spreading false information and hatred among the states. Both states should come up with means to control such activities that aggravate the already intimidating situation.

There are various factors that need to be considered while developing information space CBMs. One such factor is that the process should be kept away from the media. The process must start informally and slowly move towards the official level. Only a regional approach toward building confidence measures could allow Pakistan and India to end this long-term bilateral animosity. The essential condition for maintaining peace is to maintain a balance between non-military and military CBMs. CBMs cannot become successful overnight, they will take time but the need to begin negotiations in the cyber domain among India and Pakistan is immediate.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/28072021-future-of-information-of-space-cbms-in-south-asia-oped/>

Growing Pakistan-Uzbekistan Relations

Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai

Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations in recent times are growing and cooperation is on the rise between the two important countries of South Asia and Central Asia. The recent visit of Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan to Uzbekistan was an indication the two states are expanding their multi-faceted mutual cooperation. During his two-day visit, Imran Khan addressed Uzbekistan-Pakistan Business Forum on ‘Central and South Asia 2021: Regional Connectivity and Opportunities’. Mr. Khan expressed his hope for connectivity of both the states through aviation, road, and rail. “Pakistan has immense potential to connect Central Asia with the rest of the world and become a hub of trade,” Khan added.

The recent cooperation is happening in a time where there is a change in the regional dynamics. The U.S. and China are trying to make their clout strong in Central Asia while the change in Afghanistan is going to happen once the U.S. completes its withdrawal. Islamabad sees the potential to connect with Uzbekistan through Afghanistan. In his address, Mr. Khan said, “Pakistan is keen for peace in Afghanistan and considers it vital for trade connectivity

among the regional countries.” Pakistan aims to link Uzbekistan through a rail link with Pakistan via Afghanistan.

An agreement has been signed in February this year to develop a railroad through Termez-Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar, an important connectivity project that would boost trade between the three states and get two important regions connected in addition to Uzbekistan and Afghanistan access to Pakistani Seaports. The project will take five years which is 600-kilometer-long. Tashkent aims to diversify its Sea access option beyond its reliance on Iranian ports. On the other hand, Pakistan will also get access to Central Asia and beyond which it has sought since the independence of the Central Asian States in early the 1990s. the said railroad will decrease Pakistan’s transportation costs to Russia by 15-20 percent.

For two major reasons, Uzbekistan prefer Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railroad: its shortest one. Secondly, it connects the Uzbekistan-Kyrghizstan-China corridor with Europe and South Asia. Among other reasons, the U.S.-Iran rivalry is also a factor because of that reason Uzbekistan want a safe passage and option. Tashkent has hugely invested in the transportation sector to connect the Iranian ports with Uzbekistan but it fears Tehran’s escalation with Washington can cost Tashkent of heavy price. Bandar Abbas is the main port Tashkent is using for its trade. Once these projects are materialized, it will add great value to the objectives of both states.

Pakistan’s strategic policy vis-à-vis Central Asia has five broad objectives: trade and connectivity, strong political link, investment, and energy sector cooperation, defense and security and people-to-people contact. Islamabad has made many endeavors since the independence of the Central Asia to get access to it yet due to Afghanistan’s precarious security situation; this plan did not come true. Now at the moment when a change is going to occur in Afghanistan, Islamabad sees a ray of hope to get safe access to Central Asian states.

On the other hand, Pakistan is the shortest, easiest and economical connectivity route to the Arabian Sea for Central Asian states and specifically for Uzbekistan. Islamabad is willing to help facilitate Central Asian states to engage in trade via its sea routes. Similarly, Uzbekistan and Pakistan can engage in various sectors including trade, tourism, education, health, and energy projects. Moreover, Pakistan’s renewed focus is geo-economics which can strengthen Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations. However, for the said purpose, peace in the region and particularly in Afghanistan is essential for any trade, investment, and connectivity initiative. Similarly, the

Chinese Belt and Road Initiative will further bring both countries close to each other as it has to connect Pakistan with Central Asia and beyond.

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