



VISION

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Compiled & Edited by:

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Strategic Vision Institute
Islamabad

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

Indian military modernization encompasses apt response from Pakistan, and continuous military modernization and training in this regard helps attain strategic stability and deterrence stability in the region. The mutual vulnerability prevails when the two adversaries are capable enough to deter each other's aggressive designs. A strong conventional deterrence ultimately creates anxiety and fear at the adversary's end that the war would be costlier and unachievable, and could result into a humiliating defeat.

Similarly, India being its member, Quad is considered a serious challenge for Pakistan. The question is how Pakistan could deal with such a concerning situation? Islamabad on one had to maintain its smooth relations with Washington while on the other, it has to balance India. Pakistan assumes Indo-US close partnership in the Indian Ocean Region as a 'nexus' that will resultantly undermine Pakistan's interests. In case of strong India-US ties or India being a member of a strategic group like Quad will imbalance the balance of power in South Asia and will further push Islamabad towards Beijing and Moscow as we have seen recently.

Though, Ballistic Missile Defence System is a defensive technology, but India wants to exploit it offensively against Pakistan, by creating a false sense of security and going aggressively towards Pakistan, and to exploit the strategic, economic and political assets for bargain. Furthermore, BMD also undermines the core of regional stability which is the concept of deterrence. The exclusion of the phenomenon of nuclear deterrence will accentuate the arms readiness, and 'use it or lose it' strategy by the other state for its protection. Hence, it could prove to trigger nuclear war in the South Asian region.

Keeping in view BJP aggressive policies against minorities in India, Sikhs have announced to held more referendums regarding Khalistan in Europe and Canada where a large number of Sikhs are living. However, if these repressive policies keep continuing, there would be further such movements in India. Similarly, if Khalistan movement gets accelerated, it will further encourage Kashmiris to fight for the right of their self-determination.

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](#).

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Pakistan Improving Military Capabilities through Multi-National Exercises

Amber Afreen Abid

A country's prepared military has always been its guarantor of peace, along with the vigilance, wide-range training and preparedness. Thus preparing the state for unforeseeable circumstances and crisis that befalls upon. Pakistan's tri-forces have conducted numerous exercises in various regions, nationally and internationally. These exercises basically incorporate the peace efforts, and are not by any means a show of aggressive force posture. The peace time exercises promotes peace by preparing the state for encountering any kind of defensive acts, and creating strong deterrence. The history manifests that deterrence has always been a prime factor in avoidance of wars and establishing peace. Hence, such exercises become a guarantor of peace in the volatile south Asian region.

Numerous exercises have been conducted by Pakistan which includes the multinational naval exercises, Aman Exercise and the recent participation in multinational exercise Nusret 2021, with the purpose of strengthening Pakistan Navy's hold in the Arabian Sea; Pakistan Army exercise Jidar-ul-Hadeed and Tasksheer-e-Jabal, for getting better grip in the desert and mountainous areas, multinational air exercise ACES meet 2021-1 and ACES meet 2021-2. The exercise included the airborne systems, fighter jets, early warning and control aircraft and the military satellites, with the purpose of improving the harmony and coordination between ground and air elements. The numerous exercises conducted by all the three forces of Pakistan helps in attaining perfection and preparedness in the desired areas and prepare the military for exceptional response under the conventional operation settings.

More than two decades have passed since overt nuclearization of Pakistan and India, but the importance of conventional deterrence in the maintenance of strategic stability still can't be ruled out. India has always tried to exploit the threshold under the nuclear overhang, and has always tried to disturb the strategic stability by introducing limited war doctrines and other offensive postures, and through major progression in the offensive military technology. India, in its endeavor to achieve the regional hegemony has always tried to get in the way of strategic stability in the south Asian region. The limited war in south Asia could potentially be the conflict escalator and could lead to a full scale war, which could be disastrous for the two nuclear rivals.

Hence, to let go off the chances of such consequences, the stability and credible deterrence at the lower rung is imperative for the peace and stability in the region.

Political planning and military preparedness is the key to the credible deterrence of a country. The purpose of deterrence is to delay the attainment of objective of the adversary by elongating the war and making the war unthinkable for the opponent. The conventional deterrence thus precludes the adversary from any misadventure, under the nuclear overhang.

In the evolving security situation in in south Asia, Pakistan is compelled to adopt a dual-track strategy for catering to the aggressive designs of the enemy at both conventional and unconventional level. The Full-Spectrum deterrence posture of Pakistan has been credible enough to deter the enemy at the unconventional level, but alongside that, Pakistan has to be fully prepared for any proactive war strategy or counterforce targeting by the enemy. In this regard, advanced training, exercises and operational readiness is immensely important for the security of the country. It is the result of such comprehensive trainings, vigilance and preparedness that Pakistan has successfully catered to India's aggressive actions in 2019 Pulwama-Balakot crisis. The apt retort and the befitting response is the indication of country's military preparedness, which is further strengthened through conventional military exercises.

Hence, to conclude, all the Indian military modernization encompasses apt response from Pakistan, and continuous military modernization and training in this regard helps attain strategic stability and deterrence stability in the region. The mutual vulnerability prevails when the two adversaries are capable enough to deter each other's aggressive designs. A strong conventional deterrence ultimately creates anxiety and fear at the adversary's end that the war would be costlier and unachievable, and could result into a humiliating defeat. The conventional imbalance in south Asia is aptly controllable for Pakistan, and the incessant exercises of all the forces of Pakistan's military are tallying Pakistan's capability for countering any future threat matrix.

The writer is working as a Research Associate at the Strategic Vision Institute (SVI), a non-partisan think-tank based in Islamabad, Pakistan.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/12112021-pakistan-improving-military-capabilities-through-multi-national-exercises-oped/>.

Quad: Implications for Pakistan

Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai

In the new millennium, Indo-Pacific has become a new theatre of international strategic competition. All major powers are asserting their presence and try to consolidate their positions in addition to the formation of alliances or groups to collectively protect converging interests. China is one of the main players in the region which has bitter relations with other global and regional powers. Hence, the formation of alliances and groups are keep continuing. Quad and AUKUS are prime examples of grouping in order to collectively safeguard interests.

Quad or Quadrilateral Security Dialogue is comprised of the US, Australia, Japan and India aim to work for peace, prosperity, security, and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. Cooperation among the members began following the Tsunami in 2004 in the Indian Ocean. In 2007, the group held its first meeting aiming at a free and open Indo-Pacific. The group today is working on a broader agenda having economic, health, and security components. Still, Quad is not an alliance but a loose group.

Quad aims to counter the rising Chinese clout and assertion in the Indo-Pacific region. Quad members' relationship with China has not been smooth during the pandemic and even for the last decade. Japan and India have border issues with China, Australia relations are worse with China following the Covid-19 investigation by Australia about its origin. And above all, US-China tension has been high for several years. All group members bring them together having their own interests however one objective is common: containing assertive China. Chinese believe that Quad is to split Asia by instigating regional powers to contain the Chinese clout. However, by any move against the Chinese interests, these regional powers may become cannon powder as China will respond to safeguard its interests.

Similarly, Quad members in November last year held their biggest Naval exercise in the Indian Ocean signaling to counter China's political and military clout in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). President Trump in his visit to Japan, China, the Philippines, South Korea, and Vietnam frequently used the word Indo-Pacific rather than Asia-Pacific that indicated the U.S. policy is diverted to the Indo-Pacific in the region.

China's emergent clout worries Washington among other powers like India where they challenge the regional status quo. China is under criticism for crackdown over minorities like

Uyghurs, Hong Kong which kept continues even during the pandemic. China has its eyes on Afghanistan which would be a corridor for Belt and Road project. Hence, there are many fronts where states en-bloc to China will have to resist.

The quad would also have implications for Pakistan where India is its member. The growing Indian influence in the Indian Ocean Region is a serious concern for Pakistan. Pakistan's 95 percent trade is through sea where its economy is mostly dependent on secure sea lines of communications. Islamabad has limited resources in which it cannot afford to keep check posts that could let its trade convoys go smoothly. Similarly, the security of the seaports is another concern in case of any naval conflict. Indian nuclear submarines in the region are also a grave concern that could provide for a strategic imbalance.

Underpinning the Pak-China relationship has a strong convergence: India should not dominate the Indian Ocean Region besides South Asia. India-China tussle gives Pakistan an enormous edge against India. China is not only assisting Pakistan economically and militarily but also guarding its interest in the UN Security Council as a permanent member. CPEC and BRI are further factors that grow China's interests in a strong and stable Pakistan.

India being its member, Quad is considered a serious challenge for Pakistan. The question is how Pakistan could deal with such a concerning situation? Islamabad on one had to maintain its smooth relations with Washington while on the other, it has to balance India. Pakistan assumes Indo-US close partnership in the Indian Ocean Region as a 'nexus' that will resultantly undermine Pakistan's interests. In case of strong India-US ties or India being a member of a strategic group like Quad will imbalance the balance of power in South Asia and will further push Islamabad towards Beijing and Moscow as we have seen recently. Pakistan has been trying to keep smooth relations with the US despite its close strategic partnership with India. Still Quad is a loose organization yet if it widens its scope to strategic and military cooperation among the members, it will become a real challenge for China and Pakistan which will need practical measures to tackle with.

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<http://southasiajournal.net/quad-implications-for-pakistan/>.

S-400 Ballistic Missile Defence System and South Asian Strategic Stability Dynamics

Amber Afreen Abid

The actual use of nuclear weapons by the two south Asian nuclear rivals has been barred since overt nuclearization and the sense of mutual vulnerability is there. The mutual vulnerability entails that the two states has the power and capability to attack each other but due to the fear of terrible relation in response, they refrained from indulging in such activity, and the nuclear deterrence prevails, which becomes the reason for regional stability.

India, however in its pursuit to attain regional hegemony and prestige, trying to remove this sense of mutual vulnerability by going for the aggressive military force postures and attainment of technology. India intends for a multi-layered defensive shield, and has indigenously developed a part of it, and has attained the technology form US, Russia, and Israel as well in order to complete its four –layered defensive shield, in its capital New Delhi and Mumbai. This pursuit of BMD system can create a false sense of security in the minds of Indian policy makers, and that could destabilize the region as they could go for any aggressive action against Pakistan, with the intention of defeating enemy at every level.

Besides the procurement of Israeli Iron Dome system, India has acquired Russian S-400 Air Defence System as well, in \$5.43 billion deal between India and Russia, in 2016. The delivery of this system has recently been started. The S-400 system is developed by the Almaz Central Design of Russia and can primarily engage the cruise missiles, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and aircrafts, at an altitude of 30km and 400km in the range.

The introduction of ballistic missile defence system in South Asia can make the already volatile region even more unstable, by increasing the chances of war in the region. The acquisition of such system will make India even more aggressive and could potentially lead to instability. India could potentially attack Pakistan's Political, economic and strategic sites, with a view that they can halt the attack in response to that, which is really absurd.

India is trying to destabilize the deterrence equation, and hence Pakistan has to take appropriate steps before hand in order to maintain the credibility of its deterrence. Pakistan,

keeping in view the economic constraints has not indulged in the development of BMD System, but is looking for more viable options to maintain the strategic stability in the region.

Though BMD system has some vulnerability as well, as no system could give 100% protection, as it is effective against the UAVs, aircrafts and cruise missiles, and not against the ballistic missiles, hence, the credibility get undermined. Moreover, India will be only protecting a few cities under this umbrella, and not the whole of the country falls under this, which will spark outrage amongst the Indians as well. Furthermore, given the short flight time between the two countries, the debris can still fall on the Indian side, causing damage over there as well. Moreover, the efficacy of Multiple Independent Re-entry Vehicles (MIRVs) can't be undermined, as BMD can hit only one missile at a time, and the MIRVs or the launch of multiple missiles simultaneously, BMD wouldn't be able to intercept them all, which undermines the credibility of the BMD System.

The end of Cold War gave rise to the regional hegemonic mindset, to which South Asia also became the victim. This approach has become the reason for regional chaos and instability. India continues to aspire its hegemonic behavior, continuously indulge Pakistan in conventional and unconventional arms race, the negative impact of BMD will also be driven in South Asia by compelling the vertical arms proliferation, which will further the instability in the already volatile region. Though, Ballistic Missile Defence System is a defensive technology, but India wants to exploit it offensively against Pakistan, by creating a false sense of security and going aggressively towards Pakistan, and to exploit the strategic, economic and political assets for bargain. Furthermore, BMD also undermines the core of regional stability which is the concept of deterrence. The exclusion of the phenomenon of nuclear deterrence will accentuate the arms readiness, and 'use it or lose it' strategy by the other state for its protection. Hence, it could prove to trigger nuclear war in the South Asian region.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2021/11/26/s-400-ballistic-missile-defence-system-and-south-asian-strategic-stability-dynamics/>.

India: Khalistan referendum-an analysis

Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai

Sikhs in the United Kingdom organized Khalistan referendum at Queen Elizabeth Center, London on October 31, 2021. The referendum continued from 9 am to 6 pm where more than 30,000 Sikhs voted in favor of free Khalistan. Gurpatwant Singh, the Secretary General of Sikhs for Justice said: “The participation by Sikhs in such large numbers has defied expectation of all as we were expecting a huge turnout, but the sheer passion and the numbers that came out have overwhelmed everyone.” Gurpatwant further added that they will arrange referendum in the next phase in three big cities of the UK where large number of Sikhs reside. Similarly, referendum will also be arranged in Europe and Canada where Sikhs populations is in high number. Moreover, the final results of the referendum will be announced by the Punjab Referendum Commission in the next six months.

It is pertinent to mention that on October 31, 1984, the Indian Prime Minister was assassinated in response to Operation Blue Star was ordered by the authorities against Sikhs to limit the Sikh Justice Movement. In three decades since 1984, operations against Khalistan movement caused the loss of 20,000 Sikhs lives by the Indian government operations. This article aims to trace the cause of such move and what challenges it will bring for the Modi-led BJP government where minorities persecution has become a daily routine. Khalistan movement if gets momentum will further encourage Kashmiris to struggle for their right of self-determination.

Since BJP is in power, no minority is safe in India. Whether it is Modi’s Kashmir policy or BJP anti-Muslim and Sikhs provocations, the situation is quite grave when it comes to the rights of minorities. Human Rights Watch in its report in February 2021 stated: Modi’s government has adopted such policies which severely put bars on the rights of Muslims and other minorities. The report further added, “Prejudices embedded in the government of the ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party have infiltrated independent institutions, such as the police and the courts, empowering nationalist groups to threaten, harass, and attack religious minorities with impunity.”

Similarly, there are a number of organizations which act against minorities under the patronage of BJP. BJP government in December 2019 passed the Citizenship Amendment Act

that provided for fast process of non-Muslim asylum seekers from regional countries in India. Hence, in February 2020, minorities from all faiths protested against the BJP policies of citizenship. The central government tried to discredit the protestors especially Muslims by labeling them anti-state. Moreover, thousands of farmers from across the country protested against the new farm law last year in November. The BJP leadership blamed Sikhs for inciting the protest. Likewise, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a speech in parliament described the peaceful protestors as parasites. Besides, Twitter accounts of those covering the protest were blocked.

Hence, minorities are under extreme stress and deprived of their due rights by the BJP government. Whether it was abrogation of article 370 and 35A, Citizenship Amendment Act 2019, Farm Act, National Register of Citizen, or extra-judicial killings of the minorities, India is no less than a hell for minorities. Now at a time when Sikhs are struggling to have their due rights, the Indian government is using any tactic to suppress them. Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval after a couple of weeks after the Khalistan referendum raised the issue with the authorities in the United Kingdom that why such an event was allowed to held.

Henceforth, instead of pressing minorities, the Modi-led BJP should revisit their policies and abandon provocations against minorities in addition to Kashmiris. If the Indian government charts out a balance policy where the rights of minorities are not violated, movements like Khalistan can never happen. More referendum vis-à-vis Khalistan has been announced by the leaders of the Khalistan movements in Europe and Canada where a large number of Sikhs are living. However, if these repressive policies keep continuing, there would be further such movements in India. Similarly, if Khalistan movement gets accelerated, it will further encourage Kashmiris to fight for the right of their self-determination.

<http://southasiajournal.net/india-khalistan-referendum-an-analysis/>

10th NPT Review Conference: Critical Appraisal

Ahyousha Khan

The Nuclear Non-proliferation treaty entered into force in 1970, after two years of opening for signatures. In 2020 it completed its 50 years of entry into force and in the 1995 Review Conference, the treaty was extended indefinitely. Treaty was a grand bargain between

nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon states, where non-nuclear-weapon states forgo their right to acquire nuclear weapons in exchange for access to peaceful uses of nuclear technology. Many scholars, especially in the west, consider the non-proliferation treaty as a success story because of the number of its members, which are currently 190, and because of the fact that the treaty was successful in controlling the number of nuclear proliferators. However, “NPT as a success story” requires careful reassessment and deliberation. Otherwise, this major cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime will not be able to cater to evolving circumstances and hence will continue to lose its importance.

NPT was drafted with the objective to “prevent the spread” of nuclear weapons and technology, “promote cooperation” for the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, and to achieve the goal of “nuclear disarmament - general and complete disarmament”. NPT member states review the treaty and its implementation after every five years in NPT Review conference; during 1995 NPT Review conference treaty was extended for an indefinite period of time. Treaty was extended for an indefinite period of time “under the framework of strengthening the review process, the establishment of benchmarks for non-proliferation and disarmament and establishment of NWFZ in the Middle East”. However, the point of deliberation in this regard is how 25 years down the lane today NPT member states cannot even come to a consensus on the final document of the review conference.

An evolving situation, especially after the 2015 review conference which ended in failure, tensions and differences grew among the nuclear weapon and non-nuclear weapon states parties of the NPT. 5 nuclear weapon state parties to the treaty and their allies which have access to nuclear umbrella consider NPT as a non-proliferation treaty, which has nothing to do with disarmament. Although, NPT has always been discriminatory in nature as it was bargain non-nuclear weapon state parties expected to have access to peaceful nuclear technology. However, NPT failed NNWS in providing the inalienable right to peaceful nuclear technology for growth and development. This gave rise to a sense of dissatisfaction among the NNWS and hence caused the birth of UN “Treaty of Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons” (TPNW), which regarded nuclear weapons as immoral and call for the ban on nuclear weapons.

So far 86 states have signed the treaty and 54 have ratified it, after 50 ratifications it entered into force in January 2021. Nuclear weapon states consider objectives of TPNW devoid

of geopolitical and security realities of states. However, the formation of this treaty reveals that NNWS parties to the NPT are very much interested in “general and complete disarmament”. TPNW does not enjoy the support of NWS, thus to validate the nuclear deterrence and discredit TPNW, the US presented an initiative of “CEND (Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament)” at NPT preparatory committee 2018-2019. Another important issue in the NPT review conferences is the establishment of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZ) in the Middle East. Many Middle Eastern states and especially Iran agreed to extend NPT for an indefinite period of time in the 1995 resolution.

Other than that continuous nuclear build-up and technological developments by NWS is a concern for NNWS of treaties. These all issues are becoming bone of contentions between nuclear weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states. Some of these issues will become a matter of concern in coming to NPT Review Conference in 2022. This particular NPT Review Conference was scheduled to be held in 2020 but because of the COVID-19 pandemic has been delayed. Year 2020th marked the 50 years of NPT entry into force as well. Other than the conflicting views on non-proliferation and disarmament in nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon states, NPT review conferences and treaty, in general, has so far not been revised according to the changes in a global system. It regards only 5 states as NWS states however in reality there are 4 other states which have had nuclear weapons for quite sometimes and all these states owing to their security concerns are involved in nuclear build-up like 5 NWS of the treaty. This blind eye by the NPT is proving its discriminatory nature and shows that not only TPNW but also NPT is incognizant of the security concerns of the states.

In the current situation where all major powers are involved in rapid militarization (conventional and non-conventional), Cold War disarmament agreements have deteriorated, now new disarmaments agreements are in sight, agreements like JCPOA were not respected by major powers, chances of successful review conference to mark the 50 years of NPT are very bleak. There are many divergent views on various issues held by the parties to the treaty. However, to make the next 50 years of NPT success it is necessary that NPT broaden its scope by addressing its inherent discriminatory nature and addressing the issues which are becoming bone of contentions among member states.

<http://southasiajournal.net/10th-npt-review-conference-critical-appraisal/>.