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Compiled & Edited by:
Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai

Strategic Vision Institute
Islamabad

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

SVI Foresight

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

On 10th March 2022, Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) held a press briefing in which it was told that a day earlier a "high-speed flying object" traveled from Indian air space to Pakistan's air space and crashed near the small city of Mian Channu. The "high-speed flying object" or projectile was traveling at 40,000 feet and crossed 124 km into Pakistani territory. Till the statement by the ISPR, no statement came from India which recognized any such actions. However, two days later, the Indian ministry of defense confirmed in a statement that the projectile was a missile "accidentally fired" during "routine maintenance".

This incident was one of its kinds where a nuclear hostile country launched an "accidental missile" at its adversary country and did not even bother to clear the air. This casual attitude of India was heavily criticized by Pakistan and doubts rose around the world about the safety and security of the Indian nuclear program. The Indian obsession with the acquisition of newer technology could result in the accidental or inadvertent war in South Asia, provided its unproven capability to manage it and war-prone behavior. This shows India being an irresponsible nuclear weapon state and the international community should look into this child state that is incompetent to take-up with nuclear and nuclear-related technology and delivery vehicles, and is thus a threat to the regional and global peace and security.

Likewise, instead of going towards the attainment of peace and stability in the region, India's burgeoning counterforce technology is a threat to the deterrence stability in the region. Any kind of failure to maintain nuclear deterrence in South Asia could result in an all-out war, without any escalation control. India, in its lust for power and hegemonic designs, has been destabilizing the region. Both the nuclear states in South Asia need to engage in arms restraint and escalation control measures and should take concrete steps for maintaining the strategic stability in the region. This seems to be a plausible way out; else the new era of destabilization even could be more disastrous.

Moreover, this volume presents a number of articles analyzing the burning important issues for global peace, security, non-proliferation, deterrence, Artificial Intelligence, Pakistan's security challenges, Russia-Ukraine military standoff, and India's irresponsible behavior vis-à-vis the safety and security of its weapons that negatively affect peace and stability in South Asia.

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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Artificial Intelligence without Cyber Resilience in South Asia

Ahyousha Khan

Artificial intelligence is becoming one of the defining technologies of 21st century. Today AI is being deployed in health care systems, financial trading, translation and transportation and military technology massively. The technology and terminology “artificial intelligence” are not the product of 21st century, rather the term was coined in 1956 at Dartmouth summer workshop organized to develop thinking machines. However, there is no single definition of this technology, thus is quite difficult to define.

According to a definition proposed by European Commission, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a system with capability to achieve given goal by acting physically or digitally, after perceiving their environment by interpreting the structured or unstructured data, reasoning the knowledge derived from this data and deciding the best actions to perform the given goal. This definition identifies the capability to perceive, interpret and reason as the pre-requisites for AI enabled systems. Due to its capability of intelligence monitoring, reconnaissance, target recognition, communication and navigation, automated command and control, precision strikes, AI enable systems are becoming necessary for militaries.

Artificial intelligence is not a stand-alone technology, rather enhances or adds new features when integrated into military systems. AI’s integration into military systems is a double edge sword. On the one hand it is improving the existing systems by providing precision, intelligence, detection, and decision-making tools; on the other hand it is increasing risks and vulnerabilities for the existing structures and systems.

Most of the research related to AI in military systems is associated with their contribution as catalyst in offensive or defensive operations. However, one less discussed fact in this regard is the security of the artificial intelligence-based systems. Today artificial intelligence is used in missile defence and reconnaissance, which enhances the target recognition, image and pattern recognition and trajectory calculation. Moreover, it can also assist in analysis of damage effects. Enhanced intelligence and trajectory calculations will assist states in more guided and precision strikes. All these technological developments reveal that artificial intelligence is enabling states to gather massive information and processing it to achieve desired objectives.

However, artificial intelligence does not exist in vacuum. It is essential to recognize that all the data amassed, processed and utilized with the help of artificial intelligence needs protection and security. Moreover, besides data, machines and their algorithms also need to work effectively to avoid manipulation and breach. This brings us to the point that though artificial intelligence is a necessity for national security of states and is largely adopted worldwide; this technology also needs to be secured against cyber-attacks. To protect such systems, it is necessary that states build resilience against them. It is necessary that AI systems should be protected from cyber-attacks and whole infrastructure of state must have cyber resilience.

With increased dependence on information technology and rapid digitization of systems, term cyber security gained momentum. However, these systems not only need to be securitized but they should be resilient against the threats. Cyber resilience is the ability of the system to operate during an attack and achieve a minimum level of operationalization while responding to an attack. It also enables system to develop a back-up system that works in case of attack. Cyber resilience is a step forward from cyber security because it not only ensures the security of system, but also identifies the threats to it and then proposes the system that could work amidst such attacks. Most military systems are resilient against kinetic attacks because resilience and survivability go hand in hand. But, with modernizations in military it is necessary that state's cyber networks which are working on artificial intelligence must be resilient against kinetic and non-kinetic attack.

Today states are in race to use the AI in their military systems to achieve maximum military gains and denying their adversary the same. Situation is not so different in South Asia where two nuclear rivals of the region are paving the way towards use of artificial intelligence for military purposes. India has developed Center for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (CAIR) in DRDO, with the aim to develop AI within the military systems to improve geographical information system technology, decision support systems and object detection and mapping. Moreover, companies like Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) are already in the process of developing and incorporating AI into military equipment. This includes AI-enabled patrol robot developed by BEL built in the hope to be utilized by the Indian military. Moreover, in 2019 India's Gen. Bipin Rawat said adversary in north is spending huge amount on AI and cyber warfare, so we cannot be left behind in this race. It is mostly projected by the Indian policy

makers and many international scholars that India is facing adversaries at two fronts (China-Pakistan), to justify India's military expenditure and modernization.

However, recently, events like Galwan Valley clash evidently exposed that India's military capabilities are mostly against Pakistan. Moreover, South Asia's security dynamics are heavily characterized by the action-reaction chain. To avoid security dilemma vis-à-vis India, Pakistan would also invest in AI. At the moment Pakistan has also started working towards achieving expertise in AI. In 2019 President of Pakistan launched PIAIC with focus on development of skills in AI to strengthen economy and defence systems. Moreover, there are centers like National Center of Artificial Intelligence and Department of Robotics and Intelligent Machine Learning in NUST, which are working to improve AI based knowledge in Pakistan. Besides that Pakistan recently launched a program named "Digital Pakistan" to increase access and connectivity, digital infrastructure, e-government, digital skilling and training and introduce innovation and entrepreneurship.

There are many studies done on the implications of AI on nuclear deterrence and strategic stability in South Asia. These studies highlight that due to prevalent asymmetry in conventional military build-up, introduction of AI into military technology would worsen the already fragile deterrence stability of the region. This assumption is based on the argument that due to AI in reconnaissance systems, high-level intelligence collection would affect the survivability of nuclear weapons, which is based on diversification and concealment. However, AI would also enable both states to have more response options in a short time with the help of decision-making tools in case of crisis, especially in aerial battle.

Moreover, both states are moving towards the massive digitalization of their military systems and society without building cyber resilient systems. Resilience can be built against the vulnerabilities like human factor, massive speed of the systems, protection and storage of data and advanced persistent threats (ATPs). Artificial intelligence-based systems must be incorporated in societies and militaries along with mechanisms to strengthen the cyber security systems. A front runner in AI like US has also expressed concerns over the need for modern equipment to operate on "internet-like networks" and subsequent increased vulnerabilities due to their applicability. Therefore, military modernization can happen effectively through cyber resiliency in military systems, network processes and cyber architecture. Cyber resilient system

would enable state to develop a system that would remain functional during a phishing attack. Steps like cyber deception, agility and clone defense could increase resilience in the existing systems. This is important to understand in already lacking strategic stability, military systems based on artificial intelligence would be an ideal target of AI advanced persistent threats in South Asia.

Therefore, as the process of digitalization is increasing in Pakistan-India equation, it is also becoming very important that both states should develop resilience in their cyber systems so that the technologies could give them advantage rather than becoming a security peril for them.

<https://www.melangemagazine.biz/artificial-intelligence-without-cyber-resilience-in-south-asia/>

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Quad and its impact on strategic stability in South Asia

Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai

In the last couple of decades, there is huge concentration on the Indo-Pacific by great powers to establish their hegemony. This great powers' game is between China and a bloc of countries i.e., the US, UK, Australia, Japan and India. However, smaller countries like Pakistan fall under its impact being in rivalry with one member or the other. Pakistan's arch rival, India, is the member of Quad that provide for concerns for the former. 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. However, India being its member, this organization is a real challenge to the strategic stability of South Asia.

Cooperation among the Quad 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.

Likewise, 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 in the shape of Quad 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 disturb the strategic stability in South Asia and will further push Islamabad towards Beijing and Moscow as we have noticed 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.

<https://criticaloutsider.com/2022/03/30/quad-and-its-impact-on-strategic-stability-in-south-asia/>

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Indian Counter-force Capabilities: Effects on South Asian Strategic Stability

Amber Afreen Abid

With the innovation in the warfare technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, improvements in ISR capabilities, hypersonic weapons, and Ballistic Missile Defence Systems (BMDS) have changed the face of warfare. The BMD and MIRV technology would embolden India to go for the first strike against Pakistan. Furthermore, with the provision of an advanced navigation system under BECA, India would be in a much stronger position to go for a counterforce first strike against Pakistan, while having reliance on BMD, as to be sheltered in return. These technological advancements made by India are sprouting a new era of counterforce posture, which would further make the South Asian region more volatile and vulnerable to conflicts.

India's urge to acquire counterforce capability is strongly associated with the doctrinal shift. As the stated posture requires flexibility in the use of nuclear weapons, which fortifies the first strike capability, and thus a deviation in India's declared policy of NFU has become more significant, particularly with reference to its impact on regional security. Indian stated policy of No-First Use (NFU), set out in Draft Nuclear Doctrine in 1999, followed by its first amendment in January 2003 has since then been into hot debates. The NFU pledge coincides with the Credible Minimum Deterrence posture, in which a state maintains a minimum enough quantity

of weapons to deter the enemy and to ensure the survivability of attack. Pakistan has long doubted the Indian policy of NFU, as the actions and statements by the officials of the latter have always been aggressive and protruding toward the former.

India, now, is drifting away from its policy of NFU by the acquisition of counterforce capabilities particularly against Pakistan. This is further evident from the statement issued by India's Defense Minister Mr. Rajnath Singh, back in August 201. It stated "Till today, our nuclear policy is 'no-first-use (NFU). What happens in the future depends on the circumstances.'" A change at the doctrinal level is evident in the Indian strategic enclave, notwithstanding the challenges and repercussions caused by the counterforce strategy, and with an attempt to destabilize the nuclear deterrence in the region, India will go unjustifiably low to attain such measures.

Many experts believe that India has been enhancing its capabilities for strategic flexibility against its nuclear rivals. India wants to attain nuclear dominance, which would ultimately result in chaos in the region. The counterforce capability of India would compel its adversaries to heed the preemptive strike, in case of a crisis, out of the fear of the use of Nuclear weapons first by the patent enemy. Moreover, the counterforce capability pushes the enemy to put the nuclear weapons on hair-trigger mode, and the chances of accidental use and crisis escalation significantly increase. The acquisition of counterforce capability by India would likely provoke a new arms race in the region. This would further destabilize the already unstable South Asian region. The far-reaching destabilization which India is trying to create, just to have an edge on the nuclear adversary, will be back on India's face, faster than she knew it.

On contrary, Pakistan adheres to the policy of Credible Minimum Deterrence (CMD) and does not claim to have any no-First Use (NFU) policy. Moreover, Pakistan aims to use nuclear weapons as a tool for deterrence only. Given the Indian notions of counterforce posture, Pakistan would be left with no choice but to go for a pre-emptive counterforce strike. Nevertheless, with the advent of technological innovations, its countermeasure arrives soon, too. Presently, there are two aspects that Pakistan should take into consideration- the growing Indo-US nexus and India's concealed innovations in the nuclear posture. Though India is far from achieving counterforce strikes against Pakistan's nuclear targets, but concrete steps are required for maintaining future deterrence stability. With that intention, Pakistan should look for competent allies for getting

hands-on the modern capabilities, advanced communication, navigation system and sensors, the advancements in artificial intelligence and otherwise, is essential for strengthening its deterrent capability. Pakistan should heed the development of absolute second-strike capability; as, what is survivable today, could be vulnerable tomorrow. Therefore, advancements in technology should be made for preserving nuclear deterrence in the future as well.

Nuclear deterrence has created a stable environment in the region, at least, to the extent of avoiding nuclear war or full-scale war. With the revolution in nuclear technology, the threat of nuclear war has emerged again. Instead of going towards the attainment of peace and stability in the region, India's burgeoning counterforce technology is a threat to the deterrence stability in the region. Any kind of failure to maintain nuclear deterrence in South Asia could result in an all-out war, without any escalation control. India, in its lust for power and hegemonic designs, has been destabilizing the region. Both the nuclear states in South Asia need to engage in arms restraint and escalation control measures and should take concrete steps for maintaining the strategic stability in the region. This seems to be a plausible way out; else the new era of destabilization even could be more disastrous.

<https://strategic-times.com/blog/2022/03/30/indian-counter-force-capabilities-effects-on-south-asian-strategic-stability/#>.

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Indian Missile Misfire: An Unprecedented Danger

Amber Afreen Abid

On March 9, 2022 a supersonic missile crossed the Indian border, covering a distance of 124 km across the border, and crashed into Pakistan destroying a civilian building. It is believed to be a BrahMos cruise missile, with a range of 292-400 km, jointly developed by India and Russia. This is the first-ever incident in nuclear history, wherein a missile has been fired from a nuclear state into another nuclear state.

On top of that, India remained quiet for 48 hrs after the incident; and was provoked to answer only after Pakistan's military spokesperson went on to highlight this grave incident in the media. India termed the incident as an accidental firing of the missile during routine maintenance and a technical malfunction. However, now the Indian government has changed the narrative and

has termed the incident to be a “human error” and to review the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) with regard to missile handling. This seems even more signaling as it indicates India’s poor handling of such sensitive technology. This also indicates that the authority to launch the missile has been delegated to lower authorities who even increase the risk of accidental war as in the case of cannisterised weapons (warheads permanently mated with the missiles), such negligence can’t be tolerated.

The supersonic missile traveling at such a higher speed can’t take 90 degrees sudden turn provided its fast speed of Mach 3. Furthermore, the timing it was launched sparks concerns around their termed position of technical maintenance; as such matters are done during the day, not in the twilight. Despite having the 2004 hotline agreement between the two countries, the so-called accidental launch was not been intimated. Moreover, if at all it was human error to launch the missile, the BrahMos missile works on the Fire and Forget Principle, which means the trajectory was designed, and the missile flew to the target without further action from the operator, if it was not malfunctioning. The incident is, however, a flagrant violation of Pakistani airspace. Moreover, it could have hit any passenger plane, provided it traveled at a height of 40,000 ft. and could have caused human loss as well.

As far as Indian intentions are concerned, whether it was accidental or intentional, considering the above facts and Indian aggressive counterforce posture and aggressive designs against Pakistan, this could be an attempt to asses Pakistan’s deterrence capabilities and unclear response measures. India wants to undermine Pakistan’s deterrent capabilities. This war-prone behavior of India needs to be changed as it could result in disastrous consequences.

Pakistan’ Military spokesperson made it very clear that Pakistan forces are alert to any threat and the challenges it faces. However, this incident sparks a dire need to re-invigorate the Confidence Building mechanism between the two nuclear South Asian countries. Moreover, an agreement similar to the Pre-Notification of Flight-Testing of Ballistic Missile should be made for cruise missiles testing as well, in order to minimize the risk of such so-called nuclear-related accidents.

The response of Pakistan has been so mature, as if Pakistan could have retaliated, after identifying an aerial object coming from India, believing it to be an attack, the results could have been disastrous. Pakistan has always made efforts for restoring regional peace and stability,

which India has always tried to destabilize due to its immature ruling authority. The political elite has always used the aggressive war-prone card against Pakistan in front of the public for their political gains, without realizing the repercussions, which shows the ill-mindset of India's ruling power. Moreover, the world has seen numerous instances of Uranium theft in India, which indicates weak safety and security protocols and weak Command and Control structure in India to handle such precarious technology.

The Indian obsession with the acquisition of newer technology could result in the accidental or inadvertent war in South Asia, provided its unproven capability to manage it and war-prone behavior. This shows India being an irresponsible nuclear weapon state and the international community should look into this child state that is incompetent to take-up with nuclear and nuclear-related technology and delivery vehicles, and is thus a threat to the regional and global peace and security.

<https://strategic-times.com/blog/2022/03/31/indian-missile-misfire-an-unprecedented-danger/>.

Pakistan's security challenges

Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai

Pakistan in general is under constant security threats in the post-9/11 era; however, following the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, Pakistan's national security is particularly deteriorating day by day. The Tehrik-i-Taliban, Islamic State Khorasan Province, and Baloch insurgents have accelerated their attacks on Pakistan's security forces across erstwhile FATA and Balochistan. When the Taliban took over Kabul, Islamabad was expecting peace on its north-western border; however, the situation took an unexpected turn in the shape of a surge in insurgent's attacks.

All these three outfits have conducted major attacks in erstwhile FATA and Balochistan. Yesterday, TTP announced its Ramadan offensive after targeting military personnel in an attack in South Waziristan that resulted in the loss of six security forces. Pak-Afghan border areas are strongholds of the insurgents whether its erstwhile FATA or Balochistan due to the porous Pak-Afghan border. Since 2007, Pakistan army has conducted a number of operations in erstwhile FATA however, Afghanistan always adds to Pakistan's insecurity by providing safe havens to

those who escape at the time of military operations. The operation Zarb-I-Azab was the major operation in North Waziristan that pushed members of the TTP to Afghanistan.

Likewise, there are reports that thousands of Baloch insurgents returned to Balochistan following the Taliban take over. Baloch insurgents are reportedly receiving support through Afghan soil from anti-Pakistan forces. There are several instances where the government of Pakistan tried to negotiate with the insurgents and help the issue settle, however, at the end of the day, every time, negotiations or agreements did fail. Even in November, reports about a truce between TTP and Islamabad were facilitated by the Taliban in Afghanistan. However, it met the same fate due to disagreement on some issues. Hence, if negotiations are not bearing fruits and the government is unable to dismantle these outfits, what would be the end of this chaos and insecurity?

When the US conducted Operation Anaconda in March 2002 in Afghanistan to dismantle the remnants of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, several of those insurgents fled across the border due to the porous border. Resultantly, though Operation Anaconda was announced successful, the situation later provided for several serious issues and the resurgence of the insurgency that at one point went beyond the control of the Afghan government as well as the US.

Hence, the government needs to make a comprehensive policy to tackle this issue as it can spread across the country with the passage of time. Islamabad can take the following measures: One, a comprehensive strategy in collaboration with the Taliban to make the Durand Line secure by completing the fencing. Until the fencing is incomplete, the infiltration of the insurgents will keep continuing and they will be better positioned to attack on the security forces and even in a position to bargain better. A secure and packed border will discourage the TTP to infiltrate or take support from across the border. When their cadres will have no support from across the border, they will be significantly weakened.

Two, Islamabad may pressurize the Taliban to act against TTP in Afghanistan as they are conducting operations against ISKP across the country. Islamabad at the moment is in apposition to leverage the Taliban as there is rare support from the outer world to the Taliban and Pakistan is providing humanitarian support as well as pleading for humanitarian and economic support for Afghanistan to save it from hunger and humanitarian crisis. In case of an understanding between the Taliban and Islamabad, the issue of insurgents can be better tackled.

Three, if the Taliban do not agree for any case: action against the Taliban and border fencing, Pakistan shall do it unilaterally. The Taliban are not in apposition to challenge Pakistan on the issue of fencing. Once the fencing is complete, Islamabad will be better positioned to act against the insurgents in any part of the country as their roots would have been cut down. Cutting ties between the insurgents' cadres on both sides of the border is essential for weakening them that could compel them to negotiate and any settlement.

Hence, keeping in view the worsening security situation and insurgents' attacks, a comprehensive strategy is needed that could end the menace of insurgency. In the past, the government sometimes put a premium on operations and sometimes went for the sole negotiation option. During both negotiations and operations, securing the Durand Line is a prerequisite to settle the issue of insecurity in Pakistan.

<https://criticaloutsider.com/2022/03/31/pakistans-growing-security-challenges/>.

Irresponsible Case of India's accidental Missile Launch and Implications

Ahyousha Khan

On 10th March 2022 Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) held a press briefing in which it was told that a day earlier a "high-speed flying object" traveled from Indian air space to Pakistan's air space and crashed near the small city of Mian Channu. The "high-speed flying object" or projectile was traveling at 40,000 feet and crossed 124 km into Pakistani territory. Till the statement by the ISPR, no statement came from India which recognized any such actions. However, two days later, the Indian ministry of defense confirmed in a statement that the projectile was a missile "accidentally fired" during "routine maintenance".

This incident was one of its kinds where a nuclear hostile country launched an "accidental missile" at its adversary country and did not even bother to clear the air. This casual attitude of India was not heavily criticized by Pakistan. As it not only violated the sovereignty of Pakistan but put many lives in danger not only in Pakistan's territory but also of many international flights passing through. Although India termed the incident as an "accident" and launched an internal inquiry on the issue there are many aspects that need to be analyzed.

Luckily the said incident happened during peace times when both countries are observing ceasefire on the Line of Control (LoC) and the projectile was not armed. However, had this incident happened during a crisis or wartime situation the implications could have been unimaginable for not only both countries but globally.

This accident calls in question the larger-than-life claims of India being a “responsible nuclear state”. In just these two years there are many incidents of theft of uranium and other radioactive material from India, which reflected the poor mechanisms in place for the safety and security of nuclear and radiological materials and facilities safety. India’s nuclear power plant came under cyber-attack and it was not accepted by the Indian authorities till the international newspapers and media outlets broke the news. Now in case of a missile launch, India again followed the previous examples and did not accept its mistake till it was called out. Countries with nuclear materials, facilities, and delivery capabilities follow stringent protocols and regulations and safety measures to ensure the safety of such technologies.

But according to the recent trend in India, it seems that either India was not following these protocols or either its nuclear safety and security culture is depleting because of the lack of capability of its human resource perhaps. At the end of the day, these individuals ensure the safety and security of sensitive technologies and facilities. It is true that “accidents” can happen but what is not acceptable in this situation is India’s casual attitude towards such accidents. The question arises if India is a nuclear responsible state why it did not accept the accident right away and established communication with Pakistan about the event. Such an attitude by India increases the “nuclear risks” in South Asia.

It also brings us to the second point which is that such actions also put the responsibility on the global powers which are providing sensitive technologies to India without proper training and analysis that whether Indian authorities are competent enough to handle such technologies. According to Pakistan’s own forensics, the said missile is a supersonic Brahmos missile, which India developed with the help of Russia. It is true that at the moment global stage is engulfed in the Russia-Ukraine crisis. The focus of major powers is competition among themselves but ignorance of India’s actions could only lead to a catastrophic future. As in this situation, it was Pakistan that acted wisely and responded with sanity. Owing to growing military adventurism in India in recent years Pakistani authorities are continuously trying to maintain the delicate

equilibrium. Moreover, the onus of maintaining strategic stability is also only on Pakistan as Indian actions is only contributing to destabilizing the region.

This event could also serve as the foundation stone for reviving the talks on important topics like the “strategic restraint regime” which Pakistan has proposed several times to India. Moreover, it is a dire need that both countries to establish communication because a lack of communication multiplies the uncertainty and the result are the fog of war.

<https://strategic-times.com/blog/2022/03/31/irresponsible-case-of-indias-accidental-missile-launch-and-its-implications/>.

Pakistan Consolidating Conventional Deterrence through Military Exercises

Sher Bano

In order to assure its military preparedness, Pakistan’s forces have been conducting a number of military exercises nationally and internationally. Countries prepared military proves to be the guarantor of peace which can be only attained though rigorous training and exercises. 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.

A number of exercises have been conducted in the year 2022 so far which includes IMX 22, a Multi-national maritime exercise under the U.S Naval Force Central Command, Pak Navy Exercise Seaspark 2022, the US and Pakistan air forces joint exercise Falcon Talon 2022 and Pakistan Army and Royal Saudi Land Forces joint exercise Al-Samsaam-8 at National Counter Terrorism Center Pabbi. These exercises conducted by the Pakistan forces help attaining preparedness and perfection in the desired areas and prepares the military for exceptional response under conventional operational settings.

In three years airmen from the US and Pakistan air forces conducted their first bilateral training event called Falcon Talon 2022 which is an Agile Combat Employment operation conducted at Pakistan air force base from February 28th till March 4th 2022. Falcon 2022 was the first major training event of Ninth Air Force (Air Forces Central)’s since 2019. The large-force ACE operation consisted of live flying events and various other activities to strengthen interoperability across multiple capabilities including security forces, maintenance and support

functions. The US participants also highlighted their multi capable airmen to Pakistan's air force by demonstrating how these airmen perform their primary task along with the additional task that is outside their career field. AFCENT has been working with their regional partners in various training events and also in real world operations to security cooperation efforts against the regional aggressor.

On March 4th 2022 Pakistan and Saudi Arabia conducted special force military exercise called AL-SAMSAAM-VII-22 at National Counter Terrorism Centre Pabbi, Nowshera. The focus of the exercise was terrorism operations including search and cordon, counter improvised explosive device drills and combat patrolling. This was a two week long exercise and was part of bilateral military exercises between Royal Saudi Land Forces and Pakistan Army. It was a great opportunity for both the forces to further enhance and optimize their operational preparedness skills and combat readiness. This series would also strengthen the military to military relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

The maritime affairs have been globalized due to the interconnectedness of the nations, increasing their significance more than ever. The IMX 22 is a multinational maritime exercise conducted by the US Naval Force Central Command (NAVCENT) with the purpose to provide tools for promoting global and regional peace and security. Pakistan Navy was provided a great opportunity by IMX 22 to contribute towards maritime security and to enhance its interoperability with the regional navies and also to mitigate non-traditional threats prevalent in the maritime environment. Pakistan also assumed the duty of being the Deputy Commander for the exercise along with providing naval assets. With Pakistan's outstanding contribution in the exercise, it has raised flags of peace and maritime security in the region. This exercise has also helped Pakistan to portray a better facet of its image and highlights its historical contributions to maintain peace.

Pakistan navy has also conducted its biannual maritime exercise SEASPARK-22 at Karachi. This biannual exercise examines the war preparedness and verifies operational plans of Pakistan Navy against the projected danger spectrum in the maritime affairs. It also offers the fuel to Pakistan's aim for sustaining stability and peace by creating a sustainable and safe environment in the area. The drill was performed in the Arabian Sea near Pakistan Coast. All naval assets/platforms of Pakistan navy, Pak marines and Special Forces along with the other units of Pak Arm, Air Force and Pakistan Marine Security Agency took part in the exercise.

Hence all these exercises conducted by Pakistan's Armed Forces increase combat readiness, help in identifying problems in training, logistics and current military doctrine. They also test the ability of the units to work together. These exercises act as expression of military might that acts as a deterrent to potential enemy action.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/31032022-pakistan-consolidating-conventional-deterrence-through-military-exercises-oped-2/>.

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Risks and challenges of emerging ISR capabilities in South Asia

Sher Bano

In the current nuclear age, improvements in surveillance and situational awareness technologies have revolutionized the emerging scenarios of conflicts. The advances in remote sensing systems and the adoption of unmanned automated systems have made early warning systems more relevant. In a way, it has increased the visibility of the adversary's actions. This has resulted in the extension of the decision-making time during a crisis. Even though the emerging situational awareness technologies provide a better understanding of a conflict to the decision-makers, the use of such capabilities can also complicate crisis management by introducing new risks. In South Asia, India has been enhancing its Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) based surveillance and strategic situational awareness capabilities. This has become considerably significant if analyzed in the context of India's evolved strategic posture. Resultantly, along with the increase in the existing gap vis-à-vis Pakistan's ISR capabilities, the strategic balance of the region is more likely to get disturbed. This would ultimately increase the risks of strategic instability in the region.

In recent years, India has acquired advanced ISR capabilities in multiple domains; air, sea, land, space, and cyber. India also enjoys a conventional superiority vis-à-vis Pakistan with the provision of more sophisticated and advanced space-based ISR assets. These include; spy satellite RISAAT-II launched in 2009, communication satellites GSAT-7 launched in 2013 and GSAT-6 launched in 2015. These satellite systems are aimed at providing ISR-based information about Pakistan's military deployment and dispositions. Similarly, India's battlefield surveillance radars (BFSRs) can detect targets such as heavy combat vehicles, creeping men, and low flying

helicopters. In addition to these, India has indigenously developed weapon locating radars (WLR) to detect the range and location of Pakistan's artillery at the border. Another significant capability in this regard is the acquisition of an Airborne Early Warning and Control Systems (AEW&CS). These are equipped with 240-degree coverage radar aimed at detecting missiles, UAVs, and aircraft at a safe distance of 200km. Furthermore, India has developed highly sophisticated UAVs such as the Heron-TP drone in collaboration with Israel. This drone can be used for both tactical and strategic missions. These developments indicate that India has been continuously enhancing its ISR capabilities.

It is notably important to discuss that situational awareness capabilities can be classified into; predictive, preemptive, and action enabling categories. The early information based on the perceived military advantage can incentivize a military action. The predictive technologies can provide information about the adversary's deployment of the weapon system, movement of forces, and the intent to take military action through early-warning satellites. The preemptive nature of the situational awareness technologies not only predicts the adversary's actions but also encourages a disruptive response to the adversary's plans or actions as preemption. The action enabling situational awareness technologies can facilitate new military options. In short, the preemptive or predictive capabilities provide information or insight into the adversary's forces while the action enabling capabilities intrinsically enables military action. In South Asia, India has already acquired these technologies which would likely encourage the Indian decision-makers to take quick military decisions both at the strategic and tactical levels. Given the vulnerability of the region, such military options can escalate a limited crisis into a full-blown conflict or turn conventional engagement into a nuclear conflict. This would likely serve as one of the most destabilizing factors for the strategic stability of the region.

For years now, India has been working on a counterforce preemption strategy against Pakistan which requires robust ISR capabilities. These capabilities would provide India with quantifiable and discernable data which would further allow it the liberty to take offensive military actions. This might embolden India to create hype about its self-proclaimed notions of 'preemptive first strikes'. Pakistan on the other hand has been following an approach of least possible countermeasures based to deal with the Indian threats. In this regard, Pakistan has indigenously developed UAVs in the year 2009 called Falco drones. Subsequently two remote sensing satellites PRSS-1 and PAKTES-1 were launched by Pakistan in 2018. Currently,

Pakistan also has the indigenous developed C4ISR-based system including AEWACs systems. The increasing gap vis-à-vis India's ISR capabilities further would provoke Pakistan to increase its inventory of highly sophisticated AWACS for air, spy satellites, maritime, and ground surveillance, and reconnaissance. However, Pakistan needs to optimally utilize the available resources along with smart acquisitions and tactically sound strategies. The evolved dynamics of sophisticated situational awareness technologies in South Asia would likely undermine the deterrence equilibrium in the region that has been primarily ensured by Pakistan's nuclear capability.

Hence, India's offensive military strategies and the development of surveillance and situational awareness capabilities would further add to the volatility of the South Asian region. The prevailing environment of surveillance and situational awareness landscape of the region suggests relooking at the risks and challenges of these emerging technologies, especially when employed between two nuclear-armed states. Moreover, with digital weaponry becoming the future of warfare, Pakistan needs to take measures to enhance its situational awareness capabilities and overcome this evolved Indian threat to its security. Otherwise, the Indian advancement in surveillance and situational awareness technologies would likely create a strategic imbalance in South Asia thereby providing for devastating implications for regional peace, security, and stability.

<https://strategic-times.com/blog/2022/03/31/risks-and-challenges-of-emerging-isr-capabilities-in-south-asia/>.

Russia-Ukraine Military Standoff

Asif Haroon Raja

"Remember when you leave this earth; you can take with you nothing that you have received; only what you have given, a full heart, enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice and courage."

– St. Francis of Assisi

Cold War

After the end of the 2nd WW, the world was divided into two camps, one led by the USSR and the other by the USA. The nuclear capability of the two superpowers deterred the two rivals from clashing with each other, but they got involved in a prolonged Cold War, which raged till 1991.

Western Pledge to Gorbachev

Once the Soviet Empire built by Lenin-Stalin began to totter after the defeat and ouster of Soviet forces from Afghanistan in Feb 1989, followed by fall of Berlin wall, the 14 Soviet Republics and the Soviet satellite states started declaring independence. A conference was held at Bonn in 1989 attended by the officials of USA, UK, France and Germany to discuss the German unification modalities. The participants gave a categorical assurance which was conveyed to Gorbachev through the US ambassador in Moscow Jack Matlock that NATO would remain confined to united Germany and would not push into the territory east of Germany, i.e. Elbe. It was stated that East European countries wouldn't be offered NATO's membership.

This pledge was dishonored after the fragmentation of the USSR in 1991 and getting reduced to the Russian Federation. Russia was not even accepted as part of a unified Europe. George H.W. Bush had declared that the First Gulf War against Iraq would usher in a 'New World Order' led by the USA. In 1992 came the Wolfowitz Doctrine, envisaging prevention of re-emergence of a new rival. With the demise of communism, Islamic fundamentalism was declared as the new threat to the US international order and capitalism.

NATO's Eastward Expansion

The US-NATO launched five waves to expand eastwards. In the first wave, Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic were taken in the fold of NATO in 1999. In the second wave in 2003-2004, the three Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Slovakia were made members of NATO thereby threatening the eastern border of Russia. Pro-Moscow socialist regime in Georgia was replaced with a pro-West regime through color revolution in 2003. Russia reacted in 2008 by making two provinces of Georgia independent.

The 3rd wave was in 2009. In the 4th wave in early 2014, a regime change was made in Ukraine through another color revolution. In reaction, Russian forces captured Crimea in March

that year. The 5th eastward wave was in 2019. In 2021, Washington and Brussels announced their intentions to make Georgia and Ukraine members of NATO. Membership of NATO jumped from 12 to 16 and then to 30. The last indirect intrusion was in Kazakhstan in Jan 2022 where widespread anti-government protests had almost toppled the pro-Moscow regime, but was rescued by the Russian troops. Most of the former Soviet Republics barring few happily helped the US and NATO in encircling Russia. Poland and Romania agreed to deploy the American Ballistic missiles defence system. President Zelensky allowed the US to establish 25-30 bio-chemical weapons labs in Kiev, Kharkov and Odessa. Reportedly, Israel was also in this business. There are reports of corona virus research labs as well.

Importance of Ukraine

Ukraine is important to both Russia and the EU since it is the largest country in Europe and rich in mineral resources. It is Europe's breadbasket and a major exporter of grains. It provides direct access to Russia's Gazprom gas field and oil pipelines to Europe. 40% of the gas, and one-quarter of crude oil, are supplied by Russia through Ukraine to Europe. Germany, Italy and the Netherlands are the largest importers of Russian gas.

Loss of Ukraine will directly threaten the security of Russia.

Hence Ukraine which provides strategic depth to Russia, is the vital ground for Russia's geo-economic and security interests. Imposition of sanctions on gas from Russia will oblige the EU to import it mainly from the US at triple the price. Brzezinski stated that 'Without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be an empire, but with Ukraine, suborned and then subjugated, Russia becomes an empire'.

Moscow's Reminders to Washington

The US-NATO were repeatedly advised by Moscow to abandon their Cold War approach, and to respect the sovereignty of other countries and interests, but drunk with power the haughty US-NATO paid no heed to Russia's security concerns. Vladimir Putin instead of taking proactive measures to block NATO's encroachment, he adopted a conciliatory policy with the West. He even collaborated with the US in its war on terror, and didn't object to the growing US influence in Central Asia. He and Trump were pally with each other, so much so that Trump was accused by the Democrats of seeking help from Russia to win the 2016 elections.

Putin Loses his Cool

Once Putin assessed that the aggressors were not prepared to halt their expansion and to remove the strike weapons deployed close to Russia's borders, and to close the bio-weapon labs, and were about to make Ukraine a member of NATO, he lost his cool, and gradually deployed up to 1, 30,000 Russian forces on the borders of Ukraine from Nov 2021 onwards, and then invaded Ukraine on Feb 24, 2022. If the US could legalize its policy of pre-emption and step into Afghanistan and the Middle East located 7000 miles away to safeguard its homeland, why can't Russia do it when its immediate backyard is threatened?

Ongoing Operations in Ukraine

Large bridgehead has been made in the Donbas region in the east where Luhansk and Donetsk, who had declared their independence was recognized by Moscow on 22 Feb. From the direction of Crimea in the Kherson region, Russian troops have made deep penetrations and have closed up to Odessa. The southern port city of Mariupol is about to fall. Northwestern suburb of Bucha is entirely held by Russian forces including parts of Irpin, and Kharkiv in the northeast. Invaders are gradually encircling the capital city Kiev to choke it and force the defenders to surrender. Chernobyl nuclear plant has been seized, and several US funded and run bio-chemical labs destroyed. Chechen forces allied with Russian forces are fighting the Ukrainians. 15000 Syrian fighters have volunteered to join Russian forces in Ukraine and Putin has given them a nod.

So far, other than Kherson, no major city has been captured due to stiff resistance by the Ukrainians. Over 4 million Ukrainians and others have fled and have become refugees in neighboring states with bulk in Poland. The Refugee issue will blow up further and would create social problems for the host countries. Both sides have suffered casualties. But, these are no match to the killings and destruction caused by western forces during the war on terror. Russia has put its nuclear assets on high alert. Belarus has shed off its non-nuclear status, enabling Russia to deploy its nuclear weapons there. Putin views all the former USSR Republics as artificial states propped up by the west, and has sternly warned them to stay out of the conflict. Russia is determined to demilitarize and de-Nazify Ukraine. He is in no mood to pull out his forces until and unless his security concerns are addressed. He allowed human corridors for the exit of civilians, but actually he wanted to deprive the Ukraine army of the human shield. He is

drawing strength from the support of China, which is also a victim of the US belligerence. Battle in Ukraine is the battle for the new world order. Like Lenin and Stalin, Putin is seeking to overthrow the US imposed world order which in his view is selfish and unjust. Much against the expectations of Putin of a short and swift outcome, the war is dragging on and is likely to get prolonged.

Zelensky's Pleas Fallen on Deaf Ears

Zelensky, a Jewish TV comedian, is beseeching the US and NATO to come to his rescue, and establish a no-fly-zone to prevent Russian jets from bombing the cities. UK, Germany, France and other NATO countries have dispatched heavy consignments of missiles, anti-tank and air defence weapons to Ukraine to bolster its spirits. At Brussels, it was decided to double NATO forces on Russia's border. The US has deployed two additional Patriot batteries in Poland, sanctioned \$ 15 billion aid, and committed a \$ 1.5 billion military aid package. Biden is now thinking of sending long range anti-aircraft guns for Ukraine. Biden declared that the US will defend every inch of NATO territory with full might of a united and galvanized NATO, but will not fight war against Russia since he cannot risk a 3rd WW. Western media is severely condemning Putin and is painting him a butcher, deranged, an evil monster and a war criminal. Parleys are taking place between Ukraine and Russia at Istanbul, but so far no breakthrough has been achieved.

Ukraine's Legitimacy

It has been revealed that the borders of Ukraine were never demarcated and registered in the UN as a sovereign state. Hence, officially it is part of the former USSR of which Russia is the officially recognized successor state. Moscow can now claim Ukraine to be its integral part, and whatever is happening there as its internal matter.

Third World Wooed

The USA and Russia are trying to win over as many countries of the third world to their side to swing the diplomatic balance on their side. China and Russia stand on a higher moral ground to win the support of the countries of Asia, Middle East and Africa. China has been helping the debt ridden countries by providing easy loans for social programs, and developing infrastructure. Russia helped Iran in its missile/ nuclear programs and in easing sanctions, and

had a key role in saving the Assad regime in Syria. On the other hand, prejudice, malice and discrimination against the non-whites have been the guiding principles of the western world.

Today the West has no justification to dub Russia as a war monger since Russia didn't for once step into the backyard of USA, nor meddled into the internal affairs of other countries, or indulged in proxy wars, or imposed sanctions on any country.

USA's Policy of Sanctions

To compel Russia to pull out its troops, the US and EU took no time to impose a series of tough sanctions on Russia, and closed airspaces for the Russian air movement. The US told Europe to boycott Russian goods and not to buy oil and gas from Russia. Russia's \$ 300 billion have been frozen in the US/European banks. Consequently, Russia has become the most sanctioned country after Iran. Purpose is to isolate Russia, make it bankrupt, bring a regime and install a puppet regime in Moscow. Blackwater in Ukraine has been activated by the CIA to create trouble. In Poland, Joe Biden gave a call saying "Putin cannot remain in power". Russians are being invited to topple Putin's regime. He also hinted that it will be a long war. Nine months earlier, he had declared that "it's time to end the war forever".

He is now justifying the long haul under the plea of fighting a great battle between democracy and autocracy, between liberty and repression. He uttered these holy words ignoring that George Bush senior and junior had also raised similar slogans to justify their brutal invasions. He also forgot that Poland is ruled by an ultra-right xenophobe regime under President Duda. Biden's jingoism points towards another New World Order.

Moscow-China's Pre-planning

In anticipation to deal with harsh western sanctions, Russia amassed some \$600 billion, yuan and gold in reserves, stored huge stacks of grain and other commodity items, and reduced its trade in dollars by 50%. It has replaced visa and master cards with Chinese cards. China's central bank operationalized its digital Yuan CBCD in 2015 to break the monopoly of petrodollars in trade of oil and gas through US controlled SWIFT.

China's System for Transfer of Financial Messages (SPFS) is equivalent to the SWIFT financial transfer system developed in 2014. SPFS is likely to be integrated with China based Cross Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS). The Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and

China have agreed to design the mechanism for an independent international monetary system. In case Russia and China succeed in importing and exporting oil and gas in ruble, Yuan and gold, it will cause a deadly blow to the power of the dollar. Sanctions are painful but have never been productive. They proved ineffective against Cuba, Iran, Pakistan, North Korea and Venezuela and wouldn't bend Putin.

USA's Relations with Arabs & Iran

Some cracks have appeared in the US relations with Saudi Arabia and UAE. The two princes didn't answer the phone calls of Biden, and declined the US desire to increase production of oil so as to lower oil prices in the international market that have crossed \$ 140 a barrel. They are going by the policy of OPEC, in which Russia is a key member, and is the third largest oil producing country, and is the largest producer of gas. Saudis and UAE, the two largest oil producing countries are considering trading oil in Yuan. Boris Johnson air dashed to Riyadh on 16 March on a one-day visit to convince MBS to enhance the oil production, but couldn't get a commitment. UAE, which has put the F-35 jets deal on hold, has been put in the grey list by the FATF. Iran has made the renewal of the nuclear deal with the US subject to clearance from Moscow. Iran doesn't want its oil and gas trade with Russia to get affected by the renewal of the 2015 deal to which Russia is one of the signatory.

Contrasting Foreign Policies

Russia's past is as sinful as of the West, with Stalin presiding over the massacre of 20 million people in the 1930s. However, after the end of Cold War, Russia has not embarked upon any external military adventure, nor has meddled into internal affairs of other countries, or ridiculed Islam. Likewise, China also adopted a defensive policy of peace and friendship after 1978. Russia and China increased their spheres of influence in the developing world through peaceful means. Putin adopted friendly policies towards the Muslims in Russia and made Chechnya a close ally. Conversely, the US used its military might, financial power and diplomatic clout to enlarge its presence all around the globe. War on terror was used as a ploy to rob the resources of the Muslim world and to neo-colonize it.

Sanctions, embargoes, human rights, World Bank, IMF, FATF and proxy wars are other tools of coercion. The UN, ICJ and other world institutions are the US handmaidens. Islam was ridiculed and demonized by the Western media under a calculated agenda to undermine Islam.

The US has the biggest stockpile of nuclear missiles, and well knowing that Russia has the second largest nuclear arsenal, the US has been constantly provoking Russia by breaching its perimeter of security. The US administration under the domination of Military Industrial Complex is anti-peace and pro-war, and has established over 800 military bases all over the globe. Since WWII, the US indulged in 19 wars causing deaths to millions.

The US is a Bully

The US behaves like a bully and has never directly locked horns with a big power. It always chose a weak country to fight and yet never won. The two glaring examples are its humiliating defeats in Vietnam and Afghanistan. China has been warned by the US to stay out of the conflict and not to provide a lifeline to Russia. The US has also made it clear to its allies to cut off relations with Russia, or be prepared for the consequences. Pakistan is among the countries that were threatened on March 7. Reportedly, it sponsored the no-trust motion moved against Imran Khan's Government by the band of opposition parties. Imran is being penalized for daring to run an independent foreign policy. China has made it clear that it will not accept another round of cold war and proxy war in this region. For the first time the US is provoking the two titans, Russia in Ukraine, and China in South & East China Sea and Taiwan Strait. The US-Russia showdown has commenced and the US-China showdown is in the making. Europe as well as Pakistan and India will get sucked into the fight of the big elephants if the war gets prolonged.

NATO's Prestige Smeared

The Ukraine crisis has given a new lease of life to the West and has helped in uniting the divided EU and NATO, and both the US and EU is taking punitive steps to pressurize Russia to step back. The US-NATO has yet to prove whether they can stand up to the challenge and turn the tide. Russia is exposing the impotence of NATO which has already tarnished its reputation in Afghanistan and the Middle East.

Paranoia in India

India has got hedged between the USA, Russia and China and is finding itself caught between the devil and deep sea. On one side is Russia with which it has had a strategic relationship since the late 1940s. 60-65% of India's defence equipment is Russian origin. On the

other side is the USA to which it had got married in 1990 out of expediency. India has been drawing huge economic and military benefits, and the US is helping India to become a global power. China, closely aligned with Russia and nuclear Pakistan, is breathing over India's neck in the Himalayas. The US is now expecting that India should pay back by severing ties with Russia, and also become an effective member of QUAD to counter China's assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region. For India, joining China-specific QUAD is getting highly risky. Coming months will see whether India bends down to the dictates of the US, or makes another volte face, quits QUAD and reverts to nonalignment and extends a hand of friendship to China and Pakistan.

Reinvigoration of Cold War

The new Cold War has resurfaced and the two belligerent camps are forming up. The Ukraine crisis, if not defused, could lead to the worst economic crisis which will have a catastrophic impact upon the world. With so many flash points, and the climate crisis morphing into an existential threat to humanity, the world has become a powder keg and needs a matchstick in the wrong hands to ignite. Standoff in Ukraine has revived fears of a nuclear clash and possibly a third world war.

Ground Realities

The realities that cannot be ignored are that shrunk Russia has bounced back on the global central stage, China is the emerging superpower, the US is a declining power, and its global hegemony is unsustainable. Unipolar world has been replaced by the multipolar world. NATO will neither establish a no-fly-zone, nor become a part of the Ukraine war as it may put the whole of Europe at risk. Without physical support of the US-NATO forces, Ukraine wouldn't be able to push back the Russian forces, and will have to come to terms with Moscow through a political settlement. The US-NATO wants Ukraine to become another graveyard for Russia, and prefers proxy war over open war, but this time the end result will be not like in Afghanistan. In case Putin comes out of this war as a victor, it will make Biden politically weak, and his party will have slim chances to win the midterm elections in November 2022.

The Zionists and extremist Jews wishing to rule the world, after pitting Christianity against Islam, has pitted USA against Russia, and will also try to pit USA against China. Israel is maintaining a balancing act and has so far not imposed sanctions on Russia or provided military support to Ukraine. After fighting communism for decades and burying it, the US created a new

threat and defined Islamic radicalism and terrorism the biggest threat to its international order and capitalism. For next three decades the US-NATO forces bombed Iraq twice in 1991 and in 1998, invaded and occupied Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, and in its bid to change the regime, destroyed Syria. Yemen, Sudan and Lebanon were also mauled. Large-scale destruction and massacre were undertaken through invasions, proxy wars, drones, sectarian war, in order to gain global hegemony, and to earn profits for the arms industry. Democratic, legal and human rights were thrown out of the window.

The Muslim specific war coupled with expanding NATO's outreach into East Europe was the most egregious crimes in the post-cold war era. From 2018 onwards, threat of terrorism has been replaced by Russia-China combine as the new threat to the US national security, for which Biden has sounded war bugles and is quite prepared to soak Europe in blood.

End Result

The US efforts to disrepute Putin have utterly failed. He has become more popular, and as per Levada Centre, over 80% of Russians support his actions. Conversely, Biden's graph is dropping. The minimum that Putin might agree on will be to make the Donbas region independent, with Luhansk and Donetsk as People's Republics, Crimea part of the Russian Federation, and Western Ukraine to become a neutral country. Zelensky has agreed not to become a NATO member and to make Ukraine neutral subject to security guarantee. He might agree to make Donetsk and Luhansk semi-autonomous instead of independent, and acknowledge Russia's sovereignty over Crimea. The US, EU and NATO might reconcile with this arrangement, and would agree to make Ukraine a buffer state between East and West Europe.

Conclusion

Wars, conflicts, civil strife, intrigues, deceit, lies and hypocrisy have become a norm. Putin has called the West an empire of lies. Piety, tolerance and forbearance have been replaced by immorality, intolerance and egotism. The Western leaders have the moral obligation to call for an immediate end of hostilities between Russia and Ukraine. The atrocities of war must stop immediately and the sanctity of human life and habitats must be assured by all within the global systems of political governance.

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