



# VISION

VISIONARY INSIGHTS INTO THE STRATEGIC INQUESTS OF NATIONS

## SVI FORESIGHT

VOLUME 8, NUMBER 4

APRIL 2022

Compiled & Edited by:  
Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai

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

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**Strategic Vision Institute (SVI)**

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

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

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

## **SVI Foresight**

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

The world is witnessing the geopolitical transition from unilateralism to multilateralism with bloc politics at its center. The Russia-Ukraine crisis has transformed the strategic stability of Asia by not only questioning major partnerships in the region but by instigating the political divide. In contemporary times, Quad is one such partnership that has put a barricade on regional cohesion. With the increasing geopolitical rivalries in contemporary times, the distribution of capabilities in IOR will endanger the strategic stability of South Asia by creating a security dilemma. Quad has its regional repercussions and if not handled with neutrality it will affect the balance in South Asia.

Likewise, the geopolitical and geo-economics competition in the Indo-Pacific is specified by the intense US-China competition to secure their national interests, however, at the cost of national security and stability of the other states in the Indo-Pacific. The ongoing political crises in Afghanistan, Myanmar, and more recently Pakistan and Sri Lanka, can be identified as the resurgence of 'fait accompli' as a viable tactic of strategic competition adopted by the USA to construct a shared networking and deterrence at the expense of China's preference.

Similarly, the saffronisation of India has jeopardized the secular nature of the Indian constitution, sliding it from a liberal democracy to an electoral autocracy. Under Modi, India is destined to further its jingoistic interests at the cost of the values promised in its constitution. It is a dilemma that for its colossal market, and geopolitical considerations, the world is still dismissive of the prevalent right-wing nationalism.

Irrespective of the real causes behind the Indian BrahMos intruding 124 kilometers deep into the Pakistani airspace, the incident is being viewed with profound skepticism in Pakistan. Reasons: the decades-old hostility and prevalent distrust between the two countries; India's long history of increasingly belligerent verbalized and force-development posturing vis-à-vis Pakistan; India's abstruse attitude aimed at mystification instead of coming out transparent as to why the missile was launched.

Provided no missile defense system can intercept a supersonic cruise missile, the only way to dissuade India from embarking on a future misadventure is "deterrence through punishment", which entails that Pakistan should demonstrate ample capability and resolve to

respond to any of India's future shenanigans with double the ferocity so as not to allow the relevant circles in New Delhi to draw erroneous and misplaced inferences.

Moreover, this volume presents a number of articles analyzing the burning important issues like the Ukraine War, QUAD, Pakistan-Turkey Strategic Economic Cooperation, implications of Evolving India's Strategic Thinking under Nuclear Overhang in South Asia, and the threat of hypersonic warfare.

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. Please see [here](#) the copy of the *SVI Foresight* electronic journal. You can find us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) and can also access the SVI [website](#).

**Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai**

**Editor, SVI Foresight**



## *What Does the Ukraine Crisis Entail for the Liberal International Order?*

*Hamdan Khan*

For many around the world, especially in the West, a war in twenty-first-century Europe was unthinkable; but the unthinkable transpired. As warned by realists for years, the post-Cold War US grand strategy of liberal hegemony – pursued more fervently in Europe than anywhere else – contained the seeds of the current war in Ukraine. Although there cannot be a rationalization of the humanitarian toll the war is taking, overlooking the underlying causes of the larger Ukraine crisis only risks yet more geostrategic blunders in other parts of the world, presumably spawning even drastic consequences.

A gamble so momentous that even after it failed to topple the Ukrainian government and Russian troops couldn't fight their way into any of the major Ukrainian cities, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent Western response in the form of crippling sanctions on Russia have dealt the most serious blow to Liberal International Order (LIO) since the anti-globalization backlash and shift induced in the global balance of power owing to the rise of China.

The LIO is premised on three principal projects: (1) the global presence of international institutions (rules) to regulate state-to-state transactions; (2) creating an international liberal economy; (3) the spread of democracy worldwide – under the 'indispensable' leadership of the US backed by its 'benign' global military presence.

The Russian invasion and the linked events undermined all the three undertakings: (1) as the Russian troops marched into the territory of another sovereign nation, the disregard for international institutions was glaring; (2) the Western countries imposing crippling sanctions on Russia essentially reversed within a matter of days the gains made to integrate Russia into the liberal economic order, thereby jolting the most serious blow in recent years to global economic liberalization dream; (3) the liberal bet that economic liberalization in autocratic states can lead to political liberalization ran into yet another fiasco.

After the end of the Cold War, Europe was made the test case for liberalism. Democracy and economic liberalization were relentlessly spread to Eastern Europe with the core objective of

integrating the continent into a liberal whole under the security umbrella of NATO. In the envisioned scenario, Russia – which initially experimented with liberalization under Boris Yeltsin – also was to be democratized and integrated into the liberal community. Nonetheless, after Putin’s rule re-established Russia’s autocratic quintessence, the goal transitioned to bolstering Ukraine as a liberal ‘bulwark’ on the border of totalitarian Russia.

The Russian invasion, even though it has largely failed to achieve the Kremlin’s political and military objectives and the invaders have suffered heavy losses all credited to steadfast Ukrainian resistance, for the broader ruling elite in Moscow, a Ukraine integrated into the European order, particularly NATO, constitutes an existential threat to Russia; they are inclined to willingly suffer even more losses to prevent Ukraine from turning into a pro-West democracy safeguarded under NATO’s Article V and hosting cutting-edge Western weapon systems. This in effect disgruntles the dream of Europe morphing into a liberal whole – a never-never land for LIO. Even more consequentially, the invasion has marked a return to security competition in Europe between NATO and the heir to the Soviet Union, Russia – though the geopolitical undercurrents drastically differ from the Cold War.

The Russian invasion and the subsequent Western response have posited before China – the primary beneficiary and also the foremost challenge to LIO – a dilemma. Moscow, after being sanctioned out of the US-led liberal economic system, is pinning high hopes on its ‘no limits’ partnership with China to keep its economy moving while the US government has issued repeated warnings of ‘implications and consequences’ if China provides some kind of support or helps Russia evade sanctions.

China is deeply integrated and has sky-high stakes in the US-led economic order; ergo despite criticizing the Western sanctions as an ineffective ‘way to solve problems’, it has largely abided by the sanctions to the content of the US. However, while trying to distance itself from both conflict and sanctions, China has vowed to maintain business as usual with Russia. In actual effect, Beijing is trying to trudge the tight rope: maintaining its current state of economic relationship with Russia while trying to minimize its vulnerability vis-à-vis Western sanctions.

Nonetheless, Putin-led Russia is China’s foremost strategic partner in the broader competition against the West, and a Russia defaulting under Western sanctions or facing domestic political turmoil resulting from an economic crunch are the imaginable scenarios



Beijing would try to avert even if it entails incurring economic and political costs. Beijing can use the harbingers of its economic order – China-led financial institutions – to salvage Russia from the adverse upshots (supra) of Western economic sanctions, which would constitute an epoch-making stride towards the consolidation of the China-led economic order at the expense of the currently predominant US-led economic order. A China-led economic order gaining solid underpinnings would further augment the formation of a China-led bounded order, thereby further expediting the erosion of LIO on the course of its inevitable demise.

*Hamdan Khan is a Research Officer at Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad.*

<https://strafasia.com/what-does-the-ukraine-crisis-entail-for-the-liberal-international-order/>

## ***Was the regime change part of the US Indo-Pacific strategy?***

*Komal Khan*

The geopolitical and geo-economics competition in the Indo-Pacific is specified by the intense US-China competition to secure their national interests, however, at the cost of national security and stability of the other states in the Indo-Pacific. The ongoing political crises in the Indo-Pacific neighboring states of Afghanistan, Myanmar, and more recently Pakistan and Sri Lanka, can be identified as the resurgence of ‘fait accompli’ as a viable tactic of strategic competition adopted by the USA to construct a shared networking and deterrence at the expense of China’s preference in the Indo-Pacific.

Fait accompli makes gains unilaterally, imposing a change to the status quo without the adversary’s consent. Fait accompli can be military or non-military, coercive or non-coercive in practice. These are basically crisis-bargaining compulsions that induce decision paralyses in states that are targeted. Biden’s Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy, announced by the White House on February 11, is one such compulsion that is based on the policy of integrated deterrence and shared networking as ‘fait accompli’ for the Indo-Pacific states with the objective of constructing creative collaborations that anchor the USA firmly in the Indo-Pacific.

The recent constitutional crisis accompanied with regime change in Pakistan may be analyzed as resurgence of the ‘fait accompli’ once again since 9/11 under the creative collaboration policy of the Biden Administration. Washington’s alleged intervention in Pakistan’s sovereignty by funding the regime change against Khan’s government in Pakistan by

investing in rival democratic institutions has been claimed by outgoing Prime Minister Imran Khan. Nonetheless, it is a fact that the no-confidence movement against a democratic government in Pakistan was also carried out in the name of democracy. Moreover, Khan's claims have been based on a letter-gate which is under probe and is allegedly claimed to be from the Biden administration, enforcing the USA's regional and global interests in a growing multilateral world order; however, at the cost of Pakistan's sovereignty.

Pakistan's multilateral approach has been evident in Khan's foreign policy which has seen an unwelcoming response from the USA. Pakistan's growing ties with Russia are seen as a major cause of regime change in Pakistan. The event of Khan's visit to Russia despite pressure from the USA and its coincidence with the Russian invasion of Ukraine has also been recognized as the immediate happening linked to the ouster of Prime Minister Khan from government, which has been described by Maria Zakharova, the spokesperson of the Russian foreign ministry, as 'punishment to the disobedient Khan.

Describing retreat in the USA's relationship with Pakistan, which served as its ally during and in the post-Cold War decade; former JCSC Committee chairman Adam Mike Mullen holds the USA responsible for distancing itself from Pakistan in the last decade which made Pakistan fall into China's strategic camp. Cashing in on the realisation, at the event of the Islamabad Security Dialogue, Pakistan's COAS Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa proposed 'counter investment' as the only mechanism by which the USA could counter the intense Chinese influence in Pakistan. This proposal exhibits the state's intention to partner with the USA in its 'Indo-Pacific economic framework' while benefitting from the Chinese camp simultaneously. On the other hand, the National Security Policy by the Khan administration also underlines the openness of Pakistan for such regional creative collaborations, but in the economic domain, while preserving neutrality in the US-China Indo-Pacific competition.

Furthermore, Pakistan's partnership in the de-dollarization drive supported by China, Russia and Turkey is another major cause of the regime change in Pakistan. Pakistan initially signed the Currency Swap Agreement with China back in 2011; however its extension by the State Bank in 2018 under the CPEC dynamics with the rationale of easing the dollar pressure over Pakistan's stock exchange proved to be a major development attracting US concern. Since then, there has been significant increase in the bilateral currency swap value from Rs 475 billion



in 2020 to Rs: 731.7 billion in 2021. Pakistan had also signed a currency swap agreement with Turkey back in 2011, while another with Iran has been in process since 2018.

Pakistan is not the only partner in the de-dollarization initiatives. On Dec 11, 2017, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia also entered into a local currency settlement framework that was further extended in 2021. Followed by Pakistan, Sri Lanka has also signed a 1.5 billion currency swap deal with China in March 2021; consequently falling victim to a constitutional crisis and regime change against Mahinda Rajapakshale by an opposition coalition; hence, presenting a case similar to that of Pakistan. De-dollarization movements have a history of consequential regime change, with the toppling of Saddam's regime in Iraq being a significant one.

Hence, Asia in general and the Indo-Pacific in particular present an emerging de-dollarization axis. The United States Department of Defence Indo-Pacific strategy 2019, and the Indo-Pacific Strategy February 2022 identify Indo-Pacific as the primary consequential region for the USA's future and the established world order based on the facts that the region accounts for 60 percent of world GDP, two-thirds of the world economy, and two-thirds of global economic growth. It supports three million US jobs, and provides \$900 billion in FDI to the USA. The Indo-Pacific holds seven of the largest militaries in the world.

While analyzing China's grand narrative of its inexorable rise and the USA's irreversible decline, Graham Allison states that as per the current trajectory, China's GDP would stand at twice the size of the USA's and thrice by 2040, based on reports of China's quadrennial add up of economy that is equivalent to India's entire GDP. The USA is accustomed to the correlation between GDP and its impact on world order which is significantly different.

It accounted for half of the world's GDP post World War II, a quarter of the global GDP during the Cold War, and 1/7th today. With a transformational increase in China's GDP from \$191 billion in 1980 to \$14.7 trillion today, China is rightly countered by the USA as the potential stakeholder in world order.

The Indo-Pacific is witnessing a revision by China's extending influence there. Relating Graham Allison's analysis of the USA's decline in world affairs to Indo-Pacific dynamics, his argument is based on the facts stated by the CIA fact book and the IMF that it is China which provides the most critical links in the supply chain. Hence China has been legitimizing its influence through geo-economic partnerships which the USA aims to counter via resilient allies,



partnerships and regime change in the other states of the Indo-Pacific as manifestations of ‘fait accompli’, with Pakistan being a significant one.

*Komal Khan is a Research Officer at Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad.*

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/04/18/was-the-regime-change-part-of-the-us-indo-pacific-strategy/>

### ***Quad: A Force of Peace or Destabilizer for South Asia?***

*Sabina Babar*

The world is witnessing the geopolitical transition from unilateralism to multilateralism with bloc politics at its center. The Russia and Ukraine crisis has transformed the strategic stability of Asia by not only questioning major partnerships in the region but by instigating the political divide. In contemporary times, Quad is one such partnership that has put a barricade on regional cohesion. In a recent meeting of the Quad on March 3, 2022, the narrative of “like-minded democracies” highlighted the solidification of the Quad as a strategic and political coalition and its narrative to counter the regional powers. Certainly, the Quad partnership is based on the Asia Pacific’s most protruding democracies working under a subsequent geopolitical and geostrategic agenda in the Indian Ocean. The idea of Quad is linked with China’s rise in a broader domain and regional dominance in the narrow domain where India and Pakistan’s role comes in.

One cannot deny that being a member of the Quad, India has the substantial potential to influence regional security and stability. On the other hand, Pakistan’s interest in the Indian Ocean due to its strategic location cannot be ignored. Pakistan has a role to play in the geopolitical shift of this region. Therefore, it is important to see the Quad’s role as a force for retaining peace in the region or working as a destabilizer for South Asia. Recently, a Biden top administrative official has said that India is a key player in the Quad and important for the US’s Indo-Pacific presence. The backdrop for this statement is to counter China’s rise and strategic presence in the Indo-Pacific region, specifically, China’s economic projects. It is important as it portrays the changing power equation and alliance between China, US, India, and Pakistan. The US’s clear alliance with India has intensified the security situation in South Asia as there is a regional shift between Pakistan and China in one block and India and the US in the other. Under

these changing dynamics and policy implications, Quad will affect the stability of the region. As the US wants India to serve as a strategic partner in the Indo-Pacific, the immediate step for Pakistan and China is to counterbalance by investing in a fusion of infrastructure projects. Pakistan has also been in close proximity with Russia and focuses on the emerging de-facto strategic partnership with China-Russia-Pakistan (CRP) as a counterforce to the Quad.

Pakistan has been trying to play its role in Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and China is clear with its economic investment in Pakistan by considering the significance of Pakistan in South Asia as an important economic partner. Though China fears that the Quad alliance is posing threat to the stability of the region by dividing it into blocs, as recently, China's vice foreign minister has said that the Quad alliance in the Indo-Pacific is dangerous as it is taking the region toward fragmentation and bloc-based division. Quad alliance, if allowed to expand, will push the Asia Pacific region into an abyss where major regional powers have to face the consequences. The Indian Minister of Foreign affairs responded by urging not to slip in an analogy of comparing Quad to security alliances, however, one cannot deny that the US wants India to work as a bulwark against China in Indo Pacific region.

So far, the idea that Quad can work as a peaceful force seems far-fetched as the narrative of the Quad is opposite to its peaceful coexistence specifically in South Asia. Pakistan is trying to promote peace in the Indian Ocean; however, India is not ready to accept Pakistan's presence in IOR. A clear indication of this non-acceptance is the non-inclusion of Pakistan in the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and Bay of Bengal multi-sectorial Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). Pakistan is focusing on increasing its maritime capabilities by participating in joint naval exercises with Russia and China. In opposition, India has recently focused on growing its strategic foothold in the Indian Ocean by organizing Milan 2022 exercises based on both Quad and AUKUS members, a strategic counter to Pakistan and China. As Milan's exercises included all the South Asian states except Pakistan, which shows the divergence in bringing peace to the region.

Up to this point, Quad as a partnership has reinvigorated its security dimension, however, it is not open to other stakeholders of the region especially Pakistan and China making it subject to debate and questioning its ability to work as a stabilizer in the region. The recent meeting of Quad can be interpreted as the beginning of the creation of Asian NATO. As Quad's narrative is



more tilted toward strategic balancing against China in the IOR by not only keeping its allies at bay but by continuously increasing its global profile through security and defense cooperation in the region. India's presence in the Indo-Pacific has provided New Delhi with a push toward rising above semi-periphery status. Quad adds up to its Extended Neighborhood policies and Act East narrative which is detrimental to Pakistan. With the increasing geopolitical rivalries in contemporary times, the distribution of capabilities in IOR will endanger the strategic stability of South Asia by creating a security dilemma. Quad has its regional repercussions and if not handled with neutrality it will affect the balance in South Asia.

*Sabina Babar is Research Officer at Associate at Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad.*

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/12042022-quad-a-force-of-peace-or-destabilizer-for-south-asia-oped/>.

## ***Pakistan-Turkey Strategic Economic Cooperation***

*Amber Afreen Abid*

The cooperation and alliance-making have always been the core principle of state's strategies. The states converge and diverge according to their benefits and rivalry. The cooperation between Pakistan and Turkey goes back to history, and both have stood by each other out of the spirit of brotherhood. Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Mustafa Kamal Ataturk also shared joint views on the intersection of Islam and promotion of Muslim brotherhood.

Turkey has always stood by Pakistan in all the leading events in history, from standing by Pakistan against Indian violence in Kashmir, and raising voice at UNGA, to supporting in the financial issues and FATF. Turkey has always been the key ally of Pakistan in whatsoever the situation befalls. Pakistan, on the other hand also stood by Turkey in its conflicts with the neighboring countries, and has always extended full support to Turkey.

The two countries have done many Joint Ventures, in order to promote economic and strategic cooperation, for enhancing stability in the region. The establishment of Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO); the two countries have also signed Strategic Economic Framework, which entails a broad spectrum of science and technology, education, tourism, health and defence. The Pakistan-Turkey Free Trade Agreement is also in the pipeline. Furthermore, Pakistan –Turkey Military Consultative Group



(MCG), the Turco-Pak Treaty are indications of strong military alliance between Turkey and Pakistan. The formulation of Pakistan-Turkey High Level Military Dialogue (HLMD) which aimed at promoting defence ties between the two countries. It opened a new era of joint defence production, training and cooperation between the two states.

The two states have also conducted Joint Military exercises as well, entailing “Ataturk-XI”, conducted earlier this year with Turkey, with the primary focus on counter-terrorism operations; the naval exercise “Aman 2021” which was conducted with 45 countries including Turkey, for enhancing military skills; the “Anatolian-Eagle 2021” with the objective to enhance the interoperability between the participating forces, was conducted in Turkey.

The MILGEM-class corvette, named PNS Babur, is the first corvette ship built by Turkey for Pakistan. It will be delivered in 2023, whereas three more vessels will be handed over in 2025, out of which two will be manufactured in Pakistan, in a deal that inculcates the technology transfer. Moreover, the Turkish Aerospace Industry has also inked a contract with Pakistan’s National Engineering and Science Commission (NESCOM) to produce the components of TAI’s Anka Medium-Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) combat drone. The Anka MALE UAV system can perform in all weather, day and night ISR Missions, communication relays and tracking of fixed and stationary targets, signals intelligence (SIGINT). Such Joint Ventures boost the defence and economic ties between the two countries.

Pakistan plays a pivotal role in enhancing peace and stability in South Asia, Turkey in this regard endeavors to assist Pakistan in order to overcome the hurdles in achieving peace. The alliance making and cooperation with regional allies, like Turkey, will boost Pakistan’s economy and international standing as well. Pakistan, considering the neighborhood, has to focus on the defence spending through defence trade ties, for boosting the state and regional security. The shifting global alliances and the continuous changing global geo-political order, the strong strategic-economic cooperation between Turkey and Pakistan add up in each other’s errand.

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 assess 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's 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.

*Amber Afreen Abid is Research Officer at Associate at Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad.*

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/22042022-pakistan-turkey-strategic-economic-cooperation-oped-2/>.

## ***Why Smaller Countries Must Invest in Independent Satellite Capabilities***

*Akash Shah*

Contrary to popular perceptions, Ukraine has fared quite well in its war against Russia. The government in Kyiv is still standing, and Russian forces have been unable to push forward substantially. Against all odds, the progression of the war so far favors Ukraine. A significant part of Ukraine's effective resistance rests on its precision airstrikes, courtesy of Turkish Bayraktar TB2 drones, against Russian military targets. Ukraine's airstrikes and ground operations are made possible by satellite imagery provided by private earth observation



companies. Satellite images showing the position and movement of Russian forces and equipment have been instrumental in guiding Ukraine's defense efforts.

Additionally, these satellites help discern wartime propaganda and misinformation from the facts on the ground. Ever since the information revolution, disinformation has become an inevitable fact of armed conflict. While news agencies reporting from conflicts have their own biases, empirical and verifiable satellite imagery has been a huge step forward in combating disinformation in war zones. Rita Konaev, a research fellow at Georgetown University, told the BBC last month that satellite imagery "has been an aspect of modern conflict for 10 to 15 years now, but the scale [this time] is different and the accessibility is different," adding that satellite imagery has helped counter misinformation about Russia's invasion. Using high-resolution eyes in the sky to unearth the truth amid claims and counterclaims has gradually become a common feature of war. For instance, satellite images helped disprove India's claim to have eliminated high-value targets in the 2019 Balakot airstrikes inside Pakistan.

However, the case of Ukraine does not mean that private satellite companies will remain altruistic in future conflicts with different actors involved. Private satellite companies have been Ukraine's guardian angels so far, but it would have looked drastically different if Ukraine was a country on "the wrong side of the war." The reason American companies like Maxar and BlackSky are sharing data with Ukrainian forces are that they believe Russia is the aggressor and want to align them with U.S. policy. It is not difficult to imagine a scenario, however, where a country is dependent on private satellite data during a war, but the United States and other Western governments—home to most of the private satellite companies—block firms from sharing information. As seen during the Gulf war, a country blinded in the sky and vulnerable to enemy satellites' constant surveillance is bound to fail miserably.

Countries facing the threat of war need to have independent and self-sufficient space resources to reduce their dependency in the satellite domain. Even Ukraine, which has been getting significant satellite data from its Western supporters, is deeming the data insufficient. There have been calls for real-time data from synthetic aperture radar satellites, which can penetrate cloud cover and take pictures at night. It is especially important for smaller countries that are embroiled in protracted conflicts with more powerful nations—Pakistan being one of them—to invest in space-related research and development. Speaking at the Islamabad Security

Dialogue in 2022, Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of the Army Staff of Pakistan, said that Ukraine's success against Russia has given smaller countries hope that they can still defend their territory by using smaller, agile forces and carrying out selective equipment modernization. As future warfare will rely on satellites more than ever, adopting this approach would help countries like Pakistan move toward self-reliance in civil and military space technology. As evident from the crippling impact of Western sanctions and targeted export controls on the Russian economy, overreliance on foreign satellite capabilities risks compromising a country's sovereignty and security.

*Akash Shah is Research Officer at Associate at Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad.*

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/techland-when-great-power-competition-meets-digital-world/why-smaller-countries-must-invest>.

## ***Russia's Taliban Policy***

*Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai*

Russia's policy towards the Taliban is quite different from what we had seen in the past. The Taliban is primarily a religious group and in the Cold War, religious groups in Afghanistan used to fight against the Soviets during their invasion. However, the current dynamics are quite changed and Moscow is closely in contact with the Taliban. For years, Moscow was hosting Taliban leadership to pave the way for their return to mainstream politics. However, the US withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban takeover has provided ease to Moscow on the one hand while on the other hand, they are skeptical about the future of Afghanistan.

From the post-World War II to the latter phase of the Sardar Daoud period, Russia's relations with Afghanistan were quite close and friendly. However, when Sardar Daoud started challenging the Soviet interference in the country, relations between him and Moscow became strained and he was eventually overthrown and killed as the result of the Saur Revolution in April 1978. From April 1978 to December 1979, the situation remained very turbulent in Afghanistan. Noor Muhammad Tarakai was killed as Hafeezullah Amin became the president who was eventually killed by the Soviets shortly after their invasion in late 1979.



The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan drew global attention due to the Cold War and the US support of the Mujahideen. Thousands of fighters were brought from different countries to fight against the Red Army in Afghanistan. The war against the Soviets was fought with religious fervor and the Soviets were presented as infidels. Though the war against the Soviets remained successful and the Red Army had to withdraw in 1989, a complex situation was left behind by the US who supported the Mujahideen and the Soviets who had invaded Afghanistan.

The 1990s was the decade in which the Soviets supported non-state actors in Afghanistan against the Taliban. India, Iran and Russia were on the same page vis-à-vis supporting the Northern Alliance, an el bloc group to the Taliban. Since then, there was a huge trust deficit between the Taliban and Moscow. Even Russia supported the US invasion of Afghanistan following the September 11 incident. However, Mr. Putin had asked President Bush that they would have to withdraw after a certain period provided Moscow did not want the long US presence in Afghanistan. Yet as the US-Afghan war unfolded, it went beyond the imagination of anyone by becoming the longest war in US history.

Nevertheless, during this time, Moscow-Taliban relations took a turn. There were many reasons: Moscow-Taliban convergence against the US; change in the Taliban behaviour; and the US-Russia tussle that widened in the new millennium when Russia resurged under President Putin. The weakening of the US-led forces in Afghanistan was a good move for Moscow as it was seeing it as a decline of the US global hegemony. Moscow was enjoying the situation where the US was observed as a global power in a multipolar system.

Similarly, the US-China tussle is also on the rise which provided for close cooperation and convergence of interests between Moscow and Beijing. Moscow saw that China is challenging the US which cut short its global clout and provided a space for Moscow in the global order. Likewise, the US failure in Afghanistan was also a failure of the Western democracy that dented the perception that western democracy is the best system in the world. Hence, it hinted that the West is declining.

On the contrary, Moscow is also concerned about the current turmoil in Afghanistan. Moscow is concerned about the spread of instability beyond the Afghanistan borders to Central Asia that will affect Russia. However, Russia at the same time has an opportunity to consolidate



its position in Central Asia as a guarantor of peace. Russia has ruled out the Western presence in Central Asia for stabilizing the environment around Afghanistan.

Similarly, Russia is concerned about the growth of terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda, ISKP and other fundamentalist groups on the Afghan soil. Since the Taliban are in contact with the regional and international players in the last several years, Russia has realized that they will not allow any terrorist group on the Afghan soil that could threaten the Russian interests. In the Doha agreement too, the Taliban pledged not to allow the Afghan soil to be used against any state.

The Taliban takeover was not taken as an unpleasant move by Moscow. However, it wishes to have a broad-based government in Afghanistan in which each ethnic and political group has a representation. Earlier this month, the Afghanistan embassy in Moscow was handed over to the Taliban representatives. Since the West-Russia ties are extremely severe due to the Ukraine conflict, Russia may go ahead to recognize the Taliban regime and may try to fill the gap the US left in Afghanistan.

*Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai is Research Officer at Associate at Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad.*

<https://dailytimes.com.pk/926224/russias-taliban-policy/>

## ***Implications of Evolving India's Strategic Thinking under Nuclear Overhang in South Asia***

***Sher Bano***

The nature of the evolving India's evolving nuclear doctrine; capabilities and posture have been highlighted in the comments, statements and writings of Indian politicians and officials several times where they have been urging to review the No First Use policy of India. Several international reputed observers and scholars have also referred to India's counterforce temptations. These developments and debate however are not new for Pakistan as Pakistan has always categorized the Indian NFU as a gimmick and bluff. The claim of India's NFU is shallow because India kept on modernizing and developing its capabilities and nuclear deterrence. Even if there was a slight bluff left regarding India's NFU, it has been clarified after the post

Pulawama crisis in 2019 and recent incident of India firing hypersonic cruise missile into Pakistan on March 9, 2022.

Modi's statements such as nuclear weapons are not for celebration and "night of massacre" was to threaten Pakistan. All these statements have glaring contradictions between Indian Political Statements on one hand and actual actions on the other hand. The policy of NFU, where India has been using it politically to tell the West and international community that it is a responsible country and it follows NFU and its neighbor is not as responsible and they do not adhere to NFU policy. But, even that is the Indian way to interpret NFU. Pakistan knows that its 2003 doctrine included the points where India reserved the right to use weapons first in response to chemical and biological weapons which violates its own NFU commitment. However, more importantly, since 2016 we have seen some senior decision-makers especially members from the nuclear command authority, former defense minister, current defense minister, former NSA, former Army chiefs have been doubting their nuclear policy which is creating and opening a space for dispersion where India can justify in future to use its nuclear weapons first against Pakistan in a preemptive strike.

Here the question arises, what is the factor that actually shapes the policy shift in India. First is India's growing confidence in its misperceived military advantage against Pakistan. The perceived edge that India is supposed to acquire from its new and emerging technologies and India's illusion that at the political level its narrative of being justified of taking action against Pakistan of the false premise of actions against terrorism is also a significant factor. Moreover among the technologies which facilitate the Indian pursuit of misguided strategies are the space technologies, which certainly provide precise data about the exact location of the adversary's assets. In parallel to these, the developments of hypersonic delivery systems, which reduce the response time manifolds and Indian induction of ballistic missile defence system including Russian S-400, seems to provide false security to India to attempt misadventure in Pakistan.

The development of BMD capability can also lead to a false sense of security amongst the Indian decision-makers and could provide an incentive for the first strike. The most important development is hypersonic missiles because of their speed and precision and they are considered as more effective against ballistic missiles or missiles that are placed on transportable launchers, such as Pakistan's short-range ballistic missile "Nasr". So, India's development of hypersonic weapons could be a sign to deter Pakistan from deploying Nasr batteries and



theatrical level and simultaneously create space for limited war fighting against Pakistan. It is a disturbing situation because it can lead the miscalculations and Pakistan would be forced to take remedial measures. India also aims to develop and acquire more technologies that suit the objective of conducting counterforce than counter value targeting against Pakistan.

All these developments are being aided and embedded by exemptions granted to India, which allows it the access to advanced military technologies and dual-use systems. US has also granted the STA-1 status to India which will allow India to purchase advanced military items without an individual license and several foundational agreements aimed at enhancing the interoperability of the US and Indian forces. This will enhance the precision striking capabilities of Indian forces, which are important in any counterforce or preemptive strike. So, in short India's temptation which is very hard to materialize at the practical level is undermining the broader strategic stability of this region thereby increasing nuclear risks and generating and fueling a new arms race.

So far, India still fails to provide any assurances regarding its NFU policy. So, India might be building its nuclear deterrent to fight a two-front war, where it wants to take out Pakistan's nuclear assets in a preemptive strike and maintain a credible second-strike capability for China is a pipe dream for India. But the sooner India shed those dreams the better it would be for India and regional and international security and strategic stability. Both countries in South Asia will have to one way or another return dialogue on promoting risk reduction, avoidance of arms race, promote restraint and adopt CBMs, which is the only way forward.

*Sher Bano is Research Officer at Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad.*

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/26042022-implications-of-evolving-indias-strategic-thinking-under-nuclear-overhang-in-south-asia-oped>.

## ***Saffronized India: A Threat to Regional Peace and Security***

***Zukhruf Amin***

Since taking office for the second term, Prime Minister Modi has consolidated his power over his public policies and governance. The Hindu rhetoric, cloaked with hyper-nationalism, which finds its reverence in the concept of Akhand Bharat, has been the driving force for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government. Saffronisation of India, which is fueled by the Hindutva ideology, has been a major factor for polarizing the society. India has now significantly

turned Islamophobic that is repeatedly injected with the Hindutva ideology. It augments the idea of glorification of a Hindu state for Hindus only, which provides a justification for the oppression of other minorities in India especially Muslims. The BJP continues to further its agenda by its radicalized policies socially and politically, through the saffron terror outfits. Thus, India is on a steady path of being converted into a Hindu Rashtra that is poles apart from its secular constitution.

Recently, the controversy regarding the Hijab ban in educational institutions highlights the majoritarian politics that is at play in India. It was another factor in determining the BJP's exclusionary policies against Muslims. The ban questioned the pluralistic and secular nature of the Indian constitution which prohibits any compulsion on the basis of religion. In addition to it, the trend of presenting India as a fundamentally Hindu nation is now seemingly a part of the Indian media. As evident by the recently released *The Kashmir Files*, that focuses on the mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the Indian Occupied Kashmir. It is an addition to the already prejudiced environment against Muslims. The movie has been granted a tax-free status in various Indian states that has significantly increased its viewership; spurring hate speech and violence against Muslims.

Unfortunately, the institutionalization of Hindutva has troubling consequences. One of the key aspects in this regard is the revocation of special status of Kashmir that plunged Pakistan and India in a renewed animosity. Kashmir, since then, has been at the mercy of the repressive Modi regime. It is under a complete communication blackout, experiencing the worst form of unprecedented human rights violations, arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances by the Indian Security Forces, crackdown on dissent and a systematic demographic change that is persistently under way. The socio-political reengineering of the Muslim majority area favors the right-wing Hindu nationalists that want to see it as a Hindu majority state. Similarly, the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) of 2019 that aimed for granting citizenship to illegal immigrants and refugees from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan seriously impacted the diplomatic ties of India. It was a move that undermined the status of Muslims, rendering them as second-class citizens. Moreover, the issue of citizenship of Bengali immigrants under the National Register of Citizens (NRC) also debunked the so-called pluralistic nature of Indian democracy. Similarly, in November 2019, Indian Supreme Court gave a historical judgment on the Babri Masjid-Ram temple dispute, prioritizing the religious beliefs over stated facts and figures. The site was authorized to the Indian government for the construction of Ram temple



while the authorities were asked to allot another place for the construction of Mosque. The verdict was a blow to the credibility of the judiciary that had succumbed to the pressure of Hindutva ideology.

It is unfortunate that at a time when states should reintegrate; particularly through CPEC for economic development and regional connectivity, India's geopolitical belligerence threatens regional peace and security. The shift towards an increased saffronisation poses serious challenges to the ventures of peace. India's nefarious designs and its network of hybrid warfare, to create instability across its neighbors, is no secret. It is because the Indian ambitions of creating a Hindu Rashtra and project itself as a regional hegemon are masculine in nature, demanding power projection. The propagation of Hindutva ideology that agitates intolerance towards the minorities, lynching of Muslims, forced conversions, fake propagandas, justifies the Two-Nation Theory advocated by our founding fathers. The provocative statements by the BJP leadership accompanied by the hawkish Doval doctrine for achieving India's hegemonic ambitions imperil the regional states' security. Modi's right-wing nationalism threatens to bring the neighboring states, particularly Pakistan on the brink of war, disregarding the fact that South Asia is home to two nuclear weapon states. The Pulwama attack, Balakot crisis, and the recently miss-fired Brahmos missile into Pakistan, are manifestations of the right-wing nationalistic tendencies.

The Hindutva ideology, a reality of today's India, has brought it to a new low with its neighbors. A society that has the largest Muslim population is on a steady path of dismantling them through governmental marginalized policies. Since BJP came to power in 2014, there has been a sharp rise in Indian aggressiveness. The saffronisation of India has jeopardized the secular nature of the Indian constitution, sliding it from a liberal democracy to an electoral autocracy. Under Modi, India is destined to further its jingoistic interests at the cost of the values promised in its constitution. It is a dilemma that for its colossal market, and geopolitical considerations, the world is still dismissive of the prevalent right-wing nationalism.

*Zukhruf Amin is Research Officer at Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad.*

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/18042022-saffronized-india-a-threat-to-regional-peace-and-security-oped/>.

## ***India's Errant BrahMos Launch and Potential Ramifications***

### ***Hamdan Khan***

Irrespective of the real causes behind the Indian BrahMos intruding 124 kilometers deep into the Pakistani airspace, the incident is being viewed with profound skepticism in Pakistan. Reasons: the decades-old hostility and prevalent distrust between the two countries; India's long history of increasingly belligerent verbalized and force-development posturing vis-à-vis Pakistan; India's abstruse attitude aimed at mystification instead of coming out transparent as to why the missile was launched.

At this moment in time, there are two widely prevalent discourses in Pakistan regarding the Indian BrahMos crashing into Pakistan: The first discourse posits the launch of BrahMos as a deliberate act meant to check Pakistan's response and that it features in the larger Indian stratagem of climbing one rung up the escalation ladder in each new crisis. The ultimate aim of the step-by-step strategy is to render Pakistan militarily acquiescent whilst dawdling below the war threshold. India's much-publicized but categorically denied by Pakistan "surgical strikes" of 2016 were the first rung on the escalation ladder. In 2019, India stepped one more rung up the escalation ladder and used airpower to deliver ammunition inside mainland Pakistan. Then there are recurrent attempts by the Indian Navy's submarines to intrude in Pakistan's territorial waters only to be detected by Pakistan Navy.

Given the step-by-step escalatory context, an Indian BrahMos intruding deep into Pakistan and India subsequently acting with utmost flippancy, could not be anything except a deliberate Indian ploy to assess Pakistan's potential response if India climbs one more rung up the escalation ladder and uses BrahMos or any other missile to hit some illusionary target in Pakistan – most likely for domestic political gains as previously has been the case.

The second discourse likewise argues that it was an advertent launch but the underlying cause being offered relates to "India's counterforce temptations" and resulting force posture development. That India is quickly advancing to mature a dependable counterforce posture and provided BrahMos is dual-capable and claimed to be one of the most accurate weapons in India's inventory, it suits aptly into the counterforce weapons category, especially to be used against Pakistan's battlefield nuclear-capable weapons systems. Hence, the argument that the deliberate



launch of an unarmed BrahMos was primarily aimed at assessing Pakistan's military response to India's potential counterforce adventures.

As for the potential ramifications of the convictions and discourses (supra), there is widespread consensus among Pakistan's strategic circles that had it not been an unarmed missile or had it hit some potential civilian or military target leading to casualties, Pakistan's response would have been exactly in line with its declaratory policy of "Quid pro-Quo Plus". In fact, as per some media reports, Pakistan did contemplate a retaliatory response to the intruding missile but only after inferring that it was an unarmed missile and that ultimately it did not cause any significant damage, did the authorities in Pakistan hold back.

However, the recent display of maturity and restraint is unlikely to become a customary Pakistani response to each Indian adventure or misadventure in the future. Provided Pakistan faces a militarily superior and bent on hegemonizing its neighbors' adversary in India – which is always predisposed to draw erroneous conclusions about Pakistan's resolve and capabilities – the "Quid pro-Quo Plus" is likely to come into play and unquestionably would have unsavory consequences for planners in New Delhi as was displayed in 2019.

Provided no missile defense system can intercept a supersonic cruise missile, the only way to dissuade India from embarking on a future BrahMos misadventure is "deterrence through punishment", which entails that Pakistan should demonstrate ample capability and resolve to respond to any of India's future shenanigans with double the ferocity so as not to allow the relevant circles in New Delhi to draw erroneous and misplaced inferences.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2022/04/25/indias-errant-brahmos-launch-and-potential-ramifications/>.

## ***Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement: The US Security Architecture in Indo-Pacific***

***Komal Khan***

In January 2022, Japan and Australia entered into a bilateral 'Reciprocal Access Agreement' (JA-RAA) which is a defense and security pact that permits reciprocal access among Defense Forces of Australia and the Japanese Self-Defense Forces. This strategic partnership between Japan and Australia has been framed under their joint underlying goal that is security of

their shared strategic interests aligned with the Indo-Pacific through an assertive foreign policy aimed at countering military assertiveness of China identified by both as the uncertainty that Japan and Australia have been facing in the Indo-Pacific.

The bilateral cooperation under the Reciprocal Access Agreement includes technological cooperation; military stationing and training; bilateral access to areas and facilities; and information exchange between Japan and Australia. The agreement legalizes allied support and extended military deployments under the extended network strategy to broaden their military reach and influence in counterbalance to China in the Indo-Pacific.

This bilateral strategic partnership depicts enactment of the US-led military order in the Indo-Pacific sustained by allied forces that provides for modernized military standings in the Indo-Pacific. Meeting the purpose, the agreement ensures reciprocal access to militaries into each other's facilities and territories for carrying out naval inter-operability in the Indo Pacific. Moreover, the agreement legalizes their interoperability into international waters with the justification of bilateral security cooperation. Bilateral information exchange and facilitation under this agreement between both of the US allies is yet another major development that supplements the US info-exchange and surveillance networking in China's neighborhood.

The United States has opted for a strategic reassurance policy to secure the status-quo of the US-led world order which is witnessing a revision by China in the Indo-Pacific. Therefore, the JA-RAA presents an extension of the 'United States Indo-Pacific Strategy', the 'free and open Indo-Pacific policy,' and the 'freedom of navigation' doctrine of the United States to counter the emerging world order in the Indo-Pacific with the assistance of allies-cum-partnerships.

The agreement has strategic benefits for Australia and Japan. Primarily, it facilitates them individually by legalizing them as potential maritime powers in the region. As in the case of Australia; while it already holds naval projections in the South China Sea as well as in the Taiwan Strait, the reciprocal access to Australian forces in Japan further provides it with maritime extension in the East China Sea. For the United States' allies, including Japan and Australia, Indo-Pacific Sea Lanes of Communication-(SLOCs) – are crucial for global trade. Similarly, these states are also claimants to the East-Asian maritime disputes over islands which necessitate such integrated deterrence as balance of power mechanisms against China. '2020



Defence Strategic Update’ of Australia signifies regional extension from the North-East Indian Ocean, into the South East Asia, to South-West Pacific, Papua, and New Guinea as Australia’s ‘immediate region,’ asserting ‘freedom of navigation’ and ‘free and open Indo-Pacific’ as order of the region.

Australia is foremost assertive in constructing the US Indo-Pacific security architecture by knitting strategic interoperability networks such as the ‘Exchange of Naval Nuclear Propulsion Information Agreement’ and the nuclear submarines purchase with the AUKUS; commissioning the HMAS Stalwart; and then the JA- RAA.

In the case of Japan, the JA-RAA presents the first status of forces agreement since 1960. The security pact indicates ‘security normalization’ in Japan’s foreign policy for constructing ‘a security nexus’ in the Indo-Pacific this time via allying with equal and middle power in the region. Significant deployments by Japan under this Indo-Pacific security nexus are JS KAGA (DDH-184); JS MURASAME (DD-101); JS SHIRANU; and the ‘Japan-Palau Goodwill Exercise; and the Japan-Vanuatu Goodwill Exercise.

The US-led security architecture holds responsibility for creating the security dilemma in the Indo-Pacific which may rightly be analyzed as the cause of militarization in the region, be that the case of Taiwan and China, North and South Korea, or Pakistan and India. Notably, it was the growing US-Japan security partnership in the Asia-Pacific post World War II, with the occupation of Diaoyu (Senkaku) Islands and security of energy monopolies, that has been responded with China’s intense military buildup and, consequently, militarization of the South and East China Seas.

China’s security policy in the Asia Pacific asserts United States’ ineligibility to intervene within maritime and land issues of China aligned with the region based on the rationale that these issue fall under the domain of ‘internal matters’ of states in the Asia-Pacific; and secondly, based on the United States’ status of being till date a non-signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas. China is also creating an ASEAN security community through bi- and multilateral security-cum-economic agreements. Similarly, China is also constructing a matching complex interdependence structure for the US-led alliance-cum-partnerships; for instance, with Japan China is collaborating in cyber space and in artificial intelligence domains.

The interpretation of the US policy of strategic reassurance is basically strengthening of the allies and partners in East Asia. Comprehending the policy in his hearing to the Congress on ‘Maritime Security in the Indo-Pacific and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea,’ Daniel Russel, former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, answers that what the US is trying to do is to create an imminent response to China by reestablishing balance of power in the Indo-Pacific through modernized military presence, strengthened allies and partnerships.

Hence, the defense and strategic security architecture of the US under its policy of strategic assurance is being executed through regional interoperability mechanisms in networked security architectures to create an ‘integrated deterrence’ against China which is established as a shared threat to the interests of the US and its allies, and to the US-led world order in the Asia-Pacific. The JA-RAA is a significant development in this regard.

### ***The threat of hypersonic warfare in Indo-Pacific***

#### ***Sabina Babar***

Alfred Thayer Mahan’s geopolitical vision of sea power and the significance of a protective system for organized warfare are more relevant today than it was a hundred years ago. The Indo-Pacific has become a geographical locus of all three major powers, with middle powers following in their footsteps, containing potential flashpoints of conflicts that can trigger conventional military confrontation and a race for dominance in the region. On March 28, US president Joe Biden announced that the USA will reinforce its role in the Indo-Pacific region and will extend its cooperation with longtime allies with a specific focus on defense and security along with emerging technologies. The Biden Administration has announced a budget of \$ 1.8 billion to support the Indo-Pacific strategic encounter.

In the near future, the region will witness the deployment and use of hypersonic missiles, as part of advanced technologies, which will radicalize the regional strategic dynamics. The US allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region are focusing on enhancing their defense capabilities. Japan has a goal for a Mach 5 + hypersonic scramjet by 2030. Recently, it was announced under the Quad umbrella that the US and Japan have to sign an agreement on advanced research and development of hypersonic missiles. Similarly, Australia is planning to advance its capabilities in



longer-range missiles. On April 5, AUKUS members announced a new trilateral alliance on joining the development of hypersonic and counter-hypersonic missiles.

India, another major ally of the USA in the Indo-Pacific region is also focusing on enhancing its missile defense system in order to tilt the regional balance of power in its favour. India has developed its first BrahMos missile and is now working on a follow-up BrahMos II with a speed of Mach 7. On March 9, India accidentally landed a BrahMos 124 km inside Pakistani territory. This inadvertent strike by India instigated a debate on hypersonic warfare and its impact in South Asia. The missile attack was a calculated act by India to access Islamabad's "response spectrum." Since there was no ongoing crisis, Pakistan acted with restraint but in a crisis situation, Islamabad is unlikely to show this restraints and this potentially could lead to a nuclear strike.

Pakistan has recently tested its ballistic missile Shaheen III, which is a defensive addition to its weaponry, however in the supersonic and hypersonic domain Pakistan still lags behind India. In response to the recent attack, Pakistan needs to focus on boosting its capabilities in supersonic and hypersonic missile technologies. So far, Pakistan has viewed the hypersonic race in the Indo-Pacific as a power competition of ascendancy between the USA and China, however with recent incidence, Islamabad is cautious about the security and safety against supersonic and hypersonic on its border. It is likely that China will assist Pakistan in developing a Hypersonic Glide Vehicle missile (HGV).

A more militarized India has time and again threatened Pakistan's minimum credible deterrence. Hypersonic weapons are offensive weapons with short reaction times that could potentially prompt conflict at the conventional level, causing an inadvertent escalation. To substantiate its defensive fence, Islamabad needs to spend wisely in order to boost its defensive capabilities. A preemptive strategy is required to counter any supersonic and hypersonic attack by India. Pakistan has built modern subsonic cruising Babur/Harbah and Ra'ad series along with the CM-302 Type-054A/P frigate programme. It seems Pakistan will pursue its own supersonic-cruising LACM through potentially the HD-1A, which China marketed as an option for the JF-17. Having said that, Pakistan still has not developed the land-based hypersonic missile defense system which is important for strategic domain.

Moreover, It is important to notice that the hypersonic race and missile development have come at a time of crumbling international architecture. States leading in this missile race are aligning themselves in blocs and coalitions which would further deepen the arms race and will bring regional and global instability. Indian advancement in missile systems along with its delinquent behaviour in the safety and security of missiles will undermine nuclear deterrence. In a similar scenario addition of hypersonic missile capabilities will further enhance India's offensive counterforce posture.

With this undermining of the Indian safety and security posture, it becomes crucial for Pakistan to adopt a possible countermeasure. The race for advanced technologies is extended beyond major powers and it is compulsory for South Asian states to boost their defensive capabilities preemptively in order to retain the strategic stability in the region

Hypersonic weapons are included in the vital capabilities of major powers in the Indo-Pacific region, while semi-periphery states in the region are trying to match these capabilities. This has implications and compels these powers to preemptively adopt new ways to counterbalance and mitigate or develop advanced technologies otherwise the potential fait accompli defeat will become their fate. Great powers need to avoid arms races as Patrick Morgan rightly said that arms control thinking can reinforce the emphasis on stabilizing and if indulged in an arms race it can end up making everyone less secure by undermining the strategic stability.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2022/04/22/the-threat-of-hypersonic-warfare-in-indo-pacific/>.

## ***Shaheen-III Test: Pakistan Maintaining Deterrence Stability In South Asia***

***Amber Afreen Abid***

Pakistan conducted a successful flight test of Shaheen-III Surface-to-Surface Ballistic Missile, with a range of 2,750 kilometers, which makes it capable of reaching the farthest point in India's northeast and Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It is solid-fuelled and equipped with the Post-Separation Altitude Correction (PSAC) system. Solid fuel is suited for rapid response capabilities, while the PSAC feature provides it the ability to adjust the warhead trajectory for greater accuracy and evading anti-ballistic missile defence systems.



The Shaheen 3 missile is a road-mobile weapon that is mounted on a transporter erector launcher (TELs) enabling transport and launch. The TELs are quicker to move and hide and are more survivable than the fixed launchers. Shaheen 3 was earlier tested twice in March and December 2015 and later unveiled to the public during a military parade in March 2016. According to ISPR, the flight test was conducted to revalidate the designs and practical considerations of the ballistic missile. The missile tests are performed to enhance Pakistan's credibility of nuclear missiles and to augment the nuclear posture of credible minimum deterrence. According to 2005 Bilateral Missile Pact between Pakistan and India, both countries notify each other before performing such tests.

The strategic policy making of the south Asian nuclear rivals accounts for several aspects, including the geographical factors, economic, military aspect, and relations with other states. The foreign policy of states on these factors and considering the long state rivalry with the neighboring country-India, Pakistan has to regularly update and modify its military capability, in order to counter for any aggressive action coming from India. For this purpose, Pakistan has designed its policy of credible minimum deterrence, which would be adequate to halt the enemy from going into adventurism.

The purpose of deterrence has always been to deter wars. Wherever, there is a nuclear dyad, the deterrence theory works. The purpose of that is to threaten and coerce the enemy to not to take any undesirable action, keeping in view the costs in response to that. In case of South Asia, the deterrence theory is visibly seen. But in order to maintain this deterrence, Pakistan has to keep up with the developments made by India, and respond efficiently to that, for maintaining the balance, strategic stability and for the deterrence to work. Pakistan reserves the option of Nuclear First Use when it comes to the nuclear weapon state, however, considers nuclear weapon as a weapon of mass destruction. By maintaining the policy of credible minimum deterrence vis-a-vis India is entirely based upon security.

Indian military posture is aggressive in nature, which enhances the need for Pakistan armed forces to cater for their operational and military preparedness. Pakistan needs to augment its capabilities in view of the growing Indian technological and military capabilities. Pakistan, therefore, is pushed to adopt the strategic measures in line with the nuclear posture of credible minimum deterrence. The sole purpose of acquisition of nuclear weapons by Pakistan is security

vis-à-vis India. Pakistan's nuclear use doctrine is clearly based upon the policy of Credible Minimum Deterrence posture. The 'minimum' and 'credible' in the nuclear posture are entirely dependent upon the advancements made by the rival state, and thus changes in accordance with its technological advancements and force postures.

Pakistan is playing field at par with the adversary. The posture of credible minimum deterrence serves as a stabilizing factor in South Asian strategic environment. It is to be certain of having dealt with up with the growing aggressive Indian strategies and force postures, and has thus wiped the chances of a total war in the region.

The nuclear deterrence of a state must depends upon three Cs-Credibility, Capability, and Communication. Hence, to maintain a credible deterrence, the capability of the nuclear forces should be communicated effectively, and the demonstration should be credible enough to restrain adversary from taking any aggressive action. The test of nuclear missiles are an effective way to show-casing the capabilities and a successful test enhances the credibility of the forces. The three Cs are always interdependent and thus creates a strong deterrence. This is the core of deterrence and is extremely important in rapidly advancing technological developments in south Asia.

The overt nuclearization in South Asia has diminished the chances of a total war. The unstable peace in the region, between two nuclear rivals remains vulnerable to animosity and competition is highly dependent on robustness of deterrence and strategic stability in the region. Pakistan has been compelled by the nonpareil conventional superiority of India and its aggressive military designs, to go for the option of aggressive defensive nuclear postures. Thus, by maintaining the nuclear and non-nuclear security measures, the deterrence and strategic stability in the region can prevail.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/15042022-shaheen-iii-test-pakistan-maintaining-deterrence-stability-in-south-asia-oped/>.

## ***The dichotomy of rules based international order***

***Akash Shah***

Last month, in an unprecedented event, a superfast object from India flew into Pakistan and crashed near Mian Channu, a city at a distance of 124 km from the Indian border. It was later identified as BrahMos, a supersonic, nuclear-capable missile developed jointly by India and



Russia. Indian authorities acknowledged the incident after two days when Pakistani military officials thoroughly briefed the media regarding missile's flight trajectory and its potential hazard to civilian air traffic that was heavy at the time.

Ideally and legitimately, it should have led to a serious response from the international community as both India and Pakistan are nuclear states and incidents like these speak volumes about the crisis instability that exists in South Asia. More than 1.5 billion people are directly vulnerable to one miscalculation but the consideration it got globally was minimalistic because a war is going on in Europe. In retrospect, the cause of the ongoing war in Europe could arguably be traced back to the underplaying of the issue through the years and not engaging with stakeholders the way they needed to be, and eventually, we are witnessing the largest ground assault in Europe since World War II.

The United States and like-minded allies have consistently championed the cause of 'rules-based international order' where institutional liberalism is at the helm of international affairs. The west takes credit for the longest spell of relative global peace courtesy of the same rules-based international order. Particularly in the security domain, the order calls for the role of international institutions, backed by democratic states, to ensure avenues for peaceful resolution of conflicts between countries, preserving the principle of sovereignty and integrity, and most importantly, preventing the use of force and spread of weapons of mass destruction.

However, the critics have argued that the idea behind such an arrangement is to maintain the global dominance on part of the United States via institutional control and selective intervention as the reaction to a particular violation of the said 'rules' depends upon the actor committing it.

For the United States, the only challenger that matters in more than just the economic calculations has been China. The U.S has been weighing options to contain the Chinese economic, military and to a lesser extent, cultural stretch in Asia and beyond. The closest working arrangement that the United States so far has managed to assemble Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or simply "Quad". A loose working arrangement of 4 democracies, the USA, Australia, Japan, and India has been there for the past two decades but its existence was perceived differently from all participating countries until recently. There seems to be a consensus now that primarily the group would tackle the issue of maritime cooperation and

security in the Indo-Pacific, re-establishing the rules-based order which is offset by Chinese assertiveness.

The response on part of the United States of America towards India has been way more lenient on issues that it otherwise has dealt with an iron fist for other nations. It came as a blow to the ‘alliance of democracies’ against China when India was the outlier in condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine, yet it seems that the U.S Quad partner in South Asia would get away once again without having to face the consequences. The purchase of the S-400 ABMD system serves as a good example here.

China and Turkey were punished under Countering America’s Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) while India’s case has been continuously brushed under the carpet. Hence, it comes as a no surprise that given India’s significance in the broader scheme of things for the United States against China, a nuclear-capable missile taking off from India towards a nuclear power Pakistan has largely gone unperturbed.

The BrahMos incident could have been a good opportunity to work on the missing pieces of the jigsaw in crisis stability in the event of an armed conflict between India and Pakistan. Both countries could have used the opportunity to work on mitigating such mishaps and strengthened the working relationship to prevent a catastrophe in the future had India agreed to a joint investigation. India has shifted the initial assessment of ‘technical fault’ to ‘human error’ for the launch of the missile.

It was expected since BrahMos is central to the export expansion of India’s defense-industrial complex and concerns were raised about its technology after a technical fault was deemed as the likely cause of the accident. However, the real reason for the bizarre and a potential escalator accident might never come out as the world in general and the United States in particular simply do not care enough. And the manifestation of not caring enough to do something substantial until it’s too late is what we are seeing in Europe right now.

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