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JUNE 2022

Compiled:

Ghulam Mujtaba Haider

Edited by:

Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai

Strategic Vision Institute
Islamabad

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I N S T I T U T E

Strategic Vision Institute (SVI)

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Strategic Vision Institute (SVI)

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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

Since the outbreak of the Ukraine war, there has been a direct clash between Russia and the West and things have gone beyond a certain point where other states have to take sides. However, India, which has a close strategic partnership with the US, did not side with the West despite efforts on the part of the US to persuade India on two things: condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine and stopping India's purchase of Russian oil.

Likewise, in the case of South Asia, the United States holds responsibility for authorizing India as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean and also for facilitating India in the development of offensive conventional military technology, specifically, of the next-generation weaponry that includes Submersible Ship Ballistic Missile Nuclear (SSBN), the nuclear power attack submarine SSNs, supersonic and the hypersonic missile defense system – the S-400, PAD and AAD BMD systems. This asymmetric advantage extended to India has to influence India's transforming strategic culture and aggressive posture, particularly towards Pakistan.

Similarly, crumbling CBM frameworks and the risk of inadvertent escalation, Pakistan reaffirms pledge to nuclear non-proliferation goals, Agnipath scheme: Boon or Bane?, Indian nuclear missile proliferation: effect on South Asian strategic stability in addition to pieces on strategic stability are included in this foresight.

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, nuclear 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

Could the Orca Autonomous Submarine Forever Change Nuclear War?

Akash Shah

The U.S. Navy has conducted the first in-water test of its Extra Large Unmanned Undersea Vehicle (XLUUV) “Orca,” marking a big step toward the future of naval warfare. The idea of an unmanned undersea vehicle in itself is not ground-breaking per se, but the sheer size, payload capacity, and artificial intelligence-driven autonomy are what make Orca-class a game-changer. The eighty-five-foot-long autonomous underwater system is purpose-built to carry out missions such as underwater surveillance and mine laying operations. The U.S Navy intends to enhance the role and capabilities of Orca-class submarines in the future which includes anti-surface, anti-submarine, and electronic warfare missions. An Orca submarine, capable of operating autonomously underwater for thirty days, hitting the waters in Huntington Beach, California in April 2022 has likely caused a ripple effect already across the world.

Although still in the early phase of operation, the possibilities platforms like Orca offer to militaries are likely to impact and reconfigure maritime warfare. For instance, the features of these underwater robots may seem tactical at first but they have the potential of reorienting the established strategic equations across the oceans. These submarines could become highly instrumental for blocking naval choke points, hampering the sea economy for a particular country, or imposing a Cuban-missile-crisis-style naval blockade. The platform could also be used to deploy highly advanced Hammerhead Mines right into enemy waters without putting any lives at risk.

Since it is just the beginning for these autonomous killers, the possibilities could be endless. Submarines are the most crucial component of nuclear deterrence as they allow nuclear-armed countries to strike back if they come under a nuclear attack or all their land-based nuclear warheads are destroyed. It might be tempting for some countries to arm underwater platforms like Orca with nuclear warheads in the future. Imagine knowing, that nuclear strike is out of the question as autonomous, nuclear-capable submarines might be lurking in the nearest ocean, drastically reducing the retaliatory response time. It might particularly be an alluring thought for countries that are under existential threat as it, theoretically, gives an additional layer of an

“assured” second-strike option. However, some psychological and technical constraints might not let the idea of autonomous unmanned nuclear submarines turn into a reality.

Just the idea of an AI-based robot submarine having the discretion to decide when to launch is absurd, to say nothing of all the things that could go wrong. I asked a high-ranking, retired Pakistani military official, who was closely associated with Pakistan’s nuclear program during his service, whether he sees any underwater autonomous platforms to be used in nuclear conflicts down the road. He instantly replied, “No! Nukes are too serious a business and would never be left at the whim of an AI platform, irrespective of whatever new technology emerges.”

Furthermore, AI systems are trained on huge caches of real-life data pertinent to the domain they are being trained for and actual data of a nuclear conflict is practically non-existent. The only nuclear raids at the end of World War II were not a conflict between two nuclear states and hence serve no purpose regarding second strikes. Based on these premises, it could be said with a higher degree of certainty that no rational international actor would combine a completely autonomous platform with the nuclear warheads.

One of the crucial elements of a secure second-strike capability is an early warning of incoming nuclear missiles and launch platforms being communicated to strike back. However, communication with a submerged vessel is one of the most challenging aspects of underwater warfare. The stealth feature of a submarine is only viable if it is underwater as the probability of detection and interception increases when it is closer to the surface. This conundrum of communication while maintaining stealthiness is somewhat addressed by using the extremely low frequency of 3 Hz to 30 Hz.

However, in the case of autonomous unmanned submarines carrying nukes, one can never be sure if the transmitted message is conceived in time and in the manner it was intended. When compared with the potential for autonomous underwater platforms to enhance a country’s deterrence capabilities, the risk and cost, if things go wrong, are simply too high.

Akash Shah is a Research Officer at Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/could-orca-autonomous-submarine-forever-change-nuclear-war-203085#:~:text=Despite%20having%20little%20to%20no,the%20future%20of%20naval%20warfare..>

Rethinking the Deterrence Stability in the Asia-Pacific

Komal Khan

The present state of Asia-Pacific order dynamics holds regional as well as global actors responsible for the regional deterrence stability. The regional states that include China, India, Australia, Japan, and Pakistan are primary stakeholders in restoring the status-quo of deterrence stability with no maritime militarization, extended deployments against regional powers, active confrontations, and increasing nuclearisation.

The utility of deterrence is to ensure restraint on adversaries' undesired actions, specifically within the military domains. This restraint has been incorporated as a primary strategy in the United States Indo-Pacific policy since the Obama administration. In a study by the Rand on the United States national security policy; Michael J. Mazarr, the senior political scientist at the Rand Corporation, argues that the United States is in immediate obligatory need of forcible deterrence since the Cold War ended.

The intra-regional military competition has a history in the Asia Pacific – such as the Sino-Japanese conflict in 1895 over South China Sea islands and the China-Vietnamese conflict. Yet, the deterrence stability in the region was sustained because the conflict remained confined to intra-regional actors. However, the United States' Indo-Pacific shift in its foreign policy implemented through regional militarization and integrated deterrence strategy is causing deterrence instability due to 'asymmetric advantage', especially among intra-regional medium powers in the Asia-Pacific.

Understanding the matter better

The deterrence policy in the Indian Ocean relies on the extension of military deployments adjacent to key sea lines of communication (SLOCs), and the maritime choke points. This may be analyzed under Mearsheimer's offensive-defensive lens where the United States integrated deterrence against China is a manifestation of offensive Realism for the U.S. strategic reassurance in China's neighborhood. While on the other hand, China's military assertiveness in the Asia Pacific and the strategic partnerships when analyzed since the post-World War era provide a more defensive outlook to deter the threats to its national integrity as in the case of the

Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute and, significantly, for the security of SLOCs against possible disruptions by the United States via its regional policing partners and allies.

However, the medium powers militarization is based on an offensive-defensive bargain as in the case of Japan and Pakistan where both the states have opted for bandwagoning either with China or the U.S. under a defensive Realist mechanism; whereas India and Australia present a case of offensive Realism where they aim at pursuing greater regional ambitions.

These regional medium powers are operating to construct a strong security profile in the Asia-Pacific and in the Indian Ocean, in particular, in order to assume recognition as the state which is the instrumental regional partner of either the status quo or the revisionist stakeholder within the world order in the Indo-Pacific. However, in both cases, this undermining of the regional balance of power has implications for the deterrence stability in the Asia-Pacific.

Unless it has been the status-quo and the revisionist power intervention for world order interests, the deterrence stability in the Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean is sustained, despite active regional disputes, due to being a regional affair. Taking the case of Japan, the Senkaku Islands were placed under the US administration in the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1951 -Article 3, and their administrative rights were later transferred to Japan in 1972.

Moreover, the US-Japan defense Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security in 1960 was an offensive mechanism that signaled the United States integrated deterrence strategy against China in years to come. Therefore, Japan as the regional state does hold liability for pushing China, which is a global and a regional stakeholder as well, towards maritime militarization policy; thus impacting deterrence stability in the Asia-Pacific.

Similarly, Canberra is assertive in constructing the U.S.-led regional security architecture in the Asia-Pacific by promoting strategic interoperability mechanisms characterized by shared military capabilities development and exchange as also mentioned in Australian government defense and its foreign policy white papers 2016, 2017, and 2020. The AUKUS arrangement between the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom and within it, the nuclear-powered submarines deal between the U.K. and Australia; and the Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement are indicators of Australia-led multilateral militarization taking place in the Asia-Pacific.

The way forward

To counterbalance that, the China-Solomon Islands security pact, which indicates an addition in China's foreign policy for constructing a regional security network, may be taken as a valid balancer for deterrence stability within the U.S. – China competition for world order in the Asia-Pacific; however, within the regional context of China-Australia power imbalance, this arrangement might disturb the regional deterrence stability. In fact, the SLOCs focus in the Indo-Pacific policy of the United States and the defense technology collaboration reveal that the U.S. is more interested in securing its economic interests against rising China either that be via integrated deterrence policy for free and open Indo-Pacific for trade or be it the war economy.

In the case of South Asia, the United States holds responsibility for authorizing India as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean and also for facilitating India in the development of offensive conventional military technology, specifically, of the next-generation weaponry that includes Submersible Ship Ballistic Missile Nuclear (SSBN), the nuclear power attack submarine SSNs, supersonic and the hypersonic missile defense system – the S-400, PAD and AAD BMD systems. This asymmetric advantage extended to India has to influence India's transforming strategic culture and aggressive posture, particularly towards Pakistan.

According to a Stimson study, India's China-Pakistan Dilemma makes it vulnerable to the two-front military threat. Therefore, the Indian approach of a more offensive posture towards Pakistan and limited military punishment for China is unaffordable as it might lead to a collaborative or collusive military response from China and Pakistan. Pakistan's strategy is more feasible in adapting to Indian Ocean strategic dynamics. Pakistan is developing tactical weapons perceivably for achieving enhanced deterrence stability in South Asia.

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<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/rethinking-the-deterrence-stability-in-the-asia-pacific/>

Crumbling CBM Frameworks and the Risk of Inadvertent Escalation

Hamdan Khan

In 1962, the world witnessed the most precarious event in ages. The USA and USSR were engaged in a perilous standoff over the deployment of Soviet missiles in Cuba and a small error

or miscalculation could have reverted humanity into the Stone Age. Auspiciously for humanity, the crisis de-escalated and begot the first Confidence Building Measure (CBM) of the Cold War: the famed hotline communication between Washington and Moscow. In the subsequent years, the two superpowers concluded numerous CBMs, which significantly enabled mitigation of Cold War tensions thereby lowering the annihilation endangerments haunting humanity. In the meantime, the CBMs were aggrandized to assume a global scope after several countries in the geographical zones adapted CBMs as a viable tool to ease tensions. Other areas, however, saw very little progress on CBMs thus retaining their “flashpoint” status.

The assorted trend of CBMs extended into the post-Cold War period and numerous CBMs covering arms control, economics, and human rights issues saw acme in some regions but could not make noteworthy headway in other troubled zones. The piece succinctly discourses the CBMs’ trends during post-Cold War in four important regions namely Europe, the Middle East, Asia-Pacific, and South Asia.

Europe – regarded as a dreamland for liberal peace and post-Cold War CBMs – is the geographical sphere to host the 21st century’s potentially most risky conflict. Starting with the Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and its support to armed separatists in Eastern Ukraine, numerous efforts to avoid escalation went in vain primarily owing to the widening trust deficit between Russia and US-led NATO, and finally, the full-fledge Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 resuscitated the Cold War-style East vs West conflict. Even before, the resurgence of Russia under Putin and the withdrawal of the USA from the ABM and INF treaties had dealt a jolting blow to CBMs between the two military superpowers.

By implication, the Russian invasion of Ukraine proved to be the last nail in the coffin of the Russia-West post-Cold War conciliation. The European countries swiftly transitioned to revert mostly economic CBMs with Russia instituted over decades while NATO wholeheartedly accepted membership applications from previously nonaligned Finland and Sweden. The landmark developments herald a new era of intense and even more perilous security competition in Europe and as the trust deficit between the contending parties looms highest in decades, the space for CBMs as a tool to reduce tensions has been further curtailed.

The most drastic turnaround on CBMs post-Cold War took place in the Middle East. The traditional antagonists Israel and the Arab nations after CBMs are currently making headways in

strengthening peace. This despite the root cause of tensions – the Israel-Palestine Conflict – remains outstanding, however, without evoking much interest or support from the new generation of Arab rulers who are least beholden to the Palestinian cause.

The expansion of Iranian influence and Iran's nuclear program, nonetheless, have added new dimensions to the tensions in the Middle East with the risk of the USA also getting embroiled in a hot war with Iran. Nevertheless, given the destructive concomitants of such an undertaking, the USA and its Arab allies have been cautious not to escalate tensions with Iran. The arduously reached Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran's nuclear program could have contributed meaningfully to reducing tensions in the region but was torpedoed by the Trump administration, which also pushed the Middle East to the brink of war by recklessly eliminating the top commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Following, the Biden administration's endeavors to return to the deal and persuade Iran to reverse its actions that belie JCPOA encountered impediments and the negotiations have lately become hostage to Russia-West resuscitated powers struggle. Though the Biden administration has been carefully trudging the fine line in the Middle East, with minimum CBMs in place between the USA-led coalition and Iran, inadvertent escalation in the region remains plausible.

The Asia-Pacific region currently hosts the two most powerful countries on the planet, the USA and China, and despite both sides pledging to manage their relationship, the vicious dynamics of great power politics have hindered the institutionalization of CBMs. Emboldened by its risen status, China is expanding its military outreach in Western Pacific – areas traditionally dominated by the USA and its allies – and with no existing CBMs in the form of the operational framework for the contending militaries, the conflict avoidance strategy by both the sides is prone to failure raising the risks of inadvertent escalation, especially in volatile areas like the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait. To add is the intensifying techno-economic war and the absence of arms control CBMs between the two sides, which clubbed together are speedily rendering the strategic environment in Asia-Pacific more challenging than ever.

The most troubled zone in Asia-Pacific, Korean Peninsula, has seen many ups and downs in tensions during the last three decades. North Korea went nuclear in 2006 and since then has been using nuclear tests occasionally and missile tests frequently to pressurize its adversaries. Several conflict avoidance strategies were adopted by the USA and its regional allies, specifically during

President Trump's reign. In June 2018, Trump became the first US President to meet a North Korean leader followed by another inconclusive meeting the next year hosted by Vietnam. In June 2019, Trump became the first US President to step foot on North Korean soil as he walked alongside Kim Jong Un from the demilitarized zone into North Korea only to walk back into South Korea. Though the optics were high, the meetings were largely the result of President Trump's eccentric personality and lacked Washington's institutional backup. Fast forward to 2022, even the CBM forbidding the missile tests has been abandoned by Pyongyang and the relationship between the two countries is back to square one with missile tests by North Korea acting as a primary destabilizer and raising the risks of inadvertent escalation.

Among the regions that maintained their "flashpoint" status, South Asia holds the distinction. The rollercoaster of hostilities and parleys between India and Pakistan makes South Asia one of the most volatile regions of the world. In 1988, the two countries signed a landmark agreement prohibiting attacks on each other's nuclear installations, and after the countries declared their nuclear status in 1998, the Lahore Declaration and MoU marked noteworthy CBMs only to be rendered ineffective by the outbreak of the Kargil War. Following the Twin Peak crisis, General Musharraf's regime made headways in negotiations with India, and many CBMs were concluded, most notably the 2003 ceasefire agreement, while out-of-the-box solutions were considered to resolve the festering Kashmir Conflict. The 2008 Mumbai attacks proved to be a tipping point in India-Pakistan negotiations and since then no new substantive and institutionalized dialogue has taken place between the two countries, apart from occasional confidence-building initiatives, which are usually relapsed by the outbreak of a new crisis.

Previously agreed dialogue frameworks and CBMs, nonetheless, are being followed despite the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi issuing vile threats to undermine some of those, such as his threat to deprive Pakistan of its share of water settled under the landmark Indus water treaty. The perturbing propensity is further compounded by Modi's intertwining of India's domestic electoral politics with anti-Pakistan jingoism. In 2019, after having failed to deliver on his socio-economic promises during his first five years as India's PM, Modi tapped Pulwama Crisis to secure a landslide victory in Indian elections but in the process pushed the region to the brink of nuclear holocaust. As the things stand, the trust deficit between the two countries is predictably high, and though the hostilities along the LoC have ceased thanks to a UAE-brokered resumption

of ceasefire, the breakdown in meaningful dialogue persists essentially creating a veritable stalemate.

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<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2022/06/12/crumbling-cbm-frameworks-and-the-risk-of-inadvertent-escalation/>

How India is an Unreliable Partner to the US?

Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai

Since the outbreak of the Ukraine war, there has been a direct clash between Russia and the West and things have gone beyond a certain point where other states have to take sides. However, India, which has a close strategic partnership with the US, did not side with the West despite efforts on the part of the US to persuade India on two things: condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine and stopping India's purchase of Russian oil. This article looks at how on one hand, India has adopted a neutral posture toward Ukraine, but on the other hand, it has continued buying Russian oil, which has frustrated the US by portraying India as an unreliable partner.

When Russia attacked Ukraine, the West under the US imposed stringent sanctions on Russia. However, there was a difficulty: most of the European countries depend on Russian oil and gas. By the start of March and the second week of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, President Biden announced: "We're banning all imports of Russian oil and gas and energy." He said in remarks from the White House, "That means Russian oil will no longer be acceptable at the US ports and the American people will deal another powerful blow to Putin's war machine."

Similarly, Washington convinced the European Union and other European allies to cut Russian oil imports in addition to sanctions aimed at hitting the Russian economy. In early May, the European Union proposed a ban on Russian oil and gas. The European Commission has devised a strategy to cut reliance on Russian oil and gas by 2030. They are working on renewable energy sources that would fulfill their 45 per cent energy needs. Hence, Europe is working on alternative sources to cut its ties completely with Russia in the coming years.

Besides, to put pressure on Russia, the US moved a resolution to the UN General Assembly in early March. Though the resolution was passed, some countries abstained from voting. Among

them, India and Pakistan were also included. Relations between the US and Pakistan are not much closer, which can be a reason why Pakistan wanted to be away from taking any side. However, India is a strategic partner of the US and the latter had asked the former to condemn the Russian invasion of Afghanistan which India didn't do.

Likewise, the US has time and again warned India over the imports of Russian oil. However, India has maintained its imports from Russia. India imports 600000 barrels of oil daily from Russia, which adds a considerable amount of money to the Russian exchequer. The Biden administration's leading international energy adviser warned India not to increase discounted oil imports from Russia that can create hurdles for them. India has continued its imports of Russian oil which is causing frustration in the west. The Russian oil and gas exports have remained stable despite the sanctions and cuts in supply to Europe. The Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) has recently found in a report that Russia has earned \$100 billion from oil and gas exports in the 100 days, which has shocked the West as, despite sanctions, Russia managed to export its oil and gas.

When Russia offered its oil at a discounted price, India greatly benefited from it despite being a strategic ally of the US. In March, the import of Russian oil to India was three million barrels which rose to 7.2 million barrels in April. However, in May, it reached 24 million barrels, which is alarming for the west as India pours its money into the Russian exchequer that is used in its war in Ukraine. In the coming months, it seems India will further increase its oil imports from Russia. Thus, it is concluded that India didn't care about the US interests while dealing with its strategic partner: the US. Likewise, the Indian approach towards the Ukraine war portrays that India is an unreliable partner of the US.

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<https://dailytimes.com.pk/956313/how-india-is-an-unreliable-partner-to-the-us/>

Pakistan Reaffirms Pledge to Nuclear Non-Proliferation Goals

Sher Bano

1540 Support Unit of Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) hosted a side event entitled "Regional Approaches to Supporting UNSCR 1540 (2004)" on 1st June, 2022. UNSCR 1540

came in 2004 as a response to the threats of WMDs, non-proliferation and terrorism that emerged in 21st century. Pakistan has always supported the globally agreed objectives of promoting nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Pakistan also share's the concerns about WMDs proliferation and their means of delivery by the non-state actors and has always cooperated with the international efforts to promote equitable and fair solutions to non-proliferation and disarmament challenges.

During the UNSCR 1540 meeting Pakistan insisted that it is the legitimate right of the states to avail dual use technologies and material while keeping them away from the non-state actors. It was argued that the principle driver of proliferation are the state's insecurities and they must be addressed unreservedly, but at the same time having the right to participate in the decision making process regarding global regulation of technology and access to technologies must be enjoyed by all the states in the non-discriminatory manner. In order to achieve this, the MECRs (Multi-lateral export-control regimes) must be democratized and the arbitrary entity listing along with waivers, discriminations and exceptions needs to be eliminated. Pakistan emphasized that the sensitive technologies must be protected against the non-state actors but it should be the right of the states to use these dual use materials and technologies for the peaceful purposes. The minority of technology holders should not monopolize the access to the technologies, equipment and materials. MECRs (Multiple Export Control Regimes) must not be used by the few states as an instrument of coercion to further their strategic and political interests.

Pakistan conveyed its consistent view during the general debate that the international instruments and standards that are designed to address the threats to international security and peace posed by WMDs must be developed through multilateral and inclusive negotiations. Pakistan being a responsible nuclear state and member of the Security Council has being fulfilling its obligations under the resolution 1540 in order to strengthen the global framework for the non-proliferation of biological, nuclear and radiological weapons to the non-state actors.

Resolution 1540 had made a useful contribution to advancing non-proliferation goals but this has been overshadowed by the several reversals in non-proliferation and WMD disarmament. A new nuclear and conventional arms race was underway when there was no Biological Weapons Verification Regime. Established non-proliferation norms and standards have been eroded by discrimination and double standards in the pursuit of narrow national interests. In order to

address this issue, the 1540 Committee should focus on capacity building, national legislation and voluntary assistance. Provisions for technology control under resolution 1540 should be transformed into a treaty-based framework through specific treaties in the nuclear, radiological, biological and chemical weapons domains. Pakistan also proposed the establishment of an Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) under UN's auspices to prepare recommendation for more equitable access to the technologies, material and equipment, and called for evolving a UN-based review mechanism to address the denial cases that deprive countries of the technologies essential for development.

The UNSC resolution 1540 provides a concrete mandate for counter-terrorism and non-proliferation. However its effective implementation is still in progress and will mature with time. Even though the state's compliance has increased, the complete implementation is still a long term task. There are still some provisions that need to be enforced and operationalized across the broader spectrum to make the resolution fully operational and effective. In pursuing implementation of the resolution, the Committee must stay focused on its core mandate i.e. prevention of WMD proliferation by non-state actors. Ideas and suggestions for an enhanced role and revision in the 1540 architecture need detailed discussion and careful evaluation by all Member States.

Pakistan will continue to contribute towards achieving non-proliferation objectives on an equal footing as a partner of the international community. Pakistan also seeks a non-discriminatory global regime on non-proliferation that is principle-based, inclusive and underpinned by the cardinal principle of equal and undiminished security for all states. Genuine progress on disarmament necessitates a conducive regional and global security environment as well as the resolution of long-standing disputes and conflicts.

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<http://southasiajournal.net/pakistan-reaffirms-pledge-to-nuclear-non-proliferation-goals/>

Agnipath Scheme: Boon or Bane?

Zukhruf Amin

There have been disturbing developments in India over the past few weeks, indicating that India is on the path of going through a major change that will transform society permanently. It will have a long-term impact and the brunt would be faced by the minorities, especially Muslims as RSS bigotry primarily targets them.

In a short span of a few weeks, with the swiftly receding human security, rising Islamophobia, intolerance, an unparalleled suppression, and excessive use of force against minorities, the Indian society took a nosedive after announcing the military recruitment program under the title of “Agnipath Scheme”. As per the training plan, young Indians within the 17 to 21 years of age group will be inducted into the army as ‘Agniveers’. Those newly recruited soldiers will serve in the armed forces for a short period of 4 years, with the retention of only 25% of the force at the end of the term.

Through this scheme, the government has conveniently shifted from its previous recruitment policy under which newly recruited staff was commissioned to serve at least 17 years before they could retire with a pension. The core reason behind increasing resentment is the perceived loss of safety and security of a government job with a life-long pension, unlike the previous recruitment policy.

Understanding the matter better

A similar training scheme was introduced in Israel that aimed to train its population to have a strong foothold amongst the surrounding Arab nations. It is unfortunate that India today, practically being ruled by the radical Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) ideology, is moving swiftly towards a Hindu majoritarian state. The influence of the RSS is evident from Mohan Bhagwat’s statement when he said, “Sangh will prepare military personnel within three days which the Army would do in 6-7 months. This is our capability. Swayamsevak will be ready to take on the front if the country faces such a situation”. The noticeable increase in RSS’ influence on the state policies is therefore evident. With regards to the Agnipath Scheme, protests have erupted across the country that highlights the severe resentment of the population towards this scheme.

Most countries in the world have adopted such recruitment plans, however, it seriously undermines the morale and the spirit of the military personnel serving in the armed forces. The lack of safety nets is another issue that questions the professionalism of the Indian armed forces. The unemployment rate for people 15 years and above, in urban areas, has already reached 8.2% in January-March 2022 in India. So, such schemes will create more unemployed people in a society where there is already a rising tide of the unemployed young population.

Moreover, coercive domestic policies such as the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the religious coercion, and rising unemployment, the current destabilizing trends appear to be a recipe for disaster within the Indian social fabric, where people would take up arms for violence. Under the garb of a so-called training program for the youth, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) seems to have heinous plans. Along with its radical wing of RSS, the radicalization of the society to achieve socio-political gains can be one objective. It could be done so by terrorizing the minorities. Not just this, the 35000 soldiers after four years, would be well trained to be the front-line terrorists of the BJP government.

Unfortunately, the Modi's Hindu nationalism has plans to institutionalize and consolidate its power through its policy of terrorizing and intimidating the minorities, particularly Muslims. Taking a leaf out of Israel's book of conscription soldiers, who are trained to use excessive and unjustified force against the innocent Palestinians, a similar pattern of action can be expected in India which has a history of belligerence.

There have been disturbing developments in India over the past few weeks, indicating that India is on the path of going through a major change that will transform society permanently. It will have a long-term impact and the brunt would be faced by the minorities, especially Muslims as RSS bigotry primarily targets them. The more politicized the Indian army becomes the more it will weaken. The problem will have a spillover effect on other areas as well which need attention.

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<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/agnipath-scheme-boon-or-bane/>

Indian Nuclear Missile Proliferation: Effect on South Asian Strategic Stability

Amber Afreen Abid

The nuclear capability of Pakistan is purely security based and depends upon the changing technological developments in the region. Pakistan maintains a posture of credible minimum deterrence and ensures strategic stability in the region. However, India continually pushes Pakistan towards arms race, by the development and induction of new aggressive technology, and incorporation of offensive doctrines.

The proliferation of supersonic and hypersonic weapons, which is echoing in South Asia, could be disastrous for the regional peace and stability. Ever since the mass nuclear power has been invented, the deterrence stability in the region is maintained by keeping the mutual vulnerability intact, which India tries its best to sabotage. The introduction of supersonic and hypersonic weapons could be devastating as it travels with immensely high speed, and the enemy can't be certain whether it is carrying conventional or non-conventional weapon, hence the chances and risks of nuclear war manifolds.

Recently, Atul Rane, CEO and MD, BrahMos Aerospace said that in five to six years, India will be able to have the first hypersonic missile. Moreover, India has also tested the Supersonic missile assisted torpedo (SMART), which indicates the continuous modernization of its technology. Owing to the volatile situation in south Asia, with the absence of any conflict resolution treaties and agreements, the innovation in technology in South Asia leads to the change in the nuclear doctrines a swell. Pakistan maintains a policy of minimum credible deterrence, but that minimum is directly proportional to the advancements made by the adversary in offensive technology and ultimately in the nuclear doctrine.

The Indian posture of NFU is also questionable, as the statements from the defence minister of India comes otherwise. The recent development indicates India's move towards a counterforce targeting, which is a highly destabilizing factor for south Asia. The Indian military modernization is far exceeding the 'minimum' in minimum credible deterrence, and there is no reasonable justification of credible and minimum in the recent developments. Such doctrines only exist when a country prepares for the offensive first strike targeting and pre-emption strikes, hence leading to a full scale war.

The recent BrahMos Misfire incident into the Pakistan territory indicates the weak command and control structure of India. This is signaling as it indicates India's poor handling of such sensitive technology. This irresponsible behavior of India needs to be changed as it could result in disastrous consequences. 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 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 of 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.

India doesn't have any security concern for which it is going for the acquisition of hypersonic weapons or change in doctrine. It doesn't have any potent threat from the neighboring countries to go for such ventures; hence, the drive is totally out of the prestige factor, as India wants to come at par with US, Russia and China in leading world technologies, without realizing the effect of such technologies on the regional stability. India needs to withdraw its hegemonic ambitions if the stability and regional peace is required or if the arms race needs to be withheld. As a responsible nuclear weapon state, Pakistan always maintains a modest nuclear posture, and any military development is the part of strategic chain in the south Asia, and or because of its allies.

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<https://www.eurasiareview.com/27062022-indian-nuclear-missile-proliferation-effect-on-south-asian-strategic-stability-oped-2/>

The Pakistan-TTP Negotiation

Zafar Iqbal Yousafzai

The government was bent on negotiations and there was the option of carrots rather than sticks to the insurgents that emboldened them to further their activities and now they are placed in a strong position on the negotiation table.

The Pakistani government has been engaged in a negotiations process with the TTP since May. The Afghan Taliban is facilitating the process that has given a hope of brokering a deal between the two parties. Though there is still skepticism about any positive result yet due to the involvement of strong mediators, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. It is pertinent to mention that there were three agreements between the TTP and Pakistani government in the past yet all these agreements did fail. This article analyzes what steps the government of Pakistan should have taken before starting this negotiation process.

During the previous governments in Afghanistan, there were a number of issues for Pakistan from its north-western border that included the issue of TTP sanctuaries as well. However, the Taliban takeover though changed the dynamics that compelled India to get out of Afghanistan, the issue of TTP remained unsolved and the Pakistani government was assuming the Taliban will take across the board action against the TTP sanctuaries and the Taliban coming back to power will assuage its security concerns. However, the expectation of action against TTP could not materialize the Afghan Taliban despite many warnings from Islamabad and even Pakistan's National Security Advisor visited Kabul to discuss security issues with the Taliban leadership could not succeed in persuading the Taliban for taking action against TTP.

In such a situation, Pakistan should have charted out a coherent strategy to deal with the issue of TTP. Pakistan had the following options to pressurize TTP ON one hand and use carrots and sticks while dealing with the Taliban over the issue of TTP on the other hand.

When the Taliban came to power and the TTP and Baloch insurgents' attacks accelerated in Pakistan, the government should have mobilized its forces in these regions while giving an impression: the government intends to take an action or going for an operation. This step would surely pressurize the insurgents and they would think of other options including negotiations. However, during and after all these attacks, the government was bent on negotiations and there

was the option of carrots rather than sticks to the insurgents that emboldened them to further their activities and now they are placed in a strong position on the negotiation table.

Secondly, the government could also tighten the border security that would stop cross-border movement of the insurgents and they would face restrictions not only in their activities but a psychological fear would be there that in case of any operation against them, they would have no chance to escape to Afghanistan. However, nothing happened on the part of the government in this regard. The government has been offering only negotiations and even an offer was extended by President Alvi to give them amnesty. Such a policy boosts their morale and they assume they have power because the government has left with no option but negotiations.

On the other hand, the government did not put considerable pressure on the Taliban to take action against TTP. The Taliban are bound to stop any group from using its soil against any country they have pledged in the Doha agreement. Pakistan could offer Taliban some carrots in return to action against TTP and if opt was not acceptable for the Taliban, they had the other option of sticks by taking even severe measures: cutting ties to the Taliban, no political and moral support to them and even the closure of its borders for them. We can see that whenever the border has been closed, it put enormous pressure on Afghanistan.

Taliban are in a very weak position internationally and they need Pakistan's support. Pakistan didn't need them if they did not assuage Pakistan's concerns. In the post US-withdrawal Afghanistan, Pakistan didn't play its cards well. Still, it has time to revisit its Afghanistan policy and take some concrete measures to tackle the precarious security situation and hinder any potential threat that may arise. Thus, it's the need of the hour to pressurize the Taliban and signal actions against the insurgents that will bring them to Pakistan's terms.

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<https://criticaloutsider.com/2022/06/30/the-pakistan-ttp-negotiations/>

How the USA's Bid to Pitch India as a counterweight to China is destabilizing South Asia?

Hamdan Khan

South Asia indubitably presents the most precarious case for strategic stability. Two contiguous and bitterly hostile nuclear-weapon states; a festering conflict in Kashmir acting as a permanent source of tensions; the absence of a robust and comprehensive mechanism to manage nuclear risks; occasional crises that push the two nuclear-armed states on the brink of catastrophic exchanges; India's hegemonic regional and status-oriented global designs; India's long obsession with military buildup; and whatnot.

Of the aforementioned, India's interminable military buildup, which is attempted to be rationalized by citing various security threats, has been the primary factor responsible for disturbing the strategic balance in South Asia — compelling India's regional rival Pakistan to take remedial measures to restore the strategic balance. Nevertheless, provided India's interminable and unquenchable acquisitiveness for arms, the strategic balance in South Asia continuously remains susceptible to the unsteadiness, essentially giving rise to a vicious cycle of India's destabilizing actions being followed by Pakistan taking counteractive measures aimed at stabilizing the equation.

As if India's regional hegemonic instincts and linked military acquisitions were not enough, the USA is now aiming to pitch India as a counterweight to China — whose concomitant is India's attempted elevation as a hegemon in South Asia. In pursuance of the objective, the USA is bolstering India's military capabilities besides extending unequivocal diplomatic support to New Delhi on a host of issues with far-reaching consequences for South Asian regional stability.

On the military side, the USA is supplying India with cutting-edge weapon systems besides the signing of landmark four foundational agreements that enable the Indian military to access real-time and precise information about its adversaries' military activities through state-of-the-art American intelligence-gathering platforms. Furthermore, relevant services from the militaries of the two countries are regularly carrying out joint exercises primarily aimed at increasing interoperability. The increased military cooperation between the USA and India has essentially entangled the two countries in a de facto military alliance.

The most immediate and direct result of the USA-India burgeoning military ties is the disturbed strategic balance in South Asia – which Pakistan has been endeavoring so hard to maintain, despite serious budgetary constraints and without resorting to a parity-driven arms race. With the USA also contributing to the expansion of India’s military capabilities, the power asymmetry in South Asia continues to increase, which can incentivize the Modi regime to pursue their strategy of fighting a limited war under the nuclear overhang driven by the delusional belief that escalation control can be achieved. Leaving out yet another lucky break like in the 2019 Pulwama Crisis and the 2022 ‘accidental’ launch of BrahMos launch in Pakistan, the most probable result of such a venture by planners in New Delhi would dangerously increase the risk of inadvertent escalation between the two countries, possibly culminating into a nuclear exchange amidst the ‘fog’ of circumstances.

On the diplomatic side, the USA is now India’s foremost backer on various international forums steadily moving to incorporate the Cold War partner of the former Soviet Union in various multilateral regimes and institutions. Resultantly, not only India’s global influence is increasing but the absence of fear of any international reprimand for its shenanigans at home and in the region has made Modi-led India adopt a more aggressive posture towards Pakistan — which supplemented by the Modi regime’s proven penchant for resorting to nuclear brinkmanship to score domestic gains has added a dangerous new dimension to South Asia’s strategic calculus fraught with the cataclysmic endangerments.

India has a decades-long desire to strong-arm Pakistan into submission but initially the attempted external balancing followed by the introduction of a nuclear equalizer offset India’s obvious military advantage vis-à-vis its smaller neighbor. The already unfolded and imminent bolstering of India’s military capabilities further enhances the asymmetry in comparative military capabilities between the two countries besides amplifying ‘India’s counterforce temptations’ — which are a congenital recipe for disaster. These factors in tandem with India’s increasingly aggressive regional posturing — also enabled by the USA — are unprecedentedly adding to the instability in South Asia with the risk of grave escalation more credible and higher than ever.

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<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2022/06/28/how-the-usas-bid-to-pitch-india-as-a-counterweight-to-china-is-destabilizing-south-asia/>

Nuclear Energy: A Key to Sustainable Future

Sher Bano

On March 18th, 2021 ‘Pakistan’s Atomic Energy Commission’ (PAEC) announced that the 1,100 MW reactor of (KANUPP-2), the second unit of the ‘Karachi Nuclear Power Plant’ was connected to the national grid. This reactor is ACP-1000 or Hualong One and was supplied on a turnkey basis by ‘CNNC’ (China National Nuclear Corporation). KANUPP-2 would provide Pakistan with a more reliable and cost-effective source of electricity. This in turn would prove to be beneficial for the economic growth of the country. In order to meet its ever-increasing energy requirements, Pakistan has been significantly increasing the role of nuclear power which is rather an affordable alternative to fossil fuels. Hence this shift towards more reliable, modern, and affordable energy sources would lead Pakistan towards a more sustainable and equitable future.

To achieve the ‘SDGs’ (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals), Pakistan had been using nuclear technology for the country’s socio-economic development. There are diverse fields such as health, hydrology, electricity generation, environment, basic sciences, and agriculture in which nuclear technology is being used. The civil nuclear program of Pakistan is serving as an engine for the achievement of sustainable development goals that is to improve the energy security of the country by further utilizing the nuclear energy potential and becoming less dependent on fossil fuels. The operationalization of KANUPP-2 has further accentuated the aspirations of Pakistan to use nuclear energy for enhancing the power generation capacity of Pakistan. The KANUPP-2 workable life is expected to be 60 years which can be further extended to 80 years and is Pakistan’s first nuclear power plant with 1,100 MW of electricity generation capacity. Nuclear power plants are more reliable with a high capacity availability factor, is environment friendly and due to less fuel cost, the electricity price also remains sustainable.

Pakistan had faced an energy crisis during the previous decade primarily because of the existence of a huge gap in the supply and demand of electricity. According to the 2011-2012 report of the Economic Survey of Pakistan, the country was losing around USD 4.8 billion of Gross Domestic Production (GDP) annually for almost five years due to the energy crisis. According to a few scholars, the reason behind the energy shortage also lies within the energy mix of Pakistan, which relies excessively on thermal sources (natural gas, oil, and coal) causing high prices of electricity. Today at the end of the decade energy crisis in Pakistan is mitigated by planting

several new energy generation plants (some of them were part of CPEC) and according to the most recent estimates of April 2020, the energy generation capacity in Pakistan is 35,972 megawatts as compared to 33,452 megawatts of April 2019. In one year Pakistan's electricity generation capacity saw a growth rate of 7.5 %. At present energy demand in Pakistan is 25,000 megawatts; however, transmission and distribution capacity is only 22,000 megawatts, which explains interruptions in power supply in the country. At the moment through nuclear power, Pakistan is generating 8% of electricity in the total energy mix with five operational nuclear power plants and now KANUPP-2 would also be included.

The function of nuclear power generation falls under the domain of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, along with the promotion of peaceful use of nuclear technology in the field of agriculture, medicine, and industrial projects. Pakistan aims to produce 8,800 MW of electricity from nuclear power by the year 2030 and after advice from PNRA and IAEA six new sites have been selected for this purpose. Usage of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes has always been the main focus of Pakistan, considering the growing energy needs of the country under CPEC nuclear energy would provide Pakistan with a clean and reliable energy source. Unlike thermal sources of electricity generation, nuclear energy protects air quality by producing a massive amount of carbon-free electricity.

Pakistan's adherence to international practices of nuclear safety and security is evident from the very fact that for the past 48 years, Pakistan is producing electricity through nuclear power reactors and not a single major accident has occurred so far. IAEA has declared that the KANUPP-2 reactor ACP-1000 meets the safety standards of the 'Generic Reactor Safety Review' (GRSR). The review of ACP-1000 by the IAEA shows that the reactor has active and passive technology and that it fulfills the safety standards and requirements. Moreover, since March 2017 this reactor has been under IAEA safeguards. Such strong credentials are no doubt an acknowledgment of Pakistan's efforts for peaceful uses of nuclear technology. At the same time, it would help Pakistan to meet the energy demand through a more peaceful, secure, and safe use of nuclear energy.

Hence in order to attain a sustainable future, Pakistan is increasing its reliance on more clean energy alternatives. Pakistan is on its way to building more nuclear power plants to further increase the role of nuclear power in overcoming future energy needs. Pakistan would also need

international cooperation to meet its goal to have self-sufficiency in nuclear power and to further develop its nuclear power industry.

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<https://strategic-times.com/blog/2022/06/30/nuclear-energy-a-key-to-sustainable-future/>

How South Korea knows that extended deterrence doesn't work?

Akash Shah

There has been a gradual shift over the years in the South Korean domestic political discourse over pursuing an aggressive military posture to maintain deterrence stability on the Korean peninsula. Yoon Suk-yeol, the incumbent president of South Korea, has advocated and aims to pursue a 'peace through strength' policy, unlike previous administrations which were more inclined toward a tread with caution approach.

In a milestone event for the country's independent space program, South Korea successfully launched its satellite into orbit using an indigenously built rocket. The three-stage rocket 'Nuri' carried several satellites to orbit, South Korea's Space Minister Lee Jong-ho confirmed. It was the rocket's second attempt to launch satellites into space as the first test, carrying a dummy satellite, failed due to the malfunction in the third stage of the rocket eight months earlier. Nevertheless, the success of the mission, on one hand, marks South Korea's entry into the elite club of spacefaring countries; while on the other hand, it implies the gradual strategic shift toward self-reliance in key defense technologies.

The Republic of Korea, or South Korea as it is commonly known, has been in alliance with the United States of America for nearly seven decades now. The U.S guarantees extended deterrence for its Asian ally against a hostile North Korea which has harnessed nuclear power for military purposes and possesses credible delivery systems as well. The alliance has worked so far as there has not been a major confrontation on the Korean peninsula since the end of the Korean War in 1953. However, geopolitical realities have undergone large-scale changes in the past seven decades. The countries that have been under the security guarantees of the United States are beginning to question or at least reconsider the reliability of these commitments.

Understanding the matter better

The war in Ukraine has been a catalyst to spur the doubts in the minds of policymakers in countries like Japan and South Korea. Ukraine, which possessed the third-largest stockpile of nuclear weapons at the end of the cold war, has been at war with Russia for the past 4 months now. The country gave up nuclear weapons on the guarantee of major global powers, especially the United States, that its territorial integrity would be protected. As the Russian forces marched into its borders, Ukrainians have been left wondering about the pledged support which was supposed to keep them safe. Other than caches of weapons being supplied to fend off Russians themselves and regularly hearing verbatim accounts of European and American officials pledging to shun Russian imports, Ukraine is essentially on its own to fight the war for its survival.

There has been a gradual shift over the years in the South Korean domestic political discourse over pursuing an aggressive military posture to maintain deterrence stability on the Korean peninsula. Yoon Suk-yeol, the incumbent president of South Korea, has advocated and aims to pursue a ‘peace through strength’ policy, unlike previous administrations which were more inclined toward tread with caution approach.

His election to the presidential office at a time when the United States is being called out for failing to protect Ukraine could be the beginning of an overhaul in South Korea’s approach toward its defense. Technically South Korea cannot build nuclear weapons of its own as it is the signatory of the Non-proliferation treaty. However, there have been calls from U.S scholars that it would be better for the security of both the United States and South Korea if the latter is allowed to possess nuclear weapons of its own.

With the ability to strike the United States with its ICBMs, North Korea has changed the calculus of the extended deterrence that the United States has historically provided to South Korea. There is a broad understanding that in case of an escalation between Korean neighbors, the United States would not risk losing a few of its cities to the North’s nuclear strikes for defending the South. It has led to the straining of relations between both the allies even before the Ukraine war or the elections of Yoon Suk-yeol.

Although South Korea has stated that the launched satellites are not for military purposes yet it has achieved the ability to send domestically fabricated military satellites into space to keep an

eye on its nuclear neighbor. In the broader sense, the launch hints at the gradual shift on part of South Korea towards self-dependency in military technology, and, considering the fate of Ukraine, it certainly is the right call.

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<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/south-korea-knows-extended-deterrence-doesnt-work/>

The Case of India's Human Rights Violations

Komal Khan

The BJP-led Hindu right-wing has initiated demographic engineering of the Jammu and Kashmir in compliance with the Hindutva proposed Hindu majoritarian state of Kashmir as the only solution for the territorial integrity of the disputed land to Hindu Rashtra.

In a letter to the United Nations Secretary-General, the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari apprised the conviction of Yasin Malik and the sentencing for life imprisonment as a disregard of international legal obligations on human rights. Disregarding of human rights of the Kashmir population by the Modi regime is a recognized fact by the international community.

In two consecutive reports to the United Nations for the years 2019 and 2020, the special rapporteurs and experts to the United Nations Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council urged the international community to 'step up' over the 'alarming' human insecurity and the 'free fall' situation of human rights in Jammu and Kashmir since the BJP government revoked the Jammu and Kashmir special status on August 5, 2019. Following the unilateral annexation of the Jammu and Kashmir, though it remains a disputed territory as per the United Nations Resolution of April 1948 until an UN-supervised plebiscite is held, Kashmiris have been subjected to gross human rights violations.

India continues to commit atrocities

The multiple kinds of violence include extrajudicial killings during the peaceful protests which the Indian government covers up in the name of encounter killings; the information, communication, and expression crackdowns through internet shutdown; arbitrary detentions of

thousands of protestors, the political leadership most prominently arrest of the former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti- and the journalists; and torture; and much more.

The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) has been extensively used by the BJP government to unquestionably legalize the Kashmiri genocide, which is in violation of the provisions of Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law, and particularly the fourth Geneva Convention. Five months since the August 5 lockdown, the Indian authorities confessed of having about 400 people in custody yet after the release of thousands of others; and detention and concentration in de-radicalization camps of more than 144 children under the extensive utilization of the ‘Public Safety Act’ by the BJP government.

The freedom of expression of the peaceful critics has been criminalized in the name of national security under counter-terrorism and brutal sedition laws. In June 2020, the detention cases of prominent journalists including Gowher Gillani, Peerzada Ashiq, and Masrat Zahra for uploading anti-national social media posts have been taken on UN forums in a call to preserve human security in Jammu and Kashmir.

In a petition to the Jammu and Kashmir Governor, Satya Pal Malik, against the communication and expression censorship; Amnesty International has expressed concerns over curtailed freedom of expression and strict state-controlled flow of information from the Indian-governed Kashmir. Moreover, the agency launched a ‘Let Kashmir Speak’ campaign to restore the civil and political liberties of about 8 million people.

The deteriorating state of democratic norms in India manifested in the plight of Kashmiris has been voiced by Aaker Patel, the head of Amnesty International India as tantamount to ushering into the dark ages of the region. The BJP-led Hindu right-wing has initiated demographic engineering of the Jammu and Kashmir in compliance with the Hindutva proposed Hindu majoritarian state of Kashmir as the only solution for the territorial integrity of the disputed land to Hindu Rashtra.

Carrying out the agenda of Hindu settler colonialism, the BJP government passed the residency law for Kashmir under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Order 2020, and the Grant of Domicile Certificate Rules 2020 that permits residency rights along with government services to Indian citizens and non-Kashmiri residents. According to Saiba Varma, an expert on Medical and Cultural Anthropology at the University of California, the BJP-led state intervention in

Jammu and Kashmir is a move to wipe out the distinctive cultural identity of the Kashmiris and is forceful assimilation of Kashmir's Muslim population into the Hindu-Indian polity.

In over a period of a month only, about 40,000 individuals had been issued domicile certificates, as told by an Indian official Pawan Kotwal. BJP seems to be in haste with regard to its Kashmir policy. In September 2020, more than 16.79 domicile certificates had been issued to non-Kashmiris as per reports by the Jammu and Kashmir administration and the India minister of home affairs, G. Kishan Reddy to the Lok Sabha.

The Hindu nationalist government is responsible for the systemic sexual violence and abuse in Kashmir

The Delhi-based historian Irfan Habib terms it a hate-filled communal act by the conservative Hindu party aimed at taking revenge for all that happened almost 500 years back under the Muslim rule in the subcontinent, irrespective of the reality that almost half of this history narrated is based on just lies. Though misogynist remarks by the BJP leaders are a political trend in Indian politics, in the case of Kashmir they are a humiliating reality.

After the article 370 revoking move, a BJP lawmaker Vikram Saini came into the spotlight for ensuring the BJP bachelors the availability of white-skinned Kashmiri brides. Indian Law enforcement officials have a recognized record of rape crimes. In January 2018, 8 years old girl was repeatedly gang-raped by six Hindus including police officers, in a Hindu temple in the Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir. The investigations revealed a BJP government revenue officer Sanji Ram as the man who plotted the crime.

Hence, the tale of violence, ethnic cleansing, cultural and demographic engineering, and sexual abuse in Jammu and Kashmir is not new, as the Prime Minister of Pakistan in his address to the United Nations General Assembly in 2019, while quoting the figures, said that almost 100,000 Kashmiris have lost their lives in part thirty years, and around 11,000 women were subjected to a brutal rape. But it has definitely intensified in degree and frequency since the BJP came into government in 2014.

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<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/the-case-of-indias-human-rights-violations/>

Indian Ballistic Missile Defence System and South Asian Strategic Stability

Amber Afreen Abid

The actual use of nuclear weapons by the two South Asian nuclear rivals has been barred since overt nuclearization and the sense of mutual vulnerability is there. The mutual vulnerability entails that the two states has the power and capability to attack each other but due to the fear of terrible relation in response, they refrained from indulging in such activity, and the nuclear deterrence prevails, which becomes the reason for regional stability. India, however in its pursuit to attain regional hegemony and prestige, trying to remove this sense of mutual vulnerability by going for the aggressive military force postures and attainment of technology. India intends for a multi-layered defensive shield, and has indigenously developed a part of it, and has attained the technology form US, Russia, and Israel as well in order to complete its four –layered defensive shield, in its capital New Delhi and Mumbai. This pursuit of BMD system can create a false sense of security in the minds of Indian policy makers, and that could destabilize the region as they could go for any aggressive action against Pakistan, with the intention of defeating enemy at every level.

Besides the procurement of Israeli Iron Dome system, India has acquired Russain S-400 Triumph Air Defence System as well, in \$5.43 billion deal between India and Russia, in 2016. The delivery of this system started in November 2021. The S-400 system is developed by the Almaz Central Design of Russia and can primarily engage the cruise missiles, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and aircrafts, at an altitude of 30km and 400km in the range.

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

India is trying to destabilize the deterrence equation, and hence Pakistan has to take appropriate steps before hand in order to maintain the credibility of its deterrence. Pakistan, keeping in view the economic constraints has not indulged in the development of BMD System, but is looking for more viable options to maintain the strategic stability in the region.

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

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

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<https://strategic-times.com/blog/2022/06/30/indian-ballistic-missile-defence-system-and-south-asian-strategic-stability/>

India's Mounting Human Rights Violations and the US Response

Zukhruf Amin

Identity politics has created divisiveness in India's pluralistic and secular society under Narendra Modi's rule. His ultra-nationalist policies have already created a tense situation inside India's

social fabric. Hindu nationalism drives the laws and policies that are implemented at the national and state levels, posing a serious threat to freedom of religion or belief and related rights.

Human rights have been a cornerstone of the United States (US) foreign policy. The US is the guarantor of the liberal world order that is based on the principles of democracy and human rights. It is the responsibility of the US to reinstate the core values of human dignity and equality anywhere in the world. However, when it comes to India, the bi-partisan approach has been spearheading the bilateral ties between both states. India is speedily losing the foundational values of democracy; sliding into being an electoral autocracy.

Under Narendra Modi's regime, identity-based politics is causing increased polarization in the Indian pluralistic and secular society. His hyper-nationalist policies have already given rise to a conflicting situation within the Indian social fabric. Implemented at the domestic and state level, the laws and policies are driven by Hindu nationalism which poses a severe challenge to freedom of religion or belief and related rights.

Understanding the matter better

Moreover, the abrogation of Kashmir's special status 2019, Citizenship Amendment Act 2019, religious-based discrimination particularly against Muslims, illegal detentions, prohibiting interfaith marriages, curbing freedom of speech and cracking down on various non-governmental organizations including Amnesty International from operating, are some of the few policies which have eroded the essence of human rights in the self-proclaimed world's largest democracy.

The policies enforced by Modi's regime are an assault on the secular principles of the Indian constitution. It is a sheer violation of Article 15 which prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and Article 25 of the Indian constitution which calls for freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion. The state-level systematic violations and increasing repression of religious freedom has led to a growing climate of hostility within Indian society.

The US Secretary of State Antony Blinken at a joint press briefing with the US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin, Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, stated that the US is 'monitoring some recent concerning developments

in India'. His statement came amidst a rising tide of polarization in India, where minorities especially Muslims are persecuted. The statement by the US Secretary of State came hand in hand with the US Department of State's 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: India.

The report stated that there are credible and significant reports of human rights violations. It is not the first incident that the US raised concerns regarding the human rights abuses in India. In 2021, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom called for designating India as a "country of particular concern," or CPC – for engaging in and tolerating systematic, ongoing, and egregious religious freedom violations, as defined by the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA)."

Similarly, the Human Rights Watch in its World Report 2021, stated that the "BJP-led government and the ruling party members continued their smear campaign against human rights defenders, frequently describing them as "Soros agents" or "national security risks" in government-friendly media." So, the incidents of harassment, religious-based human rights abuses, and persecution of human rights activists, journalists, and students in India are frequently being highlighted. However, the lax accountability of the perpetrators has led the members of the ruling party to impose harsh and discriminatory restrictions on Muslims. The attacks have continued against minorities, especially Muslims, while the world watches apathetically.

Politically, it is no secret that the US-India strategic partnership has interests that serve both countries. It is clearly stipulated on the website of the US Department of State which says "The US-India partnership is founded on a shared commitment to freedom, democratic principles, equal treatment of all citizens, human rights, and the rule of law". It also states that "the US supports India's emergence as a leading global power and vital partner in efforts to ensure that the Indo-Pacific is a region of peace, stability, and growing prosperity." These statements indicate the geopolitical interests of both the states converge to contain China.

The US cannot afford to lose its net security provider in the region

For the same reason, recently, India also got away with a waiver under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), after its acquisition of the S-400 Air Defence System. On the economic front, the US has surpassed China as India's top trading partner in the fiscal year 2021-22, which highlights the strengthened economic ties between the two countries.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, in 2021-22, the bilateral trade between the US and India stood at \$119.42 billion.

Moreover, during the recent QUAD leaders' summit in Tokyo, India formalized its entry into the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), to strengthen economic cooperation to counter China's rise in the region. So, given the US-India bandwagoning for the colossal political and economic gains, mere concerns about India's human rights abuses are meaningless.

Such reports and statements have been a part of the political discourse each year. However, long-term interests are seldom compromised. Due to political biases, the convergence of economic interests and its policy to contain China, the US seems to be far away from holding India accountable for its mounting human rights violations. The world is yet to see how the world's human rights champion, holds India responsible for violating the principles of the liberal world order.

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<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/indias-mounting-human-rights-violations-and-the-us-response/>

Dispelling Myths about the Security of Pakistan's Nuclear Program

Dr. Iqtidar Hussain

Pakistan has done extraordinary efforts to set up a nuclear security regime and developed a nuclear security culture that has need support and encouragement from international organizations, strategic analysts, academicians, and think tanks. Pakistan needs to boost its nuclear diplomacy via effective representation across the globe to mitigate the Indian and Western propaganda.

Nuclear security has become a specialized subject in contemporary politics. The security of radiological materials and nuclear facilities has always been a global concern since the advent of nuclear weapons. Nuclear countries need to relentlessly boost their protocols to make sure infallible measures are in place to protect the nuclear sites and material. In fact, any single nuclear incident by non-state actors may drastically impact on global peace. The 9/11 terror attacks have generated myths about Pakistan's nuclear security program. The US-led Western

policy analysts and scholars have expressed their trepidations regarding the security of Pakistan's nuclear program.

The US-led Western media has projected various hypothetical scenarios concerning the security of Pakistan's nuclear assets. The European countries often pressurize Pakistan that its nuclear assets can go into the wrong hands. Moreover, some media houses have been on a mission to portray a dramatically chaotic situation regarding the security of Pakistan's nuclear assets. The security analysts of India, the U.S and the West have highlighted a potential threat from militants and their sympathizers in the military and civil organization. Meanwhile, some terrorist attacks on military installations, religious centers, and public places, have been observed in Pakistan. The Western media houses, scholars and academicians pointed out these incidents and build a narrative that Pakistan's nuclear assets are not secure when military installations are under attack.

Consequences of the false Western narrative

However, the Western narrative is based on uncorroborated accusations that neglect the ground realities. It is necessary to expose these myths and present a real picture of the security of Pakistan's nuclear program. The other side of the picture is quite different and presents a confident Pakistan with a much advanced and robust mechanism of nuclear security compared to any other nuclear country. The Western media and defense analysts propagate that Pakistan's nuclear assets might fall into the wrong hands, however they fail to point out the efforts of Pakistan to ensure the security of nuclear assets.

The authorities responsible for the protection of Pakistan nuclear assets have strongly condemned the claims by the US-led Western media and security analysts. Pakistan believes that nuclear security is a prime national responsibility. In this regard, Pakistan has established effective and comprehensive nuclear security regimes which ensure perpetual preparedness and constant vigilance as well as cover nuclear and radioactive materials, associated activities and facilities throughout their lifecycle. Furthermore, Pakistan has taken significant steps to ensure nuclear security and develop a nuclear security culture defined by the IAEA.

Security culture is bound to be slightly different in nuclear countries

The development of a nuclear security culture is the prime liability of a nuclear country. The nuclear security culture has played a significant role to implementing the essential laws and legislations regarding the security of a nuclear program. Pakistan has taken various steps to upgrade its nuclear security by inviting various stakeholders including scientists, defense organizations, and nuclear institutes to share their inputs regarding nuclear security. In order to stay abreast with challenges and threats, Pakistan's nuclear security regime is frequently reviewed and rationalized in the context of international Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) guidelines, internal obligations, and global finest practices.

The Director-General of IAEA Yukiya Amano visited Karachi in 2018. He said that “the metropolis's nuclear plants were heavily protected and that Pakistan was committed to nuclear safety.” In fact, Pakistan has a robust nuclear security culture that helps in strengthening and supporting the country's nuclear security regime. Moreover, Pakistan has taken fool-proof security measures to protect its nuclear assets against any terrorist threats.

The IAEA admired the valuable efforts of Pakistan to ensure nuclear security. According to the report of the nuclear security index (NTI) 2020, Pakistan is the most improved state due to the arrangements to strengthen the regulations its security and control measures score increased by 25 points.

The NTI report shows the significant efforts of Pakistan as “the most improved country in ranking for countries with nuclear materials, improving its overall score by 07 points” in 2020. Moreover, increased 01 point score in Global Norms as it subscribed to a nuclear security INFCIRC. INFCIRC are documents used for communication between the member states and IAEA. Pakistan ranked in top position compared to the other states in the nuclear security and control measure category. This (IAEA) report represents the commendable efforts of Pakistan to ensure nuclear security and rejected the Indian and US-led Western baseless propaganda against the nuclear security of Pakistan.

Pakistan has done extraordinary efforts to set up a nuclear security regime and developed a nuclear security culture that has need of support and encouragement from international organizations, strategic analysts, academicians, and think tanks. Pakistan needs to boost its nuclear diplomacy via effective representation across the globe to mitigate the Indian and Western propaganda. To dispel the myths about Pakistan's nuclear security is possible via

publication, narrative building, and academic writings. It would be the perfect way to counter the Indian and US-Western allegations regarding Pakistan's nuclear security program.

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<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/dispelling-myths-about-the-security-of-pakistans-nuclear-program/>

Geo-Economic Contours of Russian-Ukraine War

Dr. Iqtidar Hussain

The Russo-Ukraine conflict is seen as an event driven by geopolitics; however, geo-economic logic is a more decisive factor. The geo-economic significance of Ukraine is making it a buffer zone of influence between NATO and Russia. The ongoing geo-economic conflict and intertwined geopolitical interests of NATO and Russia in Ukraine have a long history. Ukraine has been the central point of the US-Russia post-Cold War interaction due to its geo-economic importance. Hence, this article looked at the Russo-Ukraine war through the prism of geo-economics.

According to Mackinder's Geopolitical Theory of Heartland, Ukraine is a part of the heartland with large reserves of natural resources. The significant amount of critical resources in Ukraine is an essential driving factor of the conflict because the logic of economic interest is what primarily determines the foreign relations. According to the National Atlas of Ukraine, Ukrainian resources of rare minerals are unique and largest in Europe." Lithium, titanium, and other critical minerals deposits are increasing the geo-economic position of Ukraine. The Russia, China, and Turkey were the largest importing states of titanium from Ukraine in 2021, respectively. Australia's European Lithium continues securing rights to the Kirovograd and Donetsk region of lithium deposits in Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said, "The Russian invasion came when Ukraine's critical mineral industry was trying to develop into a major player in the clean energy transition." It means that a country with reserves of natural resources and critical minerals invites investments and geopolitical tensions. The head of state geological service of Ukraine, Roman Opimakh, said: "Ukraine is beginning to auction the permit for exploration of its lithium reserves

and other critical minerals, which can enhance the strategic importance of Ukraine on the global stage.” Moreover, Ukraine has around 400 million barrels of proven oil reserves and the second-largest natural gas reserves in the West. The natural resources and critical minerals are perceived as a concealed factor of the Ukraine war, reflecting Russia and Europeans geo-economic objectives.

The growing interest of global powers towards Ukraine is based on its geo-economic strength. Ukraine is a crucial player in the energy security of the international powers, including Russia and the West. NATO is focused on Ukraine to keep up its presence and influence in the region and block the Russian assertiveness as per the geo-economic and geostrategic plan driven by the US-led Western allies. In contrast, Ukraine is a crucial transit route for Russia to reach the global market. In this context, Russia and Ukraine signed various agreements. For instance, both countries signed a transit agreement in 2019 to transfer Russian gas to Europe via the largest gas transportation system in Ukraine.

The Bratstvo gas pipeline originates from Russia and passes through Ukraine, and then splits into various directions in Europe. The second gas pipeline from Russia passes via Ukraine to the Balkan states and Turkey. The Soyuz gas pipeline passes via Ukraine and supplies Slovakia, Romania, and Hungary. However, Russia has been facing the risk from NATO for its energy security in Ukraine due to growing the influential role of NATO in Ukraine. Likewise, this region plays a vital role for the energy security of Europe as well because its link with the resources of the Black and Caspian Seas.

Indeed, the geographical position of Ukraine presents an optimum picture from a geo-economic perspective. Ukraine can play a significant role as a trade corridor for great powers. In this regard, the global powers seek to control Ukraine for their imperial pursuits. It has access to the Black Sea via the Odesa port and is a junction point for the European Peninsula and Russia. Ukraine could be a suitable market for raw materials, cheap labor, and profitable investments for the Western bloc. However, Russia has its primary reliance on Ukraine to transport its commodities worldwide. That’s why; Russia and Europe seeks to control Ukraine at any cost due to their geo-economic objectives.

Ukraine retains its industrial potential in various sectors such as aerospace, shipbuilding, steelmaking, manufacturing of defense equipment, and many critical minerals, reflecting the geo-

economic significance of Ukraine. Hence the reason why Russia and the US-led Western allies are ready to go to great lengths to determine its orientation. Suppose the US and west intend to blockade of Russian gas pipeline. In that case, they will pay a considerable cost because establishing a new energy supply line will take around ten years with an investment of multi-billion dollars. However, given the current situation, such a plan is far too difficult to put into motion and execute without the risk of escalation of conflict beyond Ukraine's borders.

It is difficult to predict every facet of the geo-economic contours of the Russo-Ukraine war. However, the macro-level geo-economic implications will be detrimental to the Russian and European economies. Under these circumstances, energy supply disruption in the European region, will cause the hike in energy prices and may trigger an energy crisis across the globe. Considering the geo-economic status of Ukraine is much valuable regarding its geo-political position, geostrategic importance, critical resources, industrial potentials, and significant role in energy security for the NATO and Russia.

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<https://www.eurasiareview.com/23052022-geo-economic-contours-of-russian-ukraine-war-oped/>