

## Indian Cruise Missile Misadventure: Malfunction or Malafide Intentions?

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### Abstract

*On March 9, an Indian BrahMos class, nuclear capable, a supersonic cruise missile with no warheads, landed in Mian Channu, around 80 miles inside Pakistan's territory. Pakistan, in turn, rationally responded to the incident by de-escalating the situation. The Indian missile fire in Pakistan's territory has brought to the spotlight a set of puzzling questions: Was it an accidental or unauthorized fire or a deliberate act to test the readiness of Pakistan's missile defense systems? Why did India fail to notify Pakistan of this missile launch immediately? If it was an accidental launch then does it not undermine accuracy of Indian BrahMos class missiles, credibility of its Command and Control (C2) system, and international aviation and safety protocols? What does Pakistan's restraint mean? How has this cruise missile fire led to creating renewed escalation risks? The study ponders on the above questions, offering some guiding posts for both the nuclear weapon states on risk management and avoidance of future*

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*misadventures, unauthorized use, or malfunctions. The study's main argument is that launching the BrahMos cruise missile into Pakistan's territory from India serves as a reminder of renewed threats to strategic stability in South Asia and points toward nuclear risks associated with the Indian nuclear program. The study concludes that whether the incident was an accidental, unauthorized or deliberate incursion, by all dimensions, it questions India's irresponsible behavior. Further, the study offers a mechanism for both the states to renew/initiate new agreements and make certain compromises to implement risk reduction measures to avoid such misadventures, thus evading misperceptions, accidents, and inadvertent escalation.*

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<sup>3</sup> See "Global Conflict Tracker," *Council on Foreign Relations*, April 4, 2022, Available at: <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ukraine> (Accessed on April 13, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> Daryl G. Kimball, "India: Accidentally Fires Missile into Pakistan," *Arms Control*, April 1, 2022, Available at: <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2022-04/news/india-accidentally-fires-missile-into-pakistan>. (Accessed on April 13, 2022).