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# **Strategic Vision Institute Islamabad**

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

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# Strategic Vision Institute (SVI)

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

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

## SVI Foresight

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*SVI Foresight* is a monthly electronic journal. It has a multi-disciplinary perspective highlighting contemporary strategic and security studies. The Journal is envisioned to be a collection of policy-oriented articles written by the SVI Research Officers, 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

SVI Foresight for the month of June brings with it another well-timed issue of the SVI electronic journal SVI-Foresight. Covering various contemporary topics of strategic importance, it offers opinion-based short commentaries on a number of issues including the South Asia strategic equation, which has for years been disturbed by India, and led to the nuclearization of Pakistan, and is still destabilizing with its latest Indo-US deal. Pakistan, despite being heavily criticized by some paid scholars, has always carried the onus of maintaining strategic stability with dignity and pride, the authors have aptly discussed and analyzed the scenarios.

The issue further entails the current happenings around the world which directly or indirectly affects Pakistan. The happenings in the Asia-Pacific with the increasing collaboration of India and the US against China, India, a revisionist state, that is being abetted by a superpower will continue to act more aggressively and irresponsibly against Pakistan as well, and would further disturb the strategic stability. Moreover, India is an unreliable state and will might not come up to US expectations against China. The authors have aptly analyzed the how the happenings are unfolding in the region. Moreover, the Russia-Ukraine conflict amid growing US aid to Ukraine, is it a necessity for Ukraine to survive or it will lead to a protracted conflict, has been succinctly and pertinently analyzed by the scholar.

It is hoped that this issue will help readers in staying updated with the current strategic environment and they will find the analyses useful. 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](#).

**Amber Afreen Abid**  
**Editor, SVI Foresight**



## ***India's nuclear tests & escalation of tensions: A catalyst for Pakistan's nuclearization***

***Ayesha Sikandar***

India's threats against Pakistan following its own nuclear tests on May 11, 1998, contributed largely to Pakistan's decision to conduct its own nuclear tests on May 28, the same year. Upon analyzing the statements made in the aftermath of India's nuclear tests on May 11th, it becomes evident that the tests not only posed an immediate threat to neighboring countries but specifically heightened the existential threat to Pakistan, emphasizing the gravity and urgency of the situation.

With their powerful statements and heated rhetoric, Indian leaders stoked the flames of nationalistic sentiment while pushing Pakistan into a security dilemma. This development was significant as it highlighted the role of strategic rivalry and the arms race in shaping the nuclear policies of both countries.

The aftermath of India's five underground nuclear tests was marked by escalated tensions in South Asia as the world watched eagerly to see how the situation would unfold. The first and foremost thing in this

regard is to revisit the statements made by Indian leaders, followed by the country's overt nuclearization.

Apparently, the rationale behind India's nuclear tests on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of May was to deal with the 'deteriorating Security and Nuclear environment' in South Asia, with special reference to the growing Chinese threat in the region as the prime reason. But if one critically analyses Atal Bihari Vajpayee's letter to President Clinton upon conducting these tests, it becomes crystal clear that Pakistan was directly targeted. Some of the main points of this letter were:

*"I have been deeply concerned about the deteriorating security environment, especially the nuclear environment, faced by India for some years past. We have an overt nuclear weapon state on our borders, a state which committed armed aggression against India in 1962. To add to the distrust, that country has materially helped another neighbor of ours to become a covert nuclear weapons state. At the hands of this bitter neighbor, we have suffered three aggressions in the last 50 years. And for the last ten years, we have been the victim of unrelenting terrorism and militancy."*

In the midst of this volatile atmosphere, a cabinet minister in the Hindu nationalist

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government, Home Minister L.K. Advani, issued a stern warning to Pakistan. While passing remarks on the Indian nuclear program he referred to Pakistan by saying, “Vajpayee’s declaration has brought India-Pakistan relations into a new phase and it signifies even with no policy of no first strike, India is resolved to deal firmly with Pakistan’s hostile activities in Kashmir.”

Advani’s words challenged Pakistan not to dare to interfere in the disputed Himalayan territory of Kashmir. As a hard-liner leader in charge of domestic security, his comments carried weight, and they were among the most forceful yet from the BJP-led coalition government. These irresponsible statements largely fueled public sentiment as public opinion went as high as 91% in favor of Indian nuclear tests.

### **India’s Domestic Politics**

While many focus on threats from China and Pakistan as the primary driver of India’s nuclearization, one must not ignore domestic politics. The domestic political scenario under Vajpayee’s coalition government didn’t favor Bhartiya Janta Party’s (BJP) ulterior motives driven by the Hindu nationalist outlook. Most of the coalition partners had differing views independent of the w.r.t agenda of the BJP.

BJP leaders saw nuclearization as one key option to ensure its legitimacy while gaining a larger population’s support. On April 18 1998, the BJP coalition government issued its Agenda for Governance, where the nuclear option was considered viable to secure India’s territory and integrity. This agenda states, “To ensure the security, territorial integrity, and unity of India, we will take all necessary steps and exercise all available options. Towards that end, we will re-evaluate the nuclear policy and exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons.”

It is pertinent that BJP plays the card of ‘national prestige’ to reinforce the nationalistic sentiments in the wider public to gain massive support in upcoming elections. Former Indian foreign secretary, Muchkund Dubey, mentioned in 1994, while stating the Indian case, that “The bomb option is a currency of power that is critical to our survival as a strong nation.” While referring to China as ‘Threat No.1’, Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes claimed that “Chinese military activities and alliances, especially those involving Pakistan, Burma, and Tibet, are encircling India.” The Indian narrative greatly undermined the security of the South Asian region, specifically Pakistan, by accelerating the arms race in the region.

### **Countering the Security Dilemma**

As Western leaders, including President Clinton, scrambled to prevent Pakistan from conducting its nuclear tests in response to India's show of force, the situation remained on a knife's edge. Soon after the Indian nuclear tests, Pakistan showed restraint and made no hasty decision. But the narrative which dominated the Indian political environment after 11<sup>th</sup> May 1998 put Pakistan in a difficult situation.

Testing its nuclear weapons became 'inevitable' as prime minister Nawaz Sharif stated, considering India's hostile behavior. While explaining the urgency of Pakistan's over-nuclearization, former Chief of Army Staff, Mirza Aslam Beg, stated that "The BJP had threatened to exercise nuclear option and to 'liberate' Azad Jammu and Kashmir

during the run-up to the elections. It has fulfilled one of the promises by exploding five devices and I fear that it will soon launch an attack on AJK".

From the statements above, it can be inferred that the Indian nuclear program disrupted the existing status quo in the region. The immediate impact of this nuclearization was an increased security dilemma at a regional level, posing a direct threat to Pakistan which officially declared itself a nuclear state on May 28<sup>th</sup> 1998.

<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/indias-nuclear-tests-escalation-of-tensions-a-catalyst-for-pakistans-nuclearization/>

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## ***Pakistan's Pursuit of Maintaining Strategic Balance in South Asia***

***Amber Afreen Abid***

France encountered a list of civil order crisis-yellow vests protests, left-wing protests over pensions, and now the suburb crisis. In the suburb riots, hundreds have been arrested, widespread destruction in dozens of cities, buildings set on fire and police has been attacked. In this huge political instability, nobody has raised concern over their nukes, strange! The United Kingdom has been at the crossroads of political instability since Brexit; according to the Forbes article, “The U.K. economy is broken”; a huge unrest occurred in Leicester occurred last year, given all the current geopolitical settings and the economic challenges, not a single beat of concern regarding ‘nukes’ has ever been heard. A nuclear capable missile is fired into a nuclear state, 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 political elite always using the aggressive war-prone card against Pakistan in front of public for their political gains like ‘Qatal ki Raat’, without realizing the repercussions, which shows the ill-mindset of India’s ruling power, but no reverberations with regard to

their nuclear safety has ever been heard. But when, there’s a slight political instability in Pakistan, some paid critiques start raising voice on nuclear safety and security. Which is absurd!

States possessing nuclear weapons prioritize the safety, security, and effective control of their arsenals. Pakistan, as a nuclear-armed state, is no exception. Pakistan established NCA as a strategic imperative, not only to establish a harmonized command and control mechanism, operational policy, and development strategy, but also to provide credibility to strategic deterrence.

Pakistan has the most efficient and robust command and control structure to ensure the security and effective use of its nuclear assets. The National Command Authority was established in 2000, as the decision making body of nuclear command and control. General Pervez Musharraf viewed the NCA as “...the apex body responsible for all policy matters including the development and employment of our strategic assets.” It is responsible for formulating policies, deploying the strategic forces, coordinating the activities of all strategic organizations, negotiating arms control/disarmament, overseeing implementation of export controls, and safeguarding nuclear assets and sites.

The NCA has two committees: the Employment Control Committee (ECC) and the Development Control Committee (DCC). The ECC is responsible for directing policy-making during peace time and deployment of strategic forces during war time; The DCC is responsible for exercising technical, financial, and administrative control over the strategic organizations. The NCA is headed by the premier of the state, i-e the prime minister. The core members include the Foreign, Defence, Interior, and Finance ministers, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, the Director General of the Strategic Plans Division, and the Chiefs of Staff of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Pakistan's nuclear command and control system is considered to be relatively sophisticated and balanced. It has civilian and military involvement and checks and balances between the participating institutions.

One critical aspect of Pakistan's command and control structure is the secure and centralized command authority. The ultimate decision-making power rests with the civilian leadership, particularly the Prime Minister, who oversees the use of nuclear weapons. This ensures a civilian-controlled mechanism that takes into account political and strategic

considerations while maintaining the highest level of responsibility.

Pakistan, as repeatedly reiterated, considers all of its nuclear capable weapons as strategic weapons, and they lie directly under the NCA. Pakistan has repeatedly assured that "nuclear use authority will remain under centralized control under all circumstances." Pakistan has no intention of delegating the authority of Tactical Nuclear Weapons to the officers in the field.

Pakistan maintains a posture of 'full spectrum deterrence', which is in line with its policy of 'Credible Minimum Deterrence'. This policy emphasizes Pakistan's resolve to deter any form of aggression through the possession of a credible and robust nuclear deterrent. It encompasses various elements, including clear command authority, secure and reliable communication networks, and personnel reliability programs.

Pakistan's commitment to nuclear security extends beyond its borders. It actively participates in international initiatives and forums related to nuclear safety, non-proliferation, and counterterrorism. Through engagement with the international community, Pakistan emphasizes its responsible approach to nuclear weapons and its dedication to preventing their proliferation

and safeguarding against unauthorized access.

Pakistan's commitment to ensuring a robust nuclear command and control structure is evident in its efforts to ensure security and deterrence. Pakistan's multi-layered approach, incorporating secure command authority, robust physical security, personnel reliability programs, and effective communication networks, reflects its commitment to maintaining the safety and security of its nuclear assets. The precise details of the structure and nuclear doctrine are intentionally kept in secrecy, as is the case with most nuclear-armed states, for obvious security reasons and enhancing the deterrence value. Naeem Salik argues, the official doctrine of Pakistan has not been made public since "this ambiguity adds to the value of deterrence."

In conclusion, Pakistan's nuclear command and control structure stands as a testament to its commitment to ensuring security and deterrence. By adhering to a policy of Full Spectrum Deterrence under the auspices of Credible Minimum Deterrence and employing comprehensive measures to safeguard its nuclear assets, Pakistan underscores its responsible approach to nuclear weapons. Ongoing engagement with the international community further

demonstrates Pakistan's dedication to nuclear security and non-proliferation efforts. Through these combined efforts, Pakistan aims to maintain regional stability while deterring potential threats to its security.

<https://strategic-times.com/blog/2023/06/28/pakistans-nuclear-command-and-control-structure-ensuring-security-and-deterrence/>

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## ***Indo-US engine deal: A new boost for Indian Air Force***

***Usman Haider***

US -India defense cooperation over the past 20 years, has rapidly increased. A historic deal on the transfer of technology (ToT) of General Electric F404-GE-IN20 engines to India would likely be signed on upcoming Indian PM Narendra Modi's visit to the US later this month. The deal is meant for arming India's home-grown fighter jet; the Tejas MK2.

US defense Secretary Lloyd J Austin's recent visit to India which lasted two days from 4-5<sup>th</sup> June, staged and finalized the deal framework with his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh. This development was signaled earlier by Youngje Kim, Vice President of the Indo-Pacific Region of General Electric Aviation, during an interview with India Daily, Financial Express.

The deadlock on the long-awaited deal got a key breakthrough, following the meeting of Indian and USA National Security Advisors (NSA's), who met in Washington, earlier this year. The agreement is an offshoot of the larger strategic US-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (ICET), a small portion of the larger Indo-US strategic partnership. The Indo-US engine

deal will serve two key objectives; aptly enhancing India's aircraft manufacturing capability, along with providing enhanced qualitative, and quantitative edge to IAF over PAF in the upcoming decade.

### **ToT Deal: Game Changer for IAF**

India will have a hundred percent ToT for the GE-F414 engines. It will be a huge upgrade because the current operational Tejas Mark-1 fighter jets have a less powerful GE-F404 engine. GE F404 can produce a dry thrust of 53.9 kilonewtons (kN) and 82 kN with an afterburner. However, in contrast, GE-F414 can attain 98 kN with an afterburner, a significant amount higher than what GE-F404 can generate along with improved specific fuel consumption.

The novel agreement will be a sign of relief for the Indian Air Force as it will now get access to funds for the manufacturing of Tejas Mk 2. Earlier, accessing funds was not possible because the Indian government argued that the funding would be available only if the US government approved a hundred percent transfer of engine technology. Now, after the signing of the deal, Tejas Mk 2 project got the go-ahead for production. It will permit the Tejas Mk 2 to meet its induction deadline of 2028, set by the Indian government.

Moreover, it is not exclusively limited to aircraft manufacturing, and fulfilling the IAF requirements but it would complement India's "Make in India" slogan, vigorously propagated by the ruling party of India since 2014. It will open new avenues for India's indigenous 5<sup>th</sup>-generation program. The deal will empower the IAF to build its indigenous fighters under the "Make in India" initiative, thus reducing capital costs associated with buying, maintaining, and overhauling jets. It will eventually strengthen the self-reliance of India's aerospace industry.

Besides, the ToT deal will remove the critical hindrance faced by India for four decades in building its own indigenous engine, Kaveri, because it failed to achieve the performance standards set by the Indian air force. This will allow India to rapidly build a modern 4.5<sup>th</sup> generation fighter force of Tejas Mk 2 that will replace the aging fleet consisting of Mig-29, Sepecat Jaguar, and Mirage-2000. Tejas Mk 2 main technical features includes eleven hard points, a useful load of 6500 kg, a maximum speed of 1.8 Mach, and a combat range of approximately 650 miles without refueling. This combo demonstrates the Tejas MK 2, in par with modern 4.5<sup>th</sup> generation fighters operational across the globe.

Moreover, the deal will be a game changer for the Indian domestic aircraft

manufacturing industry because, before the signing of the deal, the Indian aerospace industry was unable to manufacture a single jet engine fulfilling the requirement, set by the Indian air force (IAF). Moreover, the deal is a continuation of one already signed by two parties in 2021 worth \$716 million, for the supply of 99 engines for Tejas Mk-1, fulfilling the vacuum left by phasing out Mig-21 fighters. All the engines will be transferred by 2029 and India will build 83 LCA MK1A Tejas fighters, sanctioned by Indian Cabinet Committee on Security in 2021 costing around \$6.5 billion.

Additionally, India considers it the best bet to fulfill the IAF's long-standing quest of retaining 42 fighter squadrons, a mandatory requirement advocated by the IAF, over the years, for a two-front war scenario. The deal would be a blessing for India because, in the next two years, IAF would be short of three more squadrons (60 air crafts), because of the phase-wise withdrawal of Mi-21 from IAF service. This would be IAF's only chance to maintain its operational requirement of 42 squadron's strength, and it will go for it without any hesitance.

### **Concerns for the Pakistan Air Force: Challenges and Vacuum**

On the other hand, this ongoing development will be of paramount concern for PAF



because it presently operates with only 431 combat-capable fighters, interceptors, and ground attack aircraft according to the prestigious Military Balance 2023. These include 46 F-7PG Airguard, 20 F-7P Skybolt, 47 Mirage-III, and 37 Mirage-V, thus totaling 150 fighters or approximately 9.5 squadrons likely to retire in the next ten years. This will leave a massive vacuum within PAF ranks.

To fulfill the void would be a challenging task for PAF to complete, considering the existing economic situation of Pakistan. Pakistan is developing and manufacturing its own JF-17 advanced models but to cope with the rising challenge would require additional funding and resources for the JF-17 project, along with a greater chunk of military budget allocation for acquisitions of other modern 4.5<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> generation fighter jets. This is easier said than done and will need constant commitment for accomplishing such a demanding task and requires the urgent attention of Pakistan's political leadership. Political leadership should come forward and lead from the front, just like the Indian PM Narendra Modi took personal interests in the defense requirements of Indian military and found novel ways of fulfilling them.

The GE-F414 engine deal will serve as a catalyst and further increase the asymmetry in the air domain between Pakistan and India, which is already 1:2 respectively. Given India's past belligerent behavior, especially if one looks at the Balakot misadventure, it is a fair possibility that India would be tempted for setting the score with Pakistan in the future, given the rising asymmetry between both countries in the upcoming decade.

The increasing imbalance would also affect the stability in the region in the near future as a result of unbalanced military capability, especially with reference to air assets because modern wars are dictated by the air force. Finally, the deal is a win for India but an overall loss for the region because it will erode the deterrence that existed presently between the two parties, thus increasing the probability of war and conflicts in the region.

<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/indous-engine-deal-a-new-boost-for-indian-air-force/?s=03>

*Usman Haider (Research Assistant, Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad).*

## ***Manipur Crisis: Question on Majoritarian Nature of Democracy***

*Ayesha Shaikh*

The Indian government's treatment of the Manipur crisis has raised concerns about both the status of India as a democratic state, as well as the nature of democracy as the rule of majority. On Thursday, 22nd June 2023, during his visit to the United States, Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi stated "Our constitution and our government and we have proved democracy can deliver. When I say deliver, regardless of caste, creed, religion, gender – there is absolutely no space for any discrimination [in my government]". Contrary to this statement however, the escalating situation in Manipur, tells a paradoxically opposite story. The Indian state has launched a suppressive movement against protesting Kuki minority (Christian) in Manipur, against the majority Meti community (Hindu). If India is a democratic state, then the status of minorities in democracies, is a matter of concern. Indian constitution has materialized ethnic and caste-based divisions, into Scheduled caste (they can avail public quotas) and non-Scheduled caste (they can not avail public quotas) and are considered to as Other Backward Castes (OBCs). The treatment of

OBCs in India is a matter of grave humanitarian concern, recent episode of Manipur incident falls under the same shadow. Keeping in view the salience of existing situation, US envoy to India stated on 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2023 that northeast of India is a geographically significant region, Manipur and its people are important for US and therefore US is ready to assist with the resolution of ongoing conflict, keeping the sovereign concerns of India intact.

### **Manipur: A Chink in India's Armor**

Manipur is a northeastern state of India, significant due to its heterogeneous ethnic composition and strategically sensitive location. The northeastern flank of India has been prone to tumultuous ethnic uprisings throughout history; considering the case of Nagaland, Assam, and now Manipur. The geographic location of the Northeastern flank makes it a chink in India's armor, as it is connected by a 17km wide chicken-neck corridor to India while being surrounded by Bhutan, China, Myanmar, and Bangladesh from Northern, Eastern, and Western fronts respectively. Therefore, ethnic uprisings in these peripheral states can raise challenges for the already eroding democratic status of India.

## **Escalation of the May 2023 Episode**

Manipur is home to three major ethnic groups, the Kukis (Christians residing in the hilly areas), the Nagas and the Metis (Hindus residing in the valley, closer to the capital Imphal). Recent episodes of clashes escalated when the Manipur high court passed the order directing the state government to grant Meitis the status of Scheduled Tribe; in response to which the All Tribal Students Union Manipur (ATSUM) started protesting in various districts of Manipur. Resentment surfaced because declaring Metis as Scheduled Tribe would allocate all the quotas in the region to the already dominant Majority community.

The government of India, instead of looking deeper into the prevailing ethnic security dilemma among minorities of the region, invoked Article 355 of the constitution, to securitize the issue as a threat to the state. This provision has granted the state with the charge to take immediate action against the threat, internal or external, without investigation or jurisdiction. As a result, troops of Indian army have been relocated to the region with “shoot at sight” orders, curfew has been in place, and internet services have been restricted; as a necessary response to what has been declared as a security threat for the state.

## **Underlying Causes behind the Kuki's Protests:**

Kuki is the minority community of Manipur, as against Metis (more than 50% of populations), that are Christians and reside in the hilly areas of the state. Behind the protests that broke out in May against the court's order, there is a history of persisting grievances that Kuki's hold against Metis. Metis being Hindus and supporters of BJP, enjoy perks and privileges of obtaining educational facilities as well as public sector jobs in the region. Employment rate of Manipur is 79%, but most of these facilities are available in the capital and are thus engulfed by the Metis. In March 2023, government of Manipur enforced evacuation of Kukis from hilly areas to reserve forests. Furthermore, Article 371 c of the constitution of India delegated authority to Hill Area Committee (HAC), to conduct legislation and execution of laws in the hilly areas where Kukis reside. However, recent intrusion of the central government has bypassed the only mode of representation held by Kukis. In addition to this, Kukis have always had to face allegations for being foreign sponsored groups, posing threat of session.

Region of Manipur has been economically and politically marginalized in general, however the Kuki community in particular

has been deprived of the little bit of resources provided to the region. Manipur has a total of three seats in the central government; 2 in Lok Sabha and 1 in Rajya Sabha. In August 2021, Shri Alferd Kanngam Arthur (representative of Hill Areas Committee) highlighted the asymmetric distribution of resources among the hill and valley areas, with the latter always gaining more. This indicates that the ethnic grievances are rooted in economic and political deprivation of the Kuki community, and it has been persisting for years. The decision of the high court to grant scheduled class status to metis would provide them with quotas for jobs and government representation; further marginalizing the kukis as a minority.

### **Eroding democratic apparatus of India:**

After the case of Muslims in Kashmir, Nagas in the Nagaland and Bengalis in the Assam, the Kukis in Manipur as well are at the mercy of majoritarian rule in India. Instead of mitigating political and economic grievances among minorities, it has further strengthened the Hindu majority in the region. The Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) government has either relied upon suppressive machinery to mitigate the voices of dissent or upon rhetorical justifications to turn a blind eye

toward ground realities. 53 days into the conflict, there have been estimated 114 deaths and more than 60,000 displacements due to conflict. Only statement issued by PM Modi is about the infallibility of Indian democracy. On his visit to U.S., unreceptive protests from the Kuki community hailed him outside the White House. The challenge thus emerged is not only internal, as this time it's the American audience (as well) that is voicing the concern. Nevertheless, the question about failure is yet to be settled; is it the failure of the Indian government to take the democratic route to solve the issue or the failure of democracy in general to locate the concerns of minorities?

*Ayesha Shaikh (Research Assistant, Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad).*

## ***India's Naval Posturing in the Indian Ocean: Strategic Signaling to China***

**Ahmad Ali**

India's recent demonstration of its maritime prowess by conducting a Carrier Battle Group (CBG) operation serves as a significant display of its evolving naval posturing in the Indian Ocean.

*"This exercise in the Arabian Sea is the first of its kind where major assets of the Indian Navy were utilized in a coordinated manner. Keeping in view China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean, this twin Carrier Battle Group (CBG) operation in the Arabian Sea can be interpreted as strategic signaling to China."*

Indian Naval spokesperson in his statement stated that this exercise provides Indian friends with an assurance that the Indian Navy is capable and ready to support collective security needs in the region. Additionally, this exercise has been conducted ahead of the Prime Minister of India's visit to the United States which suggests that this CBG operation is a display of India's willingness to engage China within the Indian Ocean.

It was reported on June 10 that India carried out first of its kind naval exercise that involved the operational integration of two aircraft carriers INS Vikramaditya and INS Vikrant. This was a twin CBG operation that

involved two aircraft carriers along with a diverse fleet of ships, submarines, and over thirty-five aircraft. These aircraft included MiG-29K and choppers such as MH-60 Romeo, Kamov, and Advanced Light helicopters. It is pertinent to note that this exercise utilized an extensive array of air resources within the Navy that were effectively operated from the dual aircraft carriers functioning as mobile bases.

Similarly, on June 9, Indian Air Force (IAF) carried out an exercise by deploying Su-30MKI aircraft to execute a tactical maneuver spanning eight hours across the Indian Ocean. The eight hours flight of Su-30MKI aircraft was sustained by air-to-air refueling, which ensured their successful flight over the Indian Ocean's southwestern sector. Prior to this, the Indian military conducted a six-hour mission by employing four Rafale jets to cover the eastern region of the Indian Ocean. In addition to this, India is planning to procure a naval variant of Rafael i.e., Rafael-M which can operate from the flight deck of the aircraft carrier. This deal is likely to be finalized during the Indian Prime Minister's visit to France in July this year.

It is worth noting that China's eighty percent of oil passes through the Malacca Strait and such massive trade volume has compelled Beijing to secure a strategic position in the Indian Ocean to protect its interests. This is why China has been actively securing a strategic position in the Indian Ocean Region. In this context, the conduct of



dual aircraft carrier operations by India, ahead of the Indian Prime Minister's visit to the US, seems to be a calculated move reflecting strategic signaling towards China. India's twin CBG operation in the Indian Ocean, as mentioned in the Indian Naval spokesperson's statement, signifies that it is ready to assume a greater role in the region. This not only serves as a reassurance to the US but also as a display of power, projecting its ability to control the strategic seascape and counter any adversarial advances.

In particular, the CBG operation and the statement of the Indian naval spokesperson highlight that India is willing to become part of the US strategy to counter China. The US is willing to deepen its defense ties and expand New Delhi's access to cutting-edge technologies. However, many believe that India might be a bad bet for the US vis-à-vis China.

It is pertinent to highlight that the US and China competition and India being the counterweight to China will have adverse effects on South Asia. As India strengthens its military capabilities, particularly naval capabilities, scholars in Pakistan believe that New Delhi will become more aggressive in its dealings with Pakistan. India is likely to acquire more and more sophisticated technology and in doing so, will disturb the strategic stability of South Asia. Apart from disturbing the stability, India's ambitions to close the technological gap with China are likely to initiate an arms race in this region.

Keeping this in view, it is important for Pakistan to enhance the operational capabilities of its navy in order to secure its sea lines of communication and counter any aggressive moves made by India.

<https://strattheia.com/indias-evolving-naval-posturing-in-the-indian-ocean-strategic-signaling-to-china/>

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## ***Dissecting US-led anti-China coalition in the Indo-Pacific***

***Muhammad Abubaker***

The US, under the Biden administration, is allegedly trying to build an all-out anti-China coalition in the Indo-Pacific region. It is actively building webs of alignment with the regional countries to restrict China's rising influence. Moreover, this highlights the US policy that it does not want any potential challenger in the region.

To safeguard its preeminence as a superpower, it is roping in many regional countries by modernizing their long-standing bilateral alliances and partnerships with states like Japan, Australia, South Korea, India, the Philippines, Vietnam, and the island of Taiwan.

Additionally, the US is reenergizing the Quad and emerging military associations such as AUKUS, strengthening their partnership with ASEAN, and also building up emerging partnerships with Pacific islands. The underlying purpose behind these strategic efforts is to effectively compete with China, recognizing its growing influence and capabilities.

### **US-led Coalitions Counter China**

Under the Biden administration, the US side perceives China's rapid economic growth,

technological advancements, military modernization drive, and rising geo-political influence as a challenger to its military superiority. As a result, the US side accelerated its efforts toward China's containment. The explicit acknowledgment of China as a strategic competitor can be inferred from the National Security Strategy (NSS-22), released the previous year.

It prioritized competition with China by strengthening industry, infrastructure, intelligence, and military setup. In line with the context above, the US is implementing various policies such as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Chips and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act. These policies are designed to maintain a competitive advantage over China in strategic defense and technology sectors. Moreover, the US strategy also emphasized the importance of aligning the goals and approaches with those of like-minded partners. It has been encouraging its allies and partners to de-risk their supply chains away from China.

Furthermore, the revival of Quad poses a serious challenge to China. The Quad is basically an informal security alliance of like-minded democracies like the US, India, Japan, and Australia. It intends to maintain a

free and open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) and uphold the rules-based international order. In addition to that, it is important to note that the US strategically formed the Indo-Pacific concept and coalition by bringing together countries situated at the extreme edges of the region, to encircle China.

The Quad leaders leveraged the perceived threat posed by China as a justification to align their strategies to constrain, contain, and if necessary, confront China. Moreover, the fifth Quad Summit meeting was held at the sideline of the G-7 meeting in Hiroshima. Looking ahead, it was announced that Prime Minister Modi will take the helm in hosting the next Quad summit in India in 2024.

The formation of a new Australia-UK-US (AUKUS) alliance is another significant development, signaling that more states may come together to form a formal US-led military alliance to counter China. The agreement was reached after extensive negotiations between the three countries, with the aim of enhancing their security partnership and coordination in the Indo-Pacific region.

The agreement includes a number of key aspects, including increased intelligence-sharing, joint military exercises, closer cooperation on cyber security, and the establishment of an information-sharing hub

to facilitate greater cooperation between the three countries. The agreement is seen as a major step forward in the region's efforts to address the growing security challenges posed by China's increasing military presence in the region. It is also seen as a sign of the three countries' commitment to the region and to their collective security.

## **Multilateralism in Indo-Pacific**

The recent developments in the Indo-Pacific region indicate a noticeable shift. A notable alignment among the US allies is emerging in response to the growing challenges posed by China. The Australian government's Defense Strategic review highlights its intention to forge a closer relationship with the US, while also bolstering its undersea warfare capabilities, long range strike capabilities, and integrated air and missile defenses.

These efforts align with the broader framework of AUKUS, further reinforcing the perception that the US, under the Biden administration, is taking a leading role in countering China. Additionally, Japan's release of an ambitious trio of documents (The National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, and Defense Build-up program) and its recognition of China as the greatest challenge further emphasizes the stance against China.

Furthermore, the Biden administration has signed agreements with the Philippines (Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement ECDA) and South Korea (Washington Declaration) to enhance extended deterrence capabilities, allowing access to new bases and docking nuclear-armed submarines. These developments collectively contribute to the perception of the US leading efforts in an anti-China coalition.

The current state of affairs in the Indo-Pacific region remains unstable, fueled by territorial disputes, military build-up, and geopolitical tensions. China perceives the Biden administration's efforts against China as the main obstacle to its regional ambitions to reclaim what it perceives as lost territory – (Island of Taiwan).

Amidst this geo-political standoff, certain issues pose a significant risk of escalation into open conflict. One such critical concern is China's intention to expedite the reunification with island of Taiwan. Moreover, tensions also extend to disputes over sovereignty claims in the South & East China Sea, at Line of Actual Control (LAC), which directly impact the US allies like India, Japan, Vietnam, and the Philippines.

Due to these conflicting aspirations, tensions have been growing between the two

countries. Moreover, the US led anti-China coalition in the region reportedly fueling Chinese fears of encirclement. Moving forward, engaging in multilateral arrangements and confidence-building measures is crucial to address emerging threats and foster stability.

<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/dissecting-us-led-anti-china-coalition-in-the-indo-pacific/>

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## ***Will India Participate in Containing China?***

***Shamil Abdullah***

The Prime Minister of India is being hosted by the U.S. president, reinforcing and reaffirming the partnership between both states, especially regarding Indo-U.S. defense cooperation and the 'Indo-Pacific' maritime security. U.S. would at least expect India to help the U.S. implement its foreign policy goals in the region and help the U.S. counter China.

However, India's record and history regarding its ambition in the region may be far different than what the U.S. perceives. As Ashley J. Tellis explains in "America's Bad Bet on India," India has tangible goals which it seeks to gain from this partnership with the U.S. like modernization of its military capabilities Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance (ISR), upgradation and development of niche military capabilities like long-range and long-endurance undersea drones and air-launched anti-ship missiles for action specific circumstances of area incursion and to deter Chinese maritime capabilities.

There are reasons India is unlikely to support the U.S. in containing China.

## **Trade and Geographical Location**

China ranks as one of India's top trading partners, with \$136 billion of bilateral trade with \$100 billion in favor of China. India also works with China on economic forums; it recently hosted the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers' Meeting, to which the Chinese Foreign Minister was also invited.

India is a member state of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) and hosts and participates in various forums and conferences; 14th BRICS meeting was held in China, where the Indian prime minister participated and also gave a joint statement. India's 'leading position' in ensuring the security of the Asia-Pacific region would thus remain doubtful.

Another point to note is the geopolitical position of India with China as opposed to the U.S. India is an immediate neighbor of China, making them inescapable proximity to each other. This makes India unlikely to involve itself in a U.S. confrontation with China. On the other hand, the land border with China is of more relevance to India than, for example, the issue of Taiwan.

## **Foreign Policy**

India recognizes itself as a separate pole in international politics, meaning it sees itself as



a separate power against other imperium states in the international order. India has separate foreign policy goals, and they hope to balance China independently without any obligations as a global player in international politics.

Although India sees China as an adversary, it aims to avoid a confrontation resulting in irrecoverable damage. India will not compromise on the delicate balance of non-alliance by becoming brother-in-arms in case of U.S. security crises with China. For greater context, the U.S. calls QUAD the “alliance of democracies,” something India refrains from calling, instead considering it the coalition of like-minded states.

India has separate foreign policy goals and what they hope to achieve from the Indo-U.S. partnership. India assumes that the U.S. should confront China diplomatically without any confrontation itself. Instead, the U.S. should blunt all the pressure from China and India and deal with both states individually without any repercussions.

### **Security Crises with China**

India already has very futile relations with its western neighbor Pakistan which is plagued with military standoffs and unstable borders, especially over the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir. Conflict on its already delicate

northern border would mean a big chunk of its military budget would be diverted to the Indo-Chinese border, where China is superior and better equipped in every aspect against much weaker India.

During the Dokhlam standoff in 2017, which lasted 73 days, India and China exercised great caution to prevent the crisis from spiraling out of hand. Subsequently 2018, both countries engaged in the Wuhan summit, where they mutually decided to enhance communication and reinforce existing confidence-building measures. Despite the Ladakh skirmishes in 2020, both nations are currently working towards de-escalation.

The U.S. has an ultimate expectation from India—to assist in containing the escalating influence of its geopolitical rival, China. This objective reflects what the U.S. hopes to achieve through the Indo-U.S. partnership. On the other hand, India has distinct objectives that revolve around obtaining tangible benefits such as the modernization of its aging military and bolstering its military capabilities. India does not view its collaboration with the United States primarily focused on containing China. However, when it comes to the Indian confrontation with China, the United States should provide support while refraining from

direct involvement when it is India's turn to take action.

To better understand why India is unlikely to commit to the U.S., it is important to consider the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal signed in 2008. Despite its approximately 15-year existence, this agreement appears to have stalled and has not fully realized its intended goals. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that India has derived significant advantages from this nuclear agreement.

Notably, India was granted a waiver at the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). It successfully became a member of esteemed international groups such as the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), Wassenaar Group, and Australia Group. This means that the interests of both states may align for now but it is hard to say this partnership will be beneficial in the long run for the U.S. i.e. when India achieves its tangible objectives.

India's unwavering stance of refraining from forming formal alliances with any state, combined with its adherence to a policy of non-alignment, naturally gives rise to inherent disparities between the United States and India. Additionally, India's reluctance to publicly criticize its Cold War ally and its choice to abstain from voting in resolutions condemning Russia further underscore the

misalignment of Indian interests with U.S. expectations. These factors indicate that India prioritizes its tangible gains and benefits over aligning entirely with the United States.

<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/will-india-participate-in-containing-china/>

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## ***Vulnerability of the U.S-China Competition in the South Asian Strategic Theatre***

***Komal Khan***

The geostrategic competition between the U.S. and China underscores that the world is moving from a uni-polarity to a multi-polar order, creating friction in the international system and regional orders. While this destabilizes the status-quo powers, it also offers opportunities and challenges for middle powers.

In contemporary great power competition, South Asia, referred to as Southern Asia by India and a geographical blasphemy, is fast emerging as the second most specific arena in their global competition. In this region, India and Pakistan are significant states in this regard. South Asian region is of interest to the U.S. and China. Hence their balance of power strategy divides the region into three competitive and two cooperative dyads operating simultaneously. The China-U.S. dyad, the China-India dyad, and the Pakistan-India dyad are competitive. At the same time, the cooperative dyads include the India-U.S. dyad and the Pakistan-China dyad. These dyads have been witnessing competition and cooperation taking place at the same time. These cooperative partnerships in a competitive geo-strategic environment

produce a complex set of consequences for the regional states of Pakistan and India.

Due to this strategic competition, the U.S. has been relying on India to contain China as it did on Pakistan to contain the Communists in the region. Pakistan was a reliable partner, as assessed from the Capitalism takeover of the world order in the 1990s.

The U.S. – India partnership has three primary features: first, the transfer of high-end advanced technology; second, the increased India-U.S. nuclear cooperation; and third, the geo-political clout benefitting India with the U.S. designation of India as the net security provider in the Indian Ocean Region. This partnership has resulted in India's more significant economic potential. The size of India's GDP is growing at an average rate of 6-7% every year. And this is why the U.S. finds India the only meaningful competitor to China in the Region.

Second and most importantly, India's well-placed diaspora caused India's soft power influence in the U.S. and West, which presents India as the most influential economic and strategic counterweight to China in the Asia-Pacific Region.

China's offensives in the maritime domain are challenging the status quo in the world order in the Asia-Pacific. Therefore, the US correlated with India to share the burden of policing in the Indian Ocean. The U.S. designated India as the net security provider because the Indian navy offers a counterforce to the PLA navy. Therefore, India is a key member of the QUAD partnership with China. In 2016, the U.S. designated India as a major defense partner, putting India at par with the closest U.S. defense allies. Since 2008, India has purchased 21 billion dollars of military technology.

Compared to India and learned from history, Pakistan has kept its options open for successful hedging between the competing states of the U.S. and China; however, that is a challenge and an opportunity only if Pakistan can achieve political stability and put its economy back on track.

<https://southasiajournal.net/vulnerability-of-the-u-s-china-competition-in-the-south-asian-strategic-theatre/>

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## ***Analyzing China's New Law on Foreign Relations***

***Hamdan Khan***

On June 28, 2023, at the third meeting of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress — the country's top legislature — adopted “The Law on Foreign Relations of the People's Republic of China”. Dubbed the country's “first comprehensive foreign relations law”, the law was enacted on July 1st and would provide a framework for setting and achieving China's foreign policy objectives in the years and decades to come.

In Article 1, the law provides general principles of Chinese foreign policy, which include among others the signature goals of Chinese President Xi Jinping: building China into a “modernized” country; realizing the “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation”.

Article 3 of the law outlines the guiding philosophies for China's foreign policy. In addition to the philosophies of Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Mao Zedong, and Deng Xiaoping, President Xi also features in the list for his “Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics”, which is reflective of President Xi's distinguished status among the Chinese leadership. It is worth emphasizing that President Xi — after he

consolidated power and lately won an unprecedented third term in the top office — is characterized as the most powerful Chinese paramount leader since Mao Zedong. Article 4 epitomizes the ideal façade of Beijing's foreign policy ambitions and after stressing China's adherence to “mutual non-aggression” and “peaceful coexistence”, registers opposition to “hegemonism”.

The USA has now adapted to the inevitable reality of competition with peer-competitor China and lately under the Biden administration has been stressing placing guardrails and responsibly managing the relationship so as it does not veer into a conflict, which also dominated Secretary Blinken's agenda during his recent visit to Beijing. China, however, continues rejecting “power politics” and relies on buzzwords like “peaceful coexistence”, promoting “global common development” and building “a new type of international relations” to characterize its foreign policy priorities.

Article 5 of the law reinforces and formalizes the influence of the Communist Party of China (CPC) over China's foreign policy by specifying that Beijing's foreign relations would be conducted under the “centralized and overall leadership” of the CPC.



Against the backdrop of the recent escalation in the USA's techno-economic war against China, which involves Washington sanctioning more than 1,300 Chinese entities citing their alleged involvement in spying and aiding Russia's war effort in Ukraine, doubling down on efforts to stifle semiconductor supplies to China and attempts aimed at de-risking the supply chains, the Article 8 of the law stipulates holding the individuals or organizations accountable that act detrimental to Chinese interests. Article 33 is more specific in this regard and recognizes Beijing's right to undertake "measures to counter or take restrictive measures" against the acts that it deems jeopardizing its "sovereignty, national security, and development interests".

In an article for People's Daily China, the Director of the Foreign Affairs Commission of CPC, Wang Yi — who is the top foreign policy official of China — said that the new law will provide the legal foundation to counter sanctions and interference against China. The Chinese side is of the view that in the wake of the sanctions barrage by the USA, international law does not provide enough legal remedies and therefore, the new foreign policy law is being enacted to safeguard Chinese sovereignty and development interests. Although China has

sanctioned some US companies, the USA is dominating the sanctions spiral with the Chinese on the receiving end. In March, the Chinese President lashed out at the USA-led West accusing them of implementing "all-out containment, encirclement and suppression" against China, which, he added, has brought unprecedented and severe challenges to China's development. The senior leadership's framing of the new law as aimed at countering the sanctions against China suggests that Beijing might be readying to up the ante in the sanctions realm.

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<https://ibcenglish.net/analyzing-chinas-new-law-on-foreign-relations/>

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## ***Ukraine's counter-offense amid Growing US military aid***

***Shayan Hassan Jamy***

On June 13th, 2023, the US Department of Defence (DOD) announced that it would provide Ukraine with an additional military aid package of \$325 million. This came just a few days after the DOD had announced a similar defence package for Ukraine worth \$2.1 billion. Since the Russian invasion, these latest defence deals put total US military spending towards Ukraine to \$34 billion.

The military aid that Ukraine has received from the US, and other NATO states, since February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 is largely how it's been able to defend itself against the vastly superior Russian military and keep Russian forces at bay for over a year. The timing of the latest US-Ukraine military deals is interesting, as they coincide with Ukraine launching its counter-offensive against Russia.

In order to understand exactly how crucial US military aid has been for Ukraine's defensive and offensive operations against Russia, we must first analyse both the nature of the US military aid and how Ukraine has utilised that aid.

## **Details of latest defence deals**

The \$325 million package includes funding for:

1. Missiles for the National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System (NASAM)
2. Missiles for the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS)
3. Stinger anti-aircraft systems
4. Javelin anti-armour systems
5. Bradley and Stryker armoured fighting vehicles
6. 22 million rounds of small arms ammunition
7. The \$2.1 billion deal, one of the largest since February 2022, includes funding for:
  8. Additional munitions for Patriot air defence systems
  9. HAWK air defence systems and missiles
  10. Additional artillery rounds
  11. Puma surveillance drones
  12. Munitions for laser-guided rocket systems
  13. Training, maintenance etc.

Interestingly, both deals are taking place via different authorities. The \$325 million deal was authorized through the Presidential Drawdown Authority, which draws directly from US stocks and can be delivered immediately. However, the \$2.1 billion deal was authorized through the Ukraine Security

Assistance Initiative (USAI), through which the US procures capabilities from its industry and partners. The USAI aims to support the Ukrainian military in the coming months and years.

Both deals are significant in their own right. The \$325 million package shows direct US support for Ukraine's counter-offensive against Russia. Deputy Pentagon Press Secretary Sabrina Singh said the latest assistance round "includes key capabilities to aid Ukraine's efforts to retake its sovereign territory". On the other hand, the \$2.1 billion package indicates that the US likely does not see an end to the Russia-Ukraine war any time soon. The DOD announcement of the \$2.1 billion deal emphasized on the fact that the defence deal was aimed at providing "longer-term security assistance" to Ukraine.

## **US military aid to Ukraine**

The latest defence deals are simply a continuation of the growing trend of US military assistance to Ukraine. Since Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the US has been the largest supplier of military assistance to Ukraine. After the latest deals, US military aid to Ukraine has now reached \$34 billion (this figure took into account the \$6.2 billion revision by the US

Pentagon), which far outweighs what any other state has donated.

US security assistance to Ukraine has increased drastically since the Russian invasion. From 2003-2013, US military aid to Ukraine totalled \$504 million, of which \$304 million was intended to secure Ukraine's nuclear stockpile rather than to enhance its defence capabilities. Following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, US military aid grew substantially year-by-year, going from \$49.8 million in 2013 to \$412 million in 2020. The nature of the military assistance also evolved and began to focus more on improving the Ukrainian military, both technologically and tactically. Following the events of February 24, 2022, military aid has grown at an exponential rate.

An important question arises, however, of exactly how long the US will be able to keep up its military assistance to Ukraine. The amount approved by the US Congress, of \$48.9 billion, is expected to run out by September 2023. Whether another disbursement of military aid is approved beyond then remains to be seen. Although there has been some internal dissent within the US Congress against sending additional military aid to Ukraine, the current trend will likely continue. This is because Ukraine is

acting as a proxy state for the US against Russia in the grander scheme of things.

Failure for Ukraine would subsequently mean failure for the US, and perhaps another indication that the once mighty American ‘empire’ has passed its peak. Given the US embarrassment in Afghanistan and the growing global assertiveness of China, the US cannot afford to lose to Russia in Ukraine. For these reasons, US military aid to Ukraine will likely continue along the same trajectory for the foreseeable future. The ultimate goal of US security assistance to Ukraine is to prevent Russian victory without directly being involved in the fighting.

### **How Ukraine has utilized US military aid**

US military aid to Ukraine has been crucial in its defence against Russia. Of particular importance has been the air defence systems that Ukraine has acquired from the US. These systems have largely stopped the constant barrage of Russian drone and missile strikes aimed at Ukrainian cities and critical infrastructure. However, the long-term sustainability of these systems remains to be seen. For example, the Patriot air defence system costs approximately \$4 million per missile, and each launcher costs about \$10 million. Given the cost of maintaining these air defence systems and the frequency of

Russian missile and drones strikes against Ukraine, Ukraine’s over-reliance on US military systems could hurt its defence if US funds were to run out.

Ukraine’s counter-offensive against Russia has also relied heavily on the tanks and armored vehicles supplied by the US. The Stryker, Bradley, Abrams tanks and other vehicles have given Ukraine a much faster and more advanced option than they previously had. The HIMARS systems have also allowed Ukraine to carry out precision strikes against Russian targets and conduct their counter-offensive operations more effectively. Several other US-supplied military systems and weapons, such as anti-tank weapons, artillery weapons and drones, have also been crucial for Ukraine.

With US military aid to Ukraine crossing \$34 billion over 15 months since the start of the Russian invasion, a clear pattern has emerged in the Russia-Ukraine war. With US military aid unlikely to stop, Russia unwilling to give up its objectives, and Ukraine beginning its counter-offensive against Russia, the war will likely continue in the same manner for the foreseeable future; that of a protracted conflict. However, the importance of US security assistance for Ukraine is clear; it is crucial for its defensive and offensive

operations against Russia, and Ukraine cannot continue without it.

<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/ukraines-counter-offense-amid-growing-us-military-aid/>

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