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RA'AD MISSILE:

PAKISTAN'S ANSWER TO MODERN
WARFARE CHALLENGES





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EDITORIAL

INDIA'S TACTICAL ADVANCEMENTS: A MERE RIPPLE AGAINST CHINA'S TSUNAMI

Amid the escalating geopolitical tensions in the Asia-Pacific region, the strategic military balance between India and China emerges as a focal point of international discourse. In the shadow of historical disputes and border skirmishes, the deployment and development of missile technology have become emblematic of national security and deterrence strategies. India's introduction of the Agni V and Agni VI missiles is a testament to its efforts to bolster defense capabilities against an increasingly assertive China.

INDIA'S STRATEGIC AMBITIONS

The Agni V missile, with its debated range of 5,000 to 10,000 kilometers, is designed to bring the entirety of China within its operational envelope. As a multiple-independently targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV), Agni V represents a significant leap in India's strategic missile capabilities, allowing it to engage multiple targets with precision. The introduction of Agni VI, extending the range up to 15,000 kilometers, further underscores India's intent to enhance its strategic deterrence. Despite discrepancies in claims about Agni V's range, the missile symbolizes India's determination to assert its position in the regional power dynamics.

CHINA'S COUNTERMEASURES AND CAPABILITIES

In the intricate chess game of Asian geopolitics, China's military and technological strategies emerge as a sophisticated counterbalance to regional adversaries, notably India. Beijing's response to New Delhi's missile development programs, such as Agni V and Agni VI, transcends mere weaponry upgrades; it encapsulates a multi-dimensional approach aimed at asserting its strategic dominance and deterring potential threats. China's investment in anti-missile defense systems is a cornerstone of its countermeasures against India's missile capabilities. The development and deployment of systems like the HQ-19, which is akin to the U.S. THAAD system, highlight China's focus on neutralizing incoming ballistic missiles. Such systems, capable of intercepting missiles at high altitudes, undermine the strategic utility of India's MIRV-equipped missiles by potentially negating their effectiveness.

Perhaps more daunting than conventional countermeasures is China's prowess in cyber warfare and electronic dominance. China's strategic doctrine increasingly incorporates cyber operations as a means to disrupt enemy communications, intelligence, and command systems before a physical conflict begins. This preemptive strategy could severely hamper India's ability to effectively deploy its missile systems in a timely and coordinated manner, thereby blunting their strategic edge. China's advancements in space technology further augment its countermeasures against India's missile capabilities. The deployment of a constellation of reconnaissance and surveillance satellites enhances China's situational awareness, enabling it to detect missile launches in real-time and potentially engage in early interception. This space-based asset network forms a critical component of China's integrated defense strategy, offering

a comprehensive overview of missile threats and facilitating prompt counteraction.

Beyond conventional military responses, China's emphasis on asymmetric warfare capabilities including cyber attacks, anti-satellite weapons, and electronic warfare represents a strategic shift designed to exploit vulnerabilities in an adversary's defense posture. By focusing on these non-traditional domains, China aims to offset the conventional military advantages of its rivals, including India's missile advancements, and establish a deterrent posture that complicates the strategic calculus for potential adversaries. The deployment of Jin-class ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) equipped with JL-2 missiles, capable of striking targets over 7,400 kilometers away, underscores China's commitment to a credible second-strike capability. This submarine-based nuclear deterrent serves as a formidable countermeasure to any land-based missile threat, including those posed by India, ensuring that China maintains a robust retaliatory capacity that can survive a first strike. Supporting these technological and strategic countermeasures is China's substantial financial and industrial base. With a defense budget that significantly exceeds India's, China has the means to sustain a rapid pace of military modernization and technological development. This financial advantage allows China to invest in a wide array of defense projects, from artificial intelligence and quantum computing to next-generation weapons systems, ensuring its military remains at the cutting edge of technological advancement. The financial aspect of the India-China military equation presents a stark contrast. India's defense budget of \$72 billion pales in comparison to China's \$227 billion allocation, reflecting the differential in their ability to invest in military modernization and technology acquisition. This disparity not only affects the qualitative and quantitative aspects of military preparedness but also influences strategic and operational flexibility.

THE BROADER STRATEGIC PICTURE

Beyond the immediate military calculus, the broader strategic landscape offers avenues for India to enhance its security posture. Building alliances and partnerships, particularly with countries that share concerns about China's rise, could serve as a force multiplier for India. Engaging in international diplomacy and multilateral forums also presents opportunities to address security concerns and foster stability.

FUTURE PROSPECTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Looking ahead, India's path to mitigating the strategic imbalance with China involves both technological innovation and strategic recalibration. Investing in next-generation defense technologies, including anti-satellite weapons, hypersonic missiles, and AI-driven warfare systems, could provide India with a competitive edge. Equally important is the development of a comprehensive strategy that integrates military, economic, and diplomatic dimensions to address the multifaceted challenges posed by China. India's introduction of the Agni V and Agni VI missiles marks a significant step in its quest to fortify its defense capabilities against an assertive China. While these developments signal India's strategic intentions, the broader geopolitical and financial dynamics underscore the complexities of the India-China security dilemma. Bridging the capability gap, leveraging strategic partnerships, and pursuing diplomatic avenues are crucial for ensuring peace and stability in the region. As India navigates this challenging landscape, its defense initiatives will play a pivotal role in shaping the regional power balance.

NEWS IN BRIEF



AS NATION CELEBRATES PAKISTAN DAY, PRESIDENT ZARDARI REITERATES NO COMPROMISE ON NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

As Pakistan Day celebrations are underway, President Asif Ali Zardari has stressed upon the nation to participate in the nation-building process actively, embracing the values of hard work, integrity, and compassion. This day commemorates the Lahore Resolution passed on March 23, 1940, and the adoption of the first Constitution of Pakistan on March 23, 1956.

Speaking at a parade in Islamabad, President Zardari honored the commitment and sacrifices made by Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and his compatriots... "However, let me make it clear that we will not compromise on our sovereignty. Our nation and armed forces are always ready to respond to any aggression at all times.

"We will not tolerate any efforts by terrorists or any group to destabilize our

country," he said, adding that today's parade is a reminder of the country's unity, strength, and pride.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif asked the nation to renew the firm resolve to follow the footsteps of founding fathers to make Pakistan a trivet of peace, progress, and stability.

Courtesy: Dawn

UN CHIEF SAYS BLOCKED GAZA AID IS A 'MORAL OUTRAGE', CALLS FOR WAR TO END

On a visit to the Rafah crossing, Antonio Guterres urges Israel to give people in Gaza unfettered access to humanitarian aid. The line of blocked aid trucks stuck on Egypt's side of the border with the Gaza Strip while Palestinians face starvation on the other side is a "moral outrage", United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on a visit to the Rafah crossing.

"I have come to Rafah to shine a spotlight on the pain of Palestinians in Gaza," the UN chief said on Saturday (March 23, 2024), addressing a news conference in El Arish, in



Egypt's northern Sinai, where much of the international relief for Gaza is stockpiled as Israel continues to block aid from entering.

"You cannot see so many people being killed, you cannot see so much suffering without feeling hugely frustrated," Guterres said while taking questions from reporters. "We don't have the power to stop [the war in Gaza], I appeal to those who have the power to stop it to do it," he added.

Courtesy: Al Jazeera

SECURITY PLEDGES FOR WORKERS AS CPEC SET TO EXPAND

Pakistan on Friday (March 22, 2024) assured Chinese workers of top-level security as it pushed for the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) through the launch of five special industrial zones. At a meeting with the Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong, Planning and Development Minister Ahsan Iqbal assured the Chinese side that Pakistan had made significant efforts to safeguard the security of Chinese workers and would further implement top-level security measures for Chinese personnel.

He said security was a prerequisite for development, and Pakistan acknowledged the full recognition of CPEC construction and security risks. However, these risks would not disrupt work on CPEC projects, he added. The



two sides agreed to intensify efforts to establish a new working group on five new economic corridors under the second phase, aligning with the Five Es framework – export, energy, equity, environment and e-Pakistan – already prepared by the planning ministry.

Courtesy: Dawn.

GENERAL SYED ASIM MUNIR, NI (M), COAS, VISITS KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA (KSA)

General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) visited Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) on March 20, 2024. During the visit, COAS called on His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin



Abdulaziz Al Saud, The Crown Prince and Prime Minister of KSA; HRH Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Defence Minister of KSA; His Excellency General Fayyadh Bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili, Chief of General Staff (CGS) Saudi Armed Forces and Engineer Talal Abdullah Al Otaibi, Assistant Minister of Defence of KSA and other senior military leadership.

Courtesy: ISPR.

RUSSIAN SOYUZ ROCKET WITH 3 ASTRONAUTS BLASTS OFF TO ISS, DAYS AFTER GLITCH

The successful take-off to the International



Space Station follows an aborted launch on Thursday (March 21, 2024) after a voltage drop in a power source. A Russian Soyuz rocket carrying three astronauts to the International Space Station (ISS) blasted off on Saturday, two days after its launch was aborted at the last minute. The spacecraft carrying NASA astronaut Tracy Dyson, Russian Oleg Novitsky, and Marina Vasilevskaya of Belarus launched smoothly from the Russian-leased Baikonur launch facility in Kazakhstan.

Courtesy: Al Jazeera.

MODI'S INDIA PLANS ITS OWN DEMOCRACY INDEX, AFTER GLOBAL RANKINGS DOWNGRADE

The index is being finalized ahead of elections, with the Modi government worried about global criticism hurting sovereign ratings. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has approached a major Indian think tank to develop a homegrown



democracy ratings index that could help it counter recent downgrades in rankings issued by international groups that New Delhi fears could affect the country's credit rating.

The Observer Research Foundation (ORF), which works closely with the Indian government on multiple initiatives, is preparing the ratings framework, according to two people closely involved in the discussions on the project. The index is expected to hew more closely to New Delhi's narrative than Western-based rankings that Modi's team has criticized.

Courtesy: Al Jazeera

AUSTRALIA TO CONTRIBUTE \$3BN FOR CONSTRUCTION OF AUKUS SUBMARINES

Defence Minister Richard Marles says allies working 'at pace' to ensure the security deal becomes a reality. Australia is set to provide 4.6 billion Australian dollars (\$3bn) to British industry to help support the construction of nuclear-powered submarines under the AUKUS deal with the United Kingdom and the United States and ensure its new vessels arrive on time. Senior officials from the UK and Australia, as well as the US ambassador to Australia, visited the naval shipyard where the submarines will be built in the South Australian city of Adelaide on Friday.

Courtesy: Al Jazeera



THE NEW WORLD ORDER:

CONCEPT, APPROACHES AND ACCEPTABILITY



**PROF. DR.
TANWEER
KHALID**

A polycentric new world order started emerging after the end of the cold war but it has began to fray at the edges when the old world order broke down after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The United States as a uni-polar leader was neither successful nor acceptable by all the other countries.

The elements for a new world order is not a new subject for states but has its roots in ancient civilisations with significant contributions from renowned philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, who gave a philosophical underpinning to the concept. Plato's idealistic vision of a state in the 'Republic' and Aristotle's pragmatic analysis of a political organization in the 'Politics' is not just civilizational history but an approach of utopian idealism and real-world complexities.

The real world poses both challenges and opportunities for a new world order achieving a balance between material progress and spiritual values essential for sustainable development, where economic efficiency, social justice, freedom and preservation of the human species and its natural habitat are considered as the



primary insights. In other words a comprehensive approach that integrates philosophical wisdom and scientific advancement is adopted by embracing these principles and fostering global cooperation, so that humanity can aspire to a more equitable and sustainable future.

The international rule based order is under stress since its establishment after World War II threatening its very foundations. The causes for such vulnerability are the growing friction among the major powers, the triumphant rise of ultra-right wing political parties, dilution in the forces of globalisation and free market economies and the world's inability to defeat the terrorist groups comprehensively.

A world order means a rule-based order fundamental to the very existence of states without external pressure which require a collaborative approach that might be institutional, regional or global. Questions are asked such as what can be done to reinvigorate the existing old order or substitute it with a more transformative contemporary approach.

To have answers it is imperative that we must understand the most distinctive attributes of the post 1945-world order, what forces are now placing it under strain and what aspects of today's order are most vulnerable and which are most resilient. It is necessary that foundation of global stability and order should be strengthened. Cotemporary analysis of world order had documented the 'decline' of the west and the rise of the 'rest'. The rising powers dispute the longstanding rules of the global game and are

determined to alter fundamental principles and standards of international conduct. But despite the reservations they accept that in the views of G. John Ikenberry, contemporary political scientist, the western liberal order laid down in 1945 and which emerged victorious in the cold war, is here to stay.

This has powerful advantages. Firstly capitalist democracies still hold a majority of global power. Secondly sprawling landscape of rules, institutions and networks easily accommodate newcomers who can easily join but hard to overturn. Thirdly rising powers will never align into a cohesive, counter-hegemonic bloc given their distinct histories, identities and interests. Finally all major powers, rising and established, have a status-quo orientation and do not want to overhaul existing regimes but want to attain greater voice and weight within them.

The old world order and a transforming new world order points out that there exists a western liberal international order whose distinctive values, norms, laws and institutions are designed to govern state conduct. Though the post World War II order originated in Europe it achieved its full expression with the rise of the US to global leadership. The US combined power and purpose to forge a multilateral world order using persuasion, incentives and coercion to do so denoting a baseline level of predictability and patterned regularity for states and institutions which make it effective. Norms and rules are not divorced from power and great powers have been the makers of world order and the weak the takers. There is little change at present in the world order vision which carries the imprint of national purposes, historical legacies, ideological predispositions and political culture.

The principles of order based on liberal internationalism remains consistent while the old world order broke down after the demise of Soviet Union. The unipolar world lead by US was



not accepted by all. China has invested significantly domestically and around the world attempting to change world institutions becoming the first socialist super power. Russia and China have closer cooperation and Russia wishes to export resources eastwards if sanctions persist after the Ukraine war.

A closer cooperation between US and Europe is possible in theory but the US is focusing more on the Indo-Pacific region perhaps in the form of an extended AUKUS bloc (Australia, UK & US). UK is trying to play a central role as under the commonwealth but it will not be easy after Brexit. India does not want to cooperate with China as it has issues of territorial claims but it has not criticized Russia's war in Ukraine and maintains high trade relations with it.

It continues to have problems with Pakistan though unable to manage an enormous population demanding employment and welfare under Modi's nationalist government. Europe has been internally divided for a long time between northern and southern countries as well as old and new members.

They disagree over border control policies, quota for refugees and future enlargement but they have acted swiftly regarding their approach on the Ukraine war pointing at Russia as the aggressor. But Covid19 pandemic crisis and the

war in Ukraine have accelerated the reshaping of globalisation and formulation of a new world order.

Sovereignty and non-intervention are important rules of the world order but emerging security threats have weakened this presumption and sovereignty is depicted as contingent on fulfilling certain obligations. At 2005 UN High Level Summit, it was unanimously endorsed that states can forfeit their external intervention if it makes war on its citizens or fails to protect them from atrocities. But western states have hijacked the norm to pursue a policy of regime change intervention in Libya, Saddam Hussain's removal in Iraq, Russia's actions in Ukraine, Transnistria, along-with Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Use of force without UNSC approval has been a repeated deviation which includes NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999, invasion of Iraq by US-led coalition forces in 2008, a novel interpretation by administration of George W. Bush under the doctrine of 'pre-emption' in the Syrian conflict is evidence of UNSC's growing irrelevance to international peace. Failure to update council membership is a long-term threat to UNSC legitimacy and credibility.

There is a deadlock in global trade liberalization, failure to complete the WTO's Doha Development Round since 2001, rising competing models of regional trade like TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership), long term role of the dollar and China's no strings attached approach.

Besides mitigating and adapting to 'climate change', it is the gravest long term threat to world order posing an existential threat to life on earth. Another major challenge to contemporary world order is the maritime, air space, outer space and cyber space domains. More pressing are orbital debris, vehicle collisions and space militarization which need rules of the road. The US must recognize certain realities and set its objectives in the light of them. It should give special focus to

important emerging democracies like India, Brazil and Indonesia and bind itself to multilateral institutions based on enlightened self-interest and lessons of history. Since the US remains as a dominant factor in any global order it must temper its historic 'exemptionalist' stance towards multilateral cooperation or rich critique to the detriment of world order.

As the world transforms towards different blocs, the new world order is taking shape with entrants of the New South in a multi-polar world. They are adding more muscle to the G - 20 and as an array of non-western countries, forging a new identity. Hence it is hard to dismiss the fact that change in the international structure is being constructed towards greater multi-polarity. Renewed interests of major powers in securing support and partnerships with countries of the global south, new African engagements, enlargement of the BRICS indicates an openness for reform is clearly visible because the risk of losing global power and influence is real. The old order should accept multi-polarity and change with the time.

The author is the Secretary of Pakistan Institute of International Affairs and former Chairperson of Department of Political Science, University of Karachi.



FROM RULE-BASED ORDER TO REALITY:

REIMAGINING GLOBAL SURVIVAL



**DR.
NAUSHEEN
WASFI**

Contemporary global politics has experienced profound shifts and transformations, defying numerous early predictions and expectations that arose at the conclusion of the Cold War. Experts and decision-makers envisioned a new world order marked by the end of ideological conflicts, the expansion of democratic governance, and an era of peace and prosperity underpinned by global economic integration.

Post World War II international liberal order characterized by norms, rules, and institutions designed to manage relations between states and address global challenges, was expanded after the Cold War and came to be known as rule-based order. This includes a network of treaties, international organizations, and legal frameworks intended to promote peace, security, economic integration, and human rights.

HOWEVER, SEVERAL DEVELOPMENTS HAVE COUNTERED THE POST-COLD WAR PREDICTIONS:



Contrary to expectations of a peaceful world, the post-Cold War period has witnessed numerous conflicts, including wars in the Balkans, the Middle East, and the spread of non-state actors and terrorism, exemplified by the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the rise of groups such as ISIS, al Qaeda, Hamas and likes which forcefully challenged state writ. The most notable challenges to rule-based order surfaced more recently in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Hamas (Palestinian) conflict in which the implementers of rule-based order became its blunt violators.

There have already emerged fissures in the global power relationships consequent to three significant factors: globalization, the digital revolution, and the escalating impacts of environmental degradation and climate change. It is crystal clear why. Globalization has catalyzed unparalleled economic expansion and connectivity, yet it has concurrently given rise to marked inequalities, social disruptions, and widespread resistance to economic liberalization across various regions. These developments have ignited nationalist and populist movements, posing substantial challenges to the liberal international order. Predominantly, globalization is perceived as favoring the 'rich' nations of the global north, further exacerbating the divide between the world's affluent and less affluent regions.

The digital revolution has profoundly transformed international relations,

positioning cyberspace as a pivotal arena for strategic competition. In the aftermath of the Cold War, the full spectrum of cybersecurity threats, the dynamics of information warfare, and the impact of social media on political processes were not entirely foreseen.

This digital landscape offers unique capabilities to scrutinize, challenge, and target societies in ways never seen before. A notable instance of this occurred during the conflict between Israel and Hamas on October 7, 2023. Until that point, Western narratives of conflicts, often aligned with their geostrategic interests, predominated. However, the prevalence of social media now has significantly contested the West's influence in shaping these narratives. Furthermore, the state's authority and legitimacy are now under unprecedented challenge in this new era of digital transparency and engagement.

The mounting effects of climate change and environmental degradation have thrust themselves to the forefront of global politics, requiring a level of cooperation and regulation among states that surpasses expectations from the early 1990s. Failure to forge a global consensus on tackling these pressing challenges highlights the intricate nature of contemporary international relations. They underscore the difficulty of adhering to a rule-based order, revealing its shortcomings in effectively addressing global environmental crises. A thorough examination of the aforementioned factors underscores the increasing necessity for a rule-based order, particularly given its innovative approach, more than ever. However, its primary advocate and enforcer, the United States, faced significant challenges due to China's remarkable economic ascent in the 1990s, Russia's defiant stance in the 2000s, and the Global South's pursuit of alternatives for development. This situation forced the U.S.



and its allies to deviate from the rule-based order, rendering the concept's novelty commonplace. At first, the US and its allies were deviating from their own set rules for their strategic interests.

This was evident when the US violated WTO rules under Donald Trump's presidency to refrain China from making profits in the Western markets. Over the period of time they appear helpless in regulating the states' interactions. This was witnessed in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine conflict when even its preferred allied countries such as India could not be restricted to trade with Russia. Israel's blatant refusal to adhere to any legal or human rights regime in its latest attacks on Gaza is another case in point.

In fact, in today's context, not only is the rule-based order, designed to manage the interactions between states, facing considerable obstacles, but the very notion of 'state' itself is under scrutiny. Moreover, the ideals proposed by the Western state system, including democracy, freedom of speech, justice, and human rights, are being compromised by the West itself. This reflects a critical juncture in global affairs, where the foundational principles of international relations and their implementation are being reevaluated.

Continued on page 16

CHINA'S NUCLEAR RISE: SHAPING GLOBAL BALANCE OF POWER

NUSRAT MIRZA

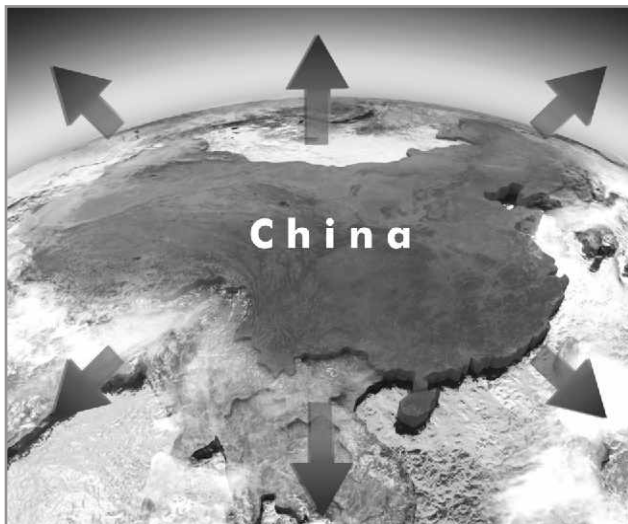
In the evolving landscape of global security, the strategic expansion of China's nuclear capabilities marks a significant shift towards maintaining a balance of power on the international stage. The recent observations by American and European military satellites, as well as US private companies, reveal the construction of hundreds of missile silos across various locations in China, including Hami, Ordos/Yulin, and PLARF fields. These developments, coupled with the detailed satellite imagery from Planet Labs and the Federation of American Scientists, underscore a concerted effort to modernize and enhance China's nuclear arsenal.

China's nuclear program, historically rooted in a doctrine of minimal deterrence and no first use, has seen an accelerated expansion in recent years. With an estimated 500 nuclear warheads and plans for further



production, China is on track to strengthen its strategic deterrent capabilities significantly. This growth encompasses the development of new missile silo fields for both solid and liquid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), the expansion of its intermediate-range ballistic missile force with the dual-capable DF-26, and the modernization of its sea-based deterrent with Type 094 ballistic missile submarines equipped with longer-range JL-3 missiles. Moreover, the recent integration of nuclear missions into China's bomber fleet and the development of an air-launched ballistic missile indicate a comprehensive approach to nuclear modernization.

This expansion reflects China's commitment to maintaining a credible nuclear deterrent capable of ensuring its national security and promoting stability in international relations through maintaining a balance of power. The Chinese Ministry of National Defense articulates a nuclear policy centered on no first use and a refusal to engage in nuclear arms races, emphasizing a





strategic posture of self-defense aimed at deterring aggression.

The significance of China's nuclear modernization goes beyond mere numbers. It embodies a strategic effort to maintain a balance of power in a world characterized by shifting geopolitical dynamics. In the context of global security, a balanced nuclear landscape is crucial for preventing unilateral actions that could threaten peace and stability. China's growing nuclear capabilities, therefore, should not be viewed in isolation but as part of a broader effort to foster a stable and balanced international order.

Critics and observers have often debated the implications of China's nuclear expansion, with some expressing concerns over potential arms races and strategic instability. However, a closer examination of China's strategic intentions and its adherence to a doctrine of minimum deterrence suggests a different narrative. China's nuclear strategy is not aimed at achieving supremacy but at securing its national interests and contributing to global stability by deterring aggression and preventing nuclear blackmail.

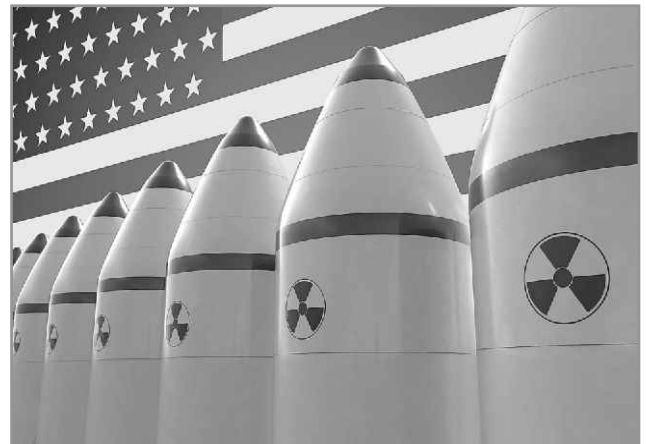
Furthermore, the transparency and openness in China's military advancements, evidenced by the detailed analysis of satellite imagery, military parades, and strategic documents, provide a window into

understanding the structure and mission of its nuclear forces. This transparency, while not complete, offers insights into China's strategic calculus and its commitment to a responsible nuclear posture.

As the global community navigates the complexities of international security, the role of nuclear weapons in maintaining peace and preventing conflict cannot be understated. In this context, China's nuclear modernization represents a rational and measured approach to ensuring its security and contributing to global stability. Rather than fearing China's nuclear capabilities, the international community should recognize the value of a balanced nuclear landscape in which no single nation can dominate or coerce others.

In a nutshell, China's expanding nuclear program is a demonstration of its commitment to maintaining a stable balance of power on the global stage. China seeks to promote peace and security through a strategy of deterrence and defense, underscoring the importance of strategic stability in an increasingly uncertain world. As we move forward, understanding and dialogue will be key to ensuring that nuclear modernization contributes to global stability rather than to tension and competition.

The author is the Chief Editor of Monthly Interaction.



THE COMPLEX DYNAMICS OF HINDU-MUSLIM RELATIONS IN MODI'S INDIA



**WAJEEHA
NAJAM**

India, with its population of 1.3 billion, boasts a rich tapestry of diversity, encompassing myriad cultures, languages, and religions. Among its populace are approximately 200 million Muslims, constituting a significant demography within the country. However, despite constitutional safeguards apparently guaranteeing equality and protection, India's Muslims continue to grapple with discrimination, violence, and societal prejudice.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Hindu nationalist policies have exacerbated anti-Muslim sentiments, raising concerns both domestically and internationally. Critics contend that Modi's administration has further marginalized Muslims, curtailed their religious freedoms, and fostered an environment conducive to violence against them. As Modi secured reelection in 2024, apprehensions mount over the deepening religious divisions within India.



The tension between Hindus and Muslims in India goes back to British colonial times and the partition of British India in 1947. The Indian National Congress, led by figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, fought for independence, while the All-India Muslim League, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, wanted a separate Muslim state. When the borders were hastily drawn, it caused a lot of violence, communal conflicts, and many people had to leave their homes, resulting in a large number of casualties. After partition, around thirty-five million Muslims continued to live in India.

India's constitution apparently upholds democratic principles, emphasizing social equality and nondiscrimination. Though the term 'secular' was incorporated into the preamble in 1976, the constitution falls short of mandating a strict separation of religion and state. Leaders of the Congress party, including Gandhi and Nehru, envisioned an India predicated on equality for all citizens and faiths. Gandhi, a proponent of a unified and inclusive India, tragically fell victim to an assassin's bullet in 1948, perpetrated by a Hindu nationalist. Nehru, India's inaugural prime minister, underscored secularism as indispensable for fostering harmony, identifying those seeking to foment religious discord as the nation's foremost threat.

The genesis of Hindu nationalism can be traced back to colonial-era ideologies advocating for the establishment of India as a

Hindu state. Despite the diverse origins of India's Muslim population, many are perceived with suspicion, often being regarded as alien intruders, despite their historical roots in the country. Political turmoil in the 1980s strained India's secular fabric, with figures like Indira Gandhi exploiting religious fault lines for political gain. The ascension of the BJP, founded in 1980, to power under Narendra Modi's stewardship in 2014 marked a pivotal juncture, with the party's electoral campaigns often imbued with anti-Muslim rhetoric.

Muslims in India face many problems, including employment, education, housing, and political representation. The dominance of the BJP has precipitated a decline in Muslim representation in parliament, with a conspicuous absence of Muslim legislators by mid-2022. Furthermore, pervasive biases within law enforcement agencies hinder justice for Muslim victims, with a significant portion of police officers exhibiting anti-Muslim sentiments. Legislative measures curtailing religious freedoms and extrajudicial actions disproportionately impact Muslims, underscoring grave apprehensions regarding their rights and safety.

The passage of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in December 2019 elicited widespread condemnation, fast-tracking citizenship for migrants from neighboring countries while conspicuously excluding Muslims. Critics lambasted the legislation as discriminatory, citing its religiously exclusive criteria for citizenship. Additionally, the BJP's pledge to execute a National Register of Citizens (NRC) stoked fears of rendering Muslims stateless, further exacerbating communal tensions. Modi's government's decision to revoke the special autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019 precipitated a spate of rights abuses, including



internet shutdowns and mass arrests, prompting international rebuke.

Recent episodes of communal violence in India have particularly targeted Muslims, increasing concerns regarding their safety and rights. Notable incidents include the destruction of the Babri Masjid in 1992, the Gujarat riots of 2002, and the Muzaffarnagar riots of 2013, among others. Vigilante attacks under the guise of cow protection, clashes over the Citizenship Amendment Act, and hostilities surrounding the inauguration of the Ram Mandir temple in Ayodhya have further exacerbated inter-communal tensions.

Critics accuse BJP officials of downplaying or ignoring violence against Muslims, fostering a climate of insecurity within the community. The proliferation of hate speech and misinformation online has only served to exacerbate violence targeting Muslims, exacerbating existing fault lines within Indian society.

Nevertheless, it's imperative to recognize that not all Hindus or BJP supporters advocate anti-Muslim sentiments. Many individuals from both communities intensely oppose actions undermining India's secular ethos. Activists, legal scholars, and conscientious citizens have tirelessly advocated against discriminatory policies and communal violence, demonstrating a commitment to upholding India's pluralistic fabric.

Internationally, condemnation of India's treatment of Muslims has been vocal, with foreign governments and international bodies denouncing actions in Kashmir, the Citizenship Amendment Act, and anti-Muslim rhetoric. While Modi's government has sought to strengthen ties with Muslim-majority nations, criticisms from organizations such as the UN human rights office and the US Commission on International Religious Freedom underscore the gravity of the situation. The relationship between Hindus and Muslims in Modi's India is complicated

and influenced by a mix of history, politics, and societal divisions. As India grapples with its pluralistic identity, the imperative of safeguarding the rights and dignity of all its citizens, regardless of religious affiliation, looms large on the national conscience. Only through concerted efforts to foster inclusivity, tolerance, and mutual respect can India aspire to realize its full potential as a beacon of pluralism and democracy on the global stage.

The author is a Research Officer at Rabita Forum International (RFI).

Continued from page 11

FROM RULE-BASED ORDER TO REALITY:

As the efficacy and appeal of the liberal/rule-based order wane, countries are increasingly confronted with the challenge of navigating a fragmented global landscape. This shift compels nations to reconsider their reliance on multilateral institutions and frameworks that have traditionally guided international cooperation and conflict resolution.

Countries are now more inclined to pursue individual policies tailored to their unique interests and circumstances for there is no option for the state and vulnerable groups but to resort to a 'self-help system' endorsed by centuries old realist discourse.

It is high time for reflection. From Europe's multifaceted crises, spanning economic, security, health, climate, and migration challenges to civil wars in Sudan and Myanmar and their regional and global repercussions to acute food shortages in Somalia, and large-scale worldwide environmental degradation, the global political landscape presents a gloomy picture.

This exemplifies the consequences of lacking effective, functional, and equitable rule-based governance.

Consequently, nationalism has resurged and more alarming is to see the renewal of the nuclear arms race. While individual policies may offer short-term benefits or address specific national concerns, this approach poses significant risks and limitations in addressing global challenges that require collective actions. The failure can lead to unintended consequences, including escalating tensions and economic inefficiencies. We find ourselves unmistakably entrenched in a zero-sum game.

The ongoing global transition emphasizes the critical need for flexible and advanced strategies to understand and manage international relations. Countries may need to venture into innovative forms of collaboration that reconcile their domestic agendas with collective actions. By reimagining international cooperation in this manner, there lies a potential pathway in an era where the traditional liberal order is experiencing significant pressure.

The author is an Assistant Professor at the Department of International Relations, University of Karachi.

RA'AD MISSILE



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION:

■ Place of Origin	Pakistan
■ Design	1998-2007
■ Manufacture	Air Weapons Complex
■ Variants	Ra'ad II
■ Mass	1,100 kg
■ Length	2.85 m
■ Diameter	0.50 m

■ Max Firing Rang	600 km
■ Warhead Weight	450 kg
■ Blast Yield	5 k TNT
■ Max Speed	0.8 mach
■ Accuracy	3.0 m

RA'AD MISSILE:

PAKISTAN'S ANSWER TO MODERN WARFARE CHALLENGES



SYED SAMIULLAH

The Ra'ad missile, carries the designation Hatf-VIII, is a noteworthy advancement in the realm of Pakistan's defense capabilities. It is classified as a subsonic, standoff, air-launched cruise missile (ALCM). The development of this sophisticated missile system was a collaborative endeavor, undertaken by the National Engineering & Scientific Commission (NESCOM) in partnership with the Air Weapons Complex (AWC).

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

The genesis of the Ra'ad missile's design and development took place in the year 1998. This important project was assigned to the NESCOM, which then collaborated closely with the Pakistan Air Force engineering laboratory, known as the Air Weapons Complex. Details surrounding the development phase of the Ra'ad missile have remained largely undisclosed, owing to the project's secretive nature, with the military taking a leading role in its design and engineering processes. The achievement of Pakistan in developing cruise missiles also



garnered attention from Western entities, which misleadingly accused other countries of collaborating on the project. However, the former program's manager, General Mirza Aslam Beg, empathetically denying those allegations, attributed the success of the missile's development exclusively to the dedication and expertise of the Pakistani scientists involved, emphasizing their significant contribution to this engineering accomplishment.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

The Ra'ad missile leverages sophisticated stealth technology to minimize its visibility through various detection methods, including radar and sonar. (Sonar is a system for the detection of objects underwater by emitting sound pulses and detecting or measuring their return after being reflected.) By employing a combination of passive and active electronic countermeasures similar to electromagnetic spectrum camouflage it is designed to evade enemy defenses. The original version of Ra'ad is capable of delivering both tactical





conventional and nuclear warheads up to a distance of 350 km (220 miles).

As outlined by the Pakistani military, Ra'ad operates at subsonic speeds and maintains a low altitude, closely following the terrain. This tactic significantly enhances its maneuverability and complicates detection by enemy radar systems. The introduction of Ra'ad-II further extends its operational range to 600 km (370 miles), thus broadening its strategic utility.

The Ra'ad missile, powered by a turbojet engine, has a length of 4.85 meters and a diameter of 0.5 meters. It can carry a payload of up to 450 kg (approximately 990 lbs), capable of producing an explosive force ranging from 5 to 12 kilotons of TNT (Trinitrotoluene), demonstrating its considerable destructive power.

OPERATIONAL JOURNEY:

The testing journey of the Ra'ad missile embarked on August 25, 2007, with its inaugural test launch officially announced by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). This momentous beginning was succeeded by a series of additional tests. The second test took place on May 8, 2008, highlighted through military footage captured from a Mirage-IIIIR aircraft of the Pakistan Air Force. Subsequent tests occurred on April 29, 2011; May 30, 2012; and February 2, 2015. The sequence continued, with a particularly notable seventh

test on January 19, 2016, underscoring Ra'ad's preparedness for operational deployment.

RA'AD-II

On March 23, 2017, during the Pakistan Day Parade, Pakistan showcased the upgraded iteration of the Ra'ad missile, Ra'ad-II, which boasted an extended range. This enhancement was further evidenced on February 19, 2020, when Pakistan successfully executed a flight test of the Ra'ad-II Air Launched Cruise Missile. With a 600 km range, the Ra'ad-II marks a substantial improvement in Pakistan's strategic standoff capabilities, both on land and at sea. The missile is equipped with state-of-the-art guidance and navigation systems, ensuring the precise targeting of objectives. The air test-launch was witnessed by Strategic Plans Division director general lieutenant general Nadeem Zaki Manj, NESCOM chairman Dr. Nabeel Hayat Malik, and senior officers from Strategic Plans Division, Strategic Forces and Strategic Organizations. Gen. Manj said the missile launch is 'a major step towards complementing Pakistan's deterrence capability'.

The choice of the Mirage-IIIIR aircraft for the Ra'ad's test launches reflects a strategic decision by the Pakistan Air Force to navigate potential objections from the United States



that might have arisen if F-16A/B jets had been used, despite their compatibility with the Ra'ad. However, integrating the Ra'ad with other aircraft types, including the JF-17, illustrates the missile's versatility and potential for wider application.

SIGNIFICANCE

Within the arsenal of the Pakistani military, the Ra'ad is tasked with executing precision strikes against high-priority assets such as command centers, radar installations, missile launchers, and stationary naval vessels.

Author, analyst, and former Pakistan Air Force pilot Kaiser Tufail believes the "treetop-hugging [air-launched cruise missile] with its minuscule radar cross-section should be a good antidote to the S-400."

Mansoor Ahmed, a senior fellow at the Center for International Strategic Studies in Islamabad who specializes in Pakistan's nuclear program and its delivery platforms, believes the Ra'ad-II is "Pakistan's answer to India's development of the Nirbhay cruise missile."

He believes Ra'ad-II "will significantly enhance the operational and targeting flexibility of the air leg of Pakistan's strategic forces." "It gives enhanced capability for precision strikes against critical military targets on land and at sea from safer standoff ranges. With its extended range, hitherto invulnerable sites, forces and assets can now be taken out with greater precision that were previously



only covered by Pakistan's ballistic missiles," he said.

CONCLUSION

The development, testing, and enhancement of the Ra'ad missile highlights Pakistan's committed efforts to sustain its defense and deterrence capabilities. This advanced air-launched cruise missile, with its stealth features, and precision strike ability, significantly enhances Pakistan's strategic posture, particularly in the domain of aerial nuclear deterrence.

With the successful integration of these missiles into its military arsenal, Pakistan not only assures a robust defensive stance but also marks a fundamental advancement in homegrown military technology, reflecting a strategic depth in its defense strategy against evolving threats.

The author is the Associate Editor of *Monthly Interaction* and a Research Officer at Rabita Forum International (RFI).



MAYA CIVILIZATION



LOST CITIES, ENDURING SPIRITS:

THE MAYA'S TIMELESS TALE

**INTERACTION
TEAM**

Once, in the lush jungles and sprawling landscapes of what is now known as southeastern Mexico, all of Guatemala and Belize, and parts of Honduras and El Salvador, there thrived an extraordinary civilization that was unlike any other in the world. This was the realm of the Maya, a people whose stories are woven with the threads of innovation, mystery, and an enduring spirit that has captivated the imagination of many.

THE DAWN OF THE MAYA

The saga of the Maya begins in the deep mists of time, around 2000 BCE, in an era when they laid the foundations of what was to become a dazzling civilization. These were the days of small beginnings, with maize cultivation that painted the landscape green and villages where the future pillars of society took shape. The Maya, even in these early days, showed signs of the greatness that was to come.

THE CLASSIC PERIOD: THE GOLDEN AGE

As centuries passed, the Maya entered



what can only be described as their golden age, a period that stretched from 250 CE to 900 CE. It was a time of flourishing cities that were marvels of architecture and hubs of human activity. Imagine places like Tikal and Palenque, where towering temples reached for the skies, and palaces sprawled in elegance, each stone telling a story of power, devotion, and the pursuit of knowledge.

The rulers of these cities were more than mere mortals; they were seen as mediators with the gods, their authority unquestioned, and their might absolute. They presided over a world where the heavens were charged with precision, where each star and planet was tracked with an understanding so profound it could predict eclipses decades in advance.

A TAPESTRY OF KNOWLEDGE

Among the Maya's most enduring legacies is their hieroglyphic script, a complex system of writing that recorded their history, beliefs, and scientific achievements. They were mathematicians, their inventions included the concept of zero, which allowed them to explore the mysteries of the universe with unparalleled accuracy. Their calendars were so sophisticated that they could align their



ceremonial life with the cosmos itself, a feat that speaks to their deep connection to the world around them.

The Maya were also master builders, their cities a testament to their understanding of both engineering and aesthetics. Each structure, from the grandest pyramid to the most modest home, was a piece of a larger cosmic puzzle, designed to harmonize with the stars above and the earth below.

GODS AND THE COSMOS: THE SPIRITUAL WORLD OF THE MAYA

The Maya world was alive with the presence of the divine. Gods of rain, corn, and the underworld walked hand in hand with the people, guiding them through the cycles of life, death, and rebirth. The Maya believed in the power of sacrifice, in the shedding of blood to nourish the gods and maintain the



balance of the universe. This belief permeated their existence, from the grandest ceremonies to the most personal rituals.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE MAYA WORLD

But no civilization can last forever. Around 900 CE, the Maya world began to change. Cities that had stood for centuries were abandoned, and the jungles slowly claimed them back. Scholars debate the causes drought, war, societal collapse but the result was the same: a world transformed.

Yet, the Maya did not disappear. When the Spanish conquistadors arrived, they found a people whose culture was vibrant, whose cities though smaller and fewer were still places of learning and worship.

THE LEGACY LIVES ON

Today, the descendants of the Maya continue to live in Central America, guardians of a heritage that is both ancient and ever-new. The ruins of their ancestors' cities are now places of pilgrimage, not just for tourists, but for those who seek to understand the depth of human ingenuity and resilience.

The story of the Maya is not just a tale of what was but a reminder of what can be. In their achievements and their challenges, we see reflections of our own world, a reminder that civilizations rise and fall, but the quest for knowledge, the reverence for the divine, and the spirit of innovation endure. This is the legacy of the Maya, written not just in stone, but in the heart of humanity itself.



NUCLEAR INSTITUTE FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (NIFA)

INTERACTION TEAM

The Nuclear Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is an esteemed research institution committed to revolutionizing crop production, soil management, and food resource enhancement.

It was established in 1982 in Peshawar as one of the premier agricultural research institutes under the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC). NIFA has been at the forefront of employing nuclear and contemporary techniques to address the evolving challenges in agriculture.

RESEARCH MANDATE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Within NIFA, the Plant Breeding and Genetics Division stands as a beacon of innovation, focusing on the genetic enhancement of economically vital crops to bolster their productivity and resilience. Through induced mutations and classical breeding techniques, the division aims to develop high-yielding, disease-resistant varieties tailored to the diverse agro-climatic conditions of Pakistan. Wheat, common bean, mungbean, oilseed brassica, and stone fruits like peach and plum are among the primary crops targeted for genetic improvement.

Over the years, NIFA's research endeavors have borne fruit, with the release of numerous high-performing crop varieties suited for both irrigated and rain-fed areas. These varieties boast traits such as disease tolerance, canola quality, and bold seed characteristics, addressing critical gaps in the agricultural



value chain. By introducing superior cultivars, NIFA contributes significantly to enhancing agricultural productivity and mitigating the nation's dependence on food imports.

ADDRESSING NUTRITIONAL DEFICIENCIES

Beyond crop improvement, NIFA plays a pivotal role in addressing pressing public health challenges, notably iron deficiency anemia (IDA). Recognizing the severe impact of IDA on vulnerable populations, particularly children and pregnant women, NIFA spearheaded research initiatives to fortify wheat flour with iron as a long-term strategy endorsed by the Government of Pakistan. Through rigorous stability and acceptability studies, NIFA demonstrated the feasibility and efficacy of flour fortification, laying the groundwork for a national-level intervention to combat IDA.

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A CONVERSATION WITH

AMBASSADOR QAZI M. KHALILULLAH (RETD)
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC STUDIES SINDH
AND FORMER AMBASSADOR OF PAKISTAN TO RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
MYANMAR AND CUBA**HOST: NUSRAT MIRZA, CHAIRMAN RABITA FORUM INTERNATIONAL****Question: When and where did you get your early and higher education?**

I got my primary and secondary education in Sindh. The schools and colleges I attended include Government Primary School Dadu, Jamia Millia Malir Karachi and Cadet College Petaro. In 1975, I was selected for Pakistan Air Force in flying branch and joined 71st GD (P) Course in Pakistan Air Force College Sarghoda. I completed four-year ground training program there and received my BSc degree from University of Punjab. I did Master's in International Public Policy from the School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University, USA, in 1997-1998.

Question: When did you join Pakistan Foreign Service? Share a brief introduction of your services at various posts and places.

I joined Foreign Service of Pakistan in 1985 after passing the CSS competitive exam. I retired from government service in 2019. During my diplomatic career of 34 years, I served at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad on various positions including as Director General and Additional Secretary. I held various diplomatic assignments in Pakistan Missions abroad including in Russia, Ukraine, Turkmenistan, Geneva, Myanmar and Cuba. I was Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from May 2015 to March 2016. I served as Ambassador of Pakistan to Myanmar from 2008 to 2012, Ambassador to Cuba from 2012 to 2014 and Ambassador to the Russian Federation from 2016 to 2019.

Question: Would you like to share for our readers some important or interesting events that occurred during your service of 34 years?

I was posted to Embassy of Pakistan Moscow for my first diplomatic assignment in 1988. Interestingly, when I arrived there, it was capital of the Soviet Union. When I left Moscow in 1993, it had become the capital of Russia.

During my five-year stay in Moscow from 1988 to 1993, I witnessed many historical events including coup against the last Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in August 1991 and disintegration of the Soviet Union which marked the end of the Cold War. After Gorbachev resigned on 25 December 1991, I saw the Soviet flag on Kremlin coming down and Russian flag hoisted in its place.

During my Ambassadorial assignment in Moscow from 2016 to 2019, most prominently, I met Russian President Vladimir Putin, when I presented my credentials to him on 20 April 2016.



Besides, I also had the opportunity to participate in several meetings of the Moscow Format of Consultations on Afghanistan, which was Russian initiative launched in December 2016 to help the peace process in Afghanistan. My efforts were helpful in bringing Pakistan and Russia closer.

During my posting in Ukraine from 1999 to 2002, I had the honor of meeting Pope John Paul II.



During my Ambassadorial assignment in Myanmar from 2008 to 2012, I had the opportunity to meet their popular political leader Aung San Suu Kyi several times. I had the honor to organize the visit of President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari to Myanmar in January 2012. He had come there to present Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medal of Democracy to Aung San Suu Kyi.



During my Ambassadorial assignment to Cuba, about 950 Pakistani students were studying medicine there. Let me expand on this. We had severe earthquake in northern part of Pakistan in 2005. In order to help the people of Pakistan, Cuban leader Fidel Castro sent a large medical contingent comprising 2400 doctors and paramedical personnel. They established 32 field hospitals in the earthquake affected areas and subsequently donated these to Pakistan. Fidel Castro then awarded 1000 fully funded scholarships for Pakistani students from the earthquake affected areas to study medicine in Cuba. When I arrived in Cuba in May 2012, about 950 students were studying there.

Let me share something interesting here for your readers about the greatness of people of Cuba. Soon after my arrival in Havana, I came to know that, at any given time, about 50,000 international students were studying free of cost in Cuba. I salute the people of Cuba for this service to humanity.

Question: When did CISSS come into being and what was the vision behind its establishment? What are the Aims and Objectives of the CISSS?

CISSS: Concept, Rationale and Objectives

The Center for International Strategic Studies Sindh (CISSS) was established in Karachi on 1 July 2021 as a Think Tank to interact with key opinion makers from various walks of life and young scholars in Sindh with a view to developing a better understanding of Pakistan's position on important regional and global issues. These include: (i) South Asian Strategic Stability; (ii) Peaceful uses of Nuclear and Space Technologies; (iii) Artificial Intelligence; (iv) Arms Control and Disarmament; (v) Multilateral Organizations; (vi) Regional and Global Security Alliances; (vii) Global Power Contestation; (viii) Hybrid and 5th Generation Warfare; and (ix) Climate Change. CISSS is providing opportunities to young scholars in Sindh through research and analysis, internship and fellowship programs.

Question: What is the structure of CISSS?

CISSS seeks guidance from an Advisory Board comprising prominent personalities including former ministers, diplomats, heads of educational institutions, businessmen, media personalities and senior retired officers of the armed forces of Pakistan. The existing composition of the CISSS Advisory Board is as follows:



I am heading CISSS as Executive Director. I have with me a team of twenty researchers which includes two Directors Research, two Associate Directors Research, twelve Research Officers and four Research Assistants.

Question: What are the Achievements of CISSS so far?

In order to achieve its goal of becoming a leading think tank of Pakistan, CISSS has organized several activities since its inception. These include conferences, seminars, webinars, book launch, guest lectures, workshops on peaceful uses of nuclear technology, internship programs and organizing visit of university students to Karachi Nuclear Power Plants.

CISSS researchers have written a number of research papers and op-eds which have been published in national and international print media and HEC recognized journals of various institutions. Outreach is an important part of CISSS activities. CISSS researchers have done outreach to more than 40 universities, institutes and government offices based in Sindh. Details are available on CISSS Website <https://ciiss.org.pk>.

CISSS has organized several joint conferences with prominent universities of Sindh including: (i) DHA Suffa University on Ukraine Crisis in March 2022; (ii) Sindh University Jamshoro on Strategic and Economic Dimensions of Pakistan-China Relations Amid Deepening Global Geopolitical Divide in December 2022; (iii) Hamdard University on Nuclear and Space Technologies for Sustainable Development in March 2023; and (iv) Karachi University on Traditional and Non-Traditional Security Imperatives for Pakistan in March 2023. President of Pakistan was the Chief Guest at this Conference.



In February 2024, CISSS, DHA Suffa University and Millennium Institute of Technology and Entrepreneurship (MiTE) came together to organize a Seminar to observe Kashmir Solidarity Day. It was the first of its kind event organized in a trilateral framework. The Speakers included: (i) Dr Huma Baqai, Rector MiTE; (ii) Ambassador Qazi M. Khalilullah (R), Executive Director CISSS; (iii) Dr Rizwan Zeb, Professor of International Relations & Strategic Studies, Air War College Institute Karachi; and (iv) Professor Dr Ahmed Saeed Minhas, Pro Vice Chancellor DHA Suffa University.



Last year, CISSS organized a Workshop on Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Technology at University of Sindh Jamshoro and also organized visit of their 30-member delegation to K2 and K3 nuclear power plants. As a result of our efforts, University of Sindh has decided to include a subject on Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Technology in their Bachelor’s degree program.

CISSS has also organized book launch events: (i) In collaboration with DHA Suffa University, CISSS organized book launch of Dr Huma Baqai’s book “Collected Works on Foreign Affairs and Security Policy” on 12 September 2023; and (ii) In collaboration with the Institute of Business Management Karachi, CISSS organized book launch of Ambassador Zamir Akram’s book “The Security Imperative: Pakistan’s Nuclear Deterrence and Diplomacy” on 8 November 2023.




BOOK LAUNCH
“Collected Works on Foreign Affairs and Security Policy”
Dr Huma Baqai

Chief Guest



Lt Gen Khalid Ahmed Kidwai
NI, HI, HI (M), (R)

Discussants



Prof. Dr Huma Baqai
Rector MITE



Engr. Prof. Dr Muhammad Afzal Haque
VC DHA Suffa University



Mr Javed Jabbar
Former Senator and Federal Minister



Mr Ikram Sehgal
Chairman Pathfinder Group



Madam Shabaz Wazir Ali
President SZABIST



Ambassador Qazi M. Khallullah (R)
Executive Director CISSS

12 September 2023
11:30 am - 1:30 pm
Auditorium, DHA Suffa University




Center for International Strategic Studies Sindh
in Collaboration with
Global and Regional Studies Centre of the Institute of Business Management
Book Launch
“The Security Imperative: Pakistan’s Nuclear Deterrence and Diplomacy”



Mr Talib Syed Karim
President Institute of Business Management



Ambassador Zamir Akram (R)
Advisor to Strategic Plans Division (Author)



Prof. Dr Huma Baqai
Rector MITE



Mr Ikram Sehgal
Chairman Pathfinder Group



Ambassador Qazi M. Khallullah (R)
Executive Director CISSS



Ambassador G.R. Baluch
Director Global and Regional Studies Centre, IoBM



Ms Safia Malik
Research Officer CISSS

08 November 2023 | 1100 - 1300 Hours
Amphitheater, SSK Block, IoBM



Question: What are your plans for the future?

We are planning book launch of Ambassador Zamir Akram’s book at University of Sindh Jamshoro and Shah Abdul Latif University Khairpur. We also plan to visit universities in Shikarpur and Sukkur as part of our outreach activities. The first issue of our journal titled Global Strategic Pulse will be published this month. We are planning to write a book on Regional Connectivity and Development.

Question: How do you evaluate cooperation between CISSS and Rabita Forum International?

We highly value our cooperation with RFI. We are grateful for the close attention you as Chairman RFI pay to CISSS. CISSS and RFI signed MoU on joint cooperation in May 2022. I am glad to say that it was the first MoU CISSS signed with any organization in Sindh.

We value RFI’s monthly magazines Interaction and Zaviah-e-Nigah. These magazines are helpful to our researchers in understanding global and regional developments. We are also regularly receiving RFI YouTube bulletins which are being prepared by RFI in several local languages of Sindh and Balochistan. RFI is always forthcoming in providing coverage to events hosted by CISSS.

Thank You.



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NUCLEAR INSTITUTE FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (NIFA)

CONSULTANCY AND ANALYTICAL SERVICES

In addition to its research endeavors, NIFA extends its expertise through a range of consultancy and analytical services. From termite control in buildings to comprehensive food and oilseed analyses, the institute provides valuable insights and solutions to stakeholders across the agricultural spectrum. Through state-of-the-art facilities and a team

of dedicated experts, NIFA continues to support the agricultural industry with innovative technologies and practical solutions.

LOOKING AHEAD

As Pakistan navigates the complexities of a rapidly evolving agricultural landscape, NIFA remains steadfast in its commitment to driving innovation, sustainability, and resilience. Through collaborative partnerships, cutting-edge research, and a focus on societal impact, NIFA endeavors to shape a future where agriculture serves as a cornerstone of national prosperity and well-being.

THE TRIANGLE OF DEATH FOR INDIA



MIRZA KASHIF BAIG

In the intricate tapestry of South Asian geopolitics, the notion of the "Triangle of Death" has emerged as a pivotal strategic concern, particularly from the perspective of Pakistan and its allies. Encompassing the ports of Chittagong in Bangladesh, Hambantota in Sri Lanka, and Gwadar in Pakistan, this triangle represents not just geographical points on a map but potent symbols of a shifting regional power balance. Viewed through the lens of Pakistan, these ports are far more than mere logistical hubs; they are beacons of strategic depth and cooperation in the face of burgeoning Indian naval aspirations.

The significance of these ports transcends their commercial value, embedding themselves into the strategic calculations of regional actors. Their potential role in wartime scenarios as chokepoints and checkpoints positions them as critical assets in ensuring the security and economic lifelines of the region. Against the backdrop of India's increasing military and economic might, the "Triangle of Death" emerges as a counterbalance, a subtle



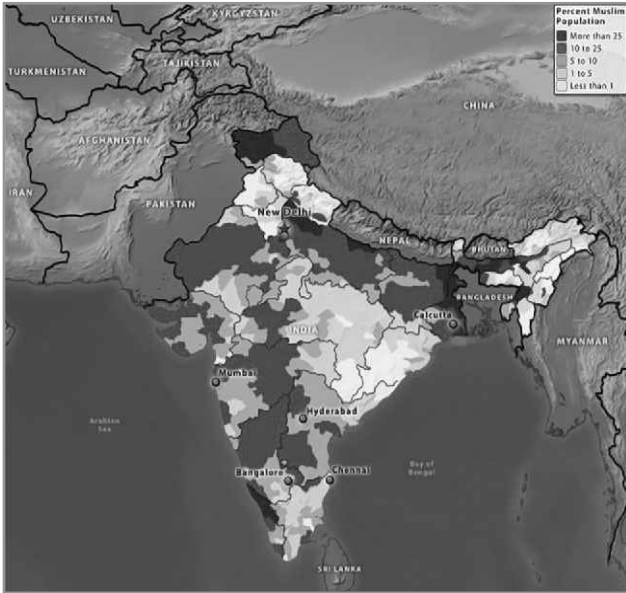
yet potent reminder of the power of strategic alliances and geographic positioning. From Pakistan's viewpoint, the collaboration and mutual interests shared with China, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka through these ports underscore a collective endeavor to maintain regional stability and deter unilateral hegemony.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE TRIANGLE

From Pakistan's vantage point, the strategic importance of the "Triangle of Death" comprising Chittagong, Hambantota, and Gwadar ports cannot be overstated. These ports are not just maritime gateways but pivotal cogs in the machinery of regional security and geopolitical strategy. They serve as both symbolic and practical counterweights to India's expansive maritime ambitions, offering a network of support and strategic depth to Pakistan and its allies.



The port of Chittagong is a linchpin in the Bay of Bengal, acting as a crucial maritime and trade hub for Bangladesh. Its significance from a strategic standpoint lies in its ability to serve as a potential launchpad for naval operations, providing a tactical advantage in the northeastern flank of the Indian Ocean. For Pakistan, Chittagong's role is seen through the prism of cooperation and mutual strategic interests with Bangladesh, especially in countering India's naval presence in the region. The Hambantota port, with its strategic location near the southern tip of Sri Lanka,



controls one of the busiest maritime routes in the world. The port's development, heavily influenced by Chinese investment, has raised eyebrows in New Delhi, given its potential use as a military base in a conflict scenario. From Islamabad's perspective, Hambantota is a critical asset in the Indian Ocean's power dynamics, offering a strategic vantage point that could serve to balance India's maritime dominance.

Gwadar port stands as a testament to Pakistan-China cooperation, strategically located at the mouth of the Persian Gulf and overlooking key shipping routes. Its

development is a cornerstone of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), symbolizing the deep-rooted strategic partnership between Pakistan and China. Gwadar's significance extends beyond economic value, embodying Pakistan's ambition to enhance its strategic depth and maritime capabilities. In the context of the "Triangle of Death," Gwadar serves as the western vertex, securing Pakistan's interests and serving as a critical node in regional maritime security.

The collective strategic value of the "Triangle of Death" ports lies in their ability to serve as chokepoints and checkpoints in times of conflict, providing a strategic advantage against India. For Pakistan, these ports symbolize the strength of regional cooperation and the importance of a multipolar world order. They are viewed as essential components in a broader strategy to maintain regional balance and deter any attempts at maritime dominance by India.

The deployment of naval assets and the development of these ports have broader implications for the Indian Ocean's security architecture. They represent a shift towards a more balanced power distribution, emphasizing the importance of strategic alliances and cooperation. For Pakistan, the "Triangle of Death" is not just a geographical concept but a strategic doctrine that underscores the necessity of mutual support and collaboration in the face of common challenges.

In this light, the ports of Chittagong, Hambantota, and Gwadar are more than mere waypoints on the maritime map; they are bastions of a strategic vision that seeks to preserve regional stability and foster an environment where no single power can assert unchecked dominance.

INDIA'S GEOPOLITICAL STANCE AND CHALLENGES

India's aspiration to be recognized as a regional and emerging global superpower is well documented. However, this ambition is not without its challenges, particularly when viewed through the lens of Pakistan and the strategic dynamics at play within the "Triangle of Death." India's balancing act between major global powers, its military modernization efforts, and its attempts to project power in the Indian Ocean region reveal a complex web of strategic ambitions and inherent limitations.

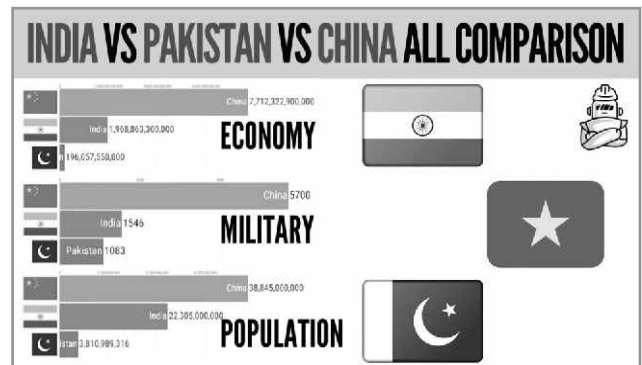
India's geopolitical strategy has often involved walking a tightrope between Russia and the United States. While historical ties have made Russia a long-standing partner, particularly in defense, India's recent overtures towards the United States signify a diversification of its strategic partnerships. From Pakistan's perspective, this maneuvering reflects India's attempt to maximize its geopolitical leverage. However, it also highlights India's vulnerability to shifting global alliances and the challenges of navigating a world where its traditional partner, Russia, and its newer ally, the United States, have conflicting interests.

India's military modernization, heavily reliant on Russian equipment and technology, presents another layer of complexity. While the transition towards more sophisticated American military technology could bolster India's strategic capabilities in the long term, it is not without its challenges. The integration of advanced American technology into India's predominantly Russian-equipped military poses significant logistical and operational hurdles. For Pakistan, these challenges underscore the limitations within India's strategic aspirations, particularly in achieving

a swift and seamless military transformation.

India's position in the regional geopolitical landscape is further complicated by its aspirations to dominate the Indian Ocean. The development and militarization of strategic ports, viewed with suspicion by neighboring countries, have raised concerns about India's intentions. From Islamabad's standpoint, these actions affirm the necessity of the "Triangle of Death" as a strategic countermeasure to ensure a balance of power in the region. Pakistan views India's ambitions with caution, emphasizing the need for strategic alliances and partnerships that can offer a counterbalance to India's growing influence. The pursuit of regional dominance has led India into complex relationships with its neighbors. While it seeks to assert its influence, it faces challenges in managing these relationships, often resulting in tensions and conflicts. Pakistan perceives these challenges as indicative of the underlying issues in India's regional strategy a strategy that, while ambitious, often overlooks the importance of constructive engagement and mutual respect.

In conclusion, India's geopolitical stance and the challenges it faces are multifaceted. Its ambitions to be recognized as a major power are tempered by the realities of global and regional dynamics, where strategic ambitions must be matched with diplomatic finesse and operational capabilities. For Pakistan, these



challenges represent opportunities to emphasize the importance of strategic depth, regional cooperation, and the need for a balanced power equation in South Asia.

THE CHINA-PAKISTAN AXIS VS. INDIA-US DYNAMICS

The evolving geopolitical landscape of South Asia and the broader Indian Ocean region is markedly influenced by the strategic axis formed between China and Pakistan, juxtaposed against the nuanced and often complex dynamics of India-US relations. From Pakistan's perspective, the steadfast partnership with China stands as a bulwark against perceived Indian hegemony, while the oscillating nature of India-US ties presents both challenges and opportunities in the grand chessboard of international relations.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), part of China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), symbolizes the depth and strength of the China-Pakistan axis. This partnership extends beyond mere economic cooperation, embodying a comprehensive strategic alliance aimed at fostering regional stability and security. Gwadar port, a crown jewel of CPEC, exemplifies this collaboration, serving not only as a commercial hub but also as a potential strategic naval outpost. This alliance is viewed by Pakistan as a countermeasure to India's maritime strategies, ensuring that Pakistan remains a pivotal player in regional geopolitics.

The relationship between India and the United States has been characterized by strategic convergences, particularly concerning counterbalancing China's rise. However, this partnership is not without its limitations. The United States' recognition of India's strategic autonomy and its cautious approach towards Pakistan's concerns highlight the nuanced balancing act inherent

in US foreign policy. Moreover, the legacy of US sanctions against Pakistan, particularly in the context of arms and ammunition, alongside the use of international financial mechanisms and proxy dynamics, has not gone unnoticed. Pakistan interprets these actions as indicative of the complex web of interests that the United States navigates in the region, often resulting in a cautious Pakistani stance towards American overtures.

The strategic alignments in the region reflect a classic realpolitik scenario, where national interests and strategic objectives dictate the nature of international partnerships. The China-Pakistan axis is viewed by Islamabad as a cornerstone of its foreign policy, offering a strategic counterbalance to India's ambitions. Conversely, India's engagement with the United States, while beneficial in certain respects, is fraught with the challenge of aligning the strategic interests of both nations, particularly in the face of historical complexities and regional sensitivities.

The China-Pakistan partnership, reinforced by projects like CPEC and the strategic use of Gwadar port, is seen as essential for maintaining regional stability and security. It represents a direct response to India's maritime and strategic postures, emphasizing the importance of strategic depth and cooperative security arrangements. Conversely, the India-US dynamic, while significant, is subject to the vagaries of international politics and strategic recalibrations, reflecting the inherent uncertainties in bilateral partnerships.

In this context, the strategic landscape of South Asia is characterized by a delicate balance of power, where alliances and partnerships are continually evolving. Pakistan views its relationship with China as a stabilizing factor, ensuring that its strategic

interests are safeguarded amidst the shifting sands of regional geopolitics. This perspective underscores the significance of the China-Pakistan axis in counterbalancing India's strategic moves, highlighting the intricate dance of diplomacy, security, and regional cooperation.

INDIA'S STRATEGIC BETRAYALS AND ASPIRATIONS

India's rise on the global stage is marked by a series of strategic maneuvers and aspirations that, from Pakistan's viewpoint, often border on betrayals, particularly in the context of its engagements with both regional and global powers. These actions not only raise questions about India's long-term intentions but also about its reliability as a partner in the complex tapestry of international relations. India's diplomatic dance between Russia and the United States exemplifies its attempts to emerge as a global power, seeking to leverage the benefits of both relationships while committing fully to neither. This balancing act is perceived by Pakistan as a strategic betrayal, especially given India's historical ties with Russia and its recent overtures towards the United States. The perception is that India's actions are driven by a self-serving agenda, aiming to position itself as a counterweight to China, often at the expense of regional stability and the interests of its neighbors.

India's pursuit of military modernization, with a significant tilt towards American defense technology, signals a strategic shift that raises concerns about the regional balance of power. Pakistan views this as another facet of India's strategic betrayal, as it undermines the existing security paradigms and introduces new uncertainties into the regional equation. The transition from Russian to American military platforms not only reflects



India's ambitions but also its willingness to recalibrate its strategic alliances, raising questions about its long-term intentions and commitment to regional peace.

The formation of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) was seen as an opportunity for emerging economies to assert themselves on the global stage. However, India's role within BRICS has been perceived by Pakistan as an attempt to carve out a position of leadership that challenges both regional adversaries and traditional powers. India's aspirations within BRICS, particularly its efforts to position itself alongside Russia and China, are viewed as a strategic move to gain leverage against the United States and its allies, further complicating the global geopolitical landscape.

The geopolitical theorizations in Zbigniew Brzezinski's "The Grand Chessboard" highlight the strategic importance of Eurasia and the role of pivotal states in determining global supremacy. India's positioning and aspirations resonate with these theories, as it seeks to establish itself as a key player among the main adversaries of the United States, alongside Iran, China, and Russia. From Pakistan's perspective, this ambition reflects India's broader strategy of challenging American dominance, aligning itself with powers that



seek to reshape the global order.

India's strategic maneuvers, marked by a blend of aspirations and perceived betrayals, signal a complex navigation of the geopolitical landscape. From Pakistan's standpoint, these actions underscore the need for vigilance and strategic alignment, particularly with allies like China, to counterbalance India's ambitions and ensure regional stability. The evolving dynamics of South Asia's geopolitics, characterized by shifting alliances and strategic recalibrations, demand a nuanced understanding of national aspirations and the delicate balance of power that defines the region.

REFLECTING ON REGIONAL STABILITY AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

The strategic chessboard of South Asia, with India's ambitions and maneuvers at its core, presents a complex tableau of alliances, rivalries, and geopolitical aspirations. Through the lens of Pakistan and the strategic narrative surrounding the "Triangle of Death," the intricate dance of power politics comes into sharp relief, highlighting the delicate balance that sustains regional stability. The interplay between India's ambitions, the China-Pakistan axis, and the shifting dynamics of global alliances underscores a

region at a crossroads, where the future hinges on strategic foresight, diplomatic acumen, and a commitment to collective security.

The "Triangle of Death" symbolizes more than a geographical or military strategy; it represents the evolving nature of geopolitical contestation in the Indian Ocean region and beyond. For Pakistan, it underscores the importance of strategic partnerships and alliances that serve as a counterbalance to India's rising aspirations and its complex web of relationships with global powers. This strategic posture is not just about deterrence or rivalry but about ensuring a multipolar region where no single actor can dominate unilaterally, thus preserving the delicate equilibrium that underpins regional peace and stability.

Looking forward, the trajectory of South Asia's geopolitical landscape will likely be shaped by how effectively regional players navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by this complex environment. The imperatives of national security, economic development, and regional cooperation will demand a nuanced understanding of the interdependencies that define this landscape. For Pakistan, forging a path that balances strategic interests with the pursuit of regional stability will be paramount, as will be the ability to adapt to the changing contours of global politics. As we reflect on the "Triangle of Death" and the broader strategic dynamics at play, it becomes clear that the future of South Asia is intricately linked to the wisdom, restraint, and vision of its leaders. The pursuit of a stable, secure, and prosperous region is a shared responsibility, one that transcends rivalries and embraces the potential for cooperation and collective growth.

The author is the Editor of Monthly Interaction.

ISRAEL; A PREDICAMENT FOR THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION



**DR. BUSHRA
BATOOL**

The rock-solid and unwavering support of the US to Israel has always been unequivocal but the scenario is changing. After more than 5 months of deadly Israeli strikes in Gaza, polarization in the American people, even the Jews, can be clearly seen and the support they used to extend to Biden is not the same anymore. Tensions between Netanyahu and top Democratic leaders in the U.S. are also



escalating amid a growing and deadly war in the Middle East that began after the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7. The Majority Leader of the United States Senate, Chuck Schumer, on 17th March, chastised Netanyahu and called for a new election in Israel and in his speech, categorically branded Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu as a major impediment to peace in the Middle East. It is important to note that Schuman is the highest-ranking Jewish official in the US from the Democratic Party. At this point, making such a statement could prove to be risky for his political career.

"This may hurt me politically; this may help me politically.' I couldn't look myself in the

mirror if I didn't do it"- Chuck Schumer

Such comments being a Jew can be well understood in light of the fact that he was brought up in Jewish Brooklyn in the shadow of the Holocaust and the situation in Gaza today is no less than that.

The internal political chaos in the US is unfolding with each passing day. Amid mounting criticism from Democrats against Israel's war in Gaza, congressional Republicans are seeking to amplify their party's unconditional loyalty to the Jewish state, in contrast with the party that has long attracted the most Jewish voters.

This is especially important and going to mark a change due to the fact that the US is going to hold national elections by the end of this year and Israel is definitely a hard nut to crack in the agenda of political parties. Former US president Donald Trump said in a recent interview that American Jews who vote for Democrats "hate" their religion, which he referred to the Democrats' growing criticism of Netanyahu's war in Gaza. This statement of Trump met a mixed reaction from both Democrats and some Republicans who expressed disgust at Trump's remarks, which they said played on anti-Semitic tropes.

Jewish American voters have long been seen as a reliable voting bloc for the Democratic Party. The Pew Research Center dubbed such Jewish American community as "among the most consistently liberal and Democratic groups in the US population".

During the last presidential election cycle, eight out of 10 Jewish people were identified as Democrats. But US policy towards Israel and the war in Gaza has since divided Jewish Americans, as well as the broader Democratic base, leading to fears of a depressed turnout. As Israel's war in Gaza continues to rage, Jewish American voters, such as Kornberg who is a member of the progressive organization Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), are grappling with the US's role in the conflict and how it will affect their voting preferences in the upcoming presidential election. Kornberg is among those protesting Biden's stance on the war in Gaza, where United Nations experts have warned of the risk of genocide and famine.

Foreign policy to be a top issue for voters this year, with a majority of Americans backing a ceasefire in Gaza, something Biden has refused to call for. That stance, however, has provoked an outcry among more progressive Jewish organizations, as the death toll in the Palestinian enclave soars past 32,000 deaths. Despite the popularity Biden used to enjoy over Trump, a January poll from USA Today and Suffolk University showed narrow margins separating Biden from his chief Republican rival, former President Donald Trump. Biden received 37 percent support in the poll, compared with Trump's 39. The pressure on the Biden administration is real. Not only Americans but a number of European countries and Middle Eastern countries are condemning Biden for sponsoring Israel's aggression in the Gaza strip. Simon Moutquin, a Belgian Member of Parliament (MP) said:

“As a signatory country of the Convention against Genocide, [Belgium has] a legal and moral obligation to act and prevent the risk of genocide, so I think this letter ... is a good first step, but we need to go further” - Simon

Moutquin

He further added that the European division on Gaza would risk its credibility to speak on Russia's actions in Ukraine if it remained silent on Gaza.

The US seems to be at odds as far as its support to Israel's war against Hamas and the atrocities in Gaza are concerned vis a vis the response of the international community and the community at home is concerned. In a recent meeting of Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud in Jeddah, the Secretary underscored the importance of urgently addressing



humanitarian needs in Gaza. This seems to have rerouted the US policy towards Israel and it seems that the US has toughened its stance. For the very first time in all these five months, the US came up proposing the 'ceasefire' in the UN for Gaza which reflected a sharp deviation from its previous stance when for the third time in February the US vetoed any resolution calling for the truce. Although the draft resolution received a majority of votes in favor, however, China and Russia, two of the Security Council's permanent members vetoed it.

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AN EXAMINATION OF MILITARY BUILD-UP ON THE LINE OF ACTUAL CONTROL:

STRATEGIC OVERREACH?

EDITORIAL BOARD

The Line of Actual Control (LAC), a fraught boundary between Asia's two largest powers, India and China, has become a focal point of escalating military tensions. Extending over 4,057 kilometers and traversing diverse and challenging terrains, the LAC epitomizes a long-standing geopolitical dispute that has recently seen a significant intensification of military activities. This article delves into the complexities of the military escalation along the LAC, with a particular focus on the strategic posture adopted by India.

It explores the nuances of this buildup, the infrastructural and logistical challenges it poses, and the broader implications of these actions within the context of Indo-China relations. Through this analysis, questions of strategic intent, capability, and regional stability are brought to the forefront, suggesting that India's military augmentation, while aimed at bolstering security, might also be indicative of a strategic overreach given the existing asymmetries between the two powers.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND THE LAC'S STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

The LAC is not merely a line on the map but a symbol of unresolved territorial disputes and a testament to the complex history of Indo-China relations. Its course through regions of strategic importance, including Ladakh, Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh, underscores the multifaceted nature of the border issue. The area's strategic significance is amplified

by its challenging geography, which complicates military logistics and operations, making any military buildup an endeavor fraught with difficulties.

INDIA'S MILITARY ESCALATION: A DETAILED OVERVIEW

In recent years, particularly since 2020, there has been a notable shift in India's military posture along the LAC. The initial deployment of Corps 14, consisting of 36,000 soldiers tasked with defending the Indian side, was a significant force in itself. However, the subsequent increase to 90,000 soldiers within this single corps marked a dramatic escalation.

This move, coupled with the expansion to include seven different corps totaling approximately 250,000 soldiers, represents a considerable concentration of military assets in the region. Furthermore, the introduction of the "Agni Veer" program, aimed at recruiting local militias to supplement the regular army forces, suggests an effort to massively increase



the manpower available for any potential conflict, with estimates suggesting a total deployment nearing a million personnel.

COUNTER-ESCALATION AND COMPARATIVE DISADVANTAGES

In response to India's military buildup, China has not remained idle, similarly increasing its forces along the contested border. This tit-for-tat escalation raises the stakes and the potential for conflict, albeit in a manner that does not favor India. The critical issue here is not just the numerical strength of deployed forces but also the infrastructural and logistical capabilities that support such a presence.

India's efforts to enhance its military infrastructure ranging from constructing roads and bunkers to ensuring adequate supplies for its troops face significant challenges. The harsh and inaccessible terrain exacerbates these difficulties, contrasting sharply with the Chinese side's well-established military infrastructure and logistical networks.

Furthermore, India's military efforts are hindered by shortages of essential supplies, including warm clothing vital for operations in the high-altitude regions along the LAC. These logistical challenges are compounded by broader strategic and operational concerns, including the effectiveness of command-and-control systems, the adequacy of funding and equipment, and the regular conduct of military exercises to ensure readiness. In comparison, China's military, benefiting from substantial investments in modernization and infrastructure development, holds a perceived advantage in terms of preparedness and capability.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS AND THE PATH FORWARD

India's significant military buildup along the LAC, while ostensibly a measure to

enhance its defensive posture and deter aggression, raises important questions about strategic intentions and capabilities. The disparity in infrastructure and logistical support, coupled with the challenges of maintaining a large military presence in such a demanding environment, suggests a potential overestimation of India's current capacity to engage in a prolonged conflict with China. This situation underscores the importance of diplomacy and dialogue in addressing the underlying issues that fuel tension along the LAC.

The pursuit of military solutions to fundamental political disputes often leads to an escalation that serves neither party's interests. Instead, a recalibration of strategy towards engagement and confidence-building measures may offer a more sustainable path to resolving the longstanding issues at the heart of the Indo-China border dispute. By focusing on diplomatic avenues and mutual agreements, India and China can work towards de-escalation, reducing the risk of unintended conflicts and fostering a more stable regional environment.

In conclusion, the military buildup on the Line of Actual Control is a complex and multi-dimensional issue, reflecting broader geopolitical dynamics and the intricacies of Indo-China relations. While India's efforts to strengthen its position along the LAC are understandable from a security perspective, the challenges and potential strategic overreach highlight the need for caution and a renewed emphasis on diplomatic resolutions. As the two powers navigate these turbulent waters, the international community remains watchful, hoping for a peaceful and constructive resolution to a dispute with far-reaching implications for regional and global stability.

BHARAT SHAKTI EXERCISE: FALSE AND OUTDATED

**INTERACTION
TEAM**

On March 12, 2024, India showcased its military might through the Bharat Shakti exercise, conducted in Porkhan, Rajasthan, proximate to Pakistan's Tharparkar area. This event, heralded as a demonstration of India's defense capabilities, has sparked a whirlwind of controversy and criticism, underpinning the complexities of nationalism, defense procurement, and the politics of military exercises. This article dissects the multifaceted aspects of the Bharat Shakti exercise, unveiling the discrepancies between its portrayal and reality, and evaluating its implications in the broader context of Indian defense strategy and political spectacle.

MISREPRESENTATION OF THE EXERCISE'S SCOPE

Initially advertised as a tri-services exercise, the Bharat Shakti event predominantly featured land forces, raising questions about the transparency and accuracy of official claims. The absence of integral air force and naval operations from the exercise contradicts the tri-service collaboration essential for comprehensive



national defense capabilities, suggesting a possible overstatement of the exercise's scope and scale.

POLITICAL THEATRICALS AND IDEOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appearance in an army uniform during the exercise was criticized as a strategic maneuver aimed at bolstering his image ahead of the imminent elections. Such actions are not unprecedented in political landscapes; however, Modi's theatrics are scrutinized through a lens of ideological beliefs closely associated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The RSS's historical parallels with Nazi philosophy, particularly concerning notions of racial superiority, cast a shadow over the exercise's narrative, intertwining military posturing with contentious ideological assertions.

THE DICHOTOMY OF "MADE IN INDIA" CLAIMS

The Bharat Shakti exercise was a platform for showcasing India's indigenous defense capabilities. However, scrutiny of the displayed weaponry reveals a stark divergence from claims of self-reliance. Lauded for its heavy armor, the Arjun tank's operational limitations in high-altitude terrain and its suitability for only specific regions of potential conflict underscore the challenges of developing versatile military hardware within the constraints of geographical diversity.

The portrayal of K9 Vajra self-propelled

artillery guns as indigenously made contrasts starkly with their origins as South Korean K9 Thunder howitzers. This discrepancy highlights the complexities of international defense collaborations and the nuanced reality behind "made in India" narratives.

Similarly, the Dhanush artillery gun, celebrated as an Indian innovation, is fundamentally a derivation of the Swedish Bofors FH77, indicating a reliance on foreign technology under the guise of indigenous development. Despite being a domestically produced asset, the Aakash missile system's technological obsolescence and unsuccessful integration attempts with the S400 missile system reflect the hurdles in achieving cutting-edge defense capabilities. The inclusion of Teja aircraft and Pinaka rocket systems, despite their respective operational flaws and misleading claims of domestic design, further illustrates the gap between aspirational self-reliance and the prevailing dependency on foreign military technology.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Bharat Shakti exercise, while a display of military readiness, inadvertently sheds light on the intricate interplay between defense, politics, and ideology. The discrepancies in the portrayal of the exercise's scope and the indigenous nature of the weaponry underscore the challenges India faces in balancing nationalistic aspirations with the realities of defense procurement and technological development. The political overtones, marked by PM Modi's conspicuous



participation, intertwine national defense exercises with broader ideological narratives and electoral strategies.

Critically, the exercise's portrayal and the underlying realities serve as a microcosm of the broader dilemmas confronting India's defense strategy. The ambition for self-reliance in defense technology coexists with an intricate global network of defense procurement and collaboration, necessitating a nuanced understanding of "made in India" claims. Furthermore, the entanglement of military displays with ideological posturing and political objectives invites reflection on the role of military exercises in shaping public perceptions and national identity.

In conclusion, the Bharat Shakti exercise encapsulates the multifaceted dynamics of modern military endeavors, where the lines between defense capability demonstrations, political spectacle, and ideological assertion blur. As India navigates its path on the global stage, the interconnections between its military ambitions, political strategies, and ideological foundations will continue to influence its defense posture and strategic decisions, warranting careful analysis and thoughtful consideration.

THE HOUTHİ RED SEA CAMPAIGN AND ITS GLOBAL RAMIFICATIONS



**NOUREEN
CHAUDHRY**

In late 2023, amidst the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, Yemen's Houthi group intensified its maritime attacks in the Red Sea, targeting vessels they believed were associated with Israel. This escalation was positioned by the Houthis as a gesture of solidarity with Palestinians, reflecting a broader strategy to pressure Israel into halting its military operations. These maritime attacks, which initially aimed at Israeli-linked shipping, have had wide-ranging implications, affecting global shipping routes, the environment, and international diplomatic relations.

THE ESCALATION OF HOUTHİ NAVAL ACTIVITIES

Retaliating against Israeli actions, the Houthis expanded their offensive to the maritime domain, causing significant disruptions. The attack on the Rubymar tanker, resulting in its sinking and the potential for an environmental disaster due to its cargo, marked a serious escalation. This incident, along with a missile strike on the "True Confidence" that killed three sailors, underscored the deadly consequences of the Houthi's naval campaign.

GLOBAL AND REGIONAL RESPONSES TO THE MARITIME THREAT

In response to the Houthi threats, a coalition led by the United States and France has deployed advanced missile defense systems to protect shipping in the Red Sea. Operation Prosperity Guardian (OPG), involving convoy protection and naval escorts,



represents an attempt to secure maritime traffic. However, the adaptability of the Houthi attacks poses a complex challenge to this strategy, suggesting that a solely military approach may not suffice.

POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS AND THE SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS

The ramifications of the Houthi's actions extend beyond immediate security concerns, highlighting the intricacies of Middle Eastern politics and the limitations of military force in resolving deep-rooted conflicts. The Biden administration's designation of the Houthis as a Foreign Terrorist Organization illustrates the severity of the threat they pose, yet also indicates the difficulties of addressing such challenges through sanctions and military means alone.

The hesitation among regional actors to become involved in a conflict perceived as supporting Israel complicates efforts to form a unified response, underscoring the complex allegiances and tensions in the region.

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CHINA'S STRATEGIC DOMINANCE:

A TRI-FRONTAL COUNTER TO U.S. SUPREMACY AND THE WIDE GULF WITH INDIA

**INTERACTION
TEAM**

In the evolving geopolitical landscape, China's strategic posturing against the United States reveals a meticulous approach to counterbalancing American military supremacy. Through a combination of advanced technological initiatives and strategic military restructuring, China aims not only to offset the United States' technological edge but also to assert its dominance in the region, leaving countries like India in a complex quandary. This article delves into China's three-pronged strategy against the U.S. and discusses the apparent chasm in military capabilities between China and India, underscoring the strategic recalibrations required by both adversaries and allies alike.

CHINA'S CALCULATED COUNTER-MEASURES AGAINST THE U.S.: THE ROCKET FORCE INITIATIVE

Recognizing the superiority of American aircraft technology, China has not chosen to compete directly in an aerial arms race. Instead, it has strategically developed the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force (PLARF). This branch of the military focuses on land-based missile systems, capable of launching precision strikes at long-range targets. By investing in a diverse arsenal of ballistic and cruise missiles, China aims to deter American military assets, including aircraft carriers and overseas bases, showcasing a shift towards asymmetric warfare tactics.

ADVANCEMENTS IN ELECTRONIC AND CYBER WARFARE

China's significant investments in

electronic warfare and cyber capabilities represent another pillar of its strategy to counter American technological dominance. By disrupting communication and information systems, China aims to blind and disorient its adversaries in the digital sphere, negating the technological advantages held by the U.S. Furthermore, the development of counter-space capabilities aimed at threatening U.S. satellites that are crucial for navigation, communication, and intelligence signals a leap towards ensuring space dominance. These advancements have caused considerable concern in Washington, as they threaten to erode the U.S.'s strategic advantages in conventional and space-based warfare.

THE DIGITAL STRATEGIC SUPPORT FORCE

The establishment of the Strategic Support Force (SSF) highlights China's recognition of the battlefield's expansion into the digital and cyber realms. This initiative consolidates cyber, electronic, and psychological warfare capabilities under a unified command, enhancing China's ability to wage non-kinetic warfare against the U.S. The SSF's role in supporting and enhancing the effectiveness of conventional military forces through digital means marks a paradigm shift in how modern warfare is conducted, positioning China as a formidable adversary in the information age.

THE SINO-INDIAN MILITARY DISPARITY

While China positions itself as a global

power capable of challenging the United States, the military imbalance between China and India becomes increasingly evident. China's rapid military modernization and strategic initiatives have far outpaced India's defense capabilities, creating a significant gap in their respective abilities to project power. This disparity underscores a lack of competition between the two, with China seemingly uninterested in engaging India in a direct conflict. Instead, China's focus remains fixed on countering the U.S., with India's strategic concerns relegated to a secondary priority.

INDIA'S STRATEGIC DILEMMA

India finds itself in a precarious position, caught between its historical reliance on Russian military equipment and the advanced technological offerings from the U.S. The compatibility issues between Russian and American defense technologies pose a significant challenge for India, complicating any potential military aid or cooperation from the U.S. Furthermore, Russia's ambiguous

stance on aiding India against China adds another layer of complexity to India's strategic calculus. As India navigates these geopolitical intricacies, its ability to bridge the technological and strategic gap with China remains uncertain, highlighting the need for a nuanced and multifaceted approach to its defense strategy.

China's strategic maneuvers against the U.S. through its tri-frontal initiatives in rocket forces, electronic and cyber warfare, and the digital strategic support force, underscore its ambitions to redefine the global power hierarchy. These efforts not only challenge American supremacy but also signify a shifting paradigm in warfare, where digital and non-kinetic capabilities gain prominence. Simultaneously, the widening gulf between China and India's military capabilities accentuates the regional security dilemma. As the balance of power continues to evolve, the strategic responses of the U.S., India, and their allies will shape the future of international relations and security dynamics in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

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THE HOUTHY RED SEA CAMPAIGN AND ITS GLOBAL RAMIFICATIONS

LOOKING AHEAD: NAVIGATING A PATH TO STABILITY

The Houthi's maritime campaign has not only disrupted American and Israeli shipping but also posed a significant challenge to Western or global security frameworks. The ongoing situation in the Red Sea demands a nuanced approach that combines military readiness with diplomatic efforts aimed at addressing the underlying issues fueling the conflict. Achieving stability in the region will require concerted international cooperation, a

commitment to addressing the root causes of unrest, and a strategic balance between defensive actions and proactive peacemaking initiatives.

The author is a graduate of Mass Communication and a member of the RFI team.



IQBAL'S VISION OF PEACE:

CHARTING A PATH FORWARD FOR PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN



FARMANULLAH ZAHEER

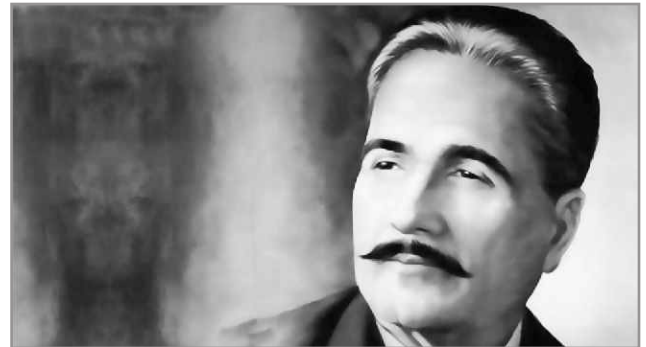
Pakistan's aspiration for peace and stability in its neighborhood, especially concerning Afghanistan, is deeply rooted in its understanding of the region's geopolitical significance. This sentiment resonates with the philosophical musings of Allama Muhammad Iqbal, a revered Muslim philosopher, who highlighted the central role of Afghanistan in Asia's harmony. Iqbal metaphorically described Asia as a body, with Afghanistan acting as its heart, suggesting that the region's equilibrium depends significantly on Afghanistan's stability. Iqbal says;

ملت افغان در آن پیکر دل است
در گشاد او گشاد آسیا

آسیا یک پیکر آب و گل است
از فساد او فساد آسیا

The recent events of March 16, 2024, highlight the complexities in the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan. A security checkpoint in Pakistan was cowardly attacked, resulting in the tragic loss of officers and personnel. Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) accepted the responsibility of the attack, operating from Afghan territory. Pakistan, in response, launched airstrikes, targeting TTP bases in Afghanistan.

It was an unambiguous reminder of the ongoing security challenges and emphasized Pakistan's resolve to defend its sovereignty, despite its economic adversities. However, it is evident that the incident has escalated tensions between the two nations, leading to strategic and economic repercussions.



According to news sources, Pakistan has indicated plans to repatriate illegal Afghan immigrants post-Eid al-Fitr, signaling a tougher stance on border and immigration issues.

Furthermore, the Afghan Taliban's government, showing resistance to Pakistani pressures, has begun diversifying its economic alliances, notably through a significant investment in Iran's Chabahar Port. This move aims to enhance Afghanistan's trade with India, reducing its economic dependency on Pakistan. These developments are not only affecting bilateral relations but have also had broader implications for regional trade dynamics. Afghanistan's shift in trade partnerships, notably increasing its trade volume with India, has significantly impacted Pakistan's economy, particularly in terms of reduced trade volumes and a widened trade deficit.

The internal political and security landscape within Pakistan, especially in regions like the Federally Administered Tribal

Areas (FATA), further complicates the scenario. Despite attempts at development and integration, such as the merger of FATA with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the region remains embroiled in political dissatisfaction and economic challenges.

The resurgence of groups like the TTP and the discontent among local populations due to past military operations and displacement accentuate the deep-seated issues that need resolution for lasting peace. The intricate balance of trade, political, and security challenges raises a broader question of regional stability and economic prosperity for both nations Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The current scenario emphasizes the need for both Pakistan and Afghanistan to transcend past grievances and work collaboratively toward peace and economic stability. The emphasis must be on healing the wounds of the past, addressing the grievances of the affected populations, and fostering an environment conducive to economic development and regional harmony.

In conclusion, the path to peace and stability in the region is tense with challenges



but remains an essential pursuit for both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The vision articulated by Allama Iqbal serves as a reminder of the interconnectedness of the region and the imperative for harmony. As both nations navigate these turbulent waters, the focus must remain on diplomatic engagement, economic cooperation, and the collective well-being of their people, paving the way for a peaceful and prosperous future.

The author is a graduate and a member of the RFI Media Team.

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ISRAEL; A PREDICAMENT FOR THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

The use of words like “imperative... (for) an immediate and sustained ceasefire to protect civilians” sparked opposition from Russia and China mentioning it ambiguous statement that does not categorically oppose Israel's aggression and demands a ceasefire.

Vasily Nebenzya, Russia's Permanent Representative to the US considered that the resolution would result in the destruction of entire Gaza and all of its population and also

hinted about another resolution being prepared by the non-permanent members of the Security Council.

Chinese UN ambassador, Zhang Jun, while criticizing the US proposal said that there is an ambiguity in the draft of the resolution and that the US does not clearly oppose Israel's planned military operations in Rafah, the border crossing of the Gaza strip to Egypt. He further considered the resolution as a way to dodge the central issue of obtaining a ceasefire and would lead to severe consequences, with the ambiguous language used in the draft resolution.

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Interaction



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