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Winter 2023
Volume XII, Number 2

JOURNAL OF
CONTEMPORARY STUDIES

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Faculty of Contemporary Studies
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Editor's Note

The *Journal of Contemporary Studies* is a flagship publication of the Faculty of Contemporary Studies (FCS), National Defence University (NDU), Islamabad. The journal offers its readers in academia, government, and the policymaking world in-depth and scholarly analyses, diverse policy perspectives on important contemporary issues, and on-going debates in the areas of national and international security, public policy and the broader field of world politics.

This journal issue comprises seven articles, four book reviews and four documents providing valuable primary information on significant international developments. The first article, *Artificial Intelligence and Arms Control* by Warisha Rashid and Adil Sultan examines the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into arms control systems presents both challenges and opportunities. While it may complicate states' security, AI can enhance transparency in verification measures for effective arms control treaties. Advanced sensor technologies, satellite imagery, and data analytics can provide real-time monitoring, detecting potential violations, and facilitating timely responses, strengthening transparency and accountability.

The second article, *The China Pakistan Economic Corridor's Extension into Central Asia: Challenges and Opportunities* by Hamzah Rifaat Hussain highlights an ongoing debate about whether projects under the Belt and Road Initiative, such as the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), can benefit countries with a history of war and domestic upheaval, including Afghanistan. This research article examines the potential of the CPEC project extending into Central Asia and contributing to Afghanistan's stability. It acknowledges challenges such as a fragile security situation and global economic deprivation, and emphasizes the need for holistic and practical solutions before the project can extend into Central Asian states and Afghanistan.

The third article, *China's Belt and Road Initiative: The Concerns and Response of the European Union* by Muhammad Riaz Shad and Muhammad Tariq Niaz argues that though the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is gaining traction in transnational connectivity and infrastructure development, but faces increasing opposition from Western countries, including the European Union (EU). The EU's skeptical approach to BRI is influenced by economic concerns, political ramifications, and concerns about China's global assertiveness. It has adopted four approaches to deal with BRI expansion: wait-and-see, participation, caution, and competition and cooperation.

The fourth article, *Pakistan's Paradigm Shift From Traditional to Non-Traditional Security: An Analysis* by Sajjad Hussain Awan discusses Pakistan's national security policy, centered on military issues, with traditional imperatives such as the Indian factor, nuclear domain, and conventional dimension. It marked a paradigm shift from state-centric security to human-centric security, recognizing current imperatives such as economic security, climate security, cyber space security, and human resource development as top priorities. The paper investigates Pakistan's transition from traditional to nontraditional security and its implications for international relations.

The fifth article, *Strategic Chessboard: Examining the Interplay of Saudi Arabia, Iran, India, and Pakistan Amidst Global Power Shifts* by Mubashar Hassan Shahid explores how China's rise has prompted states like India, Pakistan, Iran, and the Gulf countries to re-orient their foreign policies. China's investments through the Belt and Road Initiative, QUAD's resurgence, Israel's foray into the Arab countries, and persistent American support have pushed the Indian Ocean Region at the epicenter of global rivalries. The complex, interdependent relationship between strategically co-located states under the shadow of China-USA competition is the objective of this study. China's economic rise has been extraordinary, but it still lags behind the immense American industrial and military might.

The sixth article, *Revisiting the Nuclear Debate in South Asian Security* by Asim Ahmed and Mahroona Hussain explores the concept of nuclear deterrence, a dynamic concept that relies on the ingenuity of the Nuclear Weapon State (NWS). It discusses the Pulwama crisis in 2019 between India and Pakistan and the need for both sides to operationalize nuclear deterrence through physical and tangible steps. The article argues that nuclear deterrence is not a static concept, but rather a dynamic approach that depends on the NWS's ingenuity. The article also discusses the blurred boundaries between the two strategies, especially in crisis situations.

The last article, *India's Cyber Landscape: An Assessment of Indian Efforts Since Independence* by Nageen Ashraf deems India's cyberspace not as strong as it should be, despite its massive internet user population. Despite its efforts to improve its cyber capabilities, India remains one of the most vulnerable states in the world in terms of cyber-attacks. Even with collaborations with second-tier cyber powers like the USA and Israel, India's defensive and offensive cyber capabilities remain insufficient.

I am grateful to all the contributors who have sent their articles for this issue and the anonymous peer-reviewers whose valuable comments helped authors to improve their contributions. JCS is accepting articles for the upcoming issue of the Journal of Contemporary Studies issue based on original qualitative or quantitative research, an innovative conceptual framework, or a substantial literature review that opens new areas of inquiry and investigation. The editorial team at the Journal promotes

submissions from expert analysts from around the world. The Journal seeks to promote a scholarly understanding of contemporary issues pertaining to traditional and non-traditional security, peace studies, public policy, and human resource development. It intends to stimulate interdisciplinary research and writing.

Editor
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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ARMS CONTROL

Warisha Rashid* and Adil Sultan**

Abstract

The emergence of artificial intelligence has brought new challenges and opportunities to the global arms control regime. Integration of AI into military systems can complicate states' security matrix, due to its speed and accuracy, with additional problems of distinguishability, integration, and accountability. AI can be a useful tool to enhance transparency in verification measures for an effective arms control treaty. Arms control for the regulation or limiting use in military systems is as important as the use of AI for improving the arms control regime. The integration of AI in arms control is not without its pitfalls; it offers several new opportunities. Its use could help address some of the anxieties that prevent states from willingly engaging in an arms control agreements. These developments are important because of the shortcomings in global arms control treaties, and regional rivals like India and Pakistan. AI intergration could incentive the South Asian nuclear neighbours to maintain strategic stability.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Arms Control, Regulations, Verification, Compliance

Introduction

The growing military competition amongst the major powers, mainly the United States, Russia and China has adversely affected the existing global arms control regime and reduced the possibility of negotiating new arms control agreements. This negative trajectory has not only strained relations amongst the major powers, adversely affecting international peace and security, but has also influenced behavior of regional powers like India and Pakistan, since both countries remain reluctant to discuss new arms control agreements for the past over one decade.¹

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¹ Mathias Hammer, "The Collapse of Global Arms Control," *Time*, November 13, 2023, <https://time.com/6334258/putin-nuclear-arms-control/>.

Besides the political impediments, arms control treaties have struggled to deal with compliance and verification challenges exacerbated by vague language used in the treaty texts often to maintain deliberate ambiguity. This allows states to exploit loopholes and develop their interpretation of the agreements per their national interests that eventually lead to a lack of adherence and compliance. Traditional verification mechanisms based on physical inspections of the military sites and systems have also been a major contentious issue preventing states from engaging in arms control agreements with verifiable compliance and transparency mechanisms.

To address these challenges and reduce the technical and political cost of negotiating new arms control agreements, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) could offer a viable solution as it can help reduce national sensitivities, especially when arms control measures are being negotiated to reduce weapon systems or provide transparency as part of confidence building measures.²

The use of AI in arms control agreements could revolutionize verification and compliance mechanisms, offering real-time insights and improve the effectiveness of the existing and future agreements. Its use in advanced sensor technologies, satellite imagery, and data analytics can help overcome some challenges by providing real-time monitoring of military activities, detecting potential violations, and facilitating timely responses. This could not only strengthen transparency and accountability but also help in effective enforcement of the arms control agreements.³

This paper aims to explore the current state of arms control, obstacles to integrating AI into the existing and future arms control initiatives, and the potential benefits that AI could bring by enhancing verification and compliance measures that are necessary for trust and confidence building, and strengthen arms control regime. The paper also discusses impediments in arms control arrangements in South Asia, where Pakistan and India remain reluctant to engage with each other due to a lack of trust, and how the introduction of new and emerging technologies could facilitate or create more obstacles in the existing or new arms control initiatives between the two nuclear armed adversaries.

Why Arms Control Remains Challenging?

Arms control can be explained as a set of measures intended to control the design, development, production, testing, or use of weapons. In sum, arms control can be used to describe “all forms of military

² “ISAB Report on AI and Associated Technologies - U.S. Department of State,” Department of State, October 2023, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/ISAB>.

³ Jane Vaynman, “Better Monitoring and Better Spying: The Implications of Emerging Technology for Arms Control (Fall 2021),” *Texas National Security Review*, (2021).

cooperation between potential adversaries” that can help address security concerns and improve mutual security of the parties.⁴ Arms control initiatives are difficult to negotiate and implement, mainly for political, military, and technical reasons. With the emergence of new and emerging technologies and their growing use in military systems, it is necessary to regulate these weapon systems through new arms control initiatives. Besides military use, AI can also be useful in enhancing verification and transparency measures that are needed for an effective arms control regime. Arms control, therefore, is as important for regulating AI-integrated weapons as AI could be to improve verification and compliance mechanisms for effective arms control agreements.⁵

The growing trend of the use of AI in military systems and weapons could trigger a new arms race that would be difficult to regulate due to the dual-use nature of this relatively new technology for military as well as peaceful applications. Since private entities are developing some of these technologies, it is not easy to develop arms control mechanisms that could regulate private entities.

Recent studies suggest that significant developments in AI are being made by large private entities with growing concerns that this technology could be used for developing biological and chemical weapons by non-state actors for terrorist activities at a mass level. In 2002, the “AI took six hours to suggest 40,000 different potentially lethal molecules, some of which were similar to VX, the most potent nerve agent ever developed.”⁶ This has raised alarm amongst the international community with calls for new multilateral controls that could regulate AI access, especially to the most advanced AI models also known as “Frontier AI,” which can pose significant danger to the human life.⁷

Integration of AI in the military systems and weapons is gaining traction as it helps reduce the human cost and are relatively easier to build. However, fully autonomous systems that could take decisions on their own would always have limitations for three main reasons. First, the peacetime environment is different from the war zone and only human mind can adapt quickly to the changed situation; second, the character and nature of an adversary would vary in different battlefields that machines may not be able to differentiate quickly; and third, lack of human judgement amongst

⁴ James Acton, “Reimagining Nuclear Arms Control: A Comprehensive Approach,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP)*, December 16, 2021, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2021>.

⁵ Louis Vaczek and Stephen R. Graubard, “Modern Technology: Problem or Opportunity. Special Issue of Daedalus,” *Technology and Culture* 22, no. 3 (1981): 605, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3104397>.

⁶ “No 10 Worried AI Could be Used to Create Advanced Weapons that Escape Human Control,” *The Guardian*, Sep 25, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/sep/25>.

⁷ Ibid.

machines that makes it difficult for AI-based weapons to deal with various contingencies.⁸ These limitations may be overcome by “Artificial General Intelligence” that may be able to perform any kind of task better than humans, but this technology has yet not been attained.⁹

Notwithstanding these limitations, the intersection of advanced technologies such as AI and nuclear weapons, where compressed decision-making time during crises could lead to inadvertent escalation, makes it imperative to integrate restraint measures and limit the use of AI, especially in the nuclear decision-making processes. Any autonomous weapons that are capable of carrying nuclear warheads must have human operator-in-the-loop and AI-enabled fail-safe systems to “improve nuclear weapons security, ensure continuous positive control, and better detect warning errors.”¹⁰

The dual use nature of AI-based systems and the involvement of non-state actors also make it difficult to negotiate new arms control agreements. This difficulty is characterized by; distinguishability and integration.¹¹ Distinguishability is when it is relatively easy to differentiate between the two systems being used in a similar domain. For instance, it would be easy to differentiate a commercial airliner from a military aircraft, but this may be difficult while differentiating military and civilian drones. Resultantly, arms control measures intended to regulate the use of drones for military and civilian purposes would be more intrusive and difficult to negotiate than the arrangements agreed to verify military and commercial aircraft.

The second characteristic that makes arms control agreements difficult to negotiate for regulating dual-use technologies is their integration into military or civilian systems. If the technology is deeply embedded into a system, there would always be a risk that the verification mechanisms required to ensure compliance would be more intrusive and may not be acceptable for the state parties due to the sensitivities associated with the military systems. This is also applicable for commercial systems due to the proprietary concerns.¹²

⁸ Paul Scharre, “Autonomous Weapons and Stability,” PhD Dissertation, King’s College London, March 2020, 4, <https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal.pdf>.

⁹ “No 10 Worried AI could be used to Create Advanced Weapons that Escape Human Control.”

¹⁰ Rebecca K.C. Hersman, Heather Williams and Suzzane Claeys, “Integrated Arms Control in an Era of Strategic Competition,” *Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS)*, January 2022, 4.

¹¹ Jane Vaynman and Tristan A. Volpe, “Dual Use Deception: How Technology Shapes Cooperation in International Relations,” *International Organization*, Vol. 77, Issue No.3, Summer 2023, 599-632, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals>.

¹² “How are Military Drones Different from Commercial Drones?” November 8, 2022, <https://www.zenadrone.com/>.

Due to these complexities and the growing competition amongst the major powers, there is a reluctance to engage in arms control initiatives that could limit their military developments and bring added obligations of verification and transparency. This negative trajectory has also impacted adversely regional powers like India and Pakistan as they have not discussed any new arms control initiatives for the past decade.

Most states remain reluctant to join arms control arrangements due to the associated obligations of transparency and verification that could be in the form of physical and intrusive inspections, and may not be seen in line with the state's security interests.¹³ Some of these measures that have become major hurdles in implementation of agreed treaties include; on-site inspections, regular sharing of information between parties regarding their military capabilities, deployments, and activities, utilization of advanced technologies such as seismic and satellite monitoring to detect specific activities, timely communication between parties about planned military activities, changes in capabilities, involvement of international organizations, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the verification process to provide impartial assessments.¹⁴

The Use of AI for Strengthening Arms Control Agreements

Some of the major international agreements such as the 2001 Biological Weapons Convention Verification Protocol, the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, and the Open Skies Treaty - have all faced difficulty in verification and compliance thus leading to the deterioration of the arms control regime.¹⁵ Growing concerns about some of the states that are allegedly building latent nuclear capabilities have raised further doubts about the existing verification and compliance mechanisms that states have to negotiate with the IAEA as part of their safeguard arrangements. Some of these concerns can be addressed by integrating new tools, including the AI, in developing verification mechanisms that could potentially reduce the possibility of diverting civil nuclear technology for military purposes and help strengthen the existing safeguards regime.¹⁶

The North Korean case of non-compliance and building a latent nuclear capability while part of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) is one example where AI-based verification measures could have

¹³ Deborah A.Ozga, "The Reluctant Giant of Arms Control," *Sage Journals*, Volume 34, Issue No.1, 2003. 87-102, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/>

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Lynn Rusten, "U.S. Withdrawal from the Antiballistic Missile Treaty," *Center for the Study of Weapons of Mass Destruction, National Defense University*, Washington D.C. January 2010, <https://doi.org/10.21236/ada572320>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

provided more transparency and early warning. North Korea had joined the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state and agreed to place all its facilities under the IAEA safeguards. In 1993, it threatened to leave the NPT arguing that the additional inspection requested by the IAEA to inspect its plutonium waste was against its national interests and sovereignty.¹⁷ North Korea eventually left the NPT in 2003 citing national security considerations.¹⁸

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) negotiated between Iran and P-5+1 (US, UK, China, France, Russia, and Germany) was another example where verification measures became contentious between the two sides, eventually leading to its demise. As part of the deal, Iran was to dismantle its nuclear and missile program and allow more inspections by the IAEA in lieu of the promised sanctions relief.¹⁹ Differences emerged due to alleged non-compliance by Iran and reluctance by Iran to allow intrusive inspections due to the sensitivities attached with its nuclear program that it claimed was only for peaceful purposes. If both sides were to agree to renegotiate the agreement in the future, the use of new verification tools integrated with AI could address some of the sensitivities and help provide more transparency into the nuclear developments of Iran.²⁰

Verification and compliance concerns are not limited to a few states but it remains a contentious issue since it is difficult to maintain a balance in providing transparency and secrecy that is often required when dealing with sensitive installations and materials that are used in the nuclear fuel cycles. The IAEA safeguards regime could benefit significantly by the use of AI-integrated inspection mechanism which would limit the need for physical onsite inspections and provide more accurate analysis and warning about proliferation related activities.

AI as a tool could also play an important role in implementing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), if it enters into force anytime in the future. The Vienna based CTBT Preparatory Commission has established several international monitoring stations around the world to monitor activities that could be related to nuclear explosions. These monitoring stations share data that can be best analysed using AI tools.

¹⁷ "Scheinman: Iran, North Korea, and the NPT's Loopholes," *Council on Foreign Relations (CFR)*, February 1, 2005, <https://www.cfr.org/interview/>

¹⁸ "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons and Missile Programs," *Congressional Research Service Report (CRS)*, December 19, 2023, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF>.

¹⁹ Kali Robinson, "What Is the Iran Nuclear Deal?" *Council on Foreign Relations*, October 27, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/background/what-iran-nuclear-deal>.

²⁰ Trevor Findlay, "IAEA Noncompliance Reporting and the Iran Case," February 2016, *Arms Control Association*, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2016-01/features>.

This would provide objective assessments about states' non-proscribed activities without touching the national sensitivities.²¹

Another prospective arms control and disarmament treaty where AI can play a significant role is the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT), which is in stalemate due to political reasons and also because of unresolved technical issues related to the verification process needed to ensure compliance by the state parties. The US had opposed a verifiable FMCT and refused to engage in the negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament for a long time. It was only in 2009 under the Obama Administration that the US agreed to a verifiable FMCT but no further progress could be made due to the diverging interests of the negotiating parties. If FMCT is concluded in the future, the use of AI could offer a solution to overcome national sensitivities attached with the identification of fissile material and controlling its movement.²²

Potential Obstacles to Integrating AI in Arms Control

Unlike some other technologies, AI is not a standalone technology and is used by integrating it into various systems and measures to enhance the efficiency and speed. Its use in military systems could be both stabilizing as well as destabilizing. Once used for data gathering and decision making, it can provide more reaction time and could be considered as stabilizing. However, if it is used to give complete autonomy to the weapon systems without human intervention, it can trigger a crisis and lead to quick escalation as autonomous weapons are not designed to cater for variables that otherwise could play important role in the judgment made by a human mind and is necessary to avoid accidents.²³

Integrating AI in arms control presents number of challenges that need to be addressed. While AI has the potential to revolutionize the field of arms control by enhancing verification, and compliance mechanisms, it also raises significant concerns and challenges. Navigating the complexities of AI and taking lessons from previous arms control experiences can help in overcoming some of these challenges. Integration of AI tool in arms control agreements would help monitor treaty violations as the signatory states would be notified thus helping states to better control and regulate the use, deployment, or a buildup of military weapons.²⁴

²¹ "Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)," *The Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI)*, December 20, 2023, <https://www.nti.org/education-center>.

²² "Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) at a Glance," *Arms Control Association*, June 2018, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/fmct>.

²³ Vitorio E. Bossio Ballesteros, "Artificial Intelligence in the Military Field: A Relevant and Useful Tool," *CEEP*, October 26, 2023, <http://revistas.ceeep.mil.pe/index.php/>.

²⁴ Mauricio Baker, "Nuclear Arms Control Verification and Lessons for AI Treaties," April 8, 2023.

One of the biggest obstacles to the application of AI would be transparency. In contrast to conventional weapons, AI operates as a "black box," drawing conclusions from data in an increasingly unsupervised manner.²⁵ Nevertheless, achieving transparency may be difficult in the case of AI-integrated arms control arrangements if the code is hidden, information is false, or technology is denied.

Accountability is another concern in AI-integrated arms control arrangements. Traditional arms control efforts require human input for responsible actions. In the case of AI where human input is negligible the issue of accountability can become a major problem once AI-based verification systems identify patterns incorrectly or take actions that have unintended consequences. On the military side, the issue of accountability can have more serious consequences once the human factor in the decision making process is removed in targeting with "concerns over state responsibility, and attribution for the actions taken by autonomous weapon systems."²⁶

An AI-based arms control agreement may face a compliance challenge as well. The punishments or penalties executed by arms control treaties historically have remained inadequate with powerful states escaping serious consequences for non-compliance. If treaty compliance provisions are unbalanced, stronger states may continue to commit violations with little repercussion and relatively smaller countries would continue to face severe penalties for the same violations.²⁷ Compliance is made more difficult by the nature of AI and its functioning. States can protect the development of AI-based weapons by masking the code such as showing fake images or facilitation centers to the adversary thus making it difficult to ensure compliance.²⁸

The advancement in military technologies especially in the domain of self-governing weapons, require negotiation of new treaties, guidelines, and agreements that could guarantee reliability and principled application of artificial intelligence within the framework of arms control mechanisms. International organizations and policymakers need to be more creative in taking initiatives for negotiating new arms control arrangements while keeping into consideration new technology breakthroughs.²⁹

²⁵ Amina Adadi and Mohammed Berrada, "Peeking Inside the Black-Box: A Survey on Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI)," *IEEE Xplore*, Vol 6, 52138-52160.

²⁶ "Working Paper by Pakistan for the Conference on Disarmament, addressing the Security and Stability Implications of Military Applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Autonomy in Weapon Systems," *Pakistan's Note Verbale at the Conference on Disarmament (CD) Geneva CD/2334*, 21 July 2023, 3.

²⁷ Amina Adadi and Mohammed Berrada, "Peeking Inside the Black-Box: A Survey on Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI)."

²⁸ Mauricio Baker, "Nuclear Arms Control Verification and Lessons for AI Treaties," April 8, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.48550/>.

²⁹ Ibid.

Potential Benefits of Integrating AI in Arms Control

Integration of AI into arms control offers a range of potential benefits that could significantly increase global security through enhancing the mechanism of verification and compliance. The transformative power of AI in system surveillance, verification, and compliance can transform arms control efforts, provide real-time insights, and improve agreements.³⁰ Another advantage of AI-based arms control is that it can provide increased accuracy and efficiency in pattern recognition that can assist with the issue of compliance. AI is able to process large amounts of information quickly and make informed decisions, this ensures that arms control agreements are executed with higher degree of certainty providing an opportunity to improve compliance mechanisms making it harder for states to conceal.

AI can also contribute substantially to arms control by improving verification, analyze satellite photographs, find abnormal behavior at nuclear plants, and give early notice of potential violations and nuclear accidents.³¹ The 2011 Fukushima Daiichi incident had many lessons for the security and safety of nuclear power plants being operated around the globe. Integration of AI in predicting loss and damage of nuclear power plants in such disasters would be useful in limiting the human loss. Another accident that took place at Chernobyl in 1986 caused significant human losses as operators were unable to understand the severe consequences of a minor human error that plummeted into one of the biggest nuclear disasters in the history. Integration of new tools such as the AI could help provide early warning and prevent or at least limit the extent of destruction caused by these disasters.³²

Emerging Technologies and Arms Control in South Asia

India and Pakistan have a long history of distrust due to outstanding territorial disputes and number of wars that both countries fought with each. In the pre-nuclearization period, Pakistan offered several proposals to keep the region free of nuclear weapons as it could not afford to engage in a nuclear competition with an adversary that had more resources and had already tested a nuclear device in 1974.³³ Amongst the prominent arms control proposals offered by Pakistan before 1998 included joint signing of the NPT, accepting full scope safeguards on the nuclear facilities, joint inspection of each other's nuclear facilities,

³⁰ Niklas Schörnig, "AI for Arms Control," *Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF)*, <https://www.prif.org/fileadmin/>

³¹ Ibid.

³² "A Brief History of Nuclear Accidents Worldwide," *Union of Concerned Scientists*, October 1, 2013, <https://www.ucsusa.org/resources/>

³³ Anna Schumann, "History of Conflict in India and Pakistan," *Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation*, November 21, 2023, <https://armscontrolcenter.org/history>.

declaring South Asia as a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone and Bilateral Test Ban Treaty, and several others.³⁴

The 1988 agreement between the two sides prohibiting attack on each other's nuclear facilities was the most significant arms control arrangement in the pre-1998 period which is still effective despite many crises over the past years.³⁵ As per the agreement both sides share the lists of their declared nuclear installations on 1st Jan of every year with each other.³⁶ The purpose of this agreement is to avoid unintended attack on sensitive nuclear installations in a crisis or a military conflict. As of now there is no verification mechanism as both sides do not allow physical inspections of these sites and neither provide specific details of the facilities. As part of the agreement, India and Pakistan only share grid references covering broad area of a nuclear facility or facilities. To help further improve the effectiveness and compliance of this agreement, India and Pakistan can possibly use AI in the future to have better clarity of each other's nuclear facilities and avoid unintended strikes on any of these facilities.

Post 1998, both India and Pakistan agreed to engage with each other as part of Lahore MoU that signed by the two sides in 1999. This agreement amongst other issues provided a roadmap for future engagement on arms control related issues.³⁷ The 1999 Kargil conflict and subsequently the 2001-02 military stand-off limited this progress but both sides resumed their dialogue in 2004 in the form of Composite Dialogue.

As part of Composite Dialogues, India and Pakistan agreed to a ballistic missile notification agreement in 2005, which provides early warning to each other of any ballistic missile test being conducted.³⁸ This agreement is also a confidence building measure and is intended to avoid miscommunication, especially during crisis. The use of AI as part of the agreement or by either of the state individually could help analyze the pattern of missile tests and predict the future postures being developed by both the adversaries.

³⁴ A.H. Nayyar, "Pakistani Perspective on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-proliferation," *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)*, Briefing Paper 9, August 2008. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files.pdf>.

³⁵ "Agreement between India and Pakistan on the Prohibition of Attack Against Nuclear Installations and Facilities," <https://www.nti.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/>.

³⁶ "India, Pakistan Exchange Lists Of Nuclear Facilities, Prisoners," *Al Jazeera*, January 1, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/1/1>.

³⁷ Bashir Ali Abbas, "Looking Back at the 1999 India-Pakistan Lahore Declaration," *The Diplomat*, May 21, 2022.

³⁸ Neil Joeck, "The Indo-Pakistani Nuclear Confrontation: Lessons From The Past, Contingencies For The Future," *Pakistan's Nuclear Future: Reigning In The Risk*, ed., Henry Sokolski, *Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College*, 2009, 19-62.

India-Pakistan arms control process is on a hold due to number of factors. India has become increasingly dismissive towards Pakistan and does not want to engage bilaterally in any arms control initiatives that could impede its efforts to emerge as a credible regional and a potential global power. India has been increasingly propagating that its principal adversary is China and not Pakistan, and if new arms control initiatives have to be discussed, it must include China. This has reduced the possibility of restoring the bilateral arms control dialogue between India and Pakistan.

Arms control arrangements are essential as these “provide useful venues for addressing sources of conflict, reducing misperceptions, and restraining impulsive or risky actions.”³⁹ However, for arms control to succeed, “they must be adapted to the current security environment, account for rapidly evolving technological and informational factors, and consider alternative structures, modalities, and participation models.”⁴⁰

In view of the long history of distrust and varying character of each crisis between India and Pakistan, the main purpose of arms control should be to prevent a major war, and not necessarily focus on the numbers and types of weapons. This can only be possible by identifying deterrence gaps and taking into consideration the role that the new and emerging technologies can play in crisis escalation.

For example, the 2019 crisis between India and Pakistan was an attempt by the former to take advantage of its numerical conventional superiority and launch an aerial surgical strike for limited political objectives, under a nuclear shadow. Pakistan responded with a tit-for-tat kind of a surgical strike and in the bargain shot down two of the Indian aircraft that caused significant amount of discontent for the Indian decision makers, resulting into nuclear threats from India’s Prime Minister.⁴¹ This sudden escalation was not in synch with the theoretical understanding of Herman Kahn’s 44 rung escalation ladder, and had political undertones, but also reflects the deep-rooted hatred against each other where a limited action by one actor is seen as an existential challenge by the other thus pushing the national leadership to take extreme measures, which could include the possible use of nuclear weapons without taking into consideration the effect it would have on the regional as well as global stability.

In such an environment of distrust, if any of the two actors use new and emerging technologies, such as the AI-based unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in the future, it can quickly transform the crisis from a limited to

³⁹ Rebecca K.C. Hersman, Heather Williams, Suzanne Claeys, “Integrated Arms Control in an Era of Strategic Competition.”

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Adil Sultan, “Pulwama Crisis: Causes, Implications and Lessons for the Future,” *Strategic Foresight for Asia (Strafasia)*, April 10, 2019, <https://strafasia.com/pulwama/>.

an all-out war with the potential to escalate to a nuclear one. It is therefore imperative that the new arms control arrangements between the two adversaries must not be limited to specific capabilities but should address the root cause of discontent on both the sides, besides catering for the impact that the new technologies could create on crisis escalation. This can be possible if arms control is seen as a wholesome concept for maintaining strategic stability and caters for potential vulnerabilities and capabilities as part of an evolving concept of Integrated Arms Control.⁴²

The evolving technological landscape where new and emerging technologies like the AI are likely to play critical role, it is important to understand three broad implications for the future of arms control. One, new and emerging technologies can complicate strategic stability as these could be an instrument for crisis escalation and arms race; two, most of these technologies have dual purpose of civilian and military use, which makes it difficult to engage in an arms control process; and three, there are negligible or limited norms and legal instruments developed to regulate new technologies so far.⁴³

For India and Pakistan, it is essential to understand that if there are no limitations or agreed norms, the development and employment of new technologies, like the AI, would increase the nuclear risks and lead to miscalculations with disastrous consequences.

The concept of deterrence is predicated on the rationality or irrationality of the humans in a specific environment, who are able to cater for most variables during a crisis situation. Keeping humans out-of-the-loop and subletting the decision making to the AI-based systems could lead to automation of escalation with catastrophic consequences. Similarly, using AI for generating data and processing of information may provide more time for the decision makers but it can also lead to a temptation of a preemptive counterforce strike against the adversary thus fast-tracking the crisis to a point of no return. It is therefore essential to understand that while AI may have benefits but "increasing the speed of warfare and compressing decision-making timeframe, particularly in regions with high tensions and history of accidental launch incidents, represents a recipe for an unmitigated disaster."⁴⁴

Taking into consideration the past trends, it is therefore important for both India and Pakistan to avoid integration of AI into their nuclear command and control systems and negotiate confidence building and arms

⁴² Rebecca K.C. Hersman, Heather Williams, Suzanne Claeys, "Integrated Arms Control in an Era of Strategic Competition," *Centre for Strategic International Studies (CSIS)*, January 2022,3.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ "Working Paper by Pakistan for the Conference on Disarmament, addressing the Security and Stability Implications of Military Applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Autonomy in Weapon Systems," *Pakistan's Note Verbale at the Conference on Disarmament (CD) Geneva CD/2334*, 21 July 2023, 3.

control measures that could provide more transparency about each other's intent, especially during a crisis to prevent unintended escalation.

Conclusion

The emergence of new technologies such as quantum computing, cyber, hypersonic weapons, artificial intelligence, and their integration into military systems, offers both opportunities and challenges. There is therefore a need for developing new arms control measures that could limit or regulate the use of these technologies for military purposes and help maintain peace and stability at the regional as well as the global levels. New technologies, especially the AI is also useful for improving the existing arms control arrangements, if incorporated to enhance verification and transparency measures.

The growing competition amongst major powers and the increasing use of new and emerging technologies for military purposes could lead to instability at the global level. This negative trajectory is also visible amongst the regional rivals, especially in South Asia, where India is moving on a fast-track to build its AI potential as part of the new Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET)⁴⁵ that was inaugurated jointly by the US and India in June 2023. These capabilities once integrated into military systems could adversely affect strategic stability in South Asia.

At the global level, the declining interest in the arms control arrangements has led to the unravelling of the arms control regime. The collapse of key accords, like the INF Treaty, Open Skies Treaty, ABM treaty and the difficulty being faced in implementation of the CTBT, especially after Russia's decision to withdraw its ratification, underscores the need for addressing these challenges by incorporating new technologies that could help rebuild confidence in the arms control initiatives.

AI has the potential to revolutionize arms control by enhancing verification, compliance mechanisms, and addressing the challenges associated with traditional methods. The use of AI can improve accuracy and efficiency in pattern recognition, provide real-time insights, and enhance the monitoring of potential treaty violations. Its use for border surveillance through facial recognition and drone surveillance can help increase security at the international borders and prevent illegal transfer of weapons and movements of terrorist across the borders.

Although AI has the potential to improve verification, monitoring, and compliance, its complexity raises questions about accountability, and transparency. Despite these hurdles, integrating AI into arms control initiatives can contribute to global security by fostering innovation, increasing efficiency in compliance mechanisms, and building confidence among nations. States, international organizations, and policymakers need to work through collaborative approaches to develop creative solutions,

⁴⁵ "Joint Statement from the United States and India," *The White House*, June 22, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases>.

establish new agreements, and ensure the responsible application of AI in arms control. Embracing the potential benefits of AI in arms control can pave the way for a more secure and stable future, mitigating the risks of arms race and fostering international cooperation.

THE CHINA PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR'S EXTENSION INTO CENTRAL ASIA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Hamzah Rifaat Hussain*

Abstract

There has been considerable scholarly and analytical debate on whether projects under Belt and Road can benefit states with a history of war and domestic upheaval. The same debate applies to regional connectivity projects such as the flagship China Pakistan Economic Corridor given its close geographical proximity to restive Afghanistan. This research article examines the potential of the \$62 billion CPEC project extending into Central Asia and contributing to Afghanistan's stability. Also analyzed are the challenges in 2022 such as a fragile security situation domestically after the US withdrawal in 2021, global economic deprivation due to the Russian war on Ukraine and several projects of the corridor still being a work in progress. The research design is a mixed-method analytical approach. This article affirms that the aforementioned challenges must be overcome holistically, practically and through shrewd policy making before it can extend into the Central Asian states and Afghanistan.

Keywords: CPEC, Central Asia, Afghanistan, Regional Connectivity, Pakistan

Literature Review

Since its inception, much has been written by scholars and economists about the economic effects of CPEC and its potential linkage to Central Asia. The \$62 billion CPEC project is considered by optimists to have great potential in stimulating regional as well as global connectivity while also addressing Pakistan's economic problems.

Scholars and analysts on CPEC's potential extension into Central Asia hail from two schools of thought. Optimists contend that CPEC can usher in regional prosperity in light of its inherent potential and regional

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dynamics while skeptics believe that CPEC confronts several challenges to its completion and its potential to extend into regions such as Central Asia is severely compromised.

For optimists, regional projects such as CASA 1000 can be sped up if corridors such as CPEC are completed.¹ The corridor's completion can also directly benefit CARS with shorter land routes to export oil and gas reserves and simultaneously enable access to warmwaters.² There is also a high degree of receptivity to CPEC in Central Asian states since the corridor's inception in 2015. Countries such as Turkmenistan consider it to be a 'crown jewel,' providing access to the Indian Ocean while Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have expressed interest in exploiting its potential to stimulate economic growth through combined economic programs and economic interdependence with Pakistan.³

Optimists also contend that CPEC's extension into CARS is a win-win instead of a zero-sum arrangement. Logistical issues and landlocked geography for CARS for example, have historically impeded the smooth progression of trade connectivity and CPEC provides a promising route in this regard. Former Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan, Sherali S Jononov said that Central Asian states support CPEC as it enables them to narrow down their distance to export its gas reserves through potential road and railway linkages.⁴ Additionally, Pakistan's economic downturn in 2022 which can be partly attributed to its flailing energy sector gives Islamabad an alternate supply route and enabling it to tap into Central Asian energy markets through a robust regional infrastructural project. On the security front, the securitization of Chinese investments in CARS is a vision shared by Central Asia given that regional connectivity projects in China's western region is linked to declining extremism and an improvement in the regional security situation.⁵

¹ Muhammad Azhar and Muhammad Ayaz, "South Asia- Central Asia Inter-Regional Connectivity: The Future Perspective," *Central Asia Journal* no. 77 (Winter 2015): 39.

² Sabahat Jaleel, Naureen Talha, and Zahir Shah, "CPEC and Regional Integration," *Global Regional Review* no. 4 (2019): 19-28.

³ A.Z. Hilali, "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and Dynamics of Regional Connectivity: Prospects and Challenges," *Strategic Studies Journal* 39, no. 4 (2019): 2-16.

⁴ Khalid Manzoor Butt and Anam Butt, "Impact of CPEC on Regional and Extra-Regional Actors," *Journal of Political Science*, no. 33 (2015): 2-22.

⁵ Bhavna Dave and Yuka Kobayashi, "China's Silk Road Economic Belt Initiative in Central Asia: Economic and Security Implications," *Asia Europe Journal* no. 16 (2018): 267-281.

Despite optimism hinging on the aforementioned factors, scholars, academics and officials have also expressed skepticism over the future of the project as well as its potential extension into the region.

They draw from comments made by senior US government officials dealing with the South Asian region, which considered it unviable given its lack of transparency and potential contribution to Pakistan's sovereign debt.⁶ These claims are endorsed by professors at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics who consider CPEC related borrowing and Chinese loans to be disruptive and amounting to USD 3.9 billion and USD 4 billion between 2016-2018 which has a negative impact on debt sustainability and increases fiscal deficits and the national debt to GDP ratio.⁷ Alongside debt sustainability is criticism centered on the inclusiveness of the project and transparency over its deliverables.⁸

The project is also considered to be insufficient in dealing with the needs of the local Baloch population with several development officials and politicians in the province voicing concern over providing employment opportunities to the local population through it.⁹ The corridor also confronts security challenges in Balochistan with the inclination of Baloch militants to attack Chinese professionals manifesting itself in the form of the Karachi University attack in 2022.¹⁰ Lack of political stability which is a prerequisite for economic development and swift completion of economic projects is also a hindrance to CPEC's development as issues such as bureaucratic red tapism, civil military tensions and unequal distribution of its expected deliverables pose challenges to the corridor's completion and extension.

Despite pessimism in many quarters over the status of the project, the project is viewed positively in Central Asian states. Scholars however, remain divided over the project's completion with some considering the potential economic advantages such as power generation, construction of industrial plants, development of infrastructure, trade and recreational activities to outweigh concerns expressed over sovereign debt, security

⁶ Syed Baqir Sajjad, "FO Defends CPEC after Alice Wells' Criticism," *Dawn*, May 23, 2020.

⁷ Talat Anwar, "CPEC and Pakistan's Debt Burden," *Pakistan Institute of Development Economics*, January 16, 2020.

⁸ Madiha Afzal, "At All Costs: How Pakistan and China Control the Narrative on the China Pakistan Economic Corridor," *Brookings Institute*, (2020): 2-11.

⁹ Akbar Durrani, interview by author, Quetta, June 02, 2022.

¹⁰ Sophia Saifi, Saleem Mehsud and Azaz Syed, "Female Suicide Bomber behind Karachi Attack That Killed 3 Chinese Citizens: Police," *CNN*, April 27, 2022, <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/04/27/asia>.

and lack of inclusivity.¹¹ By exploring the four dimensions of the project which is categorized into political, economic and social dimensions, studies contend that if negative factors are eliminated, CPEC can result in an improvement in investor environments with promised socioeconomic dividends which address the scourge of terrorism.

When viewed within the context of CARS and their potential integration into the corridor, it is imperative to examine external, geographical and regional challenges prior to forming definitive conclusions. This paper would, hence, attempt to expand on the observations and analysis of the aforementioned authors and address the following gaps:

1. Understanding factors that will either contribute to or impede CPEC's potential expansion to CARS in 2022.
2. What is the status of CPEC in 2022, the completion of its projects and its potential to extend into the region?
3. Will variables such as the security situation in Afghanistan have a negative or positive impact on CPEC's extension into Central Asia?

Methodology

To address the gaps in the literature, this study will employ a mixed-method analysis of inquiry, which includes a descriptive research design that highlights the characteristics of CPEC in 2022. It will also explore enabling factors which can promote the corridor's extension into Central Asia. Conceptually, the descriptive research design obtains information and describes a phenomenon, concept or case study. The subject of inquiry for this research will be the progress of the corridor while external variables will include the geopolitical climate in 2022, factors stalling CPEC's progress and security challenges in the region, particularly from Afghanistan. The research objective would be to provide a comprehensive analysis of whether there are prospects for the corridor's extension into Central Asia, which economists, policy makers and sovereign governments must consider in 2022.

Introduction

China's infrastructure projects have historically been aimed at promoting regional connectivity which dates back to the second century BCE.¹² The historical Silk Road had a significant role in connecting the

¹¹ Muhammad Kashan Surahio et al., "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: Macro Environmental Factors and Challenges," *Sage Publications*, (2022): 1-18.

¹² Tim Williams, "The Silk Roads: an ICOMOS Thematic Study," *UNESCO and World Heritage Center*, (2014): 6-16.

Eurasian region where ties between states such as Japan, India, Europe, Middle East and East Asia were built upon foundations of political harmony and economic connectivity through the route.¹³ The influence of the Ottoman Empire however, jeopardized connectivity on its route, yet the concept has survived in the year 2022 based on the network's historical influence in reshaping societies.¹⁴

The term 'New Silk Route' has been used widely in the 21st century to refer to infrastructural projects seeking to expand transportation while simultaneously developing local economies along its route.¹⁵ Prime examples of initiatives falling under the New Silk Route include the Eurasian Land Bridge as a transcontinental rail transport route aimed at moving passengers and freight between seaports in China, Russia, and Europe.¹⁶ The BRI as President Xi Jinping's project was formally announced during a visit to Kazakhstan with the aim of creating a network of roads and rail transportation routes through Central Asia while also connecting to Europe and East Asia.¹⁷ Alongside construction of ports, bridges, grid stations, airports and dams, the BRI also aims at connecting sea ports in Asia and also the region of Middle East and Africa.

An integral component of the BRI is CPEC. CPEC commenced in 2013 with the goal of financing Pakistani investments through joint ventures which constitute 80% of its profile while a further 20% is debt financing.¹⁸ The project is still developing in the year 2022 with the port of Gwadar becoming fully operational in May 2021.¹⁹ CPEC as a multidimensional initiative is considered to be an integral component of

¹³ Jerry Bentley, "Old World Encounters: Cross-Cultural Contacts and Exchanges in Pre-Modern Times," *Oxford University Press*, (1993): 32.

¹⁴ Sheriff G.I. and Akeje K, "Developmental Historiography of the Ancient Silk Road," *African Journal of Culture, History, Religion and Traditions* 4(1), (2021): 69-80.

¹⁵ Lily Kuo and Niko Kommenda, "What Is China's Belt and Road Initiative," *The Guardian*, September 5, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/ng-interactive/2018/jul/30>.

¹⁶ Richard Pomfret, "The Eurasian Land Bridge the Role of Service Providers in Linking the Regional Value Chains in East Asia and the European Union," *European Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia, Discussion Paper Series*, (2018): 2-20.

¹⁷ Rafis Abazov, "Kazakhstan's Revival of the Silk Road Initiative: The Challenges Ahead," *The Central Asia Caucasus Analyst, Analytical Articles*, October 8, 2015, <https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles.html>.

¹⁸ Khaleeq Kiani, "CPEC: Govt Seeks More Joint Ventures," *Dawn*, January 14, 2019.

¹⁹ Dunya News Staff, "Gwadar Port Fully Operational: Asim Saleem Bajwa," *Dunya News*, May 31, 2021.

China Pakistan relations as it seeks to alleviate Pakistan's economic quagmire, energy shortfalls, infrastructural shortcomings and low GDP growth rates. Along with investments in Pakistan, China has prioritized the development of Central Asian economies which includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan through the BRI strategy.

Most CARs are behind globally in terms of economic growth, GDP per capita and employment.²⁰ The other corridor of the BRI is CPEC which is an ongoing economic project that is in close proximity to Central Asia. There has been plenty of positive coverage regarding the corridor's ability to promote greater regional connectivity through its route and an array of railway and road networks connecting to Central Asia. This research paper attempts to discern these opportunities while providing an overview of the challenges and opportunities of CPEC extending into Central Asian States in the year 2022.

Status of the CPEC in 2022

CPEC endeavors at promoting greater infrastructural growth in Pakistan. 20% of the corridor is debt financed while the rest are joint ventures (JV) between China and Pakistan.²¹ A total of eleven energy related projects out of twenty- one became operational in 2022.²² The latest such energy project is the 720 MW Karot Hydropower Project in Azad Jammu Kashmir and Punjab. As far as the infrastructural aspect of the corridor which includes the Peshawar- Karachi Motorway and the Karachi Circular Railway is concerned, six out of twenty-four projects have been completed in 2022.²³ Similarly, special economic zones (SEZs) have witnessed nearly fifty percent of projects completed in 2022.²⁴

²⁰ OECD "The Belt and Road Initiative in the Global Trade, Investment and Finance Landscape," *OECD Business and Finance Outlook*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1787/>

²¹ Khaleeq Kiani, "CPEC: Govt Seeks More Joint Ventures," *Dawn*, January 14, 2019.

²² Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives, "Energy Projects Under CPEC," *CPEC Authority*, 2021, <https://cpec.gov.pk/energy>.

²³ Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives, "Transport Infrastructure Projects Under CPEC," *CPEC Authority*, 2021, <https://cpec.gov.pk/infrastructure>.

²⁴ Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives, "Industrial Cooperation/ Special Economic Zones (SEZs)," *CPEC Authority*, 2021, <https://cpec.gov.pk/special-economic-zones-projects>.

Table 1.1 Energy Ventures Completed in 2022

#	Ventures
1.	1320MW Sahiwal Coal-fired Power Plant
2.	1320MW Coal-fired Power Plant at Port Qasim Karachi
3.	1320MW China Hub Coal Power Project, Hub Balochistan
4.	660MW Engro Thar Coal Power Project
5.	1000MW Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park (Bahawalpur)
6.	50 MW Hydro China Dawood Wind Farm, Gharo, Thatta
7.	100MW UEP Wind Farm, Jhimpir, Thatta
8.	50MW Sachal Wind Farm, Jhimpir, Thatta
9.	100MW Three Gorges Second and Third Wind Power Project
10.	Matiari to Lahore ±660 KV HVDC Transmission Line Project
11.	720MW Karot Hydropower Project, AJK/Punjab

Source: CPEC Authority, Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, (2022).

The project is also focused on Pakistan's socio-economic development with investments not limited to developing transport infrastructure or energy generation alone. Projects which fall under human capital development include vocational, technical and educational capacity building initiatives alongside poverty alleviation training which target segments of the Pakistani population. The completion status of socio-economic development projects in 2022 is only 19% with projects such as agricultural vocational training and a joint project on rural poverty reduction still a work in progress.²⁵ On the subject of the development of Gwadar port, four projects including the Smart Port City, the Eastbay Expressway and Technical and Vocational Training Institutes in the city have been completed.²⁶ These projects however, constitute only 29% of the total projects dedicated to the development of the port city. Construction of the Airport in Gwadar for example is about till the end of October 2023.

Table 1.2 Ventures of the Port City in 2022

#	Ventures
Finished Ventures	
1.	Development of Port and Free Zone
2.	Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan
3.	Pak-China Technical and Vocational Institute at Gwadar
4.	Gwadar Eastbay Expressway

²⁵ Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives, "Social and Economic Development Under CPEC," *CPEC Authority*, 2021, <https://cpec.gov.pk/social-sector-development-projects>.

²⁶ Mehtab Haider, "Projects under CPEC Second Phase," *The News*, June 11, 2022.

Ventures in Progress	
5.	New Gwadar International Airport
6.	Necessary facilities of fresh water treatment, water supply and distribution
7.	Pak-China Friendship Hospital
8.	300MW Coal-Fired Power Project at Gwadar
9.	1.2 MGD Desalination Plant
#	Project Name
10.	5 MGD Water Desalination Plant Gwadar
Futuristic Ventures	
11.	Construction of Breakwaters
12.	Dredging of berthing areas & channels
13.	Fish Landing Jetty and Fishermen Boat Making Industry on West bay
14.	Gwadar Smart Environment Sanitation System and Landfill Project

CPEC has been in a transitory phase in 2022 with the Annual Plan for 2022- 2023 emphasizing on agricultural modernization, establishing IT and High Technology Zones as well as socio-economic development.²⁷ It is critical for Pakistan to capitalize on the first phase of investment (2015-20) which enabled a conducive environment for investments through infrastructural development and energy generation to take place. At the 10th Joint Cooperation Council (JCC) held in September 2021, several projects have been identified by stakeholders for completion. These include the following:

- Zhob-Quetta and Zhob-DI Khan section for finalization and completion in the fiscal year 2022-23.
- Proposal to realign the Thakot-Raikot Section during 2022-23.
- Finalization of concessional financing for the ML-1 project from Karachi to Peshawar in the second quarter of 2022-23.
- Inclusion of expressways and energy projects such as the Swat Expressway Phase II and the 330 MW Thar Energy Ltd.

A significant chunk of the CPEC project is yet to be completed in 2022 which includes infrastructural projects, energy corridors, societal development schemes and special economic zones. Alongside the status of the corridor in 2022, internal and external factors will also have a bearing on its completion. As the horrendous terrorist attack at Karachi University clearly demonstrated, security challenges can easily stymie the progress of Chinese investments. CPEC's potential expansion into Central

²⁷ Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives Planning Commission, "From Stabilisation to Sustainable Growth: Annual Plan 2022-23," *Planning Commission*, June 2022, <https://www.pc.gov.pk/>

Asia is also hostage to geography as the landlocked CARS can only access trading routes in Pakistan through Afghanistan. It is critical to understand the security landscape of Pakistan, Afghanistan and the region as this directly impacts the completion of corridors in progress prior to coming up with conclusions over the corridor's extension into CARS.

CPEC's Potential Impact and Challenges in Central Asian States (CARs)

Central Asian states are landlocked countries with enormous natural resources at their disposal. The region of Central Asia stretches from the Caspian Sea to the west and shares geographical contiguity with Afghanistan, Russia and China. Historically, a lack of infrastructure and a sound logistical base has impeded their GDP growth potential, alongside non-traditional security threats from neighbouring Afghanistan. Despite infrastructural shortcomings, CARs maintained average growth rates of 5-6% as per assessments in 2020.²⁸ Given the optimistic views expressed by the senior leaderships of CARs regarding CPEC's potential expansion into the region however, it is worthwhile to examine the opportunities the \$62 billion corridor presents for the region impartially.

Reduction of Transport Costs And Tapping Into Existing Resource Potential

Since the end of the Soviet Union, CARs have been slowly moving away from state dominated economic systems to free market principles with national aspirations to become some of the leading economies in South Asia. However, much of the potential has not been realized despite the fact that in the first half of the new century, the republics benefited from a commodities boom.²⁹ This indicates that the countries of the region have untapped potential despite being largely impoverished. Kyrgyzstan for example is home to large gold deposits while Kazakhstan hosts the world's largest uranium reserves. This is precisely why corridors such as CPEC are significant and relevant, as they reduce the costs of transporting resources and products and allow for the export of gold deposits and uranium to the international market.

²⁸ Khan Zahid, Guo Changgang, and Muhammad Afzaal, "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor at the Cross Intersection of China, Central Asia and South Asia: Opportunities for Regional Economic Growth," *The Chinese Economy*, 53, no. 2 (2020): 200-215.

²⁹ Mukhitidinova, Nasiba khan, "Progress in Central Asia is being Hampered by the Low Level of Investment in Research and Development," *UNESCO Science Report: Towards 2030*, (2015): 364-387.

Additionally, all CARs, barring Kazakhstan, which remains the dominant economic force in the country, require greater diversification of their market base beyond limited revenues from energy. A conduit for the transportation of goods and services to remain competitive in the international market is also needed. The instability within CARS has been fueled by a lack of economic competitiveness, as the unrest in Kazakhstan in 2022 vividly illustrated. Lack of economic competitiveness has fed into instability within CARS as the 2022 Kazakhstan unrest clearly demonstrated. The increase in prices of liquefied gas resulted in protests against the regime of former President Nursultan Nazarbayev, which could have been avoided had market access mitigating economic hardship been secured.³⁰ Increased trade routes, more employment opportunities and greater inclusion of respective populations can be realized if CPEC is extended into the region, particularly in countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan who remain largely impoverished and are deprived of economic connectivity.

The OBOR's Central Route, Corporate Linkages and the Significance of Gwadar

The One Belt One Road Initiative from China also involves the 'central route', linking the port city of Shanghai to the Uzbek capital of Tashkent.³¹ Additionally, the province of Xinjiang in China which is marred by an insurgency known as the 'East Turkestan Islamic Movement' also shares close geographical proximity with CARs. Hence, the development of the Eastern region of China remains a significant component of the OBOR and the ability to curb security threats through infrastructural development extends into Central Asia as well through the 'central route' strategy. Furthermore, the adoption of the 'go west' strategy by Beijing links the development of Xinjiang with the extension of corridors into CARs as well as treating the port of Gwadar as a pivotal cog in realizing economic potential. The Gwadar port connects with Central Asia alongside the Middle East and South Asia and the development of linkages through the improvement of roads and the provision of energy corridors facilitates

³⁰ Diana Kudaibergenova, and Marlene Laruelle, "Making Sense of the January 2022 Protests in Kazakhstan: Failing Legitimacy, Culture of Protests, and Elite Readjustments," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 38, no. 6 (2022): 441-459.

³¹ Filippo Costa Buranelli, "One Belt, One Road and Central Asia: Challenges and Opportunities," *The Belt & Road Initiative in the Global Arena: Chinese and European Perspectives* (2018): 207-230.

the higher volume of trade and provision of energy for greater economic regionalization.³²

Another obvious opportunity for CARs is increased corporate linkages between the region's South Asian States and China. Investment opportunities exist in areas such as textiles, the food industry, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, iron ore processing and small to medium enterprises which all form an integral part of the economic profiles of Central Asian states.³³ It is pertinent to note that CPEC provides a plethora of cooperation prospects which includes integrated information technology systems which has the potential to serve three billion people in the region, of which a significant proportion reside in CARs. CPEC's potential is further strengthened by amiable ties between CARs and Pakistan which wishes to access the energy rich region to ward off its energy crisis. Strong diplomatic relations entail that irritants in the corridor's extension can be laid to rest.

Impediments Faced by CARs, Pakistan and Afghanistan

Despite optimism, significant obstacles need to be overcome for CPEC's potential to truly materialize in CARs. Firstly, the corridor is still in its nascent stages and requires swift completion in the absence of security threats and bureaucratic wrangling to materialize. Secondly, cities which remain at the periphery of economic hubs such as Nur Sultan and Tashkent should not be alienated but accommodated for maximum impact and a trickle-down effect on the local population.

Secondly, CPEC's trickle-down effect and win-win potential is subject to regional dynamics and amicable relations between all states. The Pakistan-India relationship since the rise of the Narendra Modi led BJP government has been strained with dialogues pertaining to joint economic prosperity being suspended. The issue of Kashmir and India's abrogation of Article 370 also acts as a barrier to connectivity potential as Pakistan would condition India's inclusion in CPEC on the reversal of its illegal occupation. The BJP government however, remains adamant that such a prospect is a non-starter.

Security challenges emanating from Afghanistan and Xinjiang also impede CPEC's potential extension into Central Asia. The presence of the Islamic State in the Khorasan Province (*ISKP*) and the East Turkestan

³² Umbreen Javaid, "Assessing CPEC: Potential Threats and Prospects," *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan* 53, no. 2 (2016).

³³ Zahid Khan, Guo Changgang, and Muhammad Afzaal, "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor at the Cross Intersection of China, Central Asia and South Asia: Opportunities for Regional Economic Growth," *The Chinese Economy* 53, no. 2 (2020): 200-215.

Islamic Movement (ETIM), who are adamant about exporting their puritanical version of Islam and have a proclivity towards targeting Chinese investments are a tangible threat that needs to be addressed through joint counter terrorism efforts between Pakistan, CARS and China.

As far as Russia is concerned, the Moscow's influence on CPEC has been positive and acts as an 'enabler' for the project. Russia has expressed interest in projects which are non-western, state sponsored and infrastructure driven, as has been the case with its own 'PakStream Gas Pipeline Project,' with Moscow awarding Pakistan with a 74% stake in the project.³⁴ There is also strategic convergence between China's BRI and Russia's efforts to integrate the Eurasian Economic Union. Both visions aim at unifying the Eurasian region with overland trade and infrastructure, which benefits CARs, Afghanistan, Pakistan and China.³⁵

On the other hand, the sole skeptic of CPEC's ability to generate positive momentum is the United States. Any Chinese investment fits into the wider US-China rivalry quotient which is understood by Washington D.C. as detrimental to the interests of the Pakistani population. This explains negative coverage of CPEC despite the fact that Pakistan received \$19 billion in new infrastructure and 75,000 jobs have been created locally in 2020.³⁶ This clearly indicates that despite US opposition, there is little influence on the CPEC project which is anchored in joint understandings between the Chinese and Pakistani governments.

Regional Rivalries between China and the United States as an Impediment to CPEC's Completion and Extension

CPEC's completion and extension into Central Asia must be viewed through a macropolitical framework. The rivalry between China and the United States, characterized by puncturing Beijing's international influence, will have a detrimental impact on CPEC. The United States, through its numerous statements, has questioned the viability of CPEC as an economic project and censured it for contributing to Pakistan's debt

³⁴ Mifrah Haq, "Russia Warms to Pakistan after Three Decades of Cold Ties," *Nikkei Asia*, July 20, 2021, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/>

³⁵ Andrew Korybko, "Pakistan Is The "Zipper" Of Pan-Eurasian Integration," *Russian Institute for Strategic Studies*, September 15, 2015, <https://en.riss.ru/article/1018/>.

³⁶ Daniel Markey, "How the United States Should Deal with China in Pakistan," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, April 8, 2020, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/04/08>.

trap.³⁷ Increased economic clout for Beijing with greater return on investments would remain at the forefront of US policy making which will have a bearing on the project's completion. Washington D.C. also significantly influenced the post- Soviet era Central Asia region. It is possible that an increased Chinese footprint could act as a justification to coerce the weaker governments of impoverished states such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to change course. Greater emphasis on expanding India's role in the region is also a roadblock to Pakistan's contribution to the extension and can jointly compromise regional connectivity prospects.

Importance of Economic Connectivity for CARS in 2022

Regardless of the impediments, countries constituting CARS such as Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have sought to develop their post-Cold War economies by emphasizing on greater trade, connectivity and export driven economies. Yet in terms of FDI's in the post-Soviet era, Kazakhstan leads the region given its investor friendly climate, relative political stability and attracting more than \$370 billion in foreign investments since the dissolution of the Soviet Union.³⁸ However, beyond Kazakhstan Central Asian countries continue to remain largely impoverished with lack of infrastructure and poor investor climate failing to attract foreign direct investment. Between 2007-2019, Central Asian countries benefited from \$378.2 billion worth of FDIs of which the share for Kazakhstan was close to 78%.³⁹ As a result, the landlocked region with enormous resources has witnessed uneven economic growth.

COVID-19, the Ukraine War, the Palestine Crisis of 2023 and Domestic Economies of CARS

From 2019-2022, the pernicious effects of the pandemic and the contemporary conflict in Ukraine had negative implications as far as global growth rates are concerned, with CARS being no exception. The year 2021 also witnessed slight improvements in Foreign Direct Investment net inflows in CARS with flows rising in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The

³⁷ Thomas Ameyaw-Brobbe, "The Belt and Road Initiative: Debt Trap and its Implication on International Security," *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* 1, no. 2 (2018): 73-81.

³⁸ Assel Satbbaldina, "Kazakhstan Attracts Over US\$370 Billion in FDI Since Independence," *Astana Times*, December 6, 2021, <https://astanatimes.com/2021/12>.

³⁹ Aidana Yergaliyeva, "FDI to Central Asia Reached 378.2 Billion Over Past 13 Years," *The Astana Times*, December 9, 2020, <https://astanatimes.com/2020/12>.

region also received the least amount of direct FDI inflows in Asia.⁴⁰ Furthermore, due to the Russian war on Ukraine, inflation has risen which has exacerbated inequality and, poverty and promoted a high level of food insecurity. European Union sanctions on Russia as a result of the Ukraine war and declining export earnings from Europe have severely hampered CARS' GDP growth prospects. As per the World Bank's country forecasts for CARS from 2021-2022, economies in CARS are expected to shrink by more than 4.1%, impacting commodity and financial markets.⁴¹

Bleak economic growth prospects for CARS in light of external factors such as the global economic downturn due to Russia's war on Ukraine, heavy reliance on export revenue from Europe and Russia and economic challenges from the pandemic gives added relevance to economic corridors such as the CPEC as part of the BRI. China has been a leading investor in Central Asia and its status as a great power and a major regional economic power has given it renewed attention as an economy which provides numerous opportunities for regional countries. CARS are equally enthused about regional connectivity prospects with high degree of receptivity to CPEC since the corridor's inception in 2013. Countries such as Turkmenistan for example considered it to be a '*crown jewel*' which provides access to the Indian Ocean while Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan consider CPEC to carry potential to stimulate domestic growth through combined economic programs and economic interdependence.

The harrowing genocide conducted by the Israeli occupation forces in the Palestinian territories since October 2023 has had a ripple effect on oil prices and the world economy. It also had a major impact on CPEC's initial vision of connecting the Gwadar Port with the Gulf. Operating maritime trade below initial expectations due to the regional economic downturn in the Middle East is a reality that both China and Pakistan may have to deal with if the Gaza war is not resolved. Similarly, unrest in the Middle East ensures that the completion of the corridor requires strategic imperatives to avert risks and potential setbacks which requires contingency planning from Pakistani and Chinese policymakers. According to the World Bank's October 2023 preliminary report, there is a persistent risk for disruptions in global oil and commodity markets and while this

⁴⁰ World Investment Report, "Foreign Investment in Developing Asia Hit a Record \$619 Billion in 2021," *UNCTAD*, June 9, 2022, <https://unctad.org/news/>.

⁴¹ World Bank Group, "War in the Region," World Bank Europe and Central Asia Economic Update," *World Bank* (2022): 3-45, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986>.

might not affect the progress of CPEC it could impede its potential economic dividends.⁴²

Positive Regional Connectivity Trajectory and Increased Chinese Investments in 2022

While the global economic climate has been largely negative in 2022, there are reasons as to why economic corridors such as CPEC can be extended to regions for regional connectivity. As per the Asian Development Bank, trends in 2021-2022 and the subsequent Ukraine war, regional integration trends in the Pacific and Asia have remained positive. The pandemic has also not affected intraregional trade linkages as well as regional value chains and can be attributed to the early recovery of the Chinese economy from the pandemic which has allowed regional connectivity prospects to continue unabated.⁴³ For example, 43,600 certificates were issued by the Chinese under (RCEP) in the months of January and May 2022.⁴⁴

Regional connectivity is a priority for CARS with strong trading relationships with China. Out of the total number of BRI projects which include six overland economic belts, two are passing through CARs.⁴⁵ Due to the BRI, China will continue to be one of the biggest importers of Central Asian energy resources. At the OIC FM's meeting in Islamabad, Pakistan, Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated that a total of \$400 billion will be invested across the Muslim World of which a significant portion will be invested in CARs.⁴⁶ As a testament to expanding cooperation with CARS, at the C+C5 Forum (*China+ Central Asia*) in 2022, the following documents were adopted:

- Joint Statement provided at the congregation of Central Asia Foreign Ministers.
- The Virtual Summit held between China and Central Asian

⁴² Press Release, "Conflict in the Middle East Could Bring 'Dual Shock' to Global Commodity Markets," *The World Bank Preliminary Report*, October 30, 2023, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/research/commodity-markets>.

⁴³ Asian Development Bank, "Advancing Digital Services Trade in Asia and the Pacific," Asian Development Bank, 2022, <https://www.adb.org/news/events>.

⁴⁴ Global Times, "RCEP Agreement Helps Boost Foreign Trade among Member Economies," *Global Times*, June 29, 2022, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202206/1269315.shtml>.

⁴⁵ Aamir Latif, and Islamuddin Sajid, "Beijing Investing over \$400B in 54 Muslim Countries, Says Top Chinese Diplomat," *Anadolu Agency*, March 22, 2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific>.

⁴⁶ Chris Devonshire-Ellis, "The China Plus Central Asia C+C5 Forum: Statements and Analysis," *Silk Road Briefing*, June 23, 2022, <https://www.silkroadbriefing.com/news/2021/05/14/>

States provided the roadmap for operationalization of the agreements.

- The cooperation and connectivity have also been boosted by the venture of C plus C5 (A project of China and Central Asia Project).
- The collaboration among China and CARS is further strengthened through cooperation that has been made under the sphere of data security.

Pakistan's Internal Security Challenges in 2022, the BLA as an Existential Threat

Pakistan has faced significant internal security challenges in 2022 which is also directed at Chinese investments. The BLA and the BLF targeted Chinese academics at the Karachi University in a suicide attack in April 2022 and the Baloch insurgency remains an existential threat to Pakistan's landscape. Neutralizing such groups is the key to ensure that projects which fall under CPEC as well as the overall presence of the Chinese community in the country remain unharmed. Yearly casualties have only witnessed a marginal decline in 2022 which demonstrates that the security situation is improving but remains fragile.⁴⁷

Table 2.1 Number of Fatalities in Pakistan (2019-2022)

Year	Incidents of Killing	Security Forces
2019	136	137
2020	193	178
2021	267	226
2022	197	211

Source: South Asian Terrorism Portal (2022)

From January 2022 to May 2022, eleven terrorist attacks took place in Pakistan of which only one, the Karachi University attack specifically targeted Chinese academics. Hence addressing Baloch military organizations is the key to safeguarding CPEC's corridors as well as the overall security situation in the country. The abduction of Lieutenant Colonel Laiq by Balochistan militants on the 12th of July 2022 which resulted in Pakistan's security forces launching three major operations against the 17 militants from the BLA.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Madiha Afzal, "Terrorism in Pakistan has Declined, but the Underlying Roots of Extremism Remain," *The Brookings Institute*, January 5, 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog>.

⁴⁸ Ayaz Gul, "Baluch Insurgents Kidnap and Murder Pakistan Army Officer," *Voice of America*, July 14, 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/6658455.html>.

While terrorist organizations such as the TTP employ violence and target civilians, infrastructure and security personnel indiscriminately, the BLA can be singled out as the single biggest existential threat to Chinese investments given the statements issued after attacks such as the Karachi University bombing.⁴⁹ However, an overall spike in terrorism-related incidents in 2022 has meant that an all-encompassing counter-terrorism strategy needs to be adopted to neutralize secessionist trends. It is worthwhile to explore Pakistan's current strategy for dealing with threats like the BLA.

The National Counter Terrorism Authority is the primary internal security organization responsible for both devising plans against terrorist groups and reviewing implementation. In 2014, the National Action Plan was a central component of NACTA's operations alongside countering financing of terrorism as well as initiating criminal justice reforms. There have been concerted attempts by the organization to implement comprehensive counterterrorism policies which dates back to December 2021 with the first NCVEP 2021. It includes the following key objectives:

- Coordination at the federal level by various lead divisions and law enforcement agencies.
- Revisiting the learning environment of public and private institutions to counterviolent extremism.
- Need to regulate mosques, prevent the abuse of certain religious clerics from dissemination of messages which are harmful for communal order.
- The need to adopt a uniform CVE law akin to the 1997 Anti-Terrorism Act.⁵⁰

At the kinetic level, the Pakistan military continues to tackle the scourge of terrorism from the BLA by conducting operations against militants who have employed violence against the Pakistani state and Chinese personnel. The Pakistan army has also dedicated a separate brigade in the aftermath of the Karachi University attack in 2022 which compliments the 34th Light Infantry Division that was established in September 2016. While the infrastructure to protect CPEC is in place, it is worthwhile for the Pakistani state, the judicial system, the law enforcement agencies and civil society to implement the revamped NAP policy of NCVEP 2021 to ensure that an all-encompassing strategy to dismantle Baloch militancy is in place. Only then can the security of CPEC and Chinese investments be ensured.

⁴⁹ Ayaz Gul, "Bomb Blast in Southern Pakistan Kills 1, Wounds 13," *Voice of America*, May 12, 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/>.

⁵⁰ Iftikhar A. Khan, "NACTA Drafts First-Ever Policy to Counter Violent Extremism," *Dawn*, December 15, 2021.

Economic and Security Situation of Afghanistan in 2022

CARs do not share a border with Pakistan with any potential extension of CPEC only possible through Afghanistan. Hence, it is imperative to assess Afghanistan's internal security scenario in 2022 and whether economic corridors can be extended through its landscape while formulating conclusions on CPEC's potential.

The US withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021 has precipitated an economic and security crisis of immense proportion. Militants such as ISKP and widespread lawlessness had a negative impact on the national economy and internal security.⁵¹ According to one of the World Bank surveys, more citizens worked under Taliban rule.⁵² Yet on the security front, barring the rural areas, Afghanistan's internal landscape continues to be plagued by the rise of the Islamic State which had been described by the 14th Commander of the United States Central Command Kenneth McKenzie to be exploiting the vacuums due to a reduction in American counterterrorism operations.⁵³ McKenzie's observations are correct. In 2022, a spate of terrorism incidents took place in Kabul which have been claimed by the ISKP, such as the April 29 2022 attack on a mosque in Kabul, which killed more than fifty people.⁵⁴

The presence of the ISKP casts a shadow over economic connectivity prospects, particularly as Afghanistan's economic situation since the Taliban takeover has been in a state of 'freefall.' According to the World Bank, in 2022, the Afghan economy will witness further contraction, with real GDP per capita falling between 2020 and 2022.⁵⁵ The fact that there has been no letup in America's decision to retain \$9.5 billion of

⁵¹ Debusmann Jr, Bernd and Chris Partridge, "Ayman Al-Zawahiri: How US Strike Could Kill al-Qaeda Leader- but Not His Family," *BBC News*, August 3, 2022. <https://www.bbc.com>.

⁵² Ghazala Mansuri, Cesar Cancho and Erwin Knippenberg, "Afghanistan Welfare Monitoring Survey," *World Bank Group*, (2022): 2-15.

⁵³ Statement of General Kenneth F. McKenzie, Jr., commander, CENTCOM before the Senate Armed Services Committee, *The US Central Command*, March 15, 2022, <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/STATEMENTS/Statements-View/Article/2967180>.

⁵⁴ Pamela Constable, "Sufi Mosque Bombed in Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, April 30, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022>.

⁵⁵ Press Release, "Urgent Action Required to Stabilize Afghanistan's Economy," *World Bank*, April 13, 2022, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release>.

reserves further dampens economic prospects.⁵⁶ The war in Ukraine with a global food crisis exaggerated by limited access to grain imports has also disproportionately affected the Afghan economy with household incomes shrinking in 2022.⁵⁷

With the Afghan economic and security situation being dire in 2022, CPEC does promise economic connectivity prospects particularly as the Taliban government is under US sanctions. China's top diplomat, Wang Yi on the fringes of the SCO summit of FMs conveyed China's strong endorsement of expanding CPEC into Afghanistan to his counterpart Amir Khan Muttaqi.⁵⁸ In September 2021, the Taliban government expressed an interest in joining CPEC which came nearly a month after their takeover of Afghanistan.

Given Afghanistan's economic difficulties in 2022, it is probable that the Taliban will press for closer engagement with China over CPEC if America refrains from unfreezing its assets. However, its potential extension to Central Asia depends on variables such as the country's security landscape, domestic situation, economy and route, given that Afghanistan borders all CARS except Kazakhstan. However, the optimism and joint will expressed by both the governments of China and Afghanistan can commence work on the extension provided that Pakistan finishes all outstanding projects on its route.

Conclusion

Based on an analysis of trends in the year 2022, CPEC's potential expansion into Central Asia is dependent on key variables such as geopolitical and security challenges posing a direct threat to regional connectivity, the trajectory of regional connectivity projects under the BRI in the pandemic and Ukraine war era as well as an increase in investments in the region by China. The success of the corridor's expansion is also dependent on the fragile security situation in Afghanistan which has worsened since 2021, the completion of CPEC's various deliverables and the resolution of internal security quagmires.

Policy Recommendations

1. In 2022, CPEC's deliverables are a work in progress and the CPEC

⁵⁶ Saleha Mohsin, "U.S. Freezes Nearly \$9.5 Billion Afghanistan Central Bank Assets," *Bloomberg*, August 17, 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-08-17/>.

⁵⁷ "Outlook for Afghan Economy 'Dire' as Household Incomes Shrink-World Bank," *Reuters*, April 13, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/>.

⁵⁸ Riyaz ul Khaliq, "China Puts Weight behind Extending China Pakistan Economic Corridor to Afghanistan," *Anadolu Agency*, July 30, 2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific>.

- authority/ Planning Commission in Pakistan should strive to ensure that the majority of the project which is pending is completed for its extension into Central Asia.
2. The situation in Afghanistan remains fragile in 2022 with the ISKP launching attacks on civilians which is harming the local economy. Additionally, the Ukraine crisis is having a negative impact on poverty levels and exacerbating a humanitarian crisis. The international community should take immediate steps to help release Afghan Central Bank assets and initiate effective counterterrorism efforts to eliminate terrorist groups such as ISKP to ensure regional connectivity.
 3. To ensure the swift completion of CPEC despite obstacles such as security quagmires and geopolitical global rivalry between the United States and China, CARs, Pakistan, Afghanistan and China should institutionalize a legal and regulatory framework that monitors the progress of CPEC's deliverables and the extension of the corridor in the region. Measuring the trickle-down effect on the local population in terms of employment generation, rising income levels and corporate sector development should be given to technocrats for maximum impact.
 4. Major takeaways from the C+C5 Forum in 2022 should be capitalized upon by China and CARs for increased BRI investments in Central Asia.
 5. The swift implementation of non-kinetic counterterrorism policies such as the NCVEP must be complimented with kinetic operations to uproot internal security threats particularly the BLA which has targeted Chinese personnel and investments.

CHINA'S BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE: THE CONCERNS AND RESPONSE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Abstract

As the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) gains traction in transnational connectivity and infrastructure development, it meets increasing opposition from Western countries. Generally, It is viewed in the US-led Western world as an alternative form of globalization involving the leading role of China and increased participation of the Eastern powers. China's engagement in the development of regional infrastructures under BRI and its economic and political ramifications have raised concerns in the West, including the European Union (EU). Economic concerns and prospective political ramifications connected with China's grand initiative tend to shape the EU's sceptical approach towards BRI. The EU is alarmed by the expansion of the BRI not only in Europe but also in other world regions. Despite regional connectivity being a common interest of the EU and China, the former's sceptical approach towards BRI calls for an in-depth examination of the phenomenon. This paper explains the factors that account for the EU's sceptical approach vis-à-vis the BRI and evaluates its response to the Chinese mega project.

Keywords: Belt and Road Initiative, European Union, 16+1 Framework, Trade, Ports

Introduction

The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is viewed as a gigantic regional connectivity project with a geostrategic potential. BRI is a multifaceted connectivity project that incorporates elements of the

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historic Silk Road duly upgraded to meet present-day requirements. Given its ambitious geographical expanse and infrastructural targets, it is perceived as a real marvel of connectivity across regions and continents. As it is designed to link Asia, Africa and Europe based on a network of logistical and commercial nodes, it assumes enormous proportions of strategic importance. It is referred to as the Eastern version of an alternative world order against the Western-dominated world order established following the Second World War. BRI has attracted attention of the international community because of its colossal infrastructure portfolio and the way it can potentially shape the regional and global economic and political landscape. As a result, international discourse on BRI, particularly in the Western world, is characterized by apprehensions and criticism. The European Union (EU) and a number of its member states view BRI from a sceptical standpoint, taking its political implications into consideration. The present global order provides financial support to needy countries through international financial institutions. These institutions, in turn, create a leverage for their patrons vis-à-vis the countries that receive loans from them. The BRI, along with its main financial organ, i.e., the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), provide an alternative to third-world countries to meet their economic needs challenging the hegemony of Western institutions. In addition, the BRI and its institutions profess a non-intervention policy.¹

As the BRI garnered recognition and fanfare, the EU did not welcome the project, though its collective response did not take a consistent course. The EU remains the most successful example of regional integration in modern times. However, as the BRI gains popularity among nations in various regions including Europe, it potentially challenges the EU's internal and external interests. Thanks to the single European market (CEM), the EU remains an overwhelming economic actor globally. EU's single market rests on the unification of its internal and external economic policies. This implies that the EU should deal with any external actor or economic system through a cohesive and uniform policy. Externally, the EU prefers to establish economic and political engagement with regional states at regional level while promoting rules-based economic liberalization and political cooperation. Further, it seeks its strategic interests vis-à-vis a region by adopting the approach of international political economy. This means that the EU pursues its political interests towards regional organizations and states through its economic leverage.

¹ Khalid Mahmood Shafi, Muhammad Tariq Niaz, and Muhammad Rizwan, "Neo-Mercantilism and Globalization: A Case Study of China's Belt and Road Initiative," *NDU Journal*, 37(2023):73-84.

In this context, the economic and political angles associated with the BRI cause the EU's apprehensions about the Chinese mega enterprise. In a broader sense, the Chinese rise, the BRI's potential for upgrading China's regional and global influence, and its implications for the operative Western-dominated world order account for the US and EU antagonism towards the BRI. The EU and China, though different kinds of polities are known as economic giants who pursue economic interests across the world and use economic strategies to achieve political interests. Therefore, the EU views the BRI as a competitor initiative in terms of its endorsement by its member states, regional integration model and regional economic and political influence.²

This paper examines the intricate undercurrents of the EU's concerns related to the BRI expansion in Europe and other regions of the world. This way, the paper underlines various economic and political factors that explain the EU's concerns towards BRI in the context of the politics of European integration and evolving global geopolitics. Then, the paper evaluates the EU's strategies to respond to BRI within and outside the EU. In light of its internal dynamics and geoeconomic-geopolitical interplay at the international level, the EU's response to BRI is a mix of cautiousness, strategic deliberation, collaboration and competition.

Theoretical Perspective

The constructivist theoretical approach offers an interpretive understanding of relations between the states. It is centered on the premise that reality is socially constructed and that our understanding of a social phenomenon is subject to our interpretations. These interpretations are built on norms, rules and ideas intersubjectively shared by the actors and gradually embedded in institutional order. In this context, the constructivist explanation takes several considerations into account.

First, identities play a key role in shaping the interests of states. Alexander Wendt underlines that 'identities are the basis of interests.'³ While realists hold that state interests are defined in terms of material factors, constructivists contend that ideational factors play a key role in shaping states' identities and interests. Identity is a role-specific expectation on the part of a state that develops through interaction with other states. In other words, identity is rooted in an ideational structure

² Eric Brattberg and Etienne Soula, "Europe's Emerging Approach to China's Belt and Road Initiative," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, October 19, 2018.

³ Christian Reus-Smit, "Constructivism," in *Theories of International Relations*, ed. Scott Burchill, et al (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 197.

composed of norms, rules, practices and shared meanings.⁴ Second, constructivism holds that structure and agency are mutually constituted and interaction between the two is shaped by the ideational factors. Ideational factors determine not only agents' perception of themselves but also their response to the structure. Third, constructivists argue that the behaviour of states is not determined by international anarchy, but rather by how states perceive anarchy. Alexander Wendt depicts this constructivist position as, 'anarchy is what states make of it.'⁵ This means that an 'anarchy of friends' offers opportunities while 'anarchy of enemies' is challenging and threatening.

European Union was founded on a number of norms including human rights, the rule of law, democracy, freedom, peace and environmental protection. As part of its identity, the EU promotes these norms in its relations with other countries through the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Commercial Policy (CCP). Therefore, ideational factors comprising norms and rules significantly shape the EU's response to state and international issues. In this context, the EU is known to pursue material interests defined in terms of ideas, norms and rules. Further, the EU operates under a liberal regional and international structure that guides its response to international issues. Finally, norms and perceptions play an important role in shaping the EU's differential approach vis-à-vis democratic and non-democratic states and governments.

The foregoing conceptual framework indicates that EU's response to BRI is shaped by its identity that is rooted in regional and international ideational structures. In accordance with the constructivist approach, the EU views the BRI as lacking an explicit investment regime, value-based conditions, and governance criteria. Therefore, participation of EU member states in BRI may end up in a 'debt-trap' situation for them. Secondly, the EU skepticism towards BRI is linked with the apprehension that the project can potentially undermine the rules-based European regional economic order having political implications. Thirdly, in global context, the EU shares the common Western skepticism that BRI may play pivotal role in boosting Chinese rise and influence in the world, challenging the Western-led international liberal order.

Background of the BRI

The most stunning development of the 21st century has been China's awakening from a sleeping giant to an emerging global power. The

⁴ Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory* (New York: Pearson Education, 2012), 287.

⁵ Andrew Heywood, *Global Politics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 73.

country has continued with its rising trajectory for the last four decades.⁶ Currently, China is greatly influenced and steered by President Xi Jinping whose vision of grand connectivity has been translated into the BRI, regarded as the major development of recent times. Addressing the Belt and Road Forum in May 2017, President Xi envisioned the BRI as a win-win undertaking that will surmount the "geographical distance" and lead to mutually beneficial cooperation, development, peace and harmony. He declared that BRI was based on the spirit of the historical silk routes entailing cooperation and peace, inclusiveness, mutual learning and shared benefits.⁷

President Xi Jinping offered the monumental notion of an "economic belt along the Old Silk Road" when he visited Kazakhstan in 2013.⁸ The purported objective is to link China to the Asian regions, Europe and Africa. The envisioned connectivity entails the development of various infrastructures, trade ties and cross-cultural relationships. The route known as the Silk Road starts in what was once Chang'an now known as Xi'an, traverses through the region of Xinjiang, Central Asia and West Asia and connects to the Mediterranean. It is also known as "Oasis Silk Road." The Silk Route was initially constructed during the reign of the Han Dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD).⁹ Historically, the Route served as the key source for the exchange of trade goods and cultural ideas between the East and the West for around 1500 years.¹⁰ In its current form, BRI comprises two grand networks: Silk Road Economic Belt that is composed of six land corridors and connects China with Southeast, Central and South, Russia and Europe; 21st Century Maritime Silk Road that links China with different parts of the world through sea routes.¹¹

The BRI aims to help China realize its geo-economic objectives, particularly economic growth, boost in exports of goods and services under the "Made in China 2025" initiative, and improve the development of its countryside, especially in underdeveloped regions. However, the BRI

⁶ Atia Ali Kazmi, *"The Road to Balance in Asia Pacific Publication Information,"* (Paramount Books Private Limited, Pakistan, 2021).

⁷ President Xi Jinping, "Speech at Opening of Belt and Road Forum," *Xinhua*, May 14, 2017, <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-05/>.

⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Speech by H.E. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China at Nazarbayev University, Astana," September 8, 2013.

⁹ "A Brief History of the Silk Road: Development, Significance, Travelers," Pandasilk, accessed September 6, 2023, <https://www.pandasilk.com/>.

¹⁰ "The Silk Road," *National Geographic*, www.pandasilk.com/how-long-is-the-silk-road/.

¹¹ "Belt and Road Initiative," *European Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, <https://www.ebrd.com/what-we-do/belt-and-road/overview.html>.

is perceived as more than merely an economic strategy for infrastructure development and regional connectivity. China is regarded as a major world power, able to shift the global power balance from the West to the East, eventually redefining the global order of the 21st century.

China's BRI aims to pursue an ambitious goal of uniting the whole world under the umbrella of a shared destiny. Around 30 institutions and 150 nations across the globe have signed the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with China for cooperation under BRI.¹² Overall, the BRI signatories account for more than 65 per cent of the population and 40 per cent of the GDP of the world.¹³ It is a testimony of the growing appeal of the mega initiative. Over the first decade of BRI (2013-23), China has signed agreements worth \$1 trillion with various BRI countries.¹² A score of nations across South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Africa are growing beneficiaries of the BRI-led connectivity. In practical terms, the project will assume unprecedented enormity as it fully realises the maritime potential. China's competitors anticipate and perceive that BRI will ultimately assume geostrategic dimension when it becomes a success in establishing geoeconomic footprints in the world through land corridors and sea routes. In view of its geographical and structural expanse, the BRI carries a rhetoric that "all roads lead to Beijing."¹⁴

The perception that the BRI involves non-hegemonic win-win cooperation, makes it appealing to the participating states. It is sometimes associated with the neo-mercantilist approach. However, its characterization as a market-driven liberal economic project is a more plausible manifestation.¹⁵ However, the West often perceives the BRI is often perceived by the West as an instrument to achieve the geopolitical objectives of China. The West fears that the ultimate scheme to overthrow the current international order is concealed under China's mantras of

¹² C. Nedopil, "Countries of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)," *Green Finance and Development Center*, 2022, <https://greenfdc.org/countries-of-the-belt-and-road-initiative-bri/>

¹³ James McBride, Noah Berman, and Andrew Chatzky, "China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative," Council on Foreign Relations, February 2, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative>.

¹² "How is the Belt and Road Initiative Advancing China's Interests?," *ChinaPower Project*, <https://chinapower.csis.org/china-belt-and-road-initiative/>.

¹⁴ Xue Gong, "The Belt and Road Initiative Is Still China's "Gala" But Without as Much Luster," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, March 3, 2023, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/03/03>.

¹⁵ Shafi, Niaz, and Rizwan, "Neo-Mercantalism," 75.

unification, peace, trust, friendship, and win-win collaboration.¹⁵ The BRI is viewed as a fresh kind of globalization that may conflict with the US-led Western-centric international order currently prevalent in the world.¹⁶

The idea and operationalization of the BRI acquired traction under the presidency of Xi Jinping. His leadership vision encapsulates economic and political policies to make China a distinct global player. He justifies China's role as a major actor in achieving economic development and stability worldwide. The BRI is the flagship initiative to pursue these objectives as contemplated by President Xi Jinping. Generally, western countries see President Xi's policy of "more assertive China" from a critical angle as motivated by interconnected geoeconomic and geopolitical motivations.¹⁷

An Overview of EU-China Relations

The trajectory of relations between the EU and China since the 1970s appears turbulent.¹⁶ As China began to open up to the rest of the global community in 1979, it attempted to revamp its ties with the majority of the European nations.¹⁷ The Tiananmen Square crisis in 1989 froze the relations for a short time, but the 1990s saw an enhancement in economic and political relations. EU-China ties further upgraded as China gained better integration with the global economy consequent to its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001. This development led to a reduction in tariff and non-tariff barriers and, hence, China's increased market access to the EU, resulting in expanded economic ties.¹⁸

China and the EU launched a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" in 2003 in an effort to expand their ties beyond trade and

¹⁵ Tingyang Zhao, "Rethinking Empire from a Chinese: Concept 'All-under-Heaven' (*Tian-xia*)," *Social Identities*, 12, no. 1. (January 2006):29-41.

¹⁶ Colin Mackerras, "The Belt and Road to China-based Globalization," East Asia Forum, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2017/08/31/>.

¹⁷ Paul Haenle, "The Belt and Road Initiative: Views from Washington, Moscow and Beijing," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, April 8, 2019. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/04/08/>.

¹⁶ Giulia Di Donato, "China's Approach to the Belt and Road Initiative and Europe's Response: A Backgrounder," *Performance Improvement Journal* 59, no.8 (2020).

¹⁷ Jonathan Holslag, Explaining Economic Frictions Between China and the European Union, Chapter 7, in V.K. Aggarwal, S.A. Newland (eds.), Responding to China's Rise: US and EU Strategies, *The Political Economy of the Asia Pacific* 15(2015)

¹⁸ Ibid.

investment domains to make political and security agenda part of the relationship. The initiative, however, could not produce any noteworthy effect because of political disagreements, diverging geopolitical interests and competing conceptions of regional and world orders. The 2008 global financial crisis opened doors for the Chinese enhanced engagement in the EU's Eurozone states critically affected by the sovereign debt crisis. China helped these countries with a bail out by investing in economic sectors, assets and government bonds.¹⁹ Few European nations were compelled to trade their state assets during the financial crisis.²⁰ Notably, Greece has been selling its assets, particularly ports and airports, to foreign companies to meet debt servicing obligations. In 2009, the country had to lease shares of its key port Piraeus to COSCO, a Chinese state-owned company, for 35 years in return for €100 million annually.²¹

The EU-China relations underwent certain issues in the period from 2008 to 2012. The markets in China were not fairly friendly to exports and investment coming from Europe. There were problems connected with the Chinese market access because of the governmental involvement in market regulations, inconsistency in legal interpretations and local market dynamics.²² In general, the EU demanded that China's economy and market change since they were based on excessively onerous and restricting regulations.²³ However, the EU did not have a consistent stance toward Beijing and its member states had varying trading relations with China. The same applies to the relationship between the EU and China in the context of BRI. In 2013, the two parties concluded the "EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation" to pursue objectives pertaining to development, prosperity, peace and enhanced level of people-to-people contacts and exchanges.²⁴

Despite being strategic partners, economic, political, and strategic issues adversely affect the EU-China relationship. EU has a number of long-

¹⁹ Keith B. Richburg, "China Wary of Helping Europe Weather its Debt Crisis," *The Washington Post*, February 29, 2012, <https://www.washingtonpost.com>.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Huang Yixuan, "China's COSCO Investment Revives Glory Days of Greek Port," *Shine*, <https://www.shine.cn/biz/economy>.

²² Yongge Niu, Lily C. Dong and Rong Chen, "Market Entry Barriers in China," *Journal of Business Research* 65, Issue 1 (2012): 68-76, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/>.

²³ Philippe Le Corre, "What China's Checkbook Diplomacy Means for Europe," *Politico*, December 5, 2016.

²⁴ Delegation of the European Union to China, *EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation*.

standing economic differences with China over issues including trade deficit, market openness, subsidies and intellectual property rights. It has imposed an arms embargo and sanctions on the country over human rights violations. Further, the two sides have diverging interests in the context of growing strategic rivalry among major powers. Still, China remains the second largest trading partner of the EU, only second to the US. In 2011, the country accounted for 8.9% of EU exports and 17.3% of its imports.²⁵ In 2022, it was the third largest destination for EU exports (9%) and the largest contributor to the EU's overall imports (20.8%).²⁶ The following detailed data shows how China's trade with the EU has experienced a boost over the years recording trade surplus in its favour.

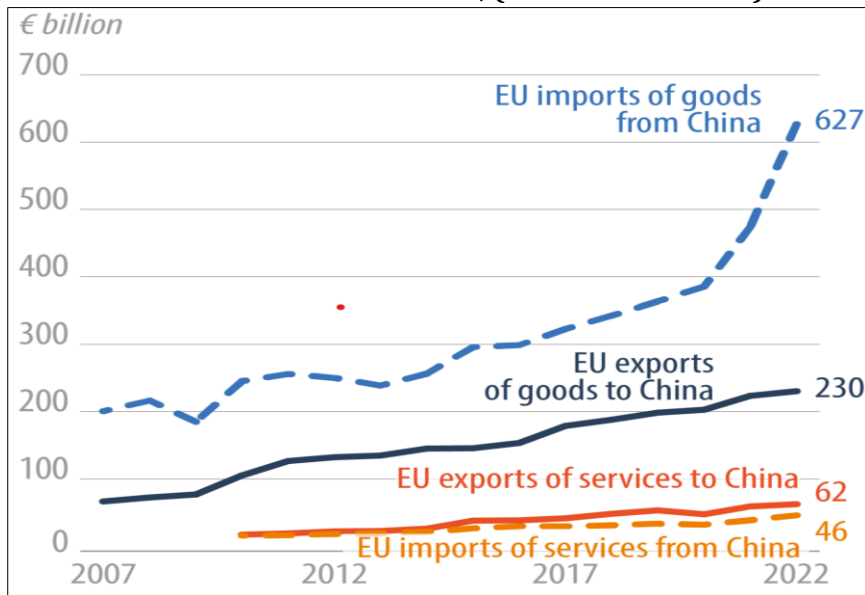
Table 1: EU Trade in Goods with China, 2012-22 (€ billion)²⁷

Year	Import	Export	Balance
2012	250.1	132.2	-117.9
2013	238.9	134.7	-104.2
2014	256.5	145.1	-111.4
2015	295.9	145.6	-150.4
2016	298.9	153.4	-145.5
2017	322.8	178.8	-144
2018	342.6	187.9	-154.7
2019	363.5	198.5	-165
2020	385.1	202.8	-182.3
2021	473.8	223.5	-250.3
2022	626	230.3	-395.7

²⁵ Directorate-General for External Policies, *Trade and Economic Relations with China 2013* (Brussels: European Parliament, 2013), 12.

²⁶ "China-EU - International Trade in Goods Statistics," Eurostat, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index>.

²⁷ Compiled by the authors from the data consulted from <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index>.

Table 2: EU Trade with China, (Year 2007 to 2022)²⁸

The above table and graph depict EU-China trade in goods and services. While the EU is slightly better positioned in terms of trade in services, China has a sharp edge over the EU in terms of trade in goods. In recent years, trade balance has hugely tilted in favour of China. In 2022, China was the largest contributor to EU's overall imports. However, this increase in Chinese exports is not because of the EU countries participation in BRI, it is rather an outcome of China's massive economic involvement in the EU market.²⁹ Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the EU is more concerned about the BRI because of its normative perception regarding the political implications of BRI.

EU-China Relations in the Context of BRI

Along with Asia and Africa, the European continent remains vital for the Chinese plan for global connectivity under BRI. The Greece and Italian ports of Piraeus and Venice, respectively, are identified on official maps as the key terminal points of the mega project of BRI.³⁰ Seventeen EU

²⁸ European Parliament Report, "EU-China Trade Relations," EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service, October 2023, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/>.

²⁹ Francesca Ghiretti, *The Belt and Road Initiative in the Eastern and Southern EU*, RSC Policy Paper 2021/07 (Italy: European University Institute, 2021), 2.

³⁰ European Council on Foreign Relations, *China and the Mediterranean: Open for Business?* (London: ECFR, 2017) 3, <https://ecfr.eu/publication/>.

member states have joined the BRI, according to the Green Finance and Development Center. Hungary was the first EU country to join BRI in 2015 while Italy became the first major EU country and the only G7 nation to sign the BRI in 2019. EU states participating in the BRI are mostly from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and Southern Europe. They have joined the project to meet their infrastructural needs in transport, energy and telecommunications. Their participation is also a political gesture to upgrade economic ties with China. It is widely accepted that the Great Recession pushed the European countries to join the BRI. The cash-strapped European states were compelled to privatize their national assets. China took advantage of the situation to make favourable deals.³¹

It is worth mentioning that the Chinese 16 + 1 framework, launched in 2012 to expand its economic ties with 11 CEE states and 5 Balkan countries, has a closer linkage to the BRI.

The sub-regional grouping provides a platform for China to launch its BRI deals with the member states. Under the 16+1 format, China has prioritized cooperation in three areas, including infrastructure, advanced and green technologies.³² A number of CEE states, notably Greece, Hungary and Portugal, have received prominent investment under BRI. Chinese major infrastructure projects in Europe under BRI include the Greek Piraeus port, Budapest-Belgrade railway and Belgrade-Bar motorway. The majority of shares of the Piraeus port are held by COSCO, the Chinese shipping corporation, while Hungary is among the countries that have received huge BRI investments.³³ Germany and France have as yet chosen not to join the BRI and expressed their concerns about the mega project with a cautious approach. Both advocate a balanced relationship between the EU and China and resist a "one-way trade road" as well as a greater role for China in the Balkan region.³⁴

In political terms, Italy presented the most important case of EU member states' participation in BRI. Following its MoU with China over BRI in March 2019 under the populist coalition government, Italy became the most important participant country in the Western world for being the third largest economy in the EU and a member of the G7. The MoU led to the conclusion of scores of commercial agreements between the parties

³¹ Erik Brattberg and Etienne Soula, "Europe's Emerging Approach to China's Belt and Road Initiative," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 19, 2018, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/10/19/>.

³² Francesca, *The Belt and Road Initiative*, 2.

³³ Henry Ridgwell, "Ten Years Old, China's 'Belt and Road' is Losing Allure in Europe," *VOA*, <https://www.voanews.com/>

³⁴ Erik Brattberg and Etienne Soula, "Europe's Emerging Approach to China's Belt and Road Initiative."

including those on the Italian ports of Trieste and Genoa.³⁵ Previously, a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT), signed in 1985, governed bilateral investment relations between China and Italy. The MoU levelled the ground for increased Chinese investment and economic engagement in Italy. Given Italy's economic and political importance, the country's participation in BRI indicated the project's enhanced footprint and prospects for further expansion in the EU. On the other hand, Italy's acceptance of BRI at a time when the EU was struggling to forge a unified response to China in the midst of rising great power geopolitical tensions, provoked serious concerns on the part of the EU and the US. The EU leaders warned Italy of the consequences of joining the BRI, saying, "Don't be naive with China."³⁶ In addition, the US castigated Italy and forewarned it of the grave dangers of succumbing to the Chinese Debt Trap diplomacy, which aims to seize control of critical infrastructure.³⁷

In general, the EU's relationship with China in relation to BRI is overly influenced by incredulity, suspicion and careful approach. Preceding the EU-China summit held in July 2018, the EU diplomats in China produced a report signed by the member countries except Hungary. The report denounced the BRI as being in direct opposition to the EU policy for trade liberalization and tilting the imbalance in favour of the Chinese companies that receive the government subsidies.³⁸ Regarding China's approach towards EU, it published a policy paper in December 2018 that advocated the enhancement of trade and commerce ties with the EU by employing all existing mechanisms for collaboration between the two sides. The strategy paper welcomes the EU countries' participation in BRI and underlines that the project is based on the principles of inclusiveness and transparency.³⁹ This kind of characterization of BRI denotes Chinese response to the Western critique of the project for lacking openness and trapping the participating countries in bad loans.

³⁵ Francesca Ghiretti, "The Belt and Road Initiative in Italy: The Ports of Genoa and Trieste," Istituto Affari Internazionali (2021), 1, <https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iaip2117.pdf>.

³⁶ Alexandra Brzozowski and Jorge Valero, "'Don't be Naive with China', EU leaders tell Italy," March 23, 2019, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/news/>.

³⁷ Daniel Jativa, "US Issues Warning to Italy on China Economic Initiative," *Washington Examiner*, March 9, 2019; Crispian Balmer, "Italy's Drive to Join China's Belt and Road Hits Potholes," *Reuters*, March 15, 2019.

³⁸ Giulia Di Donato, "China's Approach to the Belt and Road Initiative and Europe's Response," *ISPI (Italian Institute for International Political Studies)*, May 6, 2020, <https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/>.

³⁹ China's Policy Paper on the European Union, 2018, <https://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201812/18/>.

EU's Concerns Vis-a-Vis China's BRI

Notwithstanding the endorsement of BRI by the CEE and Balkan states, the EU remains concerned about the project's expansion in Europe and beyond. The BRI investment in Europe, particularly the construction of ports, is seen as the 21st century model of the Maritime Silk Road aimed at providing China access to the continent's profitable markets.⁴⁰ The EU is concerned not only about its members' participation in BRI but also about the project's expansion to other world regions. Both political and economic factors account for the EU's dubious approach vis-à-vis China and its ambitious BRI.

The EU has economic and political concerns regarding the participation of its member states in BRI. Particularly, it is critical to note the ambiguity associated with the economic governance of BRI. The Union is known for promoting transparent investment, good governance and accountability in its external relations. It proactively seeks the social and environmental standards that are part of its democratic ideals and anchored in its foundation. Such values-based conditions are not attached to China's BRI. It does not require autocratic governments to alter their policies to qualify for loans and investment.⁴¹ The BRI is criticized for lacking transparency, monitoring mechanisms, bureaucratic coordination, and clearly defined set of roles and responsibilities. It is denounced for operating without a defined framework for making investment-related decisions.⁴² Therefore, the EU believes that the BRI loans incurred by its current or prospective member countries with vulnerable economies, can potentially push them to unsustainable debt levels. The case of Montenegro illustrates this problem. The country sought the EU assistance to repay a \$1 billion debt to China's Export-Import Bank (EXIM) for a motorway project.⁴³

Secondly, there is an apprehension that, through BRI investment, China would ultimately gain control over the European infrastructures of strategic importance including railways, motorways, seaports and airports. Consequently, China would gain dominance in regional connectivity, giving it an influential position in regional and global trade and supply chains. Further, the Chinese investment in European infrastructures and telecommunications is associated with certain security

⁴⁰ Jie Yu, "The Belt and Road Initiative: Domestic Interests, Bureaucratic Politics and the EU-China Relations," *Asia Europe Journal* 16 (2018):223–236.

⁴¹ David Hut, "Can the EU's Global Investment Scheme Rival China?" DW, <https://p.dw.com/p/442bG> 12/09/2021 December 9, 2021.

⁴² Jie Yu, "The Belt and Road Initiative: Domestic Interests, Bureaucratic Politics and the EU-China Relations."

⁴³ Brattberg, "Europe's Emerging Approach to China's Belt and Road Initiative."

risks such as cyber espionage.⁴⁴ French President Emmanuel Macron, expressing his fears about BRI during a visit to China in January 2018, stated that "these roads cannot be those of a new hegemony, which would transform those that they cross into vassals."⁴⁵

Thirdly, the EU opposes the BRI as its sub-regional manifestation in Europe tends to affect the political consensus within the EU, particularly over the issues pertaining to China. The EU member states beneficiaries of BRI have undermined the bloc's unity on China several times. Thanks to Hungary and Greece, the EU abstained from making a direct reference to China in its statement regarding the July 2016 decision of the Permanent Court of Arbitration over the South China Sea. In March 2017, Hungary refused to approve a joint letter about human rights violations in China. In June 2017, Greece blocked an EU declaration at the UN Human Rights Council over human rights violations on part of China. Italy abstained from the vote on the EU's 2019 regulation on foreign investment screening that indirectly aimed at targeting the Chinese FDI.⁴⁶ Likewise, EU countries are divided over curbing the Chinese 5G provider, Huawei.

Finally, the EU has voiced reservations in reaction to the increasing prominence of China on the global stage through the BRI investment. This is reflective of the western skeptical approach towards China's global outreach. In this context, EU's reaction to China's BRI is influenced by the political tensions between the US and China and the developments taking place in Asia in this connection. Given EU's alignment with the US through global partnership and NATO, the geopolitical factors and the power dynamics involving the US and China have an impact on the EU-China ties. Therefore, The EU's cautious approach towards the BRI is also due to its relational and structural partnership with the US in economic and security spheres. The European leadership has been debating an independent and more visible role in global politics in view of the changing character of the global political environment, particularly in light of the multifaceted nature of the emerging world order.⁴⁷ However, it has yet to come up with an assertive and independent stance on global issues.

EU's Response to the BRI

While the EU sceptically perceives China's BRI as a challenge, it does not have an EU-level coherent strategy that shapes its direct

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Michel Rose, "China's new 'Silk Road' Cannot be One-way, France's Macron says," *Reuters*, January 8, 2018.

⁴⁶ Ghiretti, *The Belt and Road Initiative in the Eastern and Southern EU*, 2-3.

⁴⁷ Mercy A. Kuo, "Assessing the EU-China-US Triangle Insights from Frans-Paul van der Putten," *The Diplomat*, November 5, 2019.

response to the project. This has resulted in a divided approach of EU member states to BRI. Without a unified EU strategy on BRI, China deals with EU member states at individual or sub-regional levels through consistent negotiations and interactions. One example is the 16+1 framework. The expansion of the BRI into Europe has presented the EU with a conundrum posing the challenge of maintaining a cohesive stance toward China while keeping the Eastern and Central European states from joining the BRI.

EU institutional response to BRI has evolved gradually and indirectly. Response of the EU, including its institutions and members states, has unfolded through four phases wait-and-see, participation, caution, and competition and cooperation.⁴⁸ The EU initially adopted an impassive stance when BRI was launched in 2013. EU countries' concerns began to surface with time as the BRI began to expand in scope and magnitude. The two parties launched the "EU-China Connectivity Platform" in 2015. This marked the first noteworthy response of the EU towards BRI. The platform was signed by the key representative bodies of the two sides, namely the European Commission and the National Development and Reform Commission of China (NDRC). Specifically, it aimed at enhancing mutual connectivity centered on the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and the BRI through the criteria based on transparency, reciprocity in market access, and equal opportunities for business.⁴⁹ For follow-up, both sides agreed to arrange yearly high-level meetings of officials and technical experts. Although this networking platform is still operational, it does not serve as an instrument of EU cooperation and backing towards BRI.

As China set up the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) in 2015, a number of EU member states including the major ones joined it. In response, the EU established a Co-Investment Fund with China in 2017, which involved the European Investment Fund and the Silk Road Fund. The fund aimed at creating synergies between China's BRI and its investment programme for Europe in accordance with the "Junker Plan."⁵⁰ The plan was established in 2015 to meet the investment needs of the EU states in the wake of the Eurozone crisis. In March 2019, the EU published

⁴⁸ Liu Zuokui, *Europe and the "Belt and Road" Initiative: Responses and Risks (2019)*, 1.

⁴⁹ European Commission, "The EU-China Connectivity Platform," https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-themes/international-relations/eu-china-connectivity-platform_en.

⁵⁰ Delegation of the European Union to China, *EIB Group Cooperation with China to be Strengthened with New EUR 500 Million Silk Road Fund Equity Investment Initiative*, Brussels, June, 3 2017.

“a strategic outlook” that characterized China as a cooperation and negotiating partner as well as an economic competitor and systemic rival, indicating the changing dynamics of the relationship between the EU and China.⁵¹

Beyond Europe, the EU has undertaken several initiatives to compete with BRI. In September 2018, the EU unveiled a “connecting Europe and Asia Strategy” that aimed at providing an alternative to China’s BRI centered approach. The strategy envisions EU-Asia connectivity through cooperation in various sectors including transport, energy and the digital economy. Further, the EU distinguishes its connectivity as sustainable, comprehensive and rules-based—the European way.⁵² These attributes set the EU strategy apart from the BRI.

As an extension of its connectivity strategy, the EU unleashed the “Global Gateway Strategy,” in 2021. The strategy aims at realizing a “transformational impact” in partnership areas including digital, transport, climate and energy, education and health through a smart, clean and secure investment. It aims to make an investment of €300 billion through “Team Europe” comprising the EU, its member countries, and European financial institutions.⁵³ The Global Gateway initiative needs an assessment from another perspective. While it is lesser than BRI in terms of scope, its attached conditions may discourage countries from its membership.⁵⁴

Notwithstanding these limitations, the Global Gateway Strategy may collaborate with the US-led investment strategy, Build Back Better World (B3W). The initiative was launched by the G7 countries in June 2021, pledging a \$40 trillion investment by 2035 as an obvious alternative to the Chinese BRI. It targets investment in healthcare, gender equality, climate and digital technology, and economic connectivity. B3W distinguishes itself through transparency, high standards and multilateral partnership.⁵⁵ Given that the B3W membership includes three major EU countries and bears uniformity with the EU strategy for global connectivity in terms of objectives and mechanisms, it can potentially enhance the EU’s capacity and effectiveness to respond to the BRI

⁵¹ “Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council EU-China – A Strategic Outlook,” JOIN/2019/5 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/>.

⁵² Zuokui, *Europe and the “Belt and Road” Initiative*, 5-6.

⁵³ European Commission, “Global Gateway Review,” <https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/global-gateway/>.

⁵⁴ Hut, “Can the EU’s Global Investment Scheme Rival China?”

⁵⁵ Conor M. Savoy, “Opportunities for Increased Multilateral Engagement with B3W,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, May 6, 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/>.

expansion across regions. However, there is a fundamental difference between BRI and Western initiatives. BRI is already functional and much more serious undertaking in terms of commitment and investment volumes.

EU's connectivity strategies outside the EU exist in pieces and in an ad-hoc manner. It has several connectivity strategies and is part of various multilateral connectivity initiatives through its own or member states' participation. However, it lacks a coherent strategy that brings various disjointed initiatives together. Further, the EU strategies for global connectivity lack the operational details of the proposed infrastructure projects and investments. Therefore, its extra-regional response to BRI is far from having practical outcomes. However, its regional response to BRI, characterized by caution and competition, has produced positive outcomes. As a major development, Italy has withdrawn from the BRI, setting a tone for more European exits and creating challenges for further expansion of BRI in Europe. In addition, the 16+1 framework has been losing vibrancy as a platform for China's engagement with the CEE countries. While Lithuania has left it, some of its members including the Czech Republic and Poland are no longer fervent supporters.⁵⁶

To sum up, the divergence between the EU's strategic interests and member countries' corporate interests accounts for an inconsistent and paradoxical response of the EU to the Chinese BRI. Contrary to the EU's institutional and state position, European corporations have demonstrated much interest in investment and business under BRI. Some top European companies have inked BRI agreements. They are engaging in business related to infrastructure development, trade and logistics within the BRI context. While some benefit from direct participation in BRI-led business opportunities, others take advantage of the business activity enhanced by the BRI-related supply chain networks. Thus, the European corporate sector views the BRI as an important source of enhancing business opportunities and boosting the business environment. A pronounced example of European corporate engagement under the BRI is Germany's tech-giant Siemens, which has established a partnership with Chinese companies.⁵⁷ This context and the case of the European corporate interest in BRI indicate that only scepticism and criticism of BRI on the part of the EU is not sufficient. A pragmatic response should focus on improving the business environment, expanding opportunities and reducing risk factors.

⁵⁶ Ghiretti, *The Belt and Road Initiative in the Eastern and Southern EU*, 2.

⁵⁷ Dr Astrid Askala-Kuhmann, "European Responses to BRI-An Overdue Assessment," *The Horizons*, No. 14, Summer 2019.

Conclusion

The BRI is China's grand initiative to transform global connectivity and infrastructure across Asia, Africa and Europe. The Chinese footprint in Europe has increased through BRI-related engagement in the continent. Due to its geoeconomic manifestations and geopolitical ramifications, the project has attracted a lot of attention and criticism, notably from the West and the EU. Several economic and political factors account for the EU's concerns vis-à-vis the BRI. It is critical to note that the ambiguous economic governance of BRI is prone to adverse economic consequences for the participating EU member states. There is a perception in the EU that the BRI investment may lead to China's control over strategically important European infrastructures with economic and political repercussions. Further, Chinese engagement in CEE countries through BRI undermines EU political consensus over the issues pertaining to China. Finally, the EU is concerned about China's global assertiveness through BRI in the context of growing geopolitical tensions between the US and China.

These factors indicate that the EU does not see BRI as a liberal undertaking for regional connectivity. For lacking transparency and openness, it is viewed as contrary to Western institutionalism. Therefore, the EU is concerned about the ambiguity regarding the terms and conditions, governance and accountability of BRI. These issues may result in unsustainable debt levels on part of the participating EU countries, becoming a serious challenge for the EU's rules-based regional connectivity model in the long run. By the same token, the EU holds a perception that BRI can potentially pose a threat to the Western-led liberal world order.

EU's response to BRI has evolved through four approaches wait-and-see, participation, caution, and competition and cooperation. Over the years, it has undertaken a number of regional and global connectivity strategies to deal with the BRI expansion in Europe and other parts of the world. The regional response of the EU aims to steer China's engagement in Europe through the EU while discouraging its BRI dealings through EU member states individually or through sub-regional frameworks. Globally, the EU offers alternative connectivity strategies with distinct attributes as compared with the BRI. However, the EU's response to BRI is characterized by the lack of a coherent and comprehensive strategy. To the EU credit, BRI's further expansion in Europe faces challenges as Italy declares its withdrawal from BRI and CEE countries adopt a cautious approach regarding their interaction with China through the 16+1 framework.

PAKISTAN'S PARADIGM SHIFT FROM TRADITIONAL TO NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY: AN ANALYSIS

Sajjad Hussain Awan*

Abstract

Since its inception, traditional security considerations have largely driven Pakistan's national security orientation. Traditional security focuses on military aspects of national security, addressing the domain of direct strategy. Contextually, traditional imperatives such as the Indian factor, nuclear domain and conventional dimension have been the dominant themes of the country's national security architecture. However, the emergence of the National Security Policy in 2022 can be termed a watershed moment in its national security history. The document entails a paradigm shift in its security orientation. That is to say, shift from state-centric security to human-centric security. It recognizes the contemporary imperatives such as economic security, climate security, cyber space security and human resource development as the state's top most priorities. In this context, the paper examines Pakistan's paradigm shift from traditional to non-traditional security as an aspired reality complemented by securitization theory and a human security approach to international security based on mixed methodology.

Keywords: NSP 2022, Cyber Security, Climate Security, Human-centric Security

Introduction

Pakistan's security policy has been largely geared toward addressing traditional security challenges emerging from its country's borders throughout history. For instance, the biggest traditional security threats to Pakistan was Indian military aggression, while non-traditional threat (indirect strategy/sub-conventional warfare), though they existed alongside, got exponentially strengthened after Pakistan commissioned

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nuclear weapons. Hence the paradigm of overall security threats to Pakistan also evolved as nontraditional security threats spread in strength largely in Pakistan, especially in areas like Baluchistan and FATA. However, Pakistan's susceptibility in the realm of internal security threats and, terrorism emerged post 9/11 and remains the most prominent. In the aftermath of the Afghan War, instability quickly crept into Pakistan's borders, poisoning the country's entire length and breadth. According to Major General Babar Iftikhar, spokesman for ISPR, the country has lost 83,000 lives in the fight on terror, whereas the economic damage was over US\$126 billion.¹ In 2001, Pakistan opted to join the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) primarily in Afghanistan and provided steadfast assistance to the US-led coalition that aggravated the crisis. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ) estimates that the US has carried out at least 430 drone strikes in Pakistan since 2004. In this war, Syed argues, "Pakistan has suffered more casualties than all NATO countries combined."² The repercussions of this Pakistan-US alliance were also contained under the canopy of a terrorist organization, such as the TTP (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan). TTP carried out terrorist activities and severely degraded Pakistan's internal security situation. Another battle-hardened group, ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), held its foothold in Afghanistan along Pakistan's western border, with the possibility to spill over into Pakistan thus worsening Pakistan's internal security and adding the threat of religious extremism. Moreover, all the internal security threats (non-traditional) are indicative of an emerging internal threat rather than traditional threats. As Pakistan's paradigm shift from traditional to non-traditional security threats was realized, the focus rightly transited from geo-strategic to geo-economics. Hence, the question is which factors are involved in the process of focusing on economic security?

Literature Review

According to Savigny and Marsden, security is one of the most significant issues in international relations. Currently, security includes "not only military challenges and the balance of power in the international sphere, but also the security of each citizen within a nation."³ Security is a controversial and complex term. Countries invest significant amounts of

¹ Sana Jamal, "83,000 Lives Lost in Pakistan's War on Terrorism," *Gulf News*, January 12, 2021, <https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/pakistan/>

² Maria Syed, "Need for a Paradigm Shift in Security: Adopting Human Security in Pakistan," *IPRI Journal*: (2014) 91.

³ Heather Savigny and Lee Marsden, "Doing Political Science and International Relations: Theories in Action," *Palgrave Macmillan* (2011), 14.

money to maintain their security, based on the threat perception. Security officials pay more emphasis to current and evident conflicts, as well as the potential of such disputes. In general, these are related to military conflicts, and a large portion of national budgets is devoted on developing security capabilities to respond to potential threats. For example, "an average of 2.9 percent of every nation's Gross Domestic Product was invested on defense" at the global level in 1996.⁴

Nation-states are also constantly attempting to comprehend and react to various developing threats. Booth believes that⁵ people have achieved the extraordinary capacity to cause significant harm to their neighbouring humans and to the natural world on which humans are completely reliant. Security is a discourse about vulnerability that has been amplified.⁶ The vulnerability evaluation is based on the likelihood of threats to a nation. In the same way, security considers the danger of exposure, vulnerability to damage, and the ability to restore. The traditional understanding of security has been that other countries threaten a country's security.

Non-traditional security, on the other hand, recognizes that the danger to a nation-state can emerge from a variety of causes other than military; for instance, environmental hazards stem from man's relationship with nature. National security encompasses more than just defending a country from violence perpetrated by other countries at the borders; it also includes threats from individuals who inadvertently or by their actions damage or endanger states.⁷ Humans purposefully inflict these hazards on their fellow humans. Non-traditional security refers to a wide range of hazards posed by natural catastrophes, climate change, illness, poverty, and hunger, among other things, that can happen even when people do not intend to create them but pose a risk to national security.⁸

Following the attacks of September 11, 2001 the security dynamics changed and thus also the response strategy of the nation states. The authors have used the deterrence theory and stated that the fourth wave

⁴ Jon Barnett, "Tyndall Centre Working Paper No 7," *Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies*, (October 2001).

⁵ Ken Booth, *Theory of World Security* (Cambridge University Press (2007), 1.

⁶ Jon Barnett, "Security and Climate Change," *Global Environmental Change* 13(1):7-17, April 2003.

⁷ Josh Busby, "Climate Change and National Security: An Agenda for Action," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 2008, <https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/wps/cfr/>.

⁸ Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 71.

of deterrence theory has broadened its concept of deterrence security by including non-traditional threats as a crucial component of security strategy. Terrorism, nuclear warfare, cyber dangers, water security, human security, and energy issues, among other things, are now included in the boarder perspective of security. Pakistan is currently reevaluating and reorganizing its security tactics in order to safeguard the country from these entities. However, more intentional and tangible measures are required to address the internal and external causes that are gradually but steadily eroding the status quo.⁹

The current focus shift from traditional security to human security is academical and political concern. Military interventions are the priority in traditional security policies, yet they are ineffective inappropriately reacting to the most urgent dangers to individual security worldwide. Traditional security risks have exacerbated individual security difficulties. Internal displacement has developed a way of life in South Asia, and it is a common occurrence in conflict-torn areas around the world. Minority disputes, religious and ethnic schisms, political oppression, sovereignty aspirations, famines, earthquakes, terrorism, a dearth of development initiatives, and the IDPs problems have all contributed to the difficulty of South Asia's obviously deteriorating human security situation. Pakistan has been dealing with the IDP issue for a long time, which is a threat to human security and indeed a domain of national security, and it has proven challenging for Pakistan's government to adequately address the problem. As the reinstatement of IDPs as well as restoration of their areas following the Swat military operation in 2009 neared completion, the Pakistani military settled to cleanse out all terrorist organizations and launched the military operation 'Zarb-e-Azb' in North Waziristan Agency in 2014. Pakistan is facing a massive displacement problem, with about one million people displaced as a result of those operations. Internal displacement is examined as a non-traditional security threat that presents a severe danger to the global security of South Asia in general, and Pakistan's domestic security in particular.¹⁰

Pakistan has the world's seventh-largest army, yet it was also one of the world's 20 most fragile countries in 2018. Pakistan occupies a geostrategic location as well as position in South Asia. Traditionally, national security of Pakistan has been examined from geostrategic and

⁹ F.Z. Syed and S. Javed, "Deterrence: A Security Strategy against Non-Traditional Security Threats to Pakistan," *International Journal of Social Siences Management* vol. 4, Issue-4: (2017) 267-274.

¹⁰ Umbreen Javaid and Izzat Raazia, "Non-traditional Security Threat in South Asia with Particular Orientation to IDP's in Pakistan," *Journal of Political Studies*, vol. 22, Issue 2, (2015), 471-584.

geopolitical viewpoints; however, with the predominance of economic issues, the geo-economic approach has assumed the leading role in examining Pakistan's national security. For economic development, most developing countries rely largely on foreign resources and regional connectivity, but both might compromise national security in one way or the other and Pakistan is not an exception in this regard. The article examined the threats to Pakistan's national security by concentrating on rising Pakistan-China economic connectedness, Indian anxieties and insecurities, and instability of Afghanistan, as well as the potential impact on the CPEC.¹¹

The Taliban's control of Afghanistan has presented Pakistan with both opportunities and challenges. While Islamabad is satisfied with the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan, it remains concerned with the instability in Afghanistan spilling over into Pakistan. Radicalism, terrorism, refugees, and drug trafficking are among the top non-traditional security threats, and Islamabad fears serious concerns about how the new development in Afghanistan could present threats to Pakistan's peace and security. With a friendly regime in Kabul, Pakistan, on the other hand, has a chance to address these issues through a combination of bilateral and multilateral approaches. This paper examines the severity of non-traditional security risks for Pakistan in relation to Afghanistan by looking at historical and current factors. Islamabad's urgent non-traditional security considerations center on how recent events in Afghanistan may affect religious extremism at home. Finally, the paper offers policy recommendations regarding Pakistan's involvement in Afghanistan, which is dominated by the Taliban.¹²

Conceptual Framework

In 1995, Ole Wæver proposed the concept of securitization in detail, and a group of scientists at the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute reflected on the subject. Later, "The Copenhagen School" was the name given to the organization.¹³ In 1998, Ole Wæver, Barry Buzan, and Jaap de Wilde released their work "Security: A New Framework for Analysis," which established securitization theory as an analytical tool. Ever since, periodic international journals dedicated to securitization

¹¹ Shubnam Gul et al., "Shifting National Security Paradigm of Pakistan from Geo Politics to a Geo Economics Era," *Global Economics Review*, VI(I), (2021):81-94.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ D. Mutimer, "Critical Security Studies: A Schismatic History. In Contemporary Security Studies," ed. A. Collins. *Oxford: OUP* (2007).

and/or de-securitization have grown in numbers and popularity.¹⁴ According to a scholar, securitization theory is one of the most well-known and important methods of security studies since the Cold War.¹⁵ "It is a utility for the investigation of the politics of security-policy making," is where the innovative value of the securitization theory lies. The founders of securitization theory claim that a precise source description for threats and vulnerabilities is lacking. Threats can come from a wide range of topics. However, to be classified as security issues, "they must meet rigorously specified criteria that separate them from the ordinary run of the purely political."¹⁶ To begin with, there is very little conceptual literature on threats which is not sufficiently in-depth. Second, while there is an objective approach to dangers (actual threats) and a subjective approach (perceived threats), no one can guarantee the two are related.

Similarly, McDonald¹⁷ argues that securitization theory needs to be enlarged to take into account the viewpoints of all non-state actors and their depictions of security in order to adequately explain what security means in modern global politics. Nevertheless, this method of approaching security also has the drawback of leading to an ambiguous conception of the term security. This is due to the notion that the securitization procedure is open, or in other terms, that any actor can securitize any problem or referent object, implied by the emphasis on the fact that the definition of security is eventually established by taking into account the viewpoints of all actors.¹⁸

The most compelling viewpoint, however, is put forth by Balzacq,¹⁹ who contends that not all players are in a position to assert that a problem is a security problem. Although this idea is comparable to that of early Copenhagen School theorists, Balzacq diverges from the Copenhagen School in how he defines a successful securitization. Buzan, Waever, and de Wilde are of the view that a securitization is effective if a matter is handled outside the parameters of political procedure. Therefore, what qualifies an institutional player as a valid securitizing actor is their

¹⁴ U. P. Gad and K.L. Petersen, "Concepts of Politics in Securitization Studies," *Security Dialogue* 42 (4-5) (2011): 315-328.

¹⁵ M. C. Williams, "Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics," *International Studies Quarterly* 47 (4): (2003) 511-531.

¹⁶ B. Buzan, and O. Wæver, "Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security," Cambridge: *Cambridge University Press* (2003).

¹⁷ M. McDonald, "Securitization and the Construction of Security," *European Journal of International Relations* 14(4): (2008) 563-587.

¹⁸ M. C. Williams, "Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics."

¹⁹ EJR, "The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context," *European Journal of International Relations* 11(2): (2005) 171-201.

capacity to do so. Contrarily, according to Balzacq, a topic can be successfully securitized if it is relevant to the audience and the setting. In other words, he contends that a problem becomes securitized if a party defines it as such and the appropriate audience accepts too. Therefore, Balzacq stated that security is a social construction, and an actor's capability to create a socially efficient assertion of a security issue depends more on whether the pertinent audience acknowledges them as a suitable securitizing actor than it does on their ability to address the threat in question.²⁰

Three general characteristics of security are implied by securitization theory. The first characteristic is that security is inextricably linked to the idea of threat. Threats can take many forms. To be considered a security issue, nevertheless, they must constitute a threat to the referent object's (states, government, regime, society) important values (i.e., ideology, dignity, integrity, and identity). Second, the phrase or notion of security is a "basically contentious concept," according to W.B. Gallie,²¹ and hence subjective in character, implying that there may be no universal agreement on its description. As a result, "what is recognized as secure is entirely dependent on what the person who issued such a statement intended."²² The third element is that "security" is essentially a political term. It means that actors dealing with difficult problems (usually states) are not always obligated to use the security approach. Because the state has both forceful and non-coercive civilian mechanisms for minimizing threats and vulnerabilities before developing into open violent conflict, the deployment of a particular approach-whether forceful or non-coercive-is always a matter of personal choice.

The existential threat pertains to the domination of a single issue that is distinct from all others and so requires top emphasis. In comparison to other threats, the existential threat is the most serious in nature and does not relate to a philosophical idea in this context. Dangers to the existence of something, typically the state, are referred to as existential threats. The existential threat, according to Williams, is "situations of utmost peril, possibly endless effort and sacrifice that must both be preserved."²³ If the relevant referent object fails to successfully deal with such an existential threat, the referent objects' survival will be

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ "Essentially Contested Concepts," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 56 (1956): 167-198.

²² M. C. Williams, "Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics," 516.

²³ Ibid., 518.

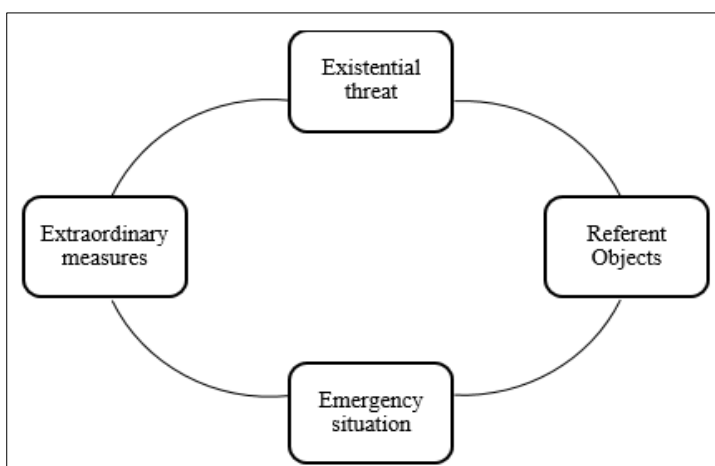
jeopardized. The referent objects are those that are perceived to be threatened with extinction and have a valid claim to life.²⁴

R Emmers divides referent objects into five categories as follows;²⁵

- (1) The state in contexts of military security.
- (2) National sovereignty or ideology in contexts of political security.
- (3) National economies in contexts of economic security.
- (4) Collective identities in contexts of societal security.
- (5) Species or habitats in contexts of environmental security

In this situation, the object in question may or may not exist, or it may be capable of dealing with the challenges in ways that the decision-makers choose. The proclamation of an emergency condition is, in effect, the next stage after invoking security. By proclaiming it, the government has always claimed "the authority to adopt whatever methods required to prevent a dangerous development"-in other words, extraordinary steps. As a result, "the invoking of security to legitimize the use of force, a method for the state to mobilize, or to take special powers" is referred to as the employment of extraordinary measures.²⁶

Figure 1: Components of Security²⁷



Source: Author's compilation.

²⁴ B. Buzan, and O. Wæver, "Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security," 23.

²⁵ R. Emmers, "Non-Traditional Security in the Asia Pacific: The Dynamics of Securitization," (*Marshall Cavendish International* : Singapore, 2009.

²⁶ B. Buzan, and O. Wæver, "Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security," 23.

²⁷ Y. Kurniawan, "The Politics of Securitization in Democratic Indonesia," *Palgrave Macmillan*, (2018)

Another approach that explains the gradual shift of Pakistan from traditional security to non-traditional security is the Human Security approach. It can be traced back to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Human Development Report (HDR) of 1994. It argues for a "people-centric" concept of security and against the dichotomy of "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear."²⁸ Simply, the contending point before Human Security approach is that human development should be the primary focus of state and society. In an era of geo-economics, the relevance of human development has increased manifold. Due to domestic factors and international compulsions, Pakistan as a state has been trading its path through a traditional security lens. However, it is experiencing a gradual shift from traditional to non-traditional security that is not only rigorously advocated by all the key stake holders but is also incorporated as the core element of the National Security Policy of 2022 as analyzed in the succeeding parts of the study.

Factorial Analysis

Because of the peculiar geostrategic, cultural mechanisms – cold war, New Great Game, Sino-US novel cold war outbreak, unipolar world, South Asian local tactical national machineries – India's supremacy drive, and country wide strategic ethnic contraption like antiquity, political-legitimacy, economic, governance tragedy, socio-cultural, and army-the obsolete safety has always outperformed the NTS in Pakistan.²⁹ Furthermore, throughout Pakistan's founding, there has never been a comprehensive, consensus-based national security plan. The reassuring strategy, which is linked to international scenarios, has stood the test of time in the face of international and national policies in South Asia. At the global level, authority dogmas produced a fully calculated philosophy, a South Asian background, and ultimately a purposeful public ethos in Pakistan.³⁰ Pakistan; as part of larger Indian sub-continent has been facing invasions from western frontiers such as Mahmood of Ghazni (Henry Elliot), the attacks by Mongols, Timur-i-Lang, Shihab-u-din Ghauri and Ahmed Shah Abdali, Persian invasion of Indian subcontinent³¹. Also to the great game and then the cold war era all point out predominance of land

²⁸ Benjamin Zyla, "Human Security," *Oxford Bibliographies*, January 13, 2021, DOI: 10.1093/OBO/9780199743292-0261.

²⁹ Dr. Imran Ali Sandano, "Nontraditional Security Diplomacy: An Ultimate Option for South Asia," *Journal of Political Studies*, Special Issue, 2018 : 155-163.

³⁰ P. R Lavoy, "Pakistan's Foreign Relation," *South Asia in World Politics*, (2005) : 49–70.

³¹ Spencer C Tucker, *A Global Chronology of Conflict: From the Ancient World to the Modern Middle East* (ABC-CLIO :December 23, 2009), 2777.

strategy to invade and hold targeted lands for occupation especially in Indian sub-continent. Hence Pakistan's preference of keeping its threat perception focused on land and specifically India centric had genuine and serious rationale as well as the basis. However, there are number of factors involved in the Pakistan's shift from traditional to non-traditional security paradigm.

Balance of Power

Pakistan's security urgencies have been identified as active and experienced in a number of internal confidence primacies on a regular basis.³² At each stage, there is a brief examination of strategic constraints. In this setting, Pakistan has a long history of deliberate local restraints, such as poverty.³³ Due to its weaker budget, these have consistently remained challenging areas for management. Referring to securitization theory, the first element is identification of threat and one of the grave threats for Pakistan has always remained India. For instance, Kashmir is a contentious issue between both states, that dates back to the humiliating Redcliff Award.³⁴ In response to Indian atrocities, Pakistan has bolstered the initial freedom movement in Indian-occupied Kashmir, which started in 1989. Several separate combatant factions, including Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM), and Lashkar-i-Tayba (LiT), began battling in anti-Indian hordes.³⁵ After the attacks of September 11, 2001, India saw an opportunity to use the media to demonize the Kashmiri people's desire for self-rule and equate it with violence. It was successful in branding Kashmir's numerous self-rule freedom fighter groups as extremist organizations, primarily the JeM and LeT.³⁶ Moreover, India has now stable economy as compared to Pakistan and investing a large sum on defense which is around 68 billion dollars annually. On the other hand, Pakistan's defense spending is only 8 billion dollars annually. This gap is present since 1998 till date Pakistan's economy cannot bear the burden of any war with India. In order to confront and create balance of power in the region Pakistan has nuclear deterrence so it is significant to focus on

³² Hassan Rizvi, *Pakistan and the Geostrategic Environment: A Study of Foreign Policy* (Palgrave Macmillan: United Kingdom, 1993)

³³ Khadija Haq, *Economic Growth with Social Justice: Collected Writings of Mahbub ul Haq*, (Oxford University Press, June 2017)

³⁴ A. G. A. M. Noorani, *The Kashmir Dispute 1947-2012* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014)

³⁵ A. Rashid, "The Taliban: Exporting Extremism," *Foreign Affairs*, (1999) : 22-35.

³⁶ J. Holland, *Selling the War on Terror: Foreign Policy Discourses after 9/11* (Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2012)

internal stability and invest on the people. Some of the regional strategic constraints are listed below ahead.

Evolving Trends of War

After the disintegration of the USSR, the war patterns have also altered in the world. Earlier, the wars were fought along the borders but now there is the trend of proxy wars through different medium. Though the Ukraine-Russia war is the latest direct confrontation in the current scenario, proxy wars are still in practice largely. Through this system, non-actors have been used to create destabilization in the target country. In the context of Pakistan and India, India has been engaged in facilitating the non-state actors to create instability in Pakistan especially in erstwhile FATA and Baluchistan. The asymmetrical threat in Afghanistan has serious repercussions for Pakistan's security, as it is stated that Washington utilized Kabul as a backdoor state against Moscow, and that after the latter's defeat, it was left in ruins without measures for its restructuring.³⁷ It built a reputation for proxy warfare and anti-regional influence. Through its intelligence activity, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), India is exasperatingly using Kabul as a proxy against Pakistan. Pakistan, being a neighbor of Afghanistan, cannot remain a silent observer of the recompense payments of its public masses. Via its messenger activity, Inter-Services Intelligence, it has been entrusted to involve in a proxy war with India in Afghanistan.³⁸

National Security Policy

The emergence of the National Security Policy (NSP) in 2022 is considered a watershed moment in the nation's security milieu. It was released in 2022 after many efforts and multiple endeavours. It reflects a paradigm shift from traditional to non-traditional security by prioritizing geo-economics over geo-politics. There are multiple reasons behind this shift. One crucial reason is India which has remained pivotal Pakistan's national security compulsions. Essentially, both Pakistan and India are nuclear powers and cannot afford any nuclear misadventure. Resultantly, India resorted to non-state actors by using them as proxies against Pakistan to cause internal destabilization. In the given context, it has become critical for Pakistan to focus on the economic dimension of national security. It can be inferred that the National Security Policy (NSP)

³⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "President Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech and Proposes to Build a Silk Road Economic Belt with Central Asian Countries," (2013)

³⁸ D. Holmes, and N. Dixon, *Behind the US War on Afghanistan*, (Resistance Books:Australia,2001)

of 2022 is a unique document because of two reasons. Firstly, it is first ever document that takes a comprehensive view of national security into account by identifying security risks emerging from numerous sources, dimensions and actors. It is the first time in the country's history that a security policy document incisively aims to defend the state and its people from numerous challenges. Secondly, it is a collaborative effort that involves the in-puts of almost all stakeholders such as federation, provinces, political parties, civil society and academia.

For instance, the preface of the National Security Policy clearly says that the prime concern of the state is the security of its people. In essence, it projects that human centric security would be the topmost priority. Nonetheless, it reinforces the significance of the state and its institutions as the custodians of the security of their people. In retrospect, the focus used to be state centric in the absence of such a document. Now, the focus of the state is its people, and the best way to protect and defend its people is to be on the track of economic development, human resource development, addressing climate challenges and resource scarcity. In other words, there is a complete reorientation of security direction from state-centric to human-centric that may best serve the national interests of Pakistan.

Generally, it is noticed that policy circles used to oversimplify the security challenges by ignoring the underlying intricacies of such challenges. In academia, this tendency is referred as reductionism because it overlooks the root causes of challenge and thus proposes a simplified view of security. On the contrary, while recognizing and addressing the security threats, the criterion of this policy is twofold: anti-reductionism and non-essentialism. In other words, the NSP of 2022 realizes that social reality is a complex realm that cannot be comprehensively understood by putting emphasis on one or two factors. It argues that security is an interwoven and interrelated phenomenon, and a single modification in one factor may have cascade implications for many others. It establishes a paradigm which gives weight to intersections and relative aspects of multiple security factors. It provides a list of challenges and identifies the potential sources in order to have a pragmatic and holistic mechanism to meet the challenges. For instance, terrorism should not only be viewed in its manifestation rather in its causal mechanism, enabling entities, foreign involvement and domestic pathologies.

In retrospect context, the emergence of NSP was a result of prolonged instability that posed serious challenge to the writ of the state particularly erstwhile FATA and Baluchistan went through severe sub-conventional warfare from hostile elements such as India. During the process of maintaining peace and stability, incessant pattern came to know that poverty ridden condition of general public, uneven distribution of resources, injustice and violence were the major sources of people's

discontent. Internal displacement during operations further aggravated the situation of people in the form of intense poverty. The basic necessities of life became a rare commodity for locals. These types of economic deprivations caused recruitment of locals by non-state actors against the state. In that environment, there was a dire need of people centric security policy to counter the root cause of the problem that rightly surfaced in 2022.

This is a trans-boundary threat that involves grave consequences that are fueled by number of elements. The direct result is extremism and intolerance that are the wombs of conflicts and violence. Apart from violent conflicts caused by variables like economic deprivation, cyber space is another critical area of contemporary national security as it may not only project the hostile narrative but also serve as medium for recruiting locals for violent activities, indeed with the help of hostile foreign hand. According to securitization theory, securitization of cyber space and curbing cybercrimes are the daunting tasks of today's national security.

Furthermore, the aforementioned threats have direct implications for referent objects, which in this case are downtrodden economy, intense violence and cybercrimes. The national security of the country is the eventual victim in this situation. However, a shift in referent object in the National Security Policy of Pakistan rightly appeared to meet these challenges. One may rationally term it as a paradigm shift in the national security architecture of the country. Our youth which is a significant portion of the country's population, holds a special place in this National Security Policy. It recognizes the issues and challenges of youth, such as illiteracy, unemployment, inflation, hopelessness and dissatisfaction that can easily be preyed by sectarianism, terrorism, ethnic violence and other crimes. The policy suggests that youth bulge is the greatest asset of the country and absence of organized human resource development of youth may result in fragile social fabric and flimsy national integration. In essence, the policy recognizes the immense significance of the country's youth that should be channelized in the right direction for a prosperous future.

Economic Development and 18th Amendment

The 18th Amendment was one of the significant apparatuses in the amendments to the 1973 constitution which actually shifted powers from center to provinces. The areas of challenge which were felt to be counterproductive were education & health regulation etc. Secondly, through NFC award provinces were allotted fair share of finance to alleviate the poverty, which owing to political expediencies was never utilized the right way and hence poverty could not be alleviated. These initiatives signified the power shift from center to provinces.

The third element is that "security" is essentially a political term. It means that actors in charge of dealing with difficult problems (usually states) are not always obligated to use the security approach. Because the state has both forceful and non-coercive civilian mechanisms for minimizing threats and vulnerabilities before developing into open violent conflict, the deployment of a particular approach—whether forceful or non-coercive—is always a matter of personal choice so the NFC award can only be settled through consensus and in agreement with the provinces, management of defense related aspects and expenditure became a challenge as very less budgetary allocations were left at the disposal of the federal government after disbursement to the provinces. The obvious solution, thus, is improvement in the economy so that the betterment of people can be ensured without compromising on the defense and security matters of the state, which is the essence of the National Security policy. Economic considerations have gradually eclipsed strategic considerations and titled Pakistan for economic progress instead of the traditional security paradigm. This is why Pakistan's initiative with China in the form of CPEC is progress towards non-traditional security concerns. The CPEC is, in fact, a critical growth mechanism and strategic motion. CPEC is a reconstruction of intensified and persistent two-sided cooperation at a time of rising Chinese geopolitical and geo-economic relevance and apprehensions about Pakistan's security and unequal economic dispensation are well-founded.³⁹

"The CPEC is intended to promote interconnectivity in Pakistan through a network of roads, trains, and tubes, as well as energy, industrial, and other construction initiatives, in order to address Pakistan's severe energy shortages and boost the country's financial development."⁴⁰ Finally, the CPEC will facilitate trade by linking the Chinese city of Kashgar to the Pakistani port of Gwadar via an overland route that connects China to the Indian Ocean. In April 2015, Pakistan and China announced their plans for the CPEC, signing fifty-one contracts and memorandums of agreement on Chinese investments worth \$46 billion during the next ten to fifteen years. Some works are already underway, including as highway and energy projects, with completion expected by the end of 2016.⁴¹

³⁹ S. A. Ramay, "China Pakistan Economic Corridor: A Chinese Dream Being Materialized Through Pakistan," SDPI Policy Brief, (2016): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn>.

⁴⁰ A. Zubedi et al., "Sustaining Low Carbon Emission Development: An Energy Efficient Transportation Plan for CPEC," *Journal of Information Processing Systems*, (2018) 14(2).

⁴¹ Sajid Hussain, "Politico-Strategic and Economic Importance of Gwadar Port, Pakistan," *Omni Scriptum GmbH & Company Kg* (2015), 152.

CPEC denotes China's intercontinental effort to improve transportation security. In terms of investments in Pakistan, it would almost certainly be expected to create jobs, reduce anti-state sentiments, and provide public funds for further advancements in law and order. As a result, while the CPEC is typically portrayed as a transportation corridor, security concerns may continue to impose limits on the cross-border movement of people and goods, at the very least in the short to medium term.⁴² The financial, political, and security potential that the CPEC deals with economic liberalism is also heightened by Pakistan's ruling citizen and military forbearer. Pakistan needs uninterrupted speculation to spur economic progress, but stakeholders have often avoided it. If carried out, China's investment policy in Pakistan will more than treble all foreign direct investment since 2008. China's energy infrastructure initiatives are particularly timely where our domestic demand surpasses stock by 4,500 megawatts on the average.⁴³

Religious, sectarian, ethnic, and linguistic conflicts have plagued Pakistan throughout its history, never allowing peace to take roots. According to the National Centre for Environmental Information (NCEI), around 12 large earthquakes have struck Pakistan in the last two decades, claiming the lives of about 90,000 people and wreaking havoc on the economy and infrastructure. The country was hit by the country's worst floods in 2010, resulting in enormous losses in human lives, the economy, infrastructure, and crops. Robert Looney examines the decisive and implicit expenses of floods, as well as how distinct aspects of human security are interconnected, such as floods probably triggering internal displacement, virus spread, broken infrastructure, and destructed agricultural and industrial outcomes, all of which are catastrophic for the economy, resulting in joblessness and inflation.

Pakistan, on the other side, is one of the nations that is experiencing severe water scarcity, resulting in a drought that is severely impinging upon the agricultural economy thus resulting into major challenges.⁴⁴ Economic uncertainty in all aspects, such as unparalleled underemployment, record inflation, energy crises, diminishing foreign currency reserves, deflation of the currency, lack of investment, and

⁴² W. Wenwen, "CPEC Defies Skepticism to Aid Pakistan's Development," *World Financial Review* (2018), <https://worldfinancialreview.com/bettingbig-on-cpec/>

⁴³ U. Javaid, and R. Javaid, "Strengthening Geo-strategic Bond of Pakistan and China through Geo-economic Configuration," *Pakistan Economic and Social Review*, (2016) 54 (1), 123.

⁴⁴ Robert Looney, "Economic Impact of Floods in Pakistan," *Contemporary South Asia* Vol. 20 Issue 2, (2012):230.

massive internal and external indebtedness, has been one of Pakistan's most urgent concerns since its establishment. These financial woes are intertwined to the point where one affects the other.

Other human security issues, such as a deteriorating health and educational system, energy turmoil, are also being plagued by the economic crisis. Administrative blunders, political instability, and corruption are frequently linked to economic concerns, all of which are regarded as dangers to human security. The current pandemic is one of the most pressing human security concerns facing not only Pakistan, but the entire globe. COVID-19 has had a negative impact on all aspects of human security, either mental or physical, personal or communal, resulting in mortality, disease, starvation, unemployment, poverty, inflation, lower growth rates, and an increase in dread, suffering, and trauma. This pandemic, according to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, is a human disaster that is "quickly becoming a Human Rights Crisis." In addition to the pandemic, Pakistan experienced another challenge last year in the form of locust attacks on crops, which posed a serious danger to food security.

Conclusion

Pakistan's security concerns have also altered due to the changing and ever-evolving dynamics of warfare around the globe. The national worry which was to defend Pakistan from Indian threats alongside the border, has also shifted as Pakistan is more vulnerable to internal security threats. Pakistan's decades long contribution towards the war on terror, including APS Attacks has negatively impacted the economy, infrastructure and well-being of the masses. This is why a shift from geopolitics to geo-economics was realized as mandatory. Moreover, the Indian trend, activation and reliance on non-state actors to support her nefarious designs against Pakistan is a serious security threat which indicates that when the state struggles to fill in the gap between expectations and provision of services to its masses, or there is a vacuum in the areas of poverty or sense of deprivation among the people, then there exists a space for non-state actors. Moreover, the securitization theoretical perspective successfully provided the basis to understand that the Pakistani state has shifted from the traditional approach of security, which was previously defined as a security threat from India, and identified the non-traditional security in the country as more serious than the traditional Indian centric direct strategy security threat.

STRATEGIC CHESSBOARD: EXAMINING THE INTERPLAY OF SAUDI ARABIA, IRAN, INDIA, AND PAKISTAN AMIDST GLOBAL POWER SHIFTS

Mubashar Hassan Shahid*

Abstract

The rise of China has seemingly brought it on a collision course with the preeminent power, The United States of America. This has convinced various states, most notably India, Pakistan, Iran, and the Gulf countries, to re-orient their foreign policies. China's investments through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), QUAD's resurgence, Israel's foray into the Arab countries, and persistent American support to enhance India's stature at par with China, have pushed the Indian Ocean Region to be at the epicenter of all global rivalries. The presence of extra-regional forces in the Western Indian Ocean Region has ensured some semblance of stability in the region, but it is the complex, interdependent relationship between strategically co-located states of Saudi Arabia, Iran, India, and Pakistan under the shadow of China-USA competition that is the objective of this study.

Keywords: Western Indian Ocean Region, Abraham Accords, QUAD, Belt and Road Initiative

"If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner."

Nelson Mandela

Introduction

The fall of Soviet Union was not triggered by a military failure but rather an economic failure where the Soviet economy could not grow enough to support the military expenditure required to balance American military prowess. It was also the success of the Americans in making successful alliances such as NATO and cultivation of other third world friends and allies in the form of Pakistan, Indonesia and Egypt. These are one of the few reasons listed by Kishore Mahbubani in

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how the USA defeated Soviet Union.¹ China on the other hand has learnt these lessons and has applied them astutely while it prepares for global influence. China's economic rise has been unprecedented but it still lags behind the immense American industrial and military might.² Doubts have been raised on whether the figures quoted for Chinese defense budget are accurate but there is no doubt that Chinese progress has alarmed the Americans.³

Table 1: China – USA Comparison

Parameters	China	USA
GDP per capita (thousands of \$)	89.5 (1960) 12720.2 (2022)	23888.6 (1960) 76398.6 (2022)
GDP per capita -Purchasing Power Parity (current int \$)	981.4 (1990) 21475.6 (2022)	23888.6 (1990) 76398 (2022)
GDP % of global economy	18.6 % (ranks 1 st)	13.6% (ranks 3 rd)
Defense Spending	242 billion \$ (2022)	767 billion (2022)
Payments from Intellectual property rights	12 billion \$ (2021)	125 billion \$ (2021)

Source: Author's compilation.

China may lag behind in certain numbers but its rise has been nothing less than extraordinary. To pull around 700 million people out of poverty over four decades is undoubtedly a great feat.⁴ Nevertheless, China with its first overseas base in Djibouti coupled with economic ties led by infrastructure projects in key states as far as Kenya, Tanzania, and Madagascar has slowly done away with Deng Xiaoping's adage of "keeping a low profile and biding one's time."⁵ All of this has not gone unnoticed.

This American fear of a global competitor in the shape of China has been evident since 2000 when Condoleezza Rice, then a foreign policy advisor to the Republican presidential election campaign's candidate George W. Bush Jr. She had identified China as a "strategic competitor" that "would like to alter Asia's balance of power in its favour" while

¹ Kishore Mahbubani, *Has China Won? The Chinese Challenge to American Primacy*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2022).

² Wohlforth Brooks, Stephen G. William C., "The Myth of Multipolarity, *Foreign Affairs*," June 2023, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/china>.

³ Beaver Robertson, Peter Wilson, "China's Defense Budget Is Much Bigger Than It Looks," *Foreign Policy*, September 19, 2023, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/09/19/>

⁴ World Bank, *Four Decades of Poverty Reduction in China: Drivers, Insights for the World, and the Way Ahead* (The World Bank, 2022)

⁵ Yan Xuetong, "From Keeping a Low Profile to Striving for Achievement," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, April 22, 2014.

proposing that the United States "should never be afraid to confront Beijing when their interests collide."⁶ The USA sees China as the only state with both the capacity and intent to reshape the international order to achieve greater political influence in the region.⁷ NATO also perceives China's ambitions and coercive policies such as its hybrid and cyber operations and its confrontational rhetoric and disinformation campaigns as a challenge to its interests, security, and values.⁸ However, the continued success of the Chinese in finding new partners and the residual effects of the Trump Presidency's America First policy has driven the Americans to aggressively engage with India and to prop it up against China. Similarly, Japan's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific,"⁹ India's "Act East Policy," South Korea's "New Southern Policy"¹⁰ and Australia's "Pacific Step-up"¹¹ have been developed to encourage deeper and dedicated bilateral coordination and cooperation amongst the Indo-Pacific countries primarily to ensure their interests against China's problematic behaviour.^{12 13 14}

⁶ Condoleezza Rice, "Promoting the National Interest," *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 1 (2000): 45.

⁷ "National Security Strategy," *White House* (Washington, 12 October 2022), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/>

⁸ "NATO Strategic Concept 2022," June 29, 2022, www.nato.int/strategic-concept/

⁹ Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific is primarily based on maintaining a rules-based order, freedom of navigation and deepening defence and technological cooperation with states having common interests in Indo-Pacific Region.

¹⁰ The New Southern Policy (NSP) is founded on the principles of People, Peace, and Prosperity. 'People' aims to make safer, better lives with greater interaction between South Korea, ASEAN member states, and India. 'Peace' seeks a community where all are free from fear or threat while 'Prosperity' aims to create mutually beneficial and future-oriented economic cooperation.

¹¹ Pacific Step Up aims to make friends and influence the people of the Pacific region. It is an engagement-type strategy that primarily aims to ensure that China's ingress into Pacific islands is curtailed to ensure the preservation of Australian interests. Australia's Defence White Paper 2016 and Foreign Policy White Paper 2017 also call for thriving, successful and a safe Indo-Pacific region.

¹² Jagannath P. Panda and Ernest Gunasekara-Rockwell, *Quad Plus and Indo-Pacific: The Changing Profile of International Relations*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2021).

¹³ 'Indo-Pacific' is defined as a region ranging from ranging from the eastern shores of Africa including Arabian Sea till the western coast of the United States.

¹⁴ "Antony Blinken Calls China's Behaviour in the Pacific 'Problematic' on Visit to Tonga," *The Guardian*, July 26, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/>.

This paper intends to study the relationship between four states i.e. India, Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia in the backdrop of the challenges being faced in the Arabian Sea/ Western Indian Ocean region. It is important to analyze how important one state is to the other and how a relationship between two states is impacted by remaining two states with Sino-American rivalry in the background.

China and BRI

China's Belt and Road Initiative, initially coined by Chinese Premier Xi Jinping, is a grand plan to ensure increased domestic productivity and, improved industrial standards, while enhancing regional and international connectivity. China geographically has coastal regions on the east and all its Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) move through the Malacca Strait. This is a major dependency for which China requires adequate alternative options to overcome the oft-titled 'Malacca Dilemma'.¹⁵ It would offer development opportunities to eastern and central regions of China at par with coastal China. It would allow for the opening of new markets and thus resolve issues of excess industrial production.¹⁶ However, not everyone views BRI simply from development lens. Many states view it as a Chinese effort to propagate its economic and political influence while describing it as a 'debt trap'. This 'unsustainable debt' as it is oft-titled can be gauged from the fact that China's high-speed rail project in Laos will cost almost half of Laos's GDP.¹⁷ Four projects, i.e. Gwadar Port in Pakistan, Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka, Koh Kong Port in Cambodia and Kyaukphyu Port in Myanmar in the Belt and Road Initiative are the cornerstones of China's increased political influence and economic connectivity.¹⁸ Out of these four ports, Gwadar and Hambantota stand out due to their geo-strategic location.

Hambantota Port

The origins of Chinese investment in Hambantota Port are surprisingly found in the American lease of Diego Garcia from the United

¹⁵ Marc Lanteigne, "China's Maritime Security and the "Malacca Dilemma," *Asian Security*, (2008) 4(2), 143-161.

¹⁶ Daniel Lindley, "Assessing China's Motives: How the Belt and Road Initiative Threatens US Interests," *Journal of Indo Pacific Affairs*, no. July August 2022, <https://media.defense.gov/2022/Jul/31>.

¹⁷ Dylan Gerstel, "It's a (Debt) Trap! Managing China-IMF Cooperation Across the Belt and Road," *Centre for Strategic and International Studies*, October 17, 2018, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/>.

¹⁸ Daniel R Russel and Blake H Berger, "Weaponizing the Belt and Road Initiative," *Asia Society Policy Institute*, September 2020, <https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/>

Kingdom in 1966, located in the Chagos Archipelago in the Indian Ocean.¹⁹ During the Sino-Indian War of 1962, the Americans felt it necessary to have a base in the Indian Ocean especially when they felt the absence of permanent American air power presence in the region.²⁰ However, despite Western concerns, the Chinese have shown no inclination to use of Hambantota Port for military purposes. The Sri Lankan Port Authority created two subsidiaries: The Hambantota International Port Group (HIPG) and Hambantota International Port Services (HIPS). HIPG was tasked to operate and develop the Port on a 99 year lease which subsequently sold its 85 per cent shares to China Merchant Port (short titled CMPort).²¹ The signing of a Terminal Service Agreement with a Japanese firm NYK for a Roll-on Roll-off facility has further lifted the fog over the Port's future.²²

Gwadar Port

Gwadar, on the other hand offers the same Geo Strategic location not just to Pakistan but to all countries having their political, economic and security interests in the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea. With the economic interdependence of various countries dependent on oil flowing safely out of the Persian Gulf, almost every country is interested in the safety and security of shipping lanes. Gwadar not only offers an alternate port to Pakistan away from the pre-dominant Indian threat but also offers connectivity to Western/ South Western Pakistan, i.e. Balouchistan, one of the most backward regions of Pakistan. It also has the potential to offer connectivity to landlocked countries like Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics (CARs). But as with Hambantota Port, Gwadar Port's performance has yet to ruffle any feathers. As Hambantota Port, the Chinese have not shown any interest in operating military assets out of Gwadar Port.

Suspensions over BRI

Suspensions over BRI have always existed. Former Secretary of State

¹⁹ "Exchange of Notes Constituting an Agreement Concerning the Availability for Defense Purposes of the British Indian Ocean Territory," December 30, 1966, <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication>.

²⁰ Micheal McDevit, "Diego Garcia: An American Perspective," *The Interpreter*, May 19, 2020, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/>

²¹ Lee Jones and Shahar Hameiri, "Debunking the Myth of 'Debt-Trap Diplomacy': How Recipient Countries Shape China's Belt and Road Initiative," Asia-Pacific Programme, Chatham House, August 2020, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites>.

²² Umesh Moramudali, "The Hambantota Port Deal: Myths and Realities," *The Diplomat*, January 1, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/01/>.

Rex Tillerson emphasized that Chinese opaque contracts, predatory loan practices, and corrupt deals are tools to advance its strategic interests in the region.²³ Ex-Secretary Defense of the USA, Mark T. Esper remarked during the Munich Security Conference in 2020 that China's overseas investments are forcing other nations into "*sub-optimal security decisions*," while in the same breath, he speaks of not seeking a conflict with China.²⁴ This all leads to fears that at some point in time, China would transform all these investments into Military bases and multiply its economic and political influence. But China's only acknowledged overseas military base is a PLA Djibouti Logistic Support Facility.²⁵ Djibouti is also home to Japanese, French and American bases primarily due to its location abreast Bab al-Mandeb strait. For China, the importance of the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandeb is only second to the South China Sea and Malacca Straits primarily due to its economic concerns.²⁶

Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD)

Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) was originally formed as a loose organization between four states i.e. USA, Japan, Australia, and India as a coordination forum to respond to the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and conduct Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations effectively. The late Japanese PM Shinzo Abe is considered the 'brainchild' behind the formation of QUAD and he stressed an open and transparent network amongst India, Japan, the USA, and Australia to allow for the free flow of people, goods, capital, and knowledge in his speech to the Indian Parliament in 2007.²⁷

Despite becoming dormant after the initial fanfare in 2007, Shinzo Abe after coming to power in 2012, re-emphasized the role of QUAD while

²³ Aman Thakker, "A Rising India in the Indian Ocean Needs a Strong Navy," *Centre for Strategic and International Studies*, October 17, 2018, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/rising-india>.

²⁴ Mark T. Esper, "As Prepared Remarks by Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper at the Munich Security Conference," U.S. Department of Defense, Munich, February 15, 2020, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech/>.

²⁵ Jean-Pierre Cabestan, "China's Military Base in Djibouti: A Microcosm of China's Growing Competition with the United States and New Bipolarity," *Journal of Contemporary China* 29, no. 125 (2 September 2020): 731–47.

²⁶ Bo Hu, Zhang Yanpei, and Geoffrey Till, *Chinese Maritime Power in the 21st Century: Strategic Planning, Policy and Predictions*, Cass Series : Naval Policy and History 64 (London ; New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2020).

²⁷ Shinzo Abe, "Confluence of the Two Seas' Parliament of the Republic of India," August 22, 2007, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmv0708/speech-2.html>.

expressing his concerns over China's intent and activities, especially in the South China Sea.²⁸ The 'America First Policy' propagated by ex-President Donald Trump created further misgivings in the US-China relationship. This mis trust only grew during President Joe Biden's tenure. Biden's proposition to add 5G technology, Cyber security, Artificial Intelligence, Space technology, and, most importantly adherence to a maritime rules-based order in South China and East China seas has furthered the objectives set forth for QUAD.²⁹

The competition between China and the USA, the world's 2nd and 3rd most populous states, is taking place in the Western Indian Ocean Region (WIOR), where China is trying to increase its sway through its flagship Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). India and Pakistan, the world's top and 5th most populous states, respectively, are also co-located in the same region. The conversion of this American-Sino competition into confrontation may have unfavourable effects not just for Pakistan and India but also for Saudi Arabia and Iran, where both states are vying for regional influence. A stable relationship between these four states i.e. India, Pakistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia has the potential to instill confidence in the region and bring development to an expanse where India lies 107th and Pakistan 99th on 2022 Global Hunger Index ratings.³⁰

Graham Allison's magnum opus 'Destined for War' may have predicted a US-China conflict but where this conflict may manifest is yet to be determined.³¹ The geo-political dynamics of WIOR especially after the departure of American forces from Afghanistan, signing of Abraham Accords and Russo-Ukraine conflict has pushed the USA and China to increase their influence to protect their vital interests while expanding their political, economic and military horizons. For the Americans however, India, an original member of the QUAD, holds great importance.

India – Friend to Many

India is central to peace and harmony in the Western Indian Ocean Region (WIOR). It's not just because of its geographical location, size or population or its growing economic prowess, but simply because of the importance that is being accorded to it by the major powers in the form of

²⁸ Shinzo Abe, "Asia's Democratic Security Diamond," *Project Syndicate*, December 27, 2012, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/magazine/>.

²⁹ "Joint Statement from Quad Leaders," *White House*, Washington, September 24, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/>.

³⁰ Aakash Hasan, "India Gets Mixed Marks on Poverty, with Hunger Rank behind Pakistan," *Nikkei Asia*, October 30, 2022, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Economy/>.

³¹ Graham T. Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017).

export exemptions of Nuclear Supplier Group, arming it with the most potent military platforms or signing of strategic agreements in the form of COMCASA³², LEMOA³³, and BECA.³⁴ This is all to ensure that a strong India, with suitable political, economic and military support from like-minded countries would act as a counterbalance to China.³⁵

India, has cleverly dealt its cards in light of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. It has abstained from various UN resolutions on the Russo-Ukraine conflict, and although it supported an inquiry into the Bucha Massacre, it did not mention Russia in its statement.³⁶ It continues to buy Russian oil and thus help finance the Russian 'Special Military Operation' in Ukraine but has not been sanctioned by the Americans or the West. It even escaped American sanctions for purchasing the Russian S-400 Air Defence System. To date, even the members of QUAD have accepted the Indian stance on Russia.³⁷ But there are doubts on how this will eventually play out as the USA describes it as the '*long game*.'³⁸ The recent humiliation of the Indian Billionaire owned Adani Group in which almost 135 billion US \$ were wiped off their value after the publishing of a damning report by Hindenburg Research on 24 January 2023 has been labeled as an 'Attack on India.'³⁹ India's national security thinkers are still not as confident as they are in comparison to Russia especially when it

³² COMCASA – Communications, Compatibility, and Security agreement allows India to purchase American secure communications and data equipment while being offered real-time data sharing over secure networks.

³³ LEMOA – Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement is a functional agreement that allows for the provision of essential supplies and services that one country would provide to another.

³⁴ BECA – Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement gives India access to American geo-spatial intelligence which improves the accuracy of its automated systems and other weapons.

³⁵ "US Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific," National Archives, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/>.

³⁶ "Ukraine: India Strongly Condemns Bucha Civilian Killings," *BBC News*, April 6, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/>.

³⁷ Kallol Bhattacharjee, "Quad Has Accepted Indian Stand on Ukraine, Says Australian Envoy," *The Hindu*, March 20, 2022, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/>.

³⁸ K. Alan Kronstadt, "India-Russia Relations and Implications for U.S. Interests," Congressional Research Service (Washington, August 24, 2022), <https://sgp.fas.org/>.

³⁹ Annabelle Liang, "Adani Group: Embattled Indian Giant Strikes \$1.87bn US Deal," *BBC News*, March 3, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business->.

comes down to Strategic cooperation.⁴⁰

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan helped make new friends and created mistrust in old ones. Iran refused to join directly the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia-USA support of Mujahideen against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. India had supported the Soviet entry into Afghanistan which was at the request of the then-Afghan government.⁴¹ Although the Mujahideen funded by the Americans and Saudis successfully drove the Soviets out, the civil war that ensued divided opinion within the region. Pakistan continued its support of the Mujahideen (later Taliban) while Iran supported the Northern Alliance. This was the first time, the interests of Iran and India aligned and since then there has been no turning back.⁴² The relations between the two countries have only improved and despite American sanctions undermining Indian investments, there is an understanding on the Iranian end of the Indian limitations. India has in the past, made a string of investments in Iran based on its strategic interests. Before the sanctions, the India-Iran trade amounted to 17 billion US \$ which plummeted to less than 2 billion US \$, from April 2021 - January 2022. India was banking on two major investments in Iran, i.e. Gas discovery in Farzad-B Gas Field and the rail link between Zahedan and Chahbahar, but were later taken over entirely by Iran due to Indian fear of American sanctions.⁴³ The fact that around 85% of Indian crude oil imports pass the Strait of Hormuz till Russia-Ukraine conflict broke out, having good relations with Iran was in India's interests. These interests have only digressed into Gulf of Aden with increased Russian imports through Suez Canal.⁴⁴

Indian- Gulf Connection

India's influence in the Gulf region has steadily grown with the

⁴⁰ Ashley J. Tellis, "Completing the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement: Fulfilling the Promises of a Summer Long Past, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace," <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/11/27/>

⁴¹ "India Supports Soviets' Afghan Position in U.N. Debate," *The Washington Post*, January 12, 1980, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1980/01/12/>

⁴² Kadira Pethiyagoda, "India's Pursuit of Strategic and Economic Interests in Iran," *Brookings Doha Centre*, September 2008, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/>

⁴³ "Iran Drops India from Key Chabahar Project," *Dawn*, 15 July 2020.

⁴⁴ Saurav Anand, "From Middle East to Moscow: India's Evolving Oil Routes Paint a New Energy Map, ET EnergyWorld," *Energyworld*, 21 September 2023, <https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/from-middle-east-to-moscow-indias-evolving-oil-routes-paint-a-new-energy-map/103841163>.

growth of its economy. GCC was India's largest trading partner bloc in FY 2021-22, with trade of over 154 billion US \$, which includes Indian exports of around 44 billion US \$ and imports of around 110 billion US \$.⁴⁵ Saudi exports alone to India have increased over an average rate of 10 per cent from 1995 (1.31 billion US \$) to 16.8 billion US \$ in 2020. Indian Maritime Strategy highlights the importance it attaches to the Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, and the Gulf of Aden in addition to the Malacca Straits and the Eastern coast of Africa.⁴⁶ It is also indicative of the importance India attaches to the countries of this region and more importantly, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar. Nonetheless, the projection of Indian Hindutva ideology across the Arabian Sea in to the Gulf states is viewed with great suspicion by the Arabs and their leadership.⁴⁷

Table 2: India & the Gulf Countries – Important Markers

	Bilateral trade (US\$)	Remarks
India – KSA	\$ 34.29 billion (2021) \$ 52.75 billion (2023)	Indian imports crude oil worth \$15.8 billion (2021)
India – UAE *	\$ 73 billion (2021)	3.5 million NRIs living in UAE
India – Qatar †	\$ 15 billion (2022)	50 per cent of Indian LNG imports come from Qatar
Total Remittances from NRIs +	\$ 100 billion from all over the world 68 per cent of NRIs live in Gulf Countries	

Sources: Author's compilation

Questions for India

"The RSS will either destroy India or India will destroy them."

Arundhati Roy⁴⁸

The alignment of interests of the Americans and the West with India, especially about India, has indirectly pushed India into a downward spiral. Starting domestically, India's push towards Hindutva has marginalized all segments of society, less the hardline Hindus. The

⁴⁵ "India-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Decide to Pursue Resumption of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Negotiations," Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Govt of India, 25 November 2022, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage>.

⁴⁶ *Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy* (New Delhi: Indian Navy, 2015).

⁴⁷ Kamran Yousaf, "India's Bonhomie with Gulf on Edge amid Muslim Prejudice," *Express Tribune*, April 21, 2020.

⁴⁸ "Arundhati Roy interview with TRT World," TRT World, Last modified March 9, 2022, <https://www.trtworld.com/asia/rss->.

desecration of Mosques, the public lynching of Muslims by Hindutva-driven fanatics, and the demolition of Muslim homes as corporal punishment have divided the once 'Secular India'.⁴⁹ The Legislative action against Muslims in the form of "anti-conversion" laws which advocate against the perceived notion that Muslim men marry Hindu women so that the women can be converted to Islam has raised concerns for genocide in the making.⁵⁰ The Hijab controversy in the Southern province of Karnataka has brought out the evil from the bud. The judiciary is also being regulated in a fashion to ensure that the BJP's political objectives as a party are fulfilled.⁵¹

India currently lies at 161st position down, from 140 in 2013 and 150 in 2022 in the World Freedom Index compiled by Reporters Sans Frontiers.⁵² The treatment of international media, in particular, e.g. BBC in India with its offices being raided, shows the other side of 'Shining India'. The silence from the Western leadership is astounding, barring a few docile statements from the foreign office spokespersons. No notable opposition has come from any Western nation against Modi's suppression of minorities, media, the incidents at Manipur, and, more importantly occupied Kashmir. The only opposition to Indian behaviour has come when Sikh leadership was targeted by Indian intelligence agents in Canada and USA.⁵³

Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) & India's Hybrid War against Pakistan

Its people are being suffocated. Ground down into some kind of powder. But still, they rise. The Kashmiri press has been garrotted. The Indian media just lies. The gates have been opened for Indians to flood in and overwhelm Kashmir by just their sheer numbers.

Arundhati Roy⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Lindsey Maizland, "India's Muslims: An Increasingly Marginalized Population | Council on Foreign Relations," 14 July 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/>.

⁵⁰ "Genocide Watch - India Country Report 2023," (Genocide Watch, April 2023), https://www.genocidewatch.com/_files/ugd.

⁵¹ "Arundhati Roy interview with TRT World."

⁵² Reporters Sans Frontiers, Accessed September 15, 2023, <https://rsf.org/en/index>.

⁵³ "This Is What Canada Has Been Talking about, Says Trudeau after U.S. Charges Indian for Plotting Sikh Separatist's Murder," *The Hindu*, November 30, 2023, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/>

⁵⁴ Suvojit Bagchi, "RSS will either Destroy India or India will Destroy them: Arundhati Roy," 2021, <https://www.trtworld.com/asia/rss->

Kashmir, by far, is the core unresolved conflict between two nuclear-powered neighbouring states, India and Pakistan. All past efforts to keep Kashmir on the back burner have fizzled out. Three wars, the first two over Kashmir and the third one which resulted in the birth of Bangladesh and numerous other confrontations and interferences, have created the perfect environment of distrust, suspicion, and misgivings. There are more than 700,000 Indian troops deployed in IIOJK, the highest density of military personnel in the world, with cases of extra-judicial torture and rape a routine activity.⁵⁵ With the abrogation of Art 370 and 35A in August 2019 and the Indian Supreme Court offering a respite to the Modi government in its recent judgement⁵⁶, the Kashmir issue remains a bone of contention between the two neighbouring states.

India's hybrid warfare campaign against Pakistan is also well documented. It can be tracked down to the Agartala conspiracy (before the 1971 separation of East Pakistan) to the support of Baluch Liberation Army terrorists and its leadership not just in Pakistan but abroad. This includes lobbying to keep Pakistan on the grey list in FATF, targeting Pakistan's purchase of weapons from Western countries, information warfare against Pakistan highlighted by the EU Disinfo lab (Indian Chronicles), and allegedly various cyber-attacks affecting critical banking and revenue sectors of Pakistan.⁵⁷ Ajit Duval, the Indian NSA has expressed India's desire to sponsor terrorist activities within Pakistan, especially in Balouchistan as part of Indian Policy.⁵⁸ The case of Commander Kalbushan Jhadav, a serving Indian Navy officer apprehended by Pakistani Intelligence Agencies in Balouchistan, on charges of espionage and sabotage and later sentenced to death is a case in point.⁵⁹

Pakistan – Between a Rock and a Hard Place

Pakistan, a country of 220 million people with a Muslim majority, is not just geographically located on the Eurasian supercontinent but is

⁵⁵ Raksha Kumar, "For Kashmiris, Resolution to Decades of Conflict Remains a Distant Dream," *NPR*, August 21, 2022, <https://www.npr.org/>.

⁵⁶ Hrishikesh Sebastian, Meryl Shranaya, "Article 370: India Supreme Court Upholds Repeal of Kashmir's Special Status," *BBC News*, December 11, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/>.

⁵⁷ M Ashfaque Arain, *India's Hybrid Warfare against Pakistan: Challenges and Response Options* (Islamabad: Centre for Aerospace and Strategic Studies, 2021).

⁵⁸ A.G Noorani, "A Hawkish Doctrine," *Dawn*, January 24, 2018.

⁵⁹ "Jadhav Case (India v. Pakistan)" (International Court of Justice, July 17, 2019), <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/>.

also titled the 'Zipper state' of Pan-Eurasian integration.⁶⁰ With CPEC being touted as the pivot of BRI and Gwadar being the pivot of CPEC, Pakistan is in the midst of the great power rivalry taking place in the Indian Ocean Region. The American withdrawal from Afghanistan has created more hiccups and worries for Pakistan as it was 'Pakistan' again that was left alone to sort out the problems on its western border. Since the beginning, this transactional relationship has not transformed into any meaningful relationship between Pakistan and the USA. The US labelling of India as a 'Net Security Provider' in the region has created more doubts in this floundering relationship.⁶¹

China quickly filled Pakistan's desire to have an all-weather strategic partner. China, in return, gained a reliable partner in Pakistan which can be seen from its support and commitment extended in the case of Taiwan, the South China Sea, Hong Kong, Tibet, and Xinjiang province. The commonality of interests, the abstinence of Western countries and the USA in particular from creating a meaningful long-term relationship with Pakistan, coupled with the Malacca Dilemma, presented China an opportunity to offer a deal in the form of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Pakistan, an offer Pakistan could not refuse. It also offered China an opportunity to further its influence in the region. China's unequivocal support on the Kashmir issue at all diplomatic levels has helped Pakistan beef up its conventional deterrence by providing hi-tech military equipment to replace the ageing Western military hardware. Economically, the development of Coal-fired Power Plants, Wind Energy Projects, the construction of Gwadar Port, various infrastructure projects in the transport sector, and the construction of Special Economic Zones have helped Pakistan to move forward despite the immeasurable economic and human losses in the two decades post 9/11⁶². In essence, Pakistan's political, security and economic interests are firmly rooted in China for the foreseeable future.

China's 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' with Pakistan's western neighbour Iran in 2016, which sought expansion of ties not just in the political domain but also to promote tangible cooperation in various facets of the economy and social development is viewed with renewed

⁶⁰ Irfan Takalvi, "Fulcrum of Eurasia: Why Pakistan Needs a Policy Road Map for Eurasian Super-Continent," *Daily Pakistan*, July 27, 2019.

⁶¹ *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington DC, February 2010)<https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/features/defenseReviews/QDR/>

⁶² "CPEC Projects Progress Update," Ministry of Planning, Development, & Special Initiatives, <https://cpec.gov.pk/progress-update>.

optimism in Pakistan⁶³. Although still in its planning stage, this development holds great promise for future expansion of China's BRI. Its connectivity with CPEC will also ensure alternate routes for Chinese exports and imports while affording interconnectivity between the three neighbouring countries.

Iran – A Case of Infinite Complexity

Iran borders Pakistan in its East, and the two nations have a historical and cultural connection. The Iranian province of 'Sistan va Baluchestan' borders the Pakistani province of 'Balouchistan.' The lack of road connectivity within Balouchistan and with major cities, vast spans, and minimum population density in Pakistan is a major impediment to its development. This also means the old routes connecting Iran to Pakistan are frequently used to bring foodstuff and other necessities from Iran. Smugglers and terrorists also use these routes to carry out attacks on both sides of the border.⁶⁴ These smugglers and terrorists sometimes become a bone of contention between the two states, as seen from the unprecedented Iranian aerial attack on 16 January 2024 with Pakistan's forceful retaliation within 48 hrs forcing countries like Turkiye and China to intervene and calm down the tempers across the border.⁶⁵

Table 3: Strait of Hormuz Important Data (21 million barrels per day)

USA	10 per cent of American imports pass through SoH monthly
Saudi Arabia	The majority of oil exports pass through SoH
China	3.5 million bpd (38 per cent daily import)

Source: Author's compilation, data from Dryad Global

Iran is central to the safe shipping passage in the critical Strait of Hormuz (SoH) connecting the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman. Iran's geographic location and contestation with the USA have brought maritime security into the limelight. To ensure the security and safety of merchant vessels, all major countries have placed their naval assets in some form to deter any activity that would adversely affect maritime security and primarily their national interests. This can be gauged by the presence of

⁶³ "Full Text of Joint Statement on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between I.R. Iran, P.R. China," President of Iran, Tehran, January 23, 2016, <https://www.president.ir/en/91435>.

⁶⁴ "Pakistan Army Says 4 Soldiers Killed in Attack near Iran Border," *Al Jazeera News*, April 1, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/>

⁶⁵ Simon Speakman Cordall, "Credibility at Stake: Why Did Iran Strike inside Pakistan amid Gaza War?" *Al Jazeera News*, January 19, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/19>.

the US 5th Fleet stationed at Bahrain, operating under US Central Command despite American withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan. The International Maritime Security Construct (IMSC) was formed in July 2019 to ensure the safe and secure transit of cargo in the Arabian Gulf, Gulf of Oman, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Southern Red Sea.⁶⁶ Its operational arm is CTF SENTINEL which is supported by the ten member nations of the IMSC.⁶⁷

The Europeans also launched an initiative around the Strait of Hormuz in January 2020 led by the French with its headquarters in Abu Dhabi. European Maritime Awareness in the Strait of Hormuz (EMASOH) surveillance mission was supported by Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, and Portugal in addition to Norway. EMASOH's military component, Operation AGÉNOR justifies the EU designation of this area as a 'Maritime Area of Interest' as one of 'strategic interest' to the EU.⁶⁸

In all these initiatives, the coastal states are directly or indirectly involved. The only missing state is Iran. The level of distrust between the Western nations led by the USA and Iran has only widened since the American withdrawal from JCPOA. With no end in sight to the nuclear negotiations and crippling American sanctions, Iran believes that freedom of navigation in the critical SoH should not be taken for granted if its strategic interests are threatened. A string of attacks on merchant ships connected with Israeli commercial enterprises were allegedly linked to Iran and reprisals allegedly from Israel against Iranian-flagged/ owned merchant vessels.⁶⁹ The targeting of a Liberian-flagged Merchant ship CSAV TYNDALL, by a surface-to-surface missile in July 2021 was not the only incident where merchant ships have been targeted to settle political differences.⁷⁰ The recent targeting of ships having any linkage with Israel by the Houthis from Yemen in response to the atrocities by Israel against

⁶⁶ "International Maritime Security Construct," last accessed 11 March, 2023, <https://www.imscsentinel.com>.

⁶⁷ IMSC includes Albania, Bahrain, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, and the United States.

⁶⁸ Moretti Bianco, Cinzia Matteo, "Europe's Role in Gulf Maritime Security," *Middle East Institute*, May 9, 2022, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/europes-role-gulf-maritime-security>.

⁶⁹ "Iranian Vessel Saviz Targeted by Limpet Mines in Red Sea - Tasnim News," *Reuters*, April 7, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/>.

⁷⁰ "Israel Probes Possible Missile Attack on Cargo Ship: Reports," *Al Jazeera News*, July 4, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/4>.

the population of Gaza has further complicated the maritime environment.⁷¹

Even before the Gaza Crises, this confrontational environment had brought the whole region to a knife's edge. The signing of the Abraham Accords and the opening up of major Gulf countries like UAE and Bahrain to Israel was only going to become a reason for increased hybrid threats against Iran and by Iran. Territorial disputes between Iran and UAE may come to the fore, which have remained dormant for many years. Similarly, Iranian aspirations of using Nuclear energy for civilian purposes are seen by many in the West and in the Gulf with great suspicion. Most of all Saudi Arabia remains sceptical of the Iranian's desire to utilize Nuclear energy for peaceful purposes 'only'. Nevertheless, the Saudi's desire to go nuclear if Iran tests a nuclear device is hardly hidden from anyone.⁷²

Saudi-Iran relations since the 1979 revolution have remained tenuous at best. But there have been times when the ice was broken and a thaw in relations was observed. This was due to both nations opening up and this détente was most notably seen during the time of Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and President Khatami. President Rafsanjani was the one who sowed the seeds of dialogue and opened the doors of reconciliation. President Khatami elected to the Presidency after President Rafsanjani's two tenures at the helm of the Iranian leadership, continued with the reconciliation effort. The Saudis led by King Fahad and Crown Prince Abdullah also followed up with the reconciliation effort with Crown Prince Abdullah attending the OIC summit in Tehran which was followed by a ten-day visit by President Khatami and his entourage.⁷³ All of this has not happened without any incidents. The Al Khobar bombing in June 1996 in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia cast a major doubt on the future of Saudi-Iranian relations.

The Saudi-Iran relationship touched a historic low with the judicial execution of Saudi Shiite cleric Nimr-al Nimr by Saudi authorities which was amongst other reactions followed by a mob attack on the Saudi Embassy in Tehran. The cleric had been charged by the Saudis with disloyalty to the ruling family, using violence and seeking foreign

⁷¹ Ruxandra Lordache, "Yemen's Houthi Attacks Norwegian Tanker after Threat to Target Any Israel-Bound Ships," December 12, 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/12/12>.

⁷² Simon Henderson, "Money for Missiles? Reassessing the Saudi Visit to Pakistan," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, January 29, 2019, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/>.

⁷³ Dilip Hiro, *Cold War in the Islamic World: Saudi Arabia, Iran and the Struggle for Supremacy* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2018)

meddling.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the recent thaw in diplomatic relations under China's auspices between the two regional rivals has been seen with great enthusiasm by the regional countries. The talk of a Chinese-led or sponsored/ supported Maritime Task Force involving both Saudi Arabia and Iran in coordination with other regional countries will surely ruffle a few feathers.⁷⁵

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)

Saudi Arabia is the world's second-largest oil producer and biggest petroleum exporter, with 17 per cent of the total proven oil reserves of the world. Petroleum products alone account for about 85 per cent of Saudi export income, making the economy heavily dependent on oil exports through Bab al-Mandeb and the Strait of Hormuz. Any disruption in the maritime domain directly impacts the Kingdom's earnings.

The Saudi-Iran rivalry has played a major role in the regional security dynamics and has impacted Pakistan as well. A gas-starved Pakistan, despite being an immediate neighbour to Iran, has not been able to import Iranian gas, not just because of American sanctions but because of also Saudi anger. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, continues to be one of the biggest contributors to the Pakistani economy and has supported Pakistan through thick and thin. Every natural disaster that has struck Pakistan, Saudi Arabia has remained a steadfast brotherly nation. Around 3 million Pakistanis live and work in Saudi Arabia and with the presence of the two Holy Mosques, a religious connection firmly binds the two nations together.

However, the conflict in Yemen was an unpleasant time for Saudi Arabia-Pakistan relations. The Saudis expected full support, but the Pakistani Parliament did not accept that request on account of regional and internal security concerns. Pakistan decided to remain non-aligned in the conflict and declared to ensure and defend the territorial sovereignty of Saudi Arabia.⁷⁶ Pakistan's fear of a proxy war in Yemen between Iran and Saudi Arabia spreading to its territory and transforming into a Sunni-Shia conflict was well-founded. Nevertheless, astute diplomacy and strong communication links ensured that Saudi Arabia-Pakistan relations remained safe.

⁷⁴ "Saudi Arabia Executes 47 on Terrorism Charges," Al Jazeera News, January 3 2016, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/1/3>.

⁷⁵ "Iran Claims To Be Forming Regional Naval Coalition," *Iran International*, March 6, 2023, <https://www.iranintl.com/en>.

⁷⁶ "The National Assembly of Pakistan Gazette," National Assembly of Pakistan, May 2015, https://na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1431958789_151.pdf.

The Saudi-Indian relations have expanded exponentially in recent times. Around 3 million Indians are working in Saudi Arabia sending home remittances of around 10 billion US \$. In 2016, PM Modi, oft titled 'Butcher of Gujrat' and denied visas by the USA/ EU because of the massacre in Gujrat in 2001, was awarded 'King Abdul Aziz Sash' the highest civilian award in Saudi Arabia during his first official visit to Saudi Arabia.⁷⁷ The return trip by Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman in 2019 also opened up various opportunities for Saudi Investment in India.

Israel and its continued diplomatic success in the form of the Abraham Accords within the greater MENA region is a major concern for Iran and Pakistan. The alleged meeting between Israeli PM Netanyahu and Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman reported by Western media and public confirmation by Yoav Galant has led to credibility to the reports.^{78 79} The presence of an Israeli delegation in Saudi Arabia for the UNESCO meeting in September 2023 was also a first of its kind and is seen as a major step.⁸⁰ But the Hamas response on 7th October, 2023 to years of Israeli blockade against Gaza and Israel's genocidal acts in reprisal against the people of Gaza has brought the Israel-Palestine conflict back to the forefront and stopped any further Israeli recognition by Muslim states in its tracks.

Analysis

China-USA competition may be going strong but there is an underlying understanding that things need to improve between the two states. The fact that both states have a bilateral trade of around 760 billion US\$ underscores the importance both have for each other. The recommencement of military communications and various other cooperation arrangements despite various critical disagreements post Biden-Xi summit in November 2023 speaks of their common interest to avoid any confrontation based on faulty or scanty information and progressing ahead where common ground exists. There is a lesson in this, especially for the two pairs of states, India/ Pakistan and Iran/ Saudi Arabia.

⁷⁷ "India-Saudi Relations," Ministry of External Affairs, Republic of India, n.d., https://www.mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Saudi_July_2016.pdf.

⁷⁸ Yoav Galant – Retired Israeli Defence Forces General and current Israeli Defence Minister since 2022 - Member of the ruling Likud Party.

⁷⁹ Oliver Holmes, "Netanyahu Holds Secret Meeting with Saudi Crown Prince," *The Guardian*, November 23, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov>.

⁸⁰ "Israeli Delegation Attends UNESCO Gathering in Saudi Arabia," *Reuters*, September 11, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/>.

India and Pakistan, with huge population centers, have the most to lose in case of regional instability in WIOR. With around 3 million Indians and 4 million Pakistanis working and living in Saudi Arabia alone, any deterioration of ties with Saudi Arabia would mean a threat to this workforce.⁸¹ All in all, it is also extremely important for Modi-led India to be aware of the religious sensitivities of the GCC states and to not antagonize them by exporting Hindutva ideology across the Arabian Sea.

In the past two and a half decades only, both India and Pakistan have grossly mis-calculated each other's intentions, more recently observed during the Pulwama/ Balakot incident of 2019. In addition, consider the domestic contexts of Pakistan, India, and—most importantly—India. The spread of Hindutva ideology, curbs on free media, marginalization of minorities, especially Muslims and Christians, the atrocities on Kashmiris in IIOJK and more so, the hatred towards Sikhs spreading into other countries is unbecoming of the world's largest democracy.

Pakistan and Iran will continue to figure prominently whenever there is talk of Saudi Arabia and India. For the Saudis, it is the Indian moral, economic, and political support to Iran and for the Indians, it is the Saudi's unflinching support to Pakistan from a national level and the forum of OIC and United Nations especially on the Kashmir issue. But this unconditional support of the Saudis to Pakistan has limited its options with Iran in light of Saudi suspicions over Iran's regional influence, its nuclear program and the threat of American sanctions. This can all change with an improvement in Saudi-Iran relationship.

China's involvement in the Iran-Saudi rapprochement is a welcome sign for the region, especially Pakistan. It secures Iranian support against elements operating against Chinese interests in Baluchistan province. Moreover, the proposed formation of a Maritime Task-force led by the Chinese, including Iran, Saudi Arabia, India, and Pakistan, would surely increase Maritime Security in the region and thus become a catalyst for stability. China, as compared to the USA, has very little maritime presence in WIOR and is considered to be a 'military featherweight' in the region.⁸² Maritime Security of the global commons is essential and can only be achieved with the participation of all regional coastal states in cooperation with extra-regional forces.

⁸¹ "Saudis Pressure Forced Pakistan to Skip KL Summit: Erdogan," *Express Tribune*, December 20, 2019.

⁸² Ruike Xu and Degang Sun, "Sino-American Relations in the Middle East: Towards A Complementary Partnership?" *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies* 13, no. 2 (3 April 2019): 143–61.

The destiny of these four nations, i.e. India, Pakistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, is intertwined. No matter how much trust or distrust might exist, regional stability, in particular and global stability, in general, cannot be sustained without cooperation and engagement among these four nations especially in light of the Global Power competition brewing between China and the USA. State sponsored proxies, private military contractors, and non-state Actors all have the potential to provide enough catalysts for an environment that is ripe with suspicion and mistrust.

The freedom accorded to India by major powers to prop it up against China as a regional power house on the lines of Japan and Australia is bound to create unwanted and undesired effects for the region, and especially for Pakistan. With rising cross-border terrorist activities from the West and a weakening economy, it is imperative for Pakistan to hedge its bets on developing a Pakistan-centric, broad-based relationship with the USA while cementing its current bond with China. This also entails cultivating regional relationships especially with Iran and Saudi Arabia, while decoupling it with India's relevance to these states.

It is without an iota of doubt that Israel's increased presence in the region is a matter of great concern for Pakistan and Iran. Israel has great capacity, interest, and political backing to hurt Iranian interests. This proxy war between Iran and Israel, and the Houthis campaign to harm Israeli interests in Red Sea/Gulf of Aden are a bad omen for all regional countries including India. This also implies that there is no room for any slip up between Iran and Pakistan. Issues at hand must be resolved through diplomatic means without further complicating the regional environment. India, on the other hand must use its influence within Iran and Israel to ensure that WIOR remains ""peaceful while keeping its hands off Iran-Pakistan divergences.

Conclusion

"Our object should be peace within, and peace without. We want to live peacefully and maintain cordial friendly relations with our immediate neighbours and with the world at large."

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah

The US-China competition will not simmer down any time soon. American interest in creating a power centre in the form of India against China is bound to have a detrimental effect on regional peace and security especially in WIOR. It is immensely important for Pakistan, India, Iran and Saudi Arabia to keep regional peace and security, on top of their priority list while embracing their national security objectives. China's growing influence in the WIOR cannot be ignored but every effort should be made to ensure a peaceful co-existence despite the political differences and, at the same time, draw away from any harmful after-effects of global power

competition. More importantly, all four states must appreciate that their rational behaviour in such obfuscated times is critical for regional peace and stability. And as Albert Camus puts it, *'Peace is the only battle worth waging.'*

REVISITING THE NUCLEAR DEBATE IN SOUTH ASIAN SECURITY

Asim Ahmed* and Mahroona Hussain Syed**

Abstract

Grand strategy and nuclear deterrence have been the most distinct strategies of the last century. The principal objective of a grand strategy for a major state is to achieve some grand strategic objectives, and for other states, it is to preserve their security in an anarchic world. However, contrary to the central assumption of the nuclear deterrence theory, evidence shows that in certain situations, mere possession of nuclear weapons does not automatically translate into deterrence. The central argument of this article is based on the idea that deterrence strategy is neither a static concept nor should be taken as such. Nuclear deterrence. It is a dynamic concept in nature and its utilization depends on the ingenuity of the Nuclear Weapon State (NWS). While citing a history of incidents, especially the Pulwama crisis in 2019 between India and Pakistan, this article explores how nuclear deterrence worked when the fear of a nuclear war was hanging in the region and how these states were able to use the nuclear deterrence strategy to their benefit. It also discusses whether there was a need for either side to operationalize nuclear deterrence through some physical and tangible steps.

Keywords: Nuclear Deterrence, Nuclear Weapons (NWs), Nuclear Weapon States (NWS), Grand Strategy, Kashmir

In explanation of the concept of 'Grand Strategy,' Liddle Hart, in his famous work '*Strategy: Indirect Approach*' propounded that all the resources of a nation, or a band of nations, must be coordinated and directed towards the attainment of the political objectives of war.¹ Howard opined that this notion of Grand Strategy would ultimately aid not in war

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¹ Basil H. Liddle Hart, *Strategy: Indirect Approach* (London: 1967), 187-188.

fighting only but also in war avoidance.”² This idea on ‘war avoidance’ later became the bedrock of the notion of ‘deterrence’³ and in turn the ‘nuclear deterrence theory.’

Initially conceptualized in the Cold War era, ‘nuclear deterrence’ was supposed to dissuade the opponent from attacking one’s state by using retaliatory threats of the use of nuclear weapons (NWs). The classical nuclear deterrence reasoning made an offensive strategy towards a nuclear rival nearly impossible because of the sheer destructive power of the nukes. Hence, the utility and capability of NWs was considered more to avert the war than fighting the war.⁴ Theoretically, the presence of nuclear deterrence was generally considered as an end of warfare between Nuclear Weapon States (NWS).

Over the years, within this paradigm, the nuclear deterrence theory came to be seen through two discrete angles: (the defensive) nuclear deterrence strategy and the (offensive) nuclear ‘compellence’ strategy as introduced by Schelling in his famous work *Arms and Influence*,⁵ although in real, both are two sides of the same coin. Schaub’s explanation is helpful in this regard where he categorised ‘compellence’ as an offensive strategy, where the compeller, in order to change the status quo, uses the persuasive value of threat to compel the adversary into taking action as desired by the compeller. On the other hand, to him, ‘deterrence’ is a defensive strategy, where the persuasive value of threat is used to keep the status quo unchanged⁶ by dissuading the adversary from taking any action or initiating any offensive.⁷ Building upon Schelling’s ideas, Sperandi talks of blurred boundaries between both the strategies, especially in crisis⁸ even to the extent of a continuous interplay between both strategies of coercion.⁹ However, the operability, and in turn success, of these strategies is predicated upon ‘credibility of intentions’, revealed

² Michael Howard, “Grand Strategy in the Twentieth Century,” *Defence Studies* 1, no.1 (Spring 2001), 1-10.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Bernard Brodie, “The Development of Nuclear Strategy,” *International Security* 4, no 2 (Spring, 1978): 65-83.

⁵ Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).

⁶ Gary Schaub, “Compellence: Resuscitating the Concept,” *In Strategic Coercion: Concepts and Cases*, ed. Lawrence Freedman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998): 37-60.

⁷ Schelling, *Arms and Influence*.

⁸ Maria Sperandei, “Bridging Deterrence and Compellence: An Alternative Approach to the Study of Coercive Diplomacy,” *International Studies Review*, no. 8(2006): 253-280.

⁹ Schelling, *Arms and Influence*.

by 'the threat of use of NWs' and 'the will to use it' though in case of 'deterrence' the threat of use of NWs is 'latent' and in case of 'compellence', the threat of use of NWs is overt. According to Powell, in an environment where there is an overt threat, there is a possibility that that situation may go out of control and result in a nuclear exchange.¹⁰ Powell's idea of *brinkmanship* is noteworthy here where he is of the view that while states involved will make an effort to exert coercive pressure to extract maximum out of the situation from an adversary,¹¹ at the same time, there exists a space for possible political gains for a state, where a *threat* to impose a cost of destruction would force an adversary to de-escalate the conflict.¹² On the other hand, Krepon and others talk of a possibility for a low intensity conflict below the conventional threshold owing to the presence of NWs within the framework of 'stability/instability paradox'.¹³ In short, these ideas hint at the fact that nuclear deterrence is not a war aversion strategy exclusively but may be used in many other ways to reap maximum benefits depending on the ingenuity of the states utilizing it.

This article aims to discuss how far nuclear deterrence can play a role in achieving grand strategic objectives of a state-right from deterring an enemy to attaining other political objectives of that state, keeping in view the case of Indo-Pak escalations. The argument dwells on the idea that sometimes the mere presence of NWs does not necessarily deter a rival and there may be a need to take some active steps to deter an enemy and force him into 'inaction.'

Role of Nuclear Deterrence during Indo-Pak Escalations

For the purpose, a study of history of escalations between the two South Asian nuclear arch rivals—India and Pakistan would be interesting to see the efficacy of nuclear deterrence beyond its conventional application. The article investigates the idea through case studies of Brassatacks Exercise (1986-87), the Kargil Conflict, Indo-Pak Military Standoff (2001-02), Mumbai Attacks – 2008, Pathankot incident (2016) and the Pulwama incident (2019)

¹⁰ Robert Powell, "Deterrence Theory, Nuclear Proliferation, and National Missile Defense," *International Security* 27, no. 4 (Spring 2003): 86–118, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4137605>.

¹¹ Ibid., 86-118.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Michael Krepon, "The Stability-Instability Paradox, Misperception, and Escalation Control in South Asia," in *Escalation Control and the Nuclear Option in South Asia*, ed. Rodney W. Jones, and Ziad Haider (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 1-24.

Brasstacks Exercise

In 1986-87, the Brasstacks exercise was organised by the Indian Army to test military readiness at a larger scale. As per Weisman, it involved approximately 150,000 troops with more than 10,000 mechanised troops in the Rajasthan desert.¹⁴ However, Bajpai, Cheema and others of the view, that during the Brasstacks exercise, Operation Trident was mounted to see the possibility of war between India and Pakistan.¹⁵ Badhwar argues that such a large-scale mobilisation and movement of Indian Army just 100 miles away from Indo-Pak border created alarms in Pakistan.¹⁶ Resultantly, Pakistan also mobilised its forces along the border.¹⁷ The crisis diffused suddenly and Bajpai, Cheema and others of the view that, "Indian and Pakistani journalists and scholars wondered how a crisis between the two countries could develop so quickly, could reach such an intense level, and then could vanish virtually overnight."¹⁸ At this stage, both states had allegedly carried out some testing of NWs or cold tests.¹⁹ However, apparently nuclear dimension did not directly affect the outcome of crisis.²⁰

Soon after nuclear tests in 1998 by India and Pakistan, both NWS passed through a set of crises such as the Kargil conflict in 1999,²¹ the attack on Indian Parliament in 2001,²² the Bombay Hotel Attack in 2008²³ and then the Pulwama incident in 2019 and crisis in its aftermath over

¹⁴ Steven R. Weisman, "On India's Border, A Huge Mock War," *The New York Times*, March 6, 1987, accessed December 29, 2019.

¹⁵ Kanti P. Bajpai, P.R. Chari, Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, Stephen P. Cohen and Sumit Ganguly, *Brasstacks and Beyond: Perception and Management of Crisis in South Asia* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 1995):2-3.

¹⁶ Inderjit Badhwar, "General Sundarji Leaves behind a Legacy most Fiercely Disputed in the History of the Army," *India Today*, May 15, 1988, <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/cover-story/story>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Bajpai and others, *Brasstacks and Beyond*, 2-3.

¹⁹ Ansar Abbasi, "Pakistan Secretly Carried Out Cold Test of Nuclear Device on Oct 6, 1984," *The News*, January 27 2017, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/>

²⁰ Bajpai, *Brasstacks and Beyond*: 2-3.

²¹ In 1998-99, Pakistan Army personnel and mujahideen crossed line of control in the areas of Dras and Kargil and held unoccupied mountains to engage Indian supply lines to Siachin. Pakistan withdrew from these positions in July 1999.

²² In December 2001, terrorists attacked Indian Parliament resulted into death of 14 people. India claimed that the attack was carried-out by Pakistan-based terrorist organization, which resulted in military stand-off between India and Pakistan.

²³ In Mumbai attacks 164 people were killed by 10 terrorists.

Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK). It appears that the presence of NWs has effectively deterred India and Pakistan from initiating aggression against each other during the period of these escalations.

Kargil Conflict

The Kargil Conflict (1999) happened immediately after nuclear tests by both states.²⁴ During the crisis, Pakistan claimed, Kashmiri Mujahideen²⁵ occupied key heights across LOC²⁶ in Dras/Kargil.²⁷ The response by Indian military forces to remove Mujahideen from these posts resulted into fierce fighting between both.²⁸ India used regular forces during the conflict, including Air Force and Artillery to support their troops. According to one estimate there were about 300 hundred artillery guns, multi-barrel rocket launchers, and mortars daily fired at an approximate rate of 5000 rounds per day.²⁹ The artillery regiments were even brought into conflict from very far-off locations like Indian Punjab.³⁰ However, the magnitude of the conflict remained limited for which a number of reasons could be attributed, including for example; that the military objectives set for Kargil operations by Pakistan were limited to interdiction of the Dras/Kargil supply line towards Indian side of Siachin and to portray Kashmir as a nuclear flash point.³¹ Secondly, Pakistan and India had recently conducted NWs tests and though by then their nuclear doctrines and concepts had not matured, yet they realized the consequence of escalation between the NWSs. Moreover, India only escalated the conflict to a level, where its objective of dislodging the

²⁴ Federation of American Scientist, "Pakistan Nuclear Weapons: Nuclear Tests," *FAS 2002*, accessed August 21, 2020, <https://fas.org/nuke/guide/pakistan/nuke/>

²⁵ Mujahid is an Arabic word for warrior; in this case freedom fighter is the best alternative nomenclature.

²⁶ Line of Control (LOC) is an armistice boundary between IOK and Pakistani-administered Kashmir. It is not a border but a de-facto boundary.

²⁷ Tehmina Mahmood, "Kargil Crisis and Deteriorating Security Situation in South Asia," *Pakistan Horizon* 52, no. 4 (October 1999): 31-47.

²⁸ Nasim Zehra, *From Kargil to the Coup: Events that Shook Pakistan*, (Lahore/Karachi: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2018).

²⁹ Ashwini Kumar, "Artillery: The Battle Winning Factor in Kargil," *India Today*, July 25, 2016, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story>.

³⁰ Lieutenant General Khalid Maqbool, Commander 4 Corps, during an interaction with Asim Ahmed immediately after Kargil Operation on July 22, 1999.

³¹ Neil Joeck, "The Indo-Pakistan Nuclear Confrontation: Lessons from the Past Contingencies for the Future," Nonproliferation Policy Education Center (NPEC), accessed August 21, 2020, <http://npolicy.org/>.

Mujahideen from the heights of Kargil could be met, therefore, according to Joeck, Indian forces had strict orders not to cross LOC to avoid escalation with Pakistan.³² Thirdly, Pakistan agreed to assist in vacation of occupied position at Kargil heights. Fourthly, Pakistan was also alleged to have shown intentions to use NWs in case of escalation.³³ Overall, it could be assumed that the nuclear deterrence worked in the Kargil conflict as both states avoided escalation and wanted to keep the conflict limited to the heights of Dras/Kargil.

India-Pak Military Standoff 2001-02

The next test of nuclear deterrence was a ten-month military stand-off between India and Pakistan in 2001-02. This was consequent to a militant attack on the Indian Parliament, which India blamed to be an act of a Pakistan-based militant organisation.³⁴ In retaliation, India mobilised its military forces all along border. During the escalation, another terrorist incident occurred on May 14, 2002, in which militants killed 21 Indian soldiers in a bus, near Indian Army garrison in OIOK.³⁵ Once again, the risk of a war between both states reached its peak during these ten months escalation, however, India held back due to the fear of NWs exchange and finally started to withdraw troops in October 2002. Kapur quoted the reasons of withdrawal of Indian troops in following words:³⁶

Despite this noncompliance? India eventually demobilised its forces without attacking Pakistan. Having lost the element of surprise, anxious to avoid angering the United States by attacking its key ally in the Afghan war, and concerned with conventional costs and nuclear risks of a large-scale Indo-Pakistan conflict, the Indians began

³² Ibid.

³³ Emma Henderson, "Kargil war: Pakistan Planned to Drop Nuclear Bomb on India During Conflict, Former CIA Officer Claims," *The Independent*, December 3, 2015, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia>.

³⁴ Steve Coll, "The Stand-Off," *The New Yorker*, February 6, 2006, accessed February 9, 2021 <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2006/02/13/the-stand-off>.

³⁵ Polly Nayak and Michael Krepon, "US Crisis Management in South Asia's Twin Peaks Crisis," *Stimson Center*, Report 57 (2014), https://www.stimson.org/wp-content/files/file-attachments/Twin_Peaks_Crisis.pdf.

³⁶ S. Paul Kapur, "India and Pakistan's Unstable Peace: Why Nuclear South Asia Is Not like Cold War Europe," *International Security* 30, no. 2 (Fall, 2005): 127-152, quoting Sood and Sawhney, Operation Parakram, 80, 82, 87; Sudarshan and Pillai, "Game of Patience,"; Shishir Gupta, "When India came close to War," *India Today*, December 19, 2002; and interviews of retired Indian Generals, New Delhi.

withdrawing from the international border and the LoC in October 2002.

Rahman quoted, President General Pervez Musharraf saying that “the Indian government had starting pulling back its troops due to his various covert messages to the Indian Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, that if a war was imposed on Pakistan, it would not remain a conventional one.”³⁷ Once again, in this case, the chances of a nuclear exchange were high, but they never materialized into an actual one. However, two other political outcomes were achieved due to the crisis. First, world attention was drawn towards the region. The fact that the threat of nuclear exchange was real, helped highlight the need for world intervention towards this region which might have been the aim of Pakistan as it has always called for world/UN intervention over the Kashmir issue. Second was the political gain for India, as it brought a lot of pressure on Pakistan to internationally denounce any extremist agenda and Pakistan even assured to the US officials that all terrorist training camps would be permanently shut down and no cross-border infiltration would take place.³⁸ The escalation, nonetheless, proved that nuclear deterrence will remain a permanent feature between both the states during any future escalation and secondly that threat of NWs could be used to achieve political aims.

Mumbai Attacks – 2008

On 26 November 2008, ten terrorists launched attacks in different parts of Mumbai, India. They reached Mumbai through sea routes and after reaching coastline they avoided usual check posts to reach the city.³⁹ They operationalized terrorist activity by targeting a number of locations at Mumbai like railway station, community residential area and prominent hotels of the town etcetera.⁴⁰ During the attacks, 174 people lost their lives and approximately 300 were wounded; among the dead there were 26 foreigners.⁴¹ The incidents drew worldwide condemnation. India blamed Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba for the incidents and claimed that this

³⁷ Shamim-ur-Rahman, “Warning Forced India to Pull Back Troops, Says President,” *Dawn*, December, 31 2002.

³⁸ Kapur, “India and Pakistan's Unstable Peace,” 127-152.

³⁹ Angel Rabasa, Robert D. Blackwill, Peter Chalk, Kim Cragin, C. Christine Fair, Brian A. Jackson, Brian Michael Jenkins, Seth G. Jones, Nathaniel Shestak, Ashley J. Tellis, “The Lessons of Mumbai,” *RAND* (Santa Monica, Arlington, Pittsburgh: RAND Corporation, 2009).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ian Black, “Attacks Draw Worldwide Condemnation,” *The Guardian*, November 28, 2008.

terrorist incident was directed from Pakistan.⁴² The lone alive terrorist involved in the incident was later hanged by India in 2012.⁴³ Despite the fact that India blamed Pakistan-based militant organisation for this incident, but avoided escalation with Pakistan to portray itself as a victim of cross-border terrorism and to pressurise Pakistan internationally. Riaz considered that this decision was largely responsible for restraining the crisis.⁴⁴

Pathankot & Pulwama Incidents

The year 2013 was the beginning of fresh wave of violence in IOK where Kashmiris started to agitate against the government of India. These protests were met with some severest kind of coercion by India.⁴⁵ After 2013, two major incidents held in IOK; first was Pathankot Air Base attack⁴⁶ in January 2016 and second was the Pulwama Attack in February 2019.⁴⁷ In reaction, Indian claimed that it had conducted surgical strikes inside Pakistan in September 2016, though these surgical strikes could not be verified by any independent source.⁴⁸ the IAF air strikes in alleged The complexities involved in Pulwama incident were more serious as it was

⁴² Zahid Hussain, "Islamabad Tells of Plot by Lashkar," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 29, 2009, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/>

⁴³ "Indian Supreme Court upholds Death Penalty for Kasab," *Dawn*, August 29, 2012.

⁴⁴ Riaz Mohammad Khan, "Conflict Resolution and Crisis Management: Challenges in Pakistan-India Relations," in *investigating Crises: South Asia's Lessons, Evolving Dynamics, and Trajectories*, eds. Sameer Lalwani and Hannah Haegeland, 75-95 (Washington, DC: Stimson Center, 2018).

⁴⁵ Kashmir Profile – Timeline, last updated August 6, 2019.

⁴⁶ Militants attacked Indian Air Force base at Pathankot from 2-5 January 2016, in which 2-3 Indian Security Forces personnel were killed. India blamed Pakistan-based group Jaish-e-Muhammad. Though, United Jihad Council of Kashmir-based militant group claimed the responsibility.

⁴⁷ On February 2019, a suicide bomber attacked convoy of Central Reserve Police Force of India at Pulwama and killed 40 personnel. India blamed Pakistan based Jaish-e-Muhammad for the incident.

⁴⁸ M Ilyas Khan in his article, "India's 'Surgical Strikes' in Kashmir: Truth or Illusion?" *The BBC News*, Pakistani-administered Kashmir, 23 October 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news>. Similarly, Michael Sheldon, claimed that after studying satellite imagery of the area in Pakistan that India had bombed, he could see "no evidence any buildings were hit." He added, "It appears to me they didn't hit their targets," referred in Jeffrey Gettleman, Hari Kumar and Sameer Yasir, "Deadly Shelling Erupts in Kashmir Between India and Pakistan After Pilot Is Freed," *The New York Times*, March 2, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/02>.

not mere escalation but once again test of existing nuclear deterrence between the two NWS.

On February 26, 2019 India claimed a surgical strike inside Pakistan in the Balakot area⁴⁹ and in the following day in a tit for tat operation Pakistan Air Force (PAF) shot down two Indian military jets.⁵⁰ military India during this period of heightened tensions, continued to up the ante on the escalation by arresting Hurriyat leaders in IOK,⁵¹ clamped strictest of curfews and took few measures in the valley, which in the presence of nuclear deterrence amounts to crossing the nuclear threshold?

While attempting to explain Pakistan's actions from the lens of nuclear deterrence theory, one would observe that its actions in the post-Pulwama situation have not conformed to the deterrence theory in general. In other words, Pakistan was unable to utilise nuclear deterrence to its advantage in the post-Pulwama situation. Despite the presence of nuclear deterrence, India scrapped Articles 370⁵² and 35A⁵³ of its constitution and claimed to have conducted surgical strike inside Pakistan at Balakot area. On the other hand, Pakistan was not able to stop India from scrapping Article 370 and 35A, which changed the special status of IOK and declared it integral part of India.⁵⁴ These articles provided special status to IOK in the Indian constitution where it cannot be treated like other states of India.⁵⁵ Scrapping of articles by India at the time when the population of IOK was agitating against the Indian state and a highly tense situation existed between India and Pakistan, provides an evidence that because of the presence of nuclear deterrence did not work. This happened due to the absence of any physical steps by Pakistan, which

⁴⁹ "Balakot Air Strike: Pakistan Shows off Disputed Site on Eve of India Election," *BBC News*, April 10, 2019, accessed November 3, 2019.

⁵⁰ Hashim, "Pakistan Shoots Down Two Indian Fighter Jets: Military," *The Al-Jazeera News*.

⁵¹ Hurriyat is an Arabic word with meanings like freedom, liberty and independence. The consortium of freedom parties leaders in IOK are known as Hurriyat leaders.

⁵² Article 370 of the Indian Constitution gave special status of self-rule and autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir.

⁵³ Article 35A define permanent residents of the region in Indian Occupied Kashmir. It denies outsiders from permanently settling, buying land, holding local government jobs or winning education scholarships.

⁵⁴ Article 370 of the Constitution of India, <https://www.constitution.org/cons/> and "Kashmir Special Status Explained: What are Articles 370 and 35A?" *Al-Jazeera*, August 5, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/08/>.

⁵⁵ Article 370 of the Constitution of India, "Kashmir Special Status Explained: What are Articles 370 and 35A?" *Al-Jazeera*, August 5, 2019.

might have shown intentions of escalation, or an overt threat of use of NWs. , On the contrary, India used the Pulwama incident for obtaining political advantage at domestic front. Farooq Abdullah, the Chief of National Congress, indicting Modi, Prime Minister of India, points out that Pulwama incident and claims of surgical strike inside Pakistan were used by Modi to win elections in India.⁵⁶ From Pakistan's perspective, the basic tenet of deterrence i.e. 'dissuasion' did not work so as to coerce India from taking any action. Same idea has been debated by Schelling to use "threat" with the intention to keep an adversary from "starting something" (inaction).⁵⁷ In the same backdrop, Pakistan was unable to effectively internationalize the Kashmir conflict as a nuclear flash point between India and Pakistan. It continued to view nuclear deterrence from the narrow perspective of dissuading India from a war. Pakistan's reticent behaviour after the Pulwama incident was negation of basic tenet of nuclear deterrence, where deterrer needs to communicate to rival of his intention to use NWs in order to dissuade him.

The regression in the prevailing nuclear deterrence was particularly observed from the Indian side. It tried to escalate the situation by violating the airspace and claimed to target areas inside Pakistan. It also took political advantage of presence of nuclear deterrence and scrapped Articles 35A and 370. Response from Pakistan on the other hand was imprudent as it did not try to show seriousness of its intentions by taking some physical steps like movement of troops or NWs etcetera, which permitted India to move ahead in scrapping Articles without any fear.

The data below shows six major incidents of crisis between India and Pakistan in order to understand how both the states reacted during these situations in terms of nuclear deterrence, mobilisation of forces and threat of use of NWs. This will help in figuring out, how these states perceived the purpose of NWs and its deterrent capability in managing the crisis.

Table 1: Six Major Incidents between India and Pakistan

Incidents	Blamed for the Incident		Mobilisation of Forces		Threat to Use NWs	
	India	Pak	India	Pak	India	Pak
Brasstacks 1986-87	1 ⁵⁸	0	1 ⁵⁹	1	0	0

⁵⁶ Kamaljit Kaur Sandhu, "Modi behind Pulwama Attack as he Wanted to Win Elections: Farooq Abdullah," *The India Today*, April 7, 2019, <https://www.indiatoday.in/elections/lok-sabha-2019/>

⁵⁷ Sperandei, "Bridging Deterrence and Compellence."

⁵⁸ Aziz, "A Leaf from History."

⁵⁹ Weisman, "On India's Border."

Kargil War	0	¹⁶⁰	¹⁶¹	¹⁶²	0	¹⁶³ (though Pakistan denied the allegation of threat to use NWs)
Stand-off 2001-02	0	¹⁶⁴	¹⁶⁵	¹⁶⁶	0	¹⁶⁷
Mumbai Attacks (26-29 November 2008)	0	¹⁶⁸	0	0	0	0
Pathankot (2 January 2016)	0	¹⁶⁹	0	0	0	0
Pulwama (14 February 2019)	0	¹⁷⁰	¹⁷¹	0	¹⁷²	¹⁷³
Total	1	5	4	3	1	4

Source: Prepared by authors.

⁶⁰ Zehra, *From Kargil to the Coup: Events that Shook Pakistan*.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Alan Sipress and Thomas E. Ricks, "Report: India, Pakistan Were Near Nuclear War in '99," *The Washington Post*, May 15, 2002, <https://www.washingtonpost.com>.

⁶⁴ Celia W. Dugger, "Group in Pakistan is Blamed by India for Suicide Raid," *The New York Times*, December 15, 2001, <https://www.nytimes.com>.

⁶⁵ John F. Burns and Celia W. Dugger, "India Builds Up Forces as Bush Urges Calm," *The New York Times*, December 30, 2001, <https://www.nytimes.com/>.

⁶⁶ Polly Nayak and Michael Krepon, "US Crisis Management in South Asia's Twin Peaks Crisis," *Stimson Center*, Report 57 (2014), <https://www.stimson.org/>.

⁶⁷ Rahman, "Warning Forced India to Pull Back Troops, says President."

⁶⁸ Hussain, "Islamabad Tells of Plot by Lashkar."

⁶⁹ Sumit Ganguly, "The Next Pathankot: India's New Terrorism Battleground," *Foreign Affairs*, January 6, 2016, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/india>.

⁷⁰ Maria Abi-Habib, Sameer Yasir and Hari Kumar, "India Blames Pakistan for Attack in Kashmir, Promising a Response," *The New York Times*, February 15, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/15/>.

⁷¹ Jeffrey Gettleman, "Troops on the Move as India and Pakistan Face Off Over Kashmir," *The New York Times*, February 25, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/>.

⁷² India Today, "Our Nuclear Weapons are not for Diwali: PM Modi on Pak's Nuclear Button Threat," *The India Today*, April 21, 2019, accessed December 26, 2019, <https://www.indiatoday.in/elections/>.

⁷³ India Today, "Imran Khan Addresses Pakistan on Kashmir, Threatens Nuclear War Once Again," *The India Today*, August 26, 2019, accessed December 26, 2019, <https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/>.

Results of the data presented in Table 1 above are as under: -

- Out of the above six incidents, India was blamed for initiating one incident and Pakistan for five.
- India carried out mobilisation of forces four times and Pakistan thrice.
- India once posed threat to use NWs during the crises, while Pakistan three times.
- Nuclear deterrence was primarily experienced in the framework of stability/instability paradox (militant & terrorist attacks/limited war) etcetera.

Politics of Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia

Krepon, while discussing the stability/instability paradox and nuclear brinkmanship considers that the presence of nuclear deterrence permits India and Pakistan to initiate conflict below the conventional level,⁷⁴ however, he is of the opinion that brinkmanship under the nuclear umbrella may prove potentially dangerous. In the case of South-Asian regional rivals, escalation between them occurred six times and the results presented in the data set in Table 1 reflect that Pakistan has been the main beneficiary of the presence of nuclear deterrence in South Asia. The purpose of escalations from Pakistan's perspective could be to hurt India and internationalise the issue of IOK. Apparently, in the five incidents referred in Table 1 above, Pakistan has allegedly used nuclear deterrence in the framework of stability/instability paradox and thereafter on at least three occasions, threatened to use NWs in case of any conflagration in order to deter India. In the post-Pulwama situation, Pakistan's behaviour conflicted with its early behaviour and vehemently cast-off threat of NWs as obvious in statements issued by different personalities holding important portfolios in Pakistan at that time.⁷⁵

In the post-Pulwama 2019 incident, a number of incidents took place, where India was observed disregarding presence of nuclear weapons with Pakistan. It claimed to conduct surgical strike on 26 February 2019 in the wooded area of Balakot, Pakistan,⁷⁶ and in follow-up operation Pakistan shot down 2 Indian Jet Aircrafts,⁷⁷ though, Pakistan

⁷⁴ Krepon, "The Stability-Instability Paradox."

⁷⁵ Asif Shahzad, "PM Khan: Pakistan would Not Use Nuclear Weapons First, Amid Tensions with India," *Reuters*, September 2, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/>.

⁷⁶ BBC, "Balakot Air Strike."

⁷⁷ Joanna Slater and Pamela Constable, "Pakistan Captures Indian Pilot Aftershooting Down Aircraft, Escalating Hostilities," *The Washington Post*, February 27, 2019.

later returned the Indian pilot possibly to diffuse the situation.⁷⁸ During the period, the major political step India took was scrapping of Articles 370 and 35A on 5 August 2019.⁷⁹

Changing the autonomous status of IOJK to a territory controlled by the Indian Union was a significant decision by the Indian government. The decision has repercussions for Kashmiris living on both sides of LOC and it has also hurt the claims of Pakistan on IOK as Pakistan considers Kashmir as a disputed territory whose fate has to be decided on the basis of UN resolution through a plebiscite. India, on the contrary, considered Jammu and Kashmir to be her integral part, and any decision on the status of the disputed territory should be taken mutually by India and Pakistan. Both states have fought three wars (1948, 1965 and Kargil) over IOK, and the exchange of fire/skirmishes is a routine matter along the LOC, causing loss of civilian lives towards Pakistan side and military personnel on both sides.⁸⁰ Though in the past Pakistan has been able to use nuclear deterrence to its advantage but at this critical juncture once India took decision to change the status of IOK, Pakistan could not dissuade India from taking this step nor effectively portray the gravity of the situation between the nuclear rivals. The statements given by Pakistan leadership were mainly rhetoric on the volatility of the situation in IOK, the threat of the use of NWs and a demand for world powers to intervene. However, Pakistan did not take any physical steps which could reflect that there was a serious chance of a nuclear war between both the states. Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, during his annual address at UNGA highlighted the worsening of situation in IOK and also used other diplomatic forums for doing the same. Despite all these efforts, no seriousness was shown by US nor was the world community in general sufficiently alarmed that any delay in diffusing the tensions between both states may result in NWs exchange. Contrary to the expectation, only verbal offers from President Trump for mediation and some statements appeared from China, Malaysia, Turkey and Iran for exercising restraints by both the states.

This brings one to a critical understanding that in certain situations, the mere presence of NWs is not sufficient to dissuade an adversary from action and in order to achieve some particular objectives,

⁷⁸ Jeffrey Gettleman, Hari Kumar and Sameer Yasir, "Deadly Shelling Erupts in Kashmir Between India and Pakistan After Pilot Is Freed," *The New York Times*, March 2, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/02/world>.

⁷⁹ Aljazeera, "India Revokes Disputed Kashmir's Special Status with Rush Decree," *The Aljazeera News*, August 5, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/08/>.

⁸⁰ OHCHR, Kashmir: UN Reports Serious Abuses (New York: OHCHR, 2019), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/07/10>.

the intentions to use NWs must appear in a certain concrete form, with some sort of overt physical steps. After the Pulwama incident, once India scrapped the Articles on IOK, had Pakistan been serious about deterring India from doing so, it would have at least taken some apparent concrete steps to show the seriousness of efforts like in the form of forward movement of troops to LOC, heavy exchange of fire/skirmishes with Indian troops on LOC or deployment of NWs/missile. After strategic signalling to India, Pakistan's will to use NWs might have appeared through public and media interviews of Government functionaries and other important personalities from the politico – military sphere, duly followed thereafter by intense diplomatic efforts to underscore the precariousness of the situation. This was not evident in this case, as Pakistan highlighted the gravity of the deteriorating situation between the two rival nuclear powers in front of the international community but in words without showing any substantial or concrete evidence of its intentions on the ground or in practical terms. For example, Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, said that there exists a possibility of use of NWs in an Indo-Pak conflict over Kashmir.⁸¹ Such hollowed efforts only attracted US President Donald Trump's interest in mediating on the issue of Kashmir with India and Pakistan.⁸² The offer, no matter how genuine it may have been, practically had no bearing on reversing the loss caused to Pakistan's and especially Kashmiris' interests, primarily for two reasons. India turned down the offer by saying that all outstanding issues between India and Pakistan will be resolved bilaterally.⁸³ Pakistan's stance looked to be more of a verbal threat or empty rhetoric and failed to present the situation as grave to invite tangible intervention from the international community, specially the US, beyond issuing statements showing concern over atrocities in IOK.⁸⁴

Pakistan's stance, in fact, looked more like a pacifist stance showing no practical desire to do something to 'compel' India to revert its decision to annex the IOK other than issuing public statements. In that sense, it is understandable why the international community gave a lacklustre response and did not put much pressure on India to change its decision. To date, the international community has not put enough

⁸¹ Imran Khan, "Full Transcript of Prime Minister Imran Khan's Speech," Business Recorder, September 27, 2019.

⁸² Dev Goswami, "Why Donald Trump's Kashmir Mediation Comments are not a Setback for India," *The India Today*, September 25, 2019, <https://www.indiatoday.in/news-analysis/story>.

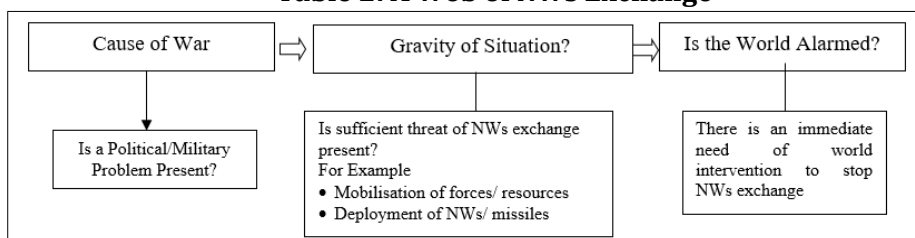
⁸³ "Fury in India over Donald Trump's Kashmir Claims," *The Guardian*, July 23, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jul/23/>.

⁸⁴ OHCHR, Kashmir: UN Reports Serious Abuses.

pressure on India despite recognizing the humanitarian crises in the IOK and the brutalities of Indian forces in Kashmir.⁸⁵

This was primarily the factor due to which any reason for NWs exchange was never present in real terms in the first place and the world was not alarmed enough to intervene either. Table 3 below presents a suggested web, which shows *how and why should the world be alarmed of NWs exchange*.

Table 2: A Web of NWs Exchange



Source: Prepared by authors.

The web in Table 2 suggests that world will only be alarmed about gravity of situation between NWS, if there is a 'cause of war,' which emanates from existence of actual problems between NWS. Secondly; gravity of situation between them is reflected in shape of some physical steps and escalation. Therefore, there is a sufficient reason for the world to believe about seriousness of the situation between NWS and their non-intervention may lead to war and exchange of NWs. In the post-Pulwama situation, absence of seriousness of situation could not alarm the world for intervention to diffuse the situation between India and Pakistan.

Taking the example from past, Horlick in his report considers placing of Soviet intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Cuba in 1962 as one of the important incidents during the Cold War era between USA and the erstwhile USSR, where USSR considered reaping some political and military advantages by placing nuclear capable missiles at Cuba.⁸⁶ The political advantages included erstwhile USSR's interests in West Germany and to deter any possibility of a foreign invasion in Cuba directly or sponsored by USA. The military advantages for erstwhile USSR included increase in nuclear strike capabilities, improved preemptive capability of USSR that would offset American capabilities and purported USA's first strike capabilities in Europe.

If NWS intend to take political advantage of the presence of nuclear deterrence, it may create a credible crisis or create a situation that will present a risk that if the situation runs out of control, it will be potentially

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Horlick, "The Cuban Missile Crisis."

dangerous and may escalate to a level of catastrophic NWs exchange. Dissuasion may remain one of NWS' purposes. If nuclear deterrence is used to accrue political advantage of the situation or dissuade an adversary, there will always be a risk of escalation. In the post-Pulwama situation, nuclear deterrence did not dissuade India from revoking Articles 35A and 370. It meant that in certain situations, the mere existence of NWs does not deter an adversary from certain actions, and instead, an opponent needs to initiate certain actions. If Pakistan was sensing the revoking of these articles by India,⁸⁷ then it might have had to mobilise its forces, exchange skirmishes along LOC and atleast show some intentions for deployment of NWs; such strategic signalling would have presented a potent risk for exchange of NWs and prevented India from action. In addition, this would have invited an immediate response from the international community to intervene to avoid further escalation. Pakistan might have used the situation for political gains against India by highlighting the case of Indian atrocities in the IOK and pushing for a just solution in the IOK. However, the caveat in this brinkmanship is the possibility of any state making wrong calculations about the rival state, which may put humanity in peril. Table 3 reflects that once the threat of war increased, for example, by mobilisation of forces, the stronger was the intervention by the world as during the Kargil Conflict and Escalation 2001-2 between both states to dissuade both states from engaging in some conflict or war.

⁸⁷ Pakistan Today, "Pakistan Condemns Indian Attempts to Bring Demographic Changes in IOK," *The Pakistan Today*, February 24, 2019, accessed December 29, 2020, <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/02/24>.

Table 3: Relationship between Mobilisation of Forces and Intervention

Incidents	Mobilisation of Forces	World Intervention		
		Strong	Partial	No
Brasstacks 1986-87	Yes	-	-	No evidence
Kargil War (1999)	Yes	Yes ⁸⁸	-	-
Indo-Pak Standoff after attack on Indian Parliament 2001/02	Yes	Yes ⁸⁹	-	-
Mumbai Attacks (2008)	No	-	Yes	-
Pathankot (2016)	No	-	Yes	-
Pulwama (2019)	No	-	Yes	-

Source: Prepared by authors.

India and Pakistan's military forces engaged in combat during the Kargil War in 1998, and during the Indo-Pak standoff in 2001–2002, both countries mobilised significant forces. At this point, the international community felt compelled to act quickly to prevent further escalation between India and Pakistan, which could result in the use of nuclear weapons. The presence of nuclear deterrence dissuaded both states from further escalating the situation, and meanwhile, potential conflict lines between both states, like Kashmir, were highlighted. In the Mumbai attacks and Pathankot incident, no mobilisation of forces or deployment of NWs was carried out by either of the states to present a veritable threat of an imminent nuclear catastrophe to the world community. However, barring limited gains on the diplomatic front, Pakistan was unable to extract substantial advantages out of the opportunity proffered by the brewing tense situation in its favour, which was only possible as suggested above like some physical steps like mobilisation of forces, cross-border skirmishes and even deployment of NWs. Intervention by the world powers at that opportune moment would have had a far more irrefutable impact on India to find some amicable solution to the IOK conflict. Same way, lacklustre response from Pakistan also permitted India to move ahead in abrogating Article 370 and 35A.

⁸⁸ Joeck, "The Indo-Pakistan Nuclear Confrontation: Lessons from the Past Contingencies for the Future."

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Conclusion

The basic purpose of Nuclear Deterrence is to dissuade an opponent from 'action.' The study examined these circumstances and came to the conclusion that, in some cases, nuclear deterrence won't be activated until a NWS takes specific physical actions and the other NWSs are compelled to "inaction." In the same way, the skilful use of nuclear deterrence permits political advantage over a rival. In order to understand these concepts, the history of nuclear deterrence between two arch-rival NWS of South Asia that is India and Pakistan, was brought to focus. It shows that nuclear deterrence remained effective between both these states during the period of escalation, and war was avoided as observed during the Kargil conflict, escalation of 2001-02 and the post-Pulwama situation. However, 'inaction,' one of the basic purposes of nuclear deterrence was violated in the post-Pulwama situation, where India changed the political status of the IOK without taking into account the presence of nuclear deterrence between both states. This was a special situation as India could not be deterred by the presence of NWs with Pakistan; therefore, the existing nuclear deterrence needed reinvigoration, which was possible through some physical steps. The absence of such steps has allowed India to advance and violate 'inaction' by changing the political status of the IOK.

Secondly, it was also observed that India adroitly used nuclear deterrence to gain political advantage. In the post-Pulwama incident, *prima facie*, it was understood that Pakistan was not showing any reaction to the Indian atrocities in IOK as no seriousness of efforts was observed in the shape of some physical steps. No escalation or movement on borders took place, and Pakistan primarily focused on diplomatic efforts to internationalise the issues faced by the IOK. In the absence of such physical action, India did not expect a military reaction and escalation from Pakistan; therefore, it changed the political status of the IOK. The political advantage gained by India from the situation was absent in the case of Pakistan. The failure of nuclear deterrence between South Asian rivals could have been the only compelling reason for the world to intervene between them, and this would have been possible, had Pakistan mobilised or at least partially mobilised its military forces and showed some intentions or deployed NWs.

Presence of NWs has changed politics among NWS, wherein their grand strategic objectives are pursued through skilful use of nuclear deterrence. A dynamic operational interpretation and use of the nuclear deterrence strategy during crisis is likely to accrue more benefits for a NWS rather through application of some fixed, static understanding of nuclear deterrence.

INDIA'S CYBER LANDSCAPE: AN ASSESSMENT OF INDIAN EFFORTS SINCE INDEPENDENCE

Nageen Ashraf^{*}

Abstract

India, as the world's largest digitally connected democracy, recognizes the critical importance of cyberspace in the face of evolving technological dynamics. India realizes that self-sufficiency has to be enhanced for strengthening cyber resilience and reducing dependence on foreign technology. This research explores India's historical efforts, spanning from the post-independence era to contemporary times, aimed at fortifying its cyberspace. The study delves into domestic measures such as the New Electronics Policy (NEP), IT Act 2000, and the National Cyber Security Policy, complemented by the establishment of key entities like the National Informatics Centre, CERT-In, Defence Cyber Agency, and National Task Force. The analysis extends to bilateral and multilateral collaborations, elucidating India's position as a global IT industry leader. Secondary resources of data, along with the primary documents- including India's official policies- form the basis of this research, offering a comprehensive understanding of India's digital landscape.

Keywords: Cyber Threats, Digital India, National Cyber Security Policy, Cyber Warfare

Introduction

In an era where advancements are taking place at an unprecedented pace, it is not unfortunate for India to develop a strong cyberspace. Safeguarding national security encompasses a crucial aspect in the form of cybersecurity, prompting India to actively fortify its cyberspace for sustainability in the evolving global landscape. The imperative for India to cultivate a resilient cyberspace arises from various compelling reasons. First, the technologically evolving world calls for a well-protected cyberspace. Any state that does not focus on cyberspace during such

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technological upheaval would surely have to bear consequences later on. Secondly, India intends to be a regional hegemon and such ambitions also demand India to have a robust cyberspace. Other than that, commonality of cyber-attacks occurrence, their ability to undermine state's security, and the enormous economic losses because of cyber-attacks are also among the reasons India should work harder on its cyber space.¹

In order to mitigate the growing cyber threats, India has been trying to build its defensive as well as offensive cyber warfare capabilities. The South Asian security dilemma, which is taking place with respect to the great power competition between the USA and China, is a primary factor in India's pursuit of cyber warfare capabilities. China aims to become a cyber-super power with ambitions to counter the USA, and China's capabilities are causing insecurity within India. China has tried to reduce its reliance and dependency on US-based technology and has made efforts to produce its technology. The notion of "techno-nationalism" has granted China the status of one of the emerging cyber powers.² It has made its cyberspace strong enough for cyber-warfare against its opponents, especially the USA. China is preparing for full-fledged cyber warfare against its opponents.³ In contrast to the USA's notion of "internet for all", China holds the view of cyber sovereignty, which is state-controlled cyberspace. And now, cyber space is considered one of the key drivers in China's pursuit of becoming a superpower.⁴

China's efforts have thus created a security dilemma within India. China has also been working on different areas, including AI and Quantum computing, to build its cyber warfare capabilities. China is expected to catch up with the USA and dominate the AI industries by 2030.⁵ If China keeps working at the same pace, it will most likely to develop software that protects its systems from cyber-attacks from adversaries. Along with such defensive measures, China's pursuit of quantum computing will allow it to break well-established encryptions and get into the systems quickly. In addition, China is believed to be building a digital Silk Road, which means that China's technology and equipment are also being used in states

¹ Sumeet Jindal, "Here's Why India Needs Strong Cyber Security Laws," *Newsroom Post*, July 20, 2021, <https://newsroompost.com/opinion>.

² Adam Segal, "When China Rules the Web: Technology in Service of the State," *Foreign Affairs* 97 (2018): 10, <https://cs.brown.edu/courses/csci1800/sources>.

³ Jayson M. Spade, *China's Cyber Power and America's National Security*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 2011, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations>.

⁴ Jon R. Lindsay, Tai Ming Cheung, and Derek S. Reveron, eds. *China and Cybersecurity: Espionage, Strategy, and Politics in the Digital Domain*, Oxford University Press, USA, 2015.

⁵ Segal, 2018.

under the BRI project. The digital side of the BRI also encourages India to opt for a strengthened cyber space. These Chinese companies are also storing data of the population while also providing people with effective internet services.⁶

Such initiatives by China have challenged the US cyberspace and put China's rivals at greater risk, especially India. In 2020, India had a border stand-off with China. Other than that, the growing Chinese navy in the Indian Ocean is also a threat to India.⁷ Therefore, it is beyond doubt that besides all these factors, China's cyber warfare capabilities also endanger India, considering their rivalry in multiple areas. The Sino-Indian War of 1962, the fight for regional dominance, the long-going border dispute, China's cordial relations with Pakistan and the 2020 Ladakh episode are pertinent reasons why China is perceived as a grave threat by India. Thus, India sees growing cyber capabilities across the border as a grave threat to its national security.⁸ Therefore, this study aims to answer the research question, "What efforts has India taken to become one of the leading technological powers in the world?" In doing so, the paper considers major efforts by India at domestic and international levels since its independence. Some of the indicators of India's tech power include the success of Indian MNCs, and the development of technology start-ups in India. However, these indicators are not mentioned in the paper because they're out of the scope of this paper.

Efforts by India in Post-Colonial Era

Considering that India is a nuclear weapon state, cyber-nuclear nexus cannot be negated. Cyber-nuclear threats are on the rise, and the world has already witnessed the case of Stuxnet, a cyber-worm which was used to disrupt Iran's nuclear program. Being termed as the most sophisticated cyber weapon ever created, Stuxnet is an eye-opener, especially for the nuclear states all around the world. Moreover, the presence of terrorist groups in South Asia and their efforts to generate instability time and again also pose serious security challenges for India. Therefore, India has regarded cyberspace as a constituent of its national security.

Tracing back the history of India's IT sector, the influence of British policies and traditions over independent India remained for some time as

⁶ Segal, 2018.

⁷ Joshua T. White, "After the Foundational Agreements: An Agenda for US-India Defense and Security Cooperation," *Brookings Institution* (2021), <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01>.

⁸ Mike Hamilton, "India: A Growing Cybersecurity Threat," *Dark Reading*, December 2020, <https://www.darkreading.com/threat-intelligence>.

far as the privacy and the IT sector of the state were concerned. Because of strict restrictions and surveillance over its citizens during the colonial period, Indian government asserted same control over its citizens in the postcolonial period. However, when the economic condition worsened because of centralization of government, India realized that opening up economy and IT sector could help the devastating economy improve. Finally in the time period of Indira Gandhi several initiatives were taken to open up the IT market, which were then extended by her son Rajiv Gandhi. Similarly, more economic reforms were taken by Narasimha Rao to open up the market. Afterwards from time to time, different governments have tried to send their fiscal support to the IT industry including the grant of subsidies and resource allocation.⁹

National Informatics Centre 1976

The establishment of NIC was one of the milestones in India's shift towards e-governance. One of the main objectives of this initiative was to assist the government in e-governance¹⁰, and it was successfully achieved its objective to a great extent. One of NIC's achievements was the Asian Games in 1982, which New Delhi hosted. All the clerical work in those games was computerized, and locally made software by NIC along with locally made computers were used.¹¹ Along with this, the center has played a decisive role in incorporating e-governance applications within India on national as well as district level.¹²

New Electronics Policy (NEP) 1984

Indian government realized the need for the state to build up its IT sector and thus slackened many restrictions on the private firms, uplifting them to become self-sufficient. One such initiative was taken in 1967, known as The Electronics Corporation India Limited, which aimed at producing computers without the help of external partners. Likewise, The New Electronics Policy was also one of the initial efforts taken towards the openness of the market. It was a landmark step taken to allow private industries to take hold of the market, unlike India's previous government centric policies. The policy also encouraged the imports of technology

⁹ Thomas Barnes. "The IT Industry and Economic Development in India: A Critical Study," *Journal of South Asian Development* 8, no. 1 (2013): 61-83. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177>.

¹⁰ Vaidyeswaran Rajaraman, "History of Computing in India: 1955-2010," *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing* 37, no. 1 (2015): 24-35. <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/>

¹¹ Rajaraman, 2015, 28.

¹² Shweta Ghate, and Pragyesh Kumar Agrawal, "A Literature Review on Cyber Security in Indian Context," *J. Comput. Inf. Technol* 8, no. 5 (2017): 30-36.

from the West ¹³ and allowed the private companies of India to manufacture telecommunications equipment.¹⁴ It was a comprehensive policy that encompassed four major aims of technology exchange, computer imports for governmental departments, facilitate the return of expatriate Indian technicians, and the establishment of Export Processing Zones.¹⁵

National Task Force on IT and Software Development 1998

In 1998, the then-prime minister of India, Atal Behari Vajpayee, established a task force in order to facilitate the Indian government in becoming a global superpower in the field of information security and technology.¹⁶ The task force was entrusted with the task of developing National Informatics Policy's draft and also aimed at facilitating the implementation of NIP and helped the government in strengthening the IT industry. Even today, India has asserted the importance of self-sufficiency in the technological domain. In an interview, India's Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw opined, "We aim to make India a tech export engine," with ambitions to make India lead the 6G. ¹⁷

These steps were three of the important initial efforts to prioritize the IT sector and move towards digitalization. These initiatives helped India to attain self-sufficiency to a greater extent. In contemporary times, India has continued to be one of the leading exporters of IT at the global level. Between March 2022 and 2023, its IT exports were worth \$230 billion, making around 11 % of the global computer and IT exports.¹⁸ Initially, working on cyberspace aimed to mitigate the economic losses caused by cyber-attacks. In addition, the initiatives taken focused more towards the privacy of the citizens and did not view cyber space as a national security concern. It was not until Mumbai attacks that India

¹³ Biswajit Dhar, and Reji K. Joseph. "India's Information Technology Industry: A Tale of Two Halves," *Innovation, Economic Development, and Intellectual Property in India and China: Comparing Six Economic Sectors* (2019): 93-117.

¹⁴ Ramesh Subramanian, "Historical Consciousness of Cyber Security in India," *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing* 42, no. 4 (2020): 71-93.

¹⁵ Biswajit Dhar, and Reji K. Joseph, "India's Information Technology Industry: A Tale of Two Halves."

¹⁶ AnnaLee Saxenian, "Bangalore: The Silicon Valley of Asia?" *Center for Research on Economic Development and Policy Reform*, February, 2001, <https://www.researchgate.net/profile>.

¹⁷ Gulveen Aulakh and Subhash Narayan, "We Aim to make India A Tech Export Engine: Ashwini Vaishnaw," *Mint*, November 26, 2023, <https://www.livemint.com/news/india>.

¹⁸ "India: The World's Newest Economic Superpower," *Foreign Affairs*, September 7, 2023, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/sponsored-gmi-india>.

realized that cyber space can also become a serious threat to states' physical security.¹⁹

Efforts by India in the 21st Century

India has broadened its cyber landscape during escalating cyber espionage incidents. It has been thinking of institutionalizing cyber warfare in order to gain superiority in the region using this asymmetric warfare.²⁰ India, like all other states, is concerned about economic growth as well as the risks and vulnerabilities associated with the cyberspace.²¹ With time, India has managed to become one of the strongest IT industries in the world. It was labelled as a recognized IT superpower in the early 20th century²² and continues to be the leader of IT and IT-enabled services.²³ Some have even labelled it as the "tech- super power",²⁴ which is also an emblem of India's resilient digital landscape. Some major efforts taken by India in the last two decades have played a major role in making India a leading cyber-power. These initiatives include the following.

The Information Technology Act, 2000

India came up with the information technology act in 2000 whose major objective was to amend and update previous acts in accordance with the changing technological environment. The act is also considered as a fundamental law that deals with e-commerce and cybercrimes²⁵ The Act is a detailed framework that defines cyber and computer related terms along with the crimes and their punishments. Critics argued that IT Act 2000 undermined the citizen's right to privacy in the name of regulation of space.²⁶ The Act was then amended in the year 2008 to address some loopholes that were present in the 2000 Act. The Act was criticized

¹⁹ Swaran Singh and Jayanna Krupakar, "Indo-US Cooperation in Countering Cyber Terrorism: Challenges and Limitations," *Strategic Analysis* 38, no. 5 (2014): 703-716.

²⁰ Pukhraj Singh, "Battle-Ready for the Fifth Dimension:: Assessing India's Cyber-Defence Preparedness," *Jindal Journal of International Affairs* 1, no. 1 (2011): 339-351, <https://jgu-dev.s3.ap-south-1.amazonaws.com>.

²¹ Sameer Patil, "India's Lead on Cyber Space Governance," *Gateway House*, August 15, 2018, <https://www.gatewayhouse.in/india-cyber-space-governance>.

²² Luke Harding, "India: The New IT Superpower," *The Guardian*, 2000. <http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2000/>.

²³ "India: The World's Newest Economic Superpower," 2023.

²⁴ Ernestas Naprys, "India's on Fast Track to Tech Superpower Status," *Cybernews*, 12 December 2023, <https://cybernews.com/editorial>.

²⁵ *Information Technology Act 2000*, India, <http://www.mit.gov.in/itbill.asp>.

²⁶ Subramanian, 2020.

because despite being a landmark act that put spotlight on many key issues, the act failed to address the preventive measures needed to be taken to make cyber-attacks unsuccessful. The government mostly tried to retain supremacy over the internet and cyber space by citing the external cyber security threats.²⁷ Critics also argued that the 2000 IT Act paid no attention towards the cyber-crimes and was more inclined towards issues related to e-commerce, but the loopholes were somehow covered in the amended IT Act of 2008.

CERT-IN-2004

At the organizational level, the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In)- established in 2004- remains one of the most dominant institutions as it is a major national agency which is responsible for the collection, monitoring, coordination, analysis, and dissemination of information.²⁸ The IT Act did not address the prevention of cyber breaches, and dealt only with the consequences of a digital breach. In this regard, the Response Team was assigned the task of blocking malicious websites as a preventive measure as an attempt to address the insufficiency of the IT Act.²⁹ The team is also responsible for helping out citizens with regard to technical assistance as well as the recovery of their systems from the cyber-attacks. It has also played a role in raising awareness among people as far as cyber security is concerned.³⁰

National Cyber Security Policy 2013

Even though the inclination towards digitalization in India began in the era of Rajiv Gandhi, but 2013 was the year of major achievements for India in the cyber domain.³¹ The first ever cyber security policy in India was formulated in 2013. The main objective of this policy was to create a safe and secure cyber environment in the state and to protect the state from cyber-attacks and cyber espionage. The policy puts forward the guidelines as well as strategies for securing cyber space and creating an

²⁷ Subramanian, 2020.

²⁸ E. Dilipraj, and Ramnath Reghunadhan, "Organisational Governance of Cyber Space in India," *Journal of Air Power and Space Studies* 13, no. 1 (2018): 115-134. <https://capsindia.org/wp-content/uploads/>

²⁹ Subramanian, 2020.

³⁰ M. Tariq Banday, and Farooq Ahmad Mir, "A Study of Indian Approach towards Cyber Security," In *2012 1st International Conference on Emerging Technology Trends in Electronics, Communication & Networking*, 1-6. IEEE, 2012. <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/6470114/>.

³¹ E Dilipraj, "India's Cyber Security 2013: A Review," *Centre for Air Power Studies* 97, no. 14 (2013): 1-4, <https://capsindia.org/wp-content/uploads/>.

invulnerable cyber ecosystem.³² Along with this policy, other achievements for India included being labeled as an "Authorizing state" when previously it was a consumer state.

The national cyber security policy was a landmark step taken by the Indian government to protect cyberspace, but many loopholes still that need to be addressed. There is a need to update the 2013 national cyber security policy keeping in view the inevitability of cyber warfare and the technological advancements that have taken place over time.³³ Other than the problem of implementation of policy nationwide, one of the major issues is that the policy does not look at cyberspace as a form of warfare; rather it focuses on securing the data of individuals and organizations.³⁴ Another problem is that the policy does not consider cyber security as an important element of nuclear security.³⁵ Being the first ever such policy, the policy was abstract but it nonetheless guided the creation of different institutions like National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre which makes up the digital landscape of India.

National Cyber Security Policy- 2020

In 2020, India updated the national cyber security strategy to broaden the cyber landscape and to address the growing vulnerabilities. The three goals- as mentioned in the National Cyber Security Policy 2020- are to secure, strengthen, and synergize the digital landscape of India.³⁶ This will be done by ensuring the security of public services, supply chains, critical infrastructures, small businesses, and digital payments. Moreover, the policy also aims to ensure the preparedness of different sectors in cyber domain in order to secure cyber space at national level. At the same time, it lays down options to deal with the digital transformations.³⁷ As far as the pillar of strength is concerned, the policy lays down an ambition to strengthen institutions, structure, governance, research, innovation, capability, assurance, audit, crisis management, and data security. Thirdly, the policy also aims to synergize human and institutional resources in

³² Pulkit Mohan, "Ensuring Cyber Security in India's Nuclear Systems," Observer Research Foundation, 2020, <https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ORF>.

³³ Arun Sukumar, and R. K. Sharma, "The Cyber Command: Upgrading India's National Security Architecture," ORF Special Report 9 (2016). <https://orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03>.

³⁴ Sukumar and Sharma, 2016.

³⁵ Pulkit Mohan, *Ensuring Cyber Security in India's Nuclear Systems*.

³⁶ Data Security Council of India, "National Cyber Security Strategy 2020," <https://www.dsci.in/files/content/knowledge-centre/2023>.

³⁷ National Cyber Security Strategy 2020, 2020.

order to mitigate cyber threats and to achieve overall objectives of a regulated and well-governed cyber space.³⁸

Digital India 2015

Reports show that internet penetration and the use of smartphones grew exponentially in the past decade and are still expected to rise the same way.³⁹ Because India's reliance on the internet has been increasing rapidly, the government of India took the initiative of approving the national e-governance plan in 2006. Later on, the authorities decided to transform Indian society digitally and came up with a plan for "Digital India" in 2015.⁴⁰ The landmark step taken by the government of India is aimed at allowing citizens to have access to high-speed internet, safe and secure cyberspace, as well as digital literacy.⁴¹

Under the umbrella of Digital India, another initiative was taken known as Cyber Swachhta Kendra. It is a Botnet cleaning and malware analysis center which aims at the detection of botnet infections, notifying users about them and guiding users to secure their systems.⁴² Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) is another program launched in 2017 under Digital India and it aims to have at least one digitally literate individual in every household in order to have skills required to compete in the growing digital ecosystem.⁴³ The major aim of this initiative was to bridge the gap between urban and rural areas by making individuals learn how to run devices like PC, cellphones, and tablets so they can in turn help in the nation-building of the state.⁴⁴ Through this program and its implementation, India has become one of the leading states in the world to use technology for the improvement of socio-economic conditions of its citizens.⁴⁵

³⁸ National Cyber Security Strategy 2020, 17.

³⁹ Aditya Bharadwaj, "Assessing India's Preparedness, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 2020, <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Jul/21/2002460417/>.

⁴⁰ Sumanta Bhattacharya, and Bhavneet Kaur Sachdev, "Can India be Successful in Achieving a Digital Economy and its Vision of Digital India: A Case Study," *International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering, Technology IJIRSET*, Vol 10: 11 (2021), <https://www.researchgate.net/profile>.

⁴¹ Digital India, July 2, 2023, <https://digitalindia.gov.in/>.

⁴² Cyber Swachhta Kendra, June 20, 2023, <https://www.csk.gov.in/>.

⁴³ Aanandita Gahlot, and Shubhankar Gahlot, "Changing the State of Literacy in the Digital Age in India," *EPIC Series in Education Science* 3 (2020): 98-107, <https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net>.

⁴⁴ Gahlot, 2020.

⁴⁵ Sumanpreet Kaur, and Sajad Ahmad Mir, "Digital India: An Analysis of its Impact on Economic, Social, and Environmental Sectors," *Neuroquantology* 20, no. 22 (2022): 2551-2561, <https://www.researchgate.net/profile>.

Defense Cyber Agency (DCA)- 2018

Previously, there have been agencies and bodies that used to deal with civilian cyber security concerns. But, in 2018, India initiated the establishment of a specialized body focused on addressing the military aspects of cybersecurity. This initiative aimed to safeguard India's digital infrastructure from foreign hackers, fostering collaboration among the navy, military, and air force. The creation of the DCA aimed to enhance collective efforts in countering cyber threats, with a particular focus on adversaries such as Pakistan and China.⁴⁶ Other than that, the agency was also expected to work towards the formulation of a cyber-warfare doctrine.⁴⁷ It was a major step because it indicates India's seriousness towards the weaponization of cyberspace as a major tool for 5th generation warfare.⁴⁸

India's Cooperation in Cyber Domain

As an effort to boost up its cyber capacity in the times of increasing relevance of cyber space in international relations, India has signed different bilateral agreements with Russia, USA, and Israel as well as multilateral agreements with regional organizations like EU and ASEAN.⁴⁹ In the years between 2000 and 2017, India signed almost 100 cyber-agreements that were either directly related to cyber- security or indirectly aimed at cyber-security.⁵⁰ It has also participated in different sessions of UN-GGE where it encouraged that states should cooperate with each other in this new realm of warfare in order to mitigate the growing cyber threats. UN Group of Governmental Experts (UN-GGE) was an international platform created to develop a framework for global cyber governance. The efforts started in 2004 but so far had not been able to bear fruit because of disagreement of major powers over the control and regulation of cyber space and the applicability of International humanitarian Law.⁵¹ However, in the 6th session of 2021, major powers

⁴⁶ ANI, India Set To Get Defence Cyber Agency to Fight Pak, Chinese Hackers, *NDTV*, (April 30, 2019), <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/>.

⁴⁷ Gunjan Chawla, "India's New Defence Cyber Agency—II: Balancing Constitutional Constraints And Covert Ops?" *Medianama*, <https://www.medianama.com/2019/10/>.

⁴⁸ Nidhi Singh, India's New Defence Cyber Agency.

⁴⁹ Sameer Patil, India's Lead on Cyber Space Governance.

⁵⁰ Hannes Ebert, "Hacked IT Superpower: How India Secures its Cyberspace as a Rising Digital Democracy," *India Review* 19, no. 4 (2020): 376-413. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080>.

⁵¹ Michael Schmitt, "The Sixth United Nations GGE and International Law in Cyberspace," *Just Security* (2021), <https://centaur.reading.ac.uk/98699>.

came to the same page to tackle this growing cyber threat all over the world.

In contemporary times, India has bilateral strategic cyber dialogues with over 10 countries. Moreover, it has signed myriad cyber MoUs, agreements and joint statements with a further 40-odd countries.⁵² These cyber collaborations have helped India build its offensive cyber warfare capabilities.⁵³ Even though the collaboration in cyber space is not necessarily aimed at offensive capabilities, the collaboration has helped India improve its offensive cyber capabilities because of access to advanced technology, exchange of technical expertise, and enhancement of skills and training programs. Along with these agreements, India's Land Warfare Doctrine of 2018 also mentioned the readiness of the Indian Army in the cyber landscape. The doctrine asserts, "The Indian Army will enhance capabilities to address the challenges of non-contact domains of conflict viz cyber, space and information as a component of our National strategy for non-contact warfare to cause unaffordable losses to potential adversaries."⁵⁴ With regards to building offensive cyber capabilities, the doctrine acknowledges that cyber warfare has become another domain of competition, which is why India will make efforts to strengthen its cyber deterrence along with capabilities of eliminating cyber threats from the adversaries.⁵⁵

India-USA India and USA have been the defense partners for a very long time and security is an integral part of Indo-US bilateral ties.⁵⁶ The Indo-US cooperation in the technological field dates back to as early as 1980s when both the states signed a memorandum of understanding mainly aimed at the exchange and transfer of technology.⁵⁷ 9/11 attack and the Mumbai attacks brought US and India on the same page for their fight against terrorism. Both the attacks also highlighted the vulnerabilities of cybercyber space and its exploitation by terrorist groups. Therefore, it was believed that cyber cooperation between both the states

⁵² Cherian Samuel, and Munish Sharma, *India's Strategic Options in a Changing Cyberspace*, New Delhi: Pentagon Press LLP, 2019, <https://idsa.in/system/files/book/>

⁵³ Ammad Farooq, and Ahmad Ali, "India's Growing Cyber Partnerships and Challenges for Pakistan," *Margalla Papers* 26 (2): 49-61. (2022), <https://doi.org/10.54690/margallapapers.26.2.121>.

⁵⁴ Indian Army, "Land Warfare Doctrine- 2018," SSRI, <https://www.ssri-j.com/MediaReport/Document/>

⁵⁵ "Land Warfare Doctrine- 2018," 10.

⁵⁶ Cara Abercrombie, "Realizing the Potential," *Asia Policy* 14, no. 1 (2019): 119-144, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26642266>.

⁵⁷ Steven R. Weisman, "U.S.-India Technology Accord Gains," *The New York Times*. (May 4, 1985), <https://www.nytimes.com/1985/05/04/world>.

would be fruitful; however, before 9/11 took place, initiatives had already begun that focused on cyber security. India and USA established India-US Cyber Security Forum Initiative in 2001 which fostered the exchange of expertise in the specific domain. Under the forum, India improved its cyber capabilities to a good extent. In fact, the development of CERT-In, (one of the first steps taken by Indian govt. to secure cyber space) was also a fruitful result of US-India cyber cooperation. With the passage of time, the forum also helped CERT-In to work on variety of areas, covering different issues like detection of malware, cyber forensics, and cyber terrorism.⁵⁸

While India possesses commendable cyber-intelligence capabilities, its comprehensive understanding often leans on collaboration with the United States. The initiation of cyber security cooperation in the early 2000s faced a setback when an incident revealed that certain individuals from India were involved with US intelligence, leading to a decline in trust between the two nations and hindering further collaboration.⁵⁹ But then, finally, in 2011, a memorandum of understanding was signed, which again boosted the technological and information exchange.⁶⁰ Indo-US cooperation in the field of defense and security will be beneficial for both US and India. In 2018, a Memorandum of Understanding⁶¹ was also signed in the cyber domain, which was similar to the MoU signed between both in 2011.⁶²

India-EU

The European Union and India have some converging interests. Keeping in view the fact that India is working towards digitalization of the state under its program "Digital India", and EU is working on the "Digital Single Market", there is a lot of room for cyber cooperation between both the states. When both the states set the EU-India agenda for Action 2020,

⁵⁸ Swaran Singh and Jayanna Krupakar, "Indo-US Cooperation in Countering Cyber Terrorism: Challenges and Limitations."

⁵⁹ Srijith K. Nair, "The Case for an India-US Partnership in Cybersecurity," *Takshashila Institution, Inde* 14 (2010) <https://takshashila.org.in/s/India-US-cybersecurity.pdf>.

⁶⁰ Mahrukh Khan, "Growing India-US Strategic Cooperation," *Strategic Studies* 37, no. 4 (2017): 97-117. <https://www.jstor.org/>.

⁶¹ A MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) is a nonbinding agreement between two or more states outlining the terms and details of an understanding, including each party's requirements and responsibility; it is often the first stage in the formation of a formal contract.

⁶² "India And US Sign Memorandum Of Understanding To Continue Cooperation In Cyber Security," *First Post*, January 12, 2017, <https://www.firstpost.com/tech/news-analysis/>.

cyber security was one of the key areas that were given importance. Along with that, both states also encouraged the exchange of technology and expertise in the domain of cyber security.⁶³ EU published its cyber security strategy in 2020 which highlights the importance of cyber collaboration with other states. In this regard, India is an essential partner. The European Union also conducted its sixth cyber dialogue with Delhi prior to releasing its cyber security strategy. In the dialogue, both the parties agreed to enhance cyber cooperation and capacity building measures.⁶⁴

India-New Zealand

According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the first dialogue between India and New Zealand was held in 2017 in which both the states focused on deepening their ties in the cyber domain.⁶⁵ Both sides encouraged that cyberspace should be made free and secure and more economical and innovation should be brought in the domain. Similarly, after 2017, various talks were held between India and New Zealand, and cyber security remained an important element of the discussions. In May 2021, a virtual meeting was also held in which both sides agreed to enhance depth in the sectors of security, defense, climate change, cyber security and counterterrorism.⁶⁶ Other than these states, India has also been collaborating with Israel, Japan, Russia, UK, and Australia in the cyber domain. Additionally, India's membership in minilateral groupings like QUAD and BRICS has also enabled it to fortify its cybercyber space.

India's Digital Terrain: An Evaluation

The overall position of India in cyber space remains contested. Because of the initiatives taken to strengthen its cyber space, India was ranked 10th in Global Cyber Security Index in 2020 as per a report by International Telecommunication Union (ITU).⁶⁷ It is a landmark

⁶³ Patryk Pawlak, "EU-India Cooperation on Cyber Issues: Towards Pragmatic Idealism?" *Gateway House*, (2016) <https://www.gatewayhouse.in/wp-content/uploads>.

⁶⁴ Ministry of External Affairs, 6th India-EU Cyber Dialogue (New Delhi: Press Release, 2020), <https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/33308/>.

⁶⁵ Ministry of External Affairs, India-New Zealand Cyber Dialogue, New Delhi (November 27, 2017) <https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/29140/>.

⁶⁶ India, New Zealand decide to enhance depth of engagement in key areas, (2021), *The Economic Times*. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-new-zealand>.

⁶⁷ International Telecommunication Union "Global Cybersecurity Index 2020," https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-d/opb/str/.

achievement for India because in 2018, India was ranked 47th in the list.⁶⁸ According to research conducted by a UK think tank (International Institute for Strategic Studies), there are seven factors⁶⁹ that determine the cyber capabilities of a state. Assessment of these factors indicates that India lies in the third tier of states having cyber power capabilities,⁷⁰ which means that there are some factors that still need improvement and some factors that show India's potential strength.⁷¹ In contrast, according to the National Cyber Power Index of 2022, India is not among the cyber powers of 2020 as well as 2022.⁷² In fact, India is not even among the top 10 cyber powers of 2020 and 2022, making India's position and capabilities contested in cyber space.

Despite various efforts, India remains the most vulnerable states to cyber-attacks. The Stuxnet, which is mainly associated with Iran, also affected around 10,000 Indian computers and targeted some critical infrastructure computers as well. Had the virus activated itself on those systems, the oil and power sectors of the state would have been crippled.⁷³ Analyzing the reports from 2019, almost 70% companies in India had to face serious consequences of the cyber-attacks. Most of these attacks were significant enough to create grave economic losses to the state. But again, this does not signify that India has a weak cyber space because the more digitalized a state is, the more vulnerable it becomes. Data suggests that from 2006 to 2020, India was the 3rd state in the world with most cyber-attacks aimed at government agencies.⁷⁴ Additionally, India had to suffer a

⁶⁸ Sandhya Sharma, "India Breaks into Top 10 Countries on UN's Index Measuring Commitment to Cybersecurity, *The Economic Times*, June 29, 2021, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/>.

⁶⁹ The assessment measures a country's cyber abilities on seven parameters — strategy, governance and control of cyber capabilities, core cyber-intelligence capability, cyber empowerment and dependence, cyber security and resilience, global leadership in cyberspace affairs, and offensive cyber capability.

⁷⁰ "Cyber Capabilities and National Power: A Net Assessment," International Institute for Strategic Studies, June 28, 2021, <https://www.iiss.org/en/research-paper/2021/06/cyber-power---tier-three/>.

⁷¹ Regina Mihindukulasuriya, "India's Offensive Cyber Capability More Focused on Pakistan than China, UK Think Tank Says," *The Print*, June 28, 2021, <https://theprint.in/india/indias>.

⁷² Julia Voo, Irfan Hemani, and Daniel Cassidy, "National Cyber Power Index 2022," *BELFER Centre for Science and International Affairs*, September 2022, <https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/files/publication/>.

⁷³ E Dilipraj, "India's Cyber Security 2013: A Review."

⁷⁴ Carmen Ang, "The Most Significant Cyber Attacks from 2006-2020, by Country," *Visual Capitalist* 4 (2021), <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/cyber-attacks-worldwide-2006-2020/s>.

loss of Rs. 1.25 trillion in 2019 and a loss of \$6 trillion during the pandemic year 2020 because of cyber threats.⁷⁵ In the initial months of 2022, India saw a tremendous increase in its cyber security incidents, with 674,000 incidents taking place.⁷⁶ From 2021 to September 2023, India witnessed an increase of 278% in cyber-attacks sponsored by state actors alone.⁷⁷ This highlights that despite many efforts, Indian cyber space and government organizations are still vulnerable to cyber-attacks and more efforts are needed in order to lower the occurrence of such incidents.

Overall, India's cyberspace is not as strong as it should be. India behind in its cyber security compared to other cyber powers, even though it has a massive population of internet users. Even though the rise in the internet has been slow in India compared to other states, India has been paying less attention to its cyberspace. But since offensive capabilities in cyberspace are more effective than one's defensive capabilities, no matter how defensive a system gets, it will always be vulnerable to foreign attacks because defensive primacy cannot be applied to even the strongest nations like the US, China and Russia.⁷⁸

One can argue that just because India has been trying to strengthen its cyberspace, does not mean it possesses cyber warfare capabilities since it comprises intense attacks and operations. But, looking at the definition of cyber warfare provided by Clarke and Knake, cyber warfare means the "actions by a nation-state to penetrate another nation's computers or networks to cause damage or disruption."⁷⁹ From this perspective, it is clear that since India can enter the adversaries' information systems and disrupt them, it also has cyber warfare capabilities. India is in its initial phases, but the state has enough human

⁷⁵ N. Singal, "Increasing cyber-attacks show why stringent cyber-security laws are need of the hour, *Business Today*," (2021) <https://www.businesstoday.in/technology/news/>.

⁷⁶ Muqbil Ahmar, "Cybersecurity: How does India Perform at the Global Stage?" *Economic Times*, April 20, 2023, <https://cio.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/digital-security/>.

⁷⁷ The Wire Staff, "State-Sponsored Cyber Attacks Against India Went Up by 278% Between 2021 and September 2023: Report," *The Wire*, 6th November, 2023, <https://thewire.in/tech/>.

⁷⁸ Kartik Bommakanti, "India's Cyber Defence Capabilities: Their Role in Net-Centric Warfare," In *The Routledge Handbook of Indian Defence Policy*, 367-377, Routledge India, 2020.

⁷⁹ Richard A. Clarke. and Robert Knake, "Cyber War: The Next Threat to National Security and What To Do About It," Ecco, 2011.

and technological resources to become one of the major cyber actors worldwide in a few years.⁸⁰

Conclusion

As an emerging tech giant, India has greatly improved its cyber capabilities in the past few decades. The initial efforts to boost the state's cyber security and IT sector started back in the time period of Rajiv Gandhi. After that, successive governments tried to keep up with the state's IT sector. Many steps have been taken, and various policies have been developed to make India self-reliant regarding technological equipment. This has helped India become one of the leading IT industries in the world and encouraged India to expedite its national cyber security efforts in defensive and offensive domains. In this regard, its collaboration with other second-tier cyber powers, including the USA and Israel, has allowed it to develop resilient cyberspace by incorporating offensive cyber capabilities. At the same time, despite all these efforts, the facts and figures presented in the paper justify that India remains one of the most vulnerable states in the world in terms of cyber-attacks, leaving room for further efforts towards a resilient cyberspace.

⁸⁰ John Leyden, "Indian Cyber-Espionage Activity Rising Amid Growing Rivalry With China, Pakistan," *The Daily Swig*, Feb 25, 2021, <https://portswigger.net/daily-swig>.

Book Reviews

Book Title: Pakistan's Pathway to the Bomb: Ambitions, Politics, and Rivalries

Author: Mansoor Ahmed

Publisher: Georgetown University Press, 2022, 304

Reviewed by Rabia Akhtar, Associate Professor, School of Integrated Social Sciences, University of Lahore.

In their seminal books, Pakistani scholars Feroz Hassan Khan and Hassan Abbas have dissected sets of complex questions relating to Pakistan's nuclear program. Both Khan and Abbas have lucidly analyzed the factors that drove not only Pakistan's nuclearization but also the activities of Abdul Qadeer Khan (A.Q. Khan) and his network. As the titles of their works suggest, both shed light on how Pakistan, facing grave security challenges, braved many an odd to get a deterrent of its own. While Khan and Abbas have made significant contributions to the literature on Pakistan's nuclear excursion, they center their analyses on external factors and A.Q. Khan, and therefore leave a lot of room for unpacking various aspects of the said journey. This gap means that Pakistan's nuclear story remains incomplete and incoherent. Enriching the body of scholarship on Pakistan's nuclear history is essential for policymakers and scholars alike, not least because it will help them understand the *how* part of the proliferation question, which is one of the pressing ones that scholars deal with as far as the country's nuclear program is concerned. Certainly, there is a lot more to how states proliferate than what is available in the vast, impressive literature on the subject. Also, it will cast light on the degree of resolve of nuclear aspirants in navigating seemingly insurmountable hurdles in pursuit of nuclear weapons. Understanding the need for adding the missing parts in Pakistan's nuclear story, Pakistani scholar Mansoor Ahmed, in his new book *Pakistan's Pathway to the Bomb: Ambitions, Politics, and Rivalries*, adroitly uses a plethora of primary sources to bring new knowledge to the fore on Pakistan's process of nuclearization. Ahmed, benefitting from his collection of primary sources and a long discussion with his uncle who was one of the key architects of Pakistan's nuclear program, Munir Ahmad Khan, deconstructs the role of the intra-elite turf wars as a major determinant of the country's nuclear odyssey. In doing so, Ahmed dispels and challenges axioms that have been attached to Nuclear Pakistan.

Ahmed joins U.S. scholar Vipin Narang in rightly asserting that getting to know why states seek the bomb is not enough to understand how they do so. In the context of Pakistan, Ahmed argues that while security drivers do explain why Pakistan went nuclear, they do not help us describe the pathways it traversed to do the needful. Ahmed uses Graham Allison's bureaucratic-politics decision-making model and Peter Lavoy's

nuclear mythmaking model, to delve into a web of domestic push and pull factors that shaped Pakistan's nuclear direction. Ahmed bringing in the perspective of individuals' and institutions' ambitions and biases to the discussion certainly gives readers fresh insights into Pakistan's road to the bomb. Ahmed's research-laden work compellingly speaks to the impacts of rivalries and competitions within Pakistan's nuclear elites on the country's approach towards its nuclear program. Ahmed lays bare the pitfalls of the friction between various stalwarts, not least A.Q. Khan and Munir Khan, arguing that it produced sunk costs and duplications. Obviously, stacked against heavy odds, perpetual infighting was the last thing Pakistan would have wanted. However, such was the heft and influence of two nuclear mythmakers in Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Munir Ahmad Khan that polarization within the nuclear establishment did not stop Pakistan from building nuclear weapons. Ahmed writes that "no other country succeeded in producing a bomb despite such a deeply divided and polarized program that epitomized rivalry, fierce competition, and turf wars within its nuclear elite." (p.4) While Ahmed brilliantly narrates the Pakistani equivalent of the Nehru-Bhabha partnership, it is important to not forget that nuclear mythmakers might not have gained traction absent a real threat from India. Therefore, it is important to add a context before talking about the influence of mythmakers. After all, mythmakers need something to play with, and, apropos of Pakistan, Bhutto and Khan had a litany of Indian aggression to build their case on.

Next, Ahmed, bringing his vast research experience into play, traces the ascendancy of A.Q. Khan and how his clout affected both Pakistan's nuclear program and narrative. As someone whose own book titled *The Blind Eye* is a product of extensive archival research, I can speak to the difficulty of corroborating and interpreting various documents to put together a coherent account. Hence, I think this is one of the strengths of the book, simply because there is a trove of archives researchers should parse and dig into. The author has used a good mix of primary and secondary sources to make his work a gripping read. Ahmed helps readers see the legendary A.Q. Khan through a new prism, one which strips him of the title 'Father of Pakistan's Nuclear Program'. Ahmed presents evidence which points to A.Q. Khan's proclivity towards self-aggrandizement and mustering as much operational freedom as possible. Further academic inquiries on the A.Q. Khan network could benefit from Ahmed's assessment of Khan's rise up the power ladder. Ahmed also details A.Q. Khan's image-building endeavors that made him into an almost untouchable holy cow in Pakistan. This side of A.Q. Khan's entire story should agitate the minds of scholars. This is primarily because it is important to correctly ascertain the prestige attached to nuclear weapons, or to those even remotely associated with their development. Besides, the way A.Q. Khan leveraged and played up his position suggests that there was a great deal of prestige attached to Pakistan's nuclear weapons.

Therefore, new knowledge on A.Q. Khan and other individuals shines further light on what nuclear weapons meant to and for Pakistan.

In sum, it is reasonable to suggest that Ahmed's focus on untangling the politics within Pakistan's nuclear enterprise has added to the scholarly mix the hitherto understudied aspects of the country's biggest success story. Also, by reframing the context in which Pakistan went about developing nuclear weapons, Ahmed has birthed new questions for researchers to dabble in. One of the questions this book could engender is: How could consensus for going nuclear be reached in the absence of strong mythmakers, especially when security environments are utterly unfavorable? Ahmed's scintillating work develops an inexorable connection between mythmakers and security woes, and therefore uncoupling the two would make for an interesting research puzzle. Also, Ahmed's work has enriched scholarship on Pakistan's nuclear program, something which will provide useful clues to researchers and policymakers dabbling in issues pertaining to nonproliferation. One big lesson from this book for nuclear watchers is that individuals play a far greater role in shaping trajectories of nuclear states, and Pakistan is no exception.

Book Title: **The AI Wave in Defence Innovation: Assessing Military Artificial Intelligence Strategies, Capabilities and Trajectories**

Editors: Eds Michael Raska, Richard A. Bitzinger

Publisher: London and New York, Routledge, 2023, 287

Reviewed by *Rubia Shoukat, Research Officer, Center for International Strategic Studies Sindh (CISSS).*

Advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) pose pressing questions related to evolution of military power, compliance with international humanitarian law, peace promotion, strategic stability, arms control and technology race. Edited by Michael Raska and Richard A. Bitzinger the book, *The AI Wave in Defence Innovation: Assessing Military Artificial Intelligence Strategies, Capabilities and Trajectories*, comprises introduction and ten chapters: (i) Artificial Intelligence in Warfare: Military Uses of AI and Their International Security Implications; (ii) AI and Technological Convergence: Catalysts for Abounding National Security Risks in the Post-COVID-19 World; (iii) AI Ethics and Governance in Defence Innovation: Implementing AI Ethics Framework; (iv) European Military AI: Why Regional Approaches Are Lagging Behind; (v) US Governance of Artificial Intelligence for National Security: Competitive Advantage from the Moral High Ground?; (vi) China's Evolving AI Development: Emergent Process Transcending Instrumentalism and Morality; (vii) Assessing Russia's National Strategy for AI Development; (viii) Military AI Developments in Russia; (ix) Comparing Military AI Strategic Perspective: Japan and South Korea; and (x) Australia's Approach to AI Governance in Security and Defence. The book assesses an international and interdisciplinary perspective on the adoption and governance of AI and ML in defence and military innovation by major and middle powers.

In the first chapter authors Jean-Marc Rickli and Federico Mantellassi introduced three schools of thought regarding the influence of AI on warfare: enthusiasts, deniers and pragmatics. These schools of thought do not differ in their recognition of the recent advances in the field of military AI, but in their view of the potential for these advances to be utilised in a military setting. In short, the debate centres on whether and to what extent AI will influence the character of war. Further, the chapter takes stock of the current and prospective uses of AI on the battlefield, showing that military AI is already a reality serving as an analytical enabler, disruptor and force multiplier. It argues that AI's current and potential future military applications and the commercial nature further increases the impact of AI on strategic stability, as it facilitates the proliferation of the technology, increasing the number of actors that have access to disruptive technologies.

Second chapter, written by Tate Nurkin focuses on the increasing necessity of AI and ML in defence and security domains. The book identifies five crucial categories where AI plays a transformative role. Firstly, situational awareness which involves the use of AI Algorithms to process vast data for enhanced understanding. Secondly, hyper-enabled platforms and people, where AI augments human capabilities and enhances the performance of military systems. Thirdly, new efficiencies in “Design Age” which refer to the use of AI in cost reduction and accelerating innovation. Fourthly, connectivity and lethality, where AI facilitates Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS). Lastly, monitoring and manipulation of AI enabled surveillance and propaganda tools. The chapter underscores the importance of optimizing human-machine collaboration for stronger, faster and more resilient defence capabilities.

Third chapter authored by Cansu Canca discusses ethical considerations in AI decision making. The author presents PiE model, an AI and governance framework comprising three key components: (i) AI ethics; (ii) Process; and (iii) People. The chapter concludes by presenting some further considerations, such as accountability. AI ethics framework supported by regulations would function as an external enforcing mechanism to define the boundaries of legally acceptable actions and to establish a fair playing field for competition.

Fourth chapter authored by Simona R. Soare highlights the global revolution in military, driven by AI advancement. The author examines strategies and capabilities of major powers, focusing on the US, China and Europe. It emphasizes the strategic leveraging of collaborative European Union and NATO formats to enhance AI capabilities and promote technological sovereignty.

Fifth chapter by Zoe Stanley-Lockman discusses chronicles of the US security and defence policy on AI and ML. The author analyses the Department of Defence’s (DoD) role in governance and the influence of National Security Commission on AI in shaping comprehensive policies. After defining the stakes of the US government in AI in the current strategic context, answer is provided in three sections. First explains how DoD has cemented its leadership role in AI/ML governance. Second explains how the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence (NSCAI) is attempting to promote a more comprehensive AI policy. Third analyzes external relationships with the private sector, academia, and international actors to assess their influence on the US AI governance for national security.

Sixth chapter written by Qi Haotian addresses concerns about the potential impact of AI development on strategic and operational stability, with specific focus on China’s prespective. There are concerns that the development of AI in military affairs can harm the stability between major military powers like the United States and China. In all fields of AI utilisation, the following concerns address the current and future roles of

AI: accountability, safety and security, reliability, explicability, adaptability, human control and responsibility. China sees the advances in AI as a way to enhance its national competitiveness and security in both civilian and military domains. China also has the largest number of AI patents globally, slightly ahead of the US and Japan. The combined number of patent disclosures of these three countries amounts to 74% of the global total.

Seventh and eighth chapters authored by Vadim Kozyulin and Samuel Bendett discuss Russia's National Strategy on AI development and AI based defence and security. Russia plans to achieve this goal by supporting scientific research, developing software, increasing the availability and quality of data and hardware, supporting export of Russian products, training and attracting foreign specialists and private investment. These chapters acknowledge the evolving debate on military use of AI in Russia and its potential impact on defence and security and also highlight the need for Russia to address technological challenges while integrating AI into its military. As stated by Russian President Vladimir Putin, "Artificial intelligence is the future, not only for Russia, but for all humankind. It comes with colossal opportunities but also threats that are difficult to predict. Whoever becomes the leader in this sphere will become the ruler of the world." In 2020, Russian Ministry of Defence announced research on new generation of military systems with AI with a budget of USD 5 million. In the wake of Ukraine crisis, Russia's "technological sovereignty", a concept described as diminished dependence on imported Western technology and growing reliance on the domestic ability to produce key high-tech systems by industries of strategic importance, such as AI, has also evolved.

Ninth chapter contributed by Ryo Hinata-Yamaguchi compares developments in Japan and South Korea regarding military AI and its governance. The author explores the rationale and applications of AI in military. The chapter further looks at the ethical debate concerning AI-based systems and research and development (R&D). Several internal and external factors rationalise Japan and the South Korea's pursuit of the development and application of AI for defence. First is threat based defence planning, eyeing the developments in China, Russia and North Korea. Second is the universal recognition of AI as a vital technology. Third is the importance of AI and robotics for Japan and South Korea in relation to their demographic challenges. Fourth is the use of AI as an enabler and driver of their military applications. Fifth is the significance of AI-equipped systems for boosting arms exports and trade. Utilisation of AI for national defence is also present in South Korea's Defence Reform 2.0, which encourages the use of scientific and technological advancements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution to overcome resource constraints and adapt to future battlefields.

Tenth chapter authored by Kate Devitt and Damian Copeland begins with Australia's strategic position, definition of AI and identifying the Australian Defence Organisation's (ADO) priorities. It then moves into AI governance initiatives and specific efforts to develop frameworks for ethical AI in both civilian and military contexts. The chapter emphasises the need for a coordinated approach, encompassing policy framework, investment in research and development and international partnerships to ensure the effective and responsible development of AI while mitigating potential risks. While Australia has not adopted an AI governance framework specifically for Defence, *A Method for Ethical AI in Defence (MEAID)* published by ADO includes a framework and pragmatic tools for managing ethical and legal risks relating to military applications of AI.

The book offers a comprehensive analysis of the impact of AI on defence and security policies of states. It explores various aspects of AI including its strategic impact, ethical considerations and governance frameworks. The book underscores the need for a responsible approach to AI development and its applications, including through international cooperation.

Book Title: Original Sin: Power, Technology, and War in Outer Space

Author: Bleddyn E. Bowen

Publisher: Oxford University Press, February 1, 2023, 256

Reviewed by Mujeeb Jan Talpur, PhD Scholar and Lecturer Shah Abdul Latif University.

In the contemporary era characterised by the emergence of space as a novel frontier for human exploration, the publication authored by Bleddyn E. Bowen, titled "Original Sin: Power, Technology, and War in Outer Space," stands out as a significant addition to the dialogue surrounding space supremacy, international relations, and technological progress in the realm of outer space. Bowen, an expert in the realm of space politics, adeptly delves into the complex terrain of space militarisation and its ensuing ramifications. This topic is comprehensively and enlighteningly analysed, facilitating readers' thorough knowledge.

Bowen's book commences with an assertion that the initial fascination with the universe, propelled by a pursuit for exploration and comprehension, has been marred by the repercussions of militarization. The following analysis explores the dynamics that arise when nations compete for dominance in space. The author thoroughly examines the historical, political, and technological factors associated with the militarization of space. Through an investigation, the author critically assesses the origins and evolution of space technology, emphasizing its transformation as a tool driven by the pursuit of supremacy. A shift in the domain has led to a highly competitive and unpredictable environment. Within this context, countries are increasingly deploying weaponry capable of targeting satellites, disrupting communication networks, and potentially damaging entire spacecraft.

Bowen highlights arguments such as power dynamics, technological advancements and the security dilemma. He emphasizes how power influences the utilization and militarization of space. Strategies nations employ to gain control over resources in space communication networks and military capabilities are analyzed. This could result in a struggle for power and the escalation of an arms race. The book thoroughly examines the progress made in space technology and its potential impact on military operations. The author examines the progress of space-based armaments, surveillance capacities, and the possibility of aggressive manoeuvres in space, emphasising the hazards linked to the militarization of this realm. Bowen presents the notion of the security dilemma, wherein defensive actions undertaken by a particular nation may be interpreted as aggressive by other nations. The individual asserts that this predicament has the potential to amplify distrust and raise the probability of conflict escalation. Consequently, they advocate for enhanced transparency and collaboration among nations.

Bowen guides readers on a journey, through the space race during the Cold War towards the ratification of the Outer Space Treaty in 1967. The author adeptly guides the reader through significant occurrences, showcasing the gradual shift from the aspiration of peaceful collaboration in space to the militarization of celestial entities. Through an examination of the historical progression of the militarization of space, the author illustrates the competitive endeavours undertaken by the United States and the Soviet Union during the 1960s and 1970s to advance their respective anti-satellite weapons (ASATs) and other space-based weaponry. Additionally, the author explores the increasing significance of space within contemporary military operations. This is exemplified by instances such as the employment of satellites to direct precision-guided munitions during the Gulf War in 1991, as well as the utilisation of space-based imagery to monitor and identify adversary forces in the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. According to Bowen, using military resources in space presents a significant risk to worldwide security. The individual highlights the potential for a space conflict to result in severe repercussions for Earth's civilian and military infrastructure. As an illustration, the compromise of a vital satellite can potentially interfere with various systems, such as communication, navigation, and financial networks, resulting in extensive disturbances to both the economy and society.

The historical basis is of great worth in comprehending the current state of space geopolitics. Nevertheless, although the historical context is adequately developed, there is room for a more comprehensive examination of the cultural and ideological elements that played a role in the transition from exploration to militarization. A comprehensive examination of the historical evolution of public attitudes towards space exploration would yield valuable insights into the changing landscape of space policy.

Bowen proceeds to discuss the present condition of space militarization. It is observed that the United States, Russia, China, and India are currently engaged in the development of novel space-based weaponry. The author also discusses the growing participation of private companies in the space industry and their ability to develop and commercialise space technologies with military applications. It is important to acknowledge that the deployment of military resources in the realm of outer space poses numerous risks. In the initial stages, it is conceivable that a competition for supremacy in space may be initiated, posing a possible threat to the stability of the global order. It is worth noting that there is a potential for heightened risk associated with conflicts in the realm of outer space, resulting in catastrophic outcomes. The prospect of militarising space will impede the utilisation of space for peaceful endeavours, such as scientific research.

The author posits that it is imperative for the global community to proactively intervene in order to mitigate the escalation of militarization

in outer space. He advocates for a novel global agreement prohibiting the advancement, experimentation, and utilisation of armaments beyond Earth's atmosphere. It would be advantageous if he could provide more specific recommendations regarding the actions that should be implemented to prevent the militarization of space. He could elaborate concerning precise recommendations for an international treaty designed to prohibit the utilisation of weapons in outer space. Most crucial would have been a thorough analysis of the participating private corporations in the militarization process. The increasing momentum of private companies engaging in the development and deployment of space-based weapons systems necessitates a comprehensive understanding.

His unwavering dedication to maintaining objectivity characterises Bowen's work. The book has been extensively researched, utilising diverse academic sources, policy papers, and historical instances. The investigation bolsters the reliability and comprehensiveness of the assertions put forth. He avoids explicitly endorsing or opposing the militarization of space, enabling readers to develop their own opinions on the presented information and analyses. Through an impartial viewpoint, he fosters the development of analytical reasoning and well-informed discussions within the academic community, decision-makers, and the general populace. While Bowen effectively maintains a sense of objectivity throughout the book, some readers might perceive the need for a definitive policy recommendation or framework as a missed chance. The book However, possible remedies and diplomatic approaches could be discussed to effectively navigate the complexities of space power dynamics, thereby increasing its practical applicability.

The accessibility of the book is another praiseworthy characteristic. Bowen effectively condenses intricate technical and geopolitical details into writing that is captivating and easily understandable. The author's narrative technique skilfully integrates historical anecdotes, technical explanations, and strategic insights, rendering the book a readily accessible reference for individuals with varying levels of expertise in the subject matter.

Overall, this book makes a significant scholarly contribution to the discussion surrounding space policy and geopolitics. Bowen's publication serves as a compelling appeal, urging individuals to address the intricate issues surrounding the militarization of space and to actively pursue resolutions that prioritise the preservation of our collective celestial environment for future cohorts. "Original Sin" is a highly commendable book that should be given significant recognition among scholars, policymakers, and individuals interested in understanding complex dynamics surrounding space power. This book stands out due to its thorough research, unbiased viewpoint, and captivating writing style, making it a valuable addition to any bookshelf.

Book Title: The Security Imperative: Pakistan's Nuclear Deterrence and Diplomacy**Author: Zamir Akram****Publisher: Paramount, 2022, 457*****Reviewed by Safia Malik is Research Officer at Center for International Strategic Studies Sindh (CISSS).***

Pakistan has been facing security threats from India since independence. Zamir Akram's book focuses on Pakistan's nuclear deterrence and diplomatic efforts to deal with various security imperatives. The author has mentioned in the introduction that the book is largely based on his personal experience spanning over 38 years in the Pakistan Foreign Service, during which he served as Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN and other International Organizations in Geneva, Pakistan's Ambassador to Soviet Union, India, and the United States. The book is divided into fourteen chapters covering Pakistan's foreign policy including nuclear diplomacy from 1947 to 2020.

Author underlines Pakistan's security imperatives since 1947. He emphasized that Pakistan's geographical location, India's deep-rooted enmity with Pakistan and Indian aspiration for regional hegemony are the real causes of tension. India has outstanding disputes with all of its neighbours. It has used its size and military muscles to annex Sikkim, balkanise Bhutan, dominate Nepal and repeatedly interfere in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka, Maldives and Bangladesh. Even with more powerful China, New Delhi has laid claim to colonial-era borders which led to the Sino-Indian war of 1962 and continuing territorial disputes that perpetrated border clashes in 2020.

There is an emphasis on the Indian role in the dismemberment of East Pakistan in 1971 set the path for Pakistan to acquire nuclear weapons. At the Multan Conference (1972), Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto decided that nuclear capability was essential for national survival. India tested its first nuclear device in May 1974 and called it a "Peaceful Nuclear Explosion (PNE)." The lukewarm international reaction to Indian nuclear explosion was deeply disappointing for Pakistan. In October 1974, the US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger during his visit to India reaffirmed that the US would continue to supply nuclear fuel to India's two General Electric Tarapur reactors, despite the Indian detonation using the US-supplied heavy water in the CIRUS reactors to produce the fuel for its nuclear bomb. French Atomic Energy Commission sent congratulations to its Indian counterparts.

The author traces Pakistan's journey of peaceful uses of nuclear technology and the role of PAEC. Three scientists played a crucial role in establishing nuclear research institutions and training manpower: (i) Dr Rafi Chaudhary, (ii) Dr Abdus Salam and (iii) Dr Nazir Ahmed who was the first Chairman of PAEC. PAEC established 5MW nuclear research reactor

namely PARR-I at PINSTECH for research and development. The discriminatory approach of Canada against Pakistan as it conditioned KANUPP (Karachi Nuclear Power Plant), funded by Canada, to be placed under the IAEA's safeguards, unlike India whose Canada supplied nuclear reactor **CANDU (Canada Deuterium Uranium)** was not required to be under such full-scope safeguards. India's acquisition of nuclear weapons under the umbrella of peaceful uses of nuclear technology was exposed by Munir Ahmed Khan, then serving at IAEA Headquarters in Vienna. He informed then Foreign Minister Bhutto and then President Ayub Khan that during his visit to India's CIRUS facility in 1964, he had seen himself that India was well on its way to making the bomb.

At the diplomatic level, Pakistan initiated a number of nuclear-related proposals in 1974 in United Nations and then in the Conference on Disarmament (CD): (i) Pakistan proposed the creation of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in South Asia, a zone in Latin America and the Caribbean region in line with Treaty of Tlatelolco which prohibits the deployment of nuclear weapons in the territory of member states. The proposal received an overwhelming response from non-nuclear weapon states during UN meeting held in New York and Geneva. India opposed the proposal. Pakistan withdrew this resolution after conducting nuclear tests in May 1998 in response to Indian nuclear tests; (ii) Resolution on Negative Security Assurances which called upon all nuclear weapon states to extend security assurances that they would not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states. The resolution was supported by the majority of UN member states and members of CD including India. However, the French voted against it and the other nuclear weapon states, with the exception of China, voiced their reservation. This resolution continues to be sponsored by Pakistan; and (iii) Pakistan joined Sri Lanka's initiative to declare Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. Despite highlighting Pakistan's concerns, these proposals were not successful. The author has emphasized that Pakistan had no choice but to develop its own programme. However, despite the CIA assessment that the KANUPP reactor had accumulated 200kg of reactor-grade plutonium by mid-1980s, which was enough nuclear material for 30-40 bombs, Pakistan decided to use its indigenously developed facilities for its nuclear weapons programme.

The US imposed sanctions on Pakistan through the Pressler Amendment. Pakistan took various diplomatic steps to deflect pressure on its strategic programme, which included: (i) Conclusion of a bilateral agreement with India in 1992 to not to acquire, develop, deploy or use chemical weapons. However, India was forced to acknowledge its secret possession of chemical weapons while becoming a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which proved that India had lied about the non-possession of chemical weapons when it signed the bilateral agreement with Pakistan five months ago; (ii) Creation of a Zero-Missile Zone in South

Asia in 1993. This proposal was rejected by India; and (iii) Convening of a Multilateral Conference on Security, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation in South Asia in 1996. This proposal was rejected by India. The author has pointed out that globally Pakistan played a crucial role in the negotiation of the Chemical Weapon Convention at CD in 1993 leading to the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Pakistan also participated in the conclusion of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996 as part of the non-proliferation regime.

The author has highlighted Pakistan's position on CTBT and FMCT. Pakistan conveyed that unlike India it had voted in favour of the Treaty in the UN and supported it in CD. However, in view of its security concerns, Pakistan stated that it would sign the CTBT if India did so. On FMCT, Pakistan could agree to negotiations in CD provided the issue of asymmetry of fissile material stockpiles between India and Pakistan. In 1998 when India conducted its Pokhran II nuclear tests, Pakistan had to test its own nuclear weapons. On 28 May 1998, Pakistan conducted its five nuclear tests and one nuclear test on 30 May 1998 in response to the 1974 Indian nuclear test. Despite the nuclear tests, Pakistan continued its nuclear diplomacy. After the nuclear tests in 1998, Pakistan proposed Strategic Restraint Regime to India that included: (i) Nuclear and missile restraint; (ii) Conventional balance; and (iii) Resolution of all disputes between India and Pakistan. The proposal did not materialize owing to Indian objections. However, it remains on table to date. To counter Indian war-fighting doctrines, the author has underscored that Pakistan has developed Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD) to lower the nuclear threshold and ensure deterrence across the entire spectrum of threats. All these factors required that Pakistan's nuclear doctrine would need to be flexible and dynamic to maintain credible nuclear deterrence and strategic stability in the future. Pakistan established a robust command and control system under the Strategic Plans Division (SPD) as the secretariat of the National Command Authority (NCA).

The author has dedicated a chapter to Pakistan's connectivity and development. (i) Pakistan's geographical location can be turned into an opportunity rather than a challenge; (ii) CPEC can expand and upgrade the country's infrastructure and enhance energy production; and (iii) China-Pakistan partnership will not only boost the economic growth of the country but also provide access to the latest generation of civil and military technologies.

Documents

Document: 1

Operation Marg Bar Sarmachar, MOFA Press Release, January 18, 2024, Islamabad.

Source:<https://mofa.gov.pk/press-releases/operation-marg-bar-sarmachar>

This morning Pakistan undertook a series of highly coordinated and specifically targeted precision military strikes against terrorist hideouts in Siestan-o-Baluchistan province of Iran. A number of terrorists were killed during the Intelligence-based operation – codenamed 'Marg Bar Sarmachar'.

Over the last several years, in our engagements with Iran, Pakistan has consistently shared its serious concerns about the safe havens and sanctuaries enjoyed by Pakistani origin terrorists calling themselves *Sarmachars* on the ungoverned spaces inside Iran. Pakistan also shared multiple dossiers with concrete evidence of the presence and activities of these terrorists.

However, because of lack of action on our serious concerns, these so-called Sarmachars continued to spill the blood of innocent Pakistanis with impunity. This morning's action was taken in light of credible intelligence of impending large scale terrorist activities by these so called Sarmachars.

This action is a manifestation of Pakistan's unflinching resolve to protect and defend its national security against all threats. The successful execution of this highly complex operation is also a testimony to the professionalism of the Pakistan Armed Forces. Pakistan will continue to take all necessary steps to preserve the safety and security of its people which is sacrosanct, inviolable and sacred.

Pakistan fully respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The sole objective of today's act was in pursuit of Pakistan's own security and national interest which is paramount and cannot be compromised.

As a responsible member of the international community, Pakistan upholds the principles and purposes of the UN Charter including territorial integrity and sovereignty of member states. Guided by these principles, and in exercise of our legitimate rights within international law, Pakistan will never allow its sovereignty and territorial integrity to be challenged, under any pretext or circumstances.

Iran is a brotherly country and the people of Pakistan have great respect and affection for the Iranian people. We have always emphasized dialogue and cooperation in confronting common

challenges including the menace of terrorism and will continue to endeavour to find joint solutions.

Islamabad

18 January 2024

17/2024

Document: 2**List of Practical Cooperation Deliverables of the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (369 concrete outcomes), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, October 18, 2023.**

Source:<http://www.beltandroadforum.org/english/n101/2023/1020/c127-1273.Html>

I. Bilateral Cooperation Documents

1. The Chinese government signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Belt and Road Cooperation with the government of Honduras, signed cooperation plans or action plans of BRI with the governments of Argentina, Mauritania, Georgia and Serbia, and will sign the Plan of Joint Promotion of BRI with the government of Egypt.
2. The Communist Party of China (CPC) signed the Action Plan on Building a Community with a Shared Future (2024-2028) with the Lao People's Revolutionary Party.
3. The Chinese government signed the Action Plan (2024-2028) on Building a China-Cambodia Community with a Shared Future in the New Era with the government of Cambodia.
4. The Chinese government signed the Belt and Road Cooperation Priority Projects List (the Second Round) with the government of Hungary.
5. The Chinese government signed the MOU for Strengthening the Cooperation on China-EU Trains Passing via Iran with the government of Iran, and signed the MOU for Deepening the Cooperation of China-EU Trains Trans-Caspian Transport Lines with the government of Kazakhstan.
6. The Chinese government signed the Agreement on Extending the Validity of the MOU on Establishing a Mechanism for Strategic Dialogue for Economic Cooperation and Coordination between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Argentine Republic, and will sign the Treaty for Developing China-EU Trains Trans-Caspian Transport lines with the government of Kazakhstan.
7. The Chinese government signed the cooperation documents on science, technology and innovation with the governments of Honduras and Indonesia, and will sign the Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation with the government of the United Arab Emirates.
8. The Chinese government signed the international road transport agreements with the governments of Kazakhstan and Mongolia, and signed the Five-year Action Plan (2023-2027) for Highway Technical Cooperation with the government of Pakistan.

9. The Chinese government signed the Free Trade Agreement and the Early Harvest Arrangement of the Free Trade Agreement with the government of Nicaragua, signed free trade agreements with the governments of Ecuador and Serbia, will sign the Agreement on Trade in Services and Investment with the government of Belarus, and signed the MOU on Investment Cooperation in Green Development and the MOU on Investment Cooperation in the Digital Economy with the government of Turkmenistan.

10. The Chinese government signed the Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation with the government of Kazakhstan, and signed the MOU on Renewable Energy Cooperation with the government of Uzbekistan.

11. The National Commission of Supervision of China signed MOUs on Cooperation in the field of Combating and Preventing Corruption with the Office of the Comptroller-General of Cuba, the Administrative Control Authority of Egypt, the Anti-Corruption Unit of Cambodia, the Corruption Eradication Commission of Indonesia and the Anti-corruption Commission of Malaysia.

12. The National Development and Reform Commission of China signed the MOU on Jointly Accelerating the Formulation of the Cooperation Plan on the BRI with the Ministry of Finance and National Planning of Zambia, signed the MOU on Establishing an Expert Exchange Mechanism within the Framework of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives of Pakistan, and signed the MOU on Exchange and Cooperation in the Field of Economic Development Policy with the Ministry of Economy of Serbia.

13. The National Development and Reform Commission of China signed the MOU on Jointly Promoting the Third Round of Key Projects in China-Cambodia Production Capacity and Investment Cooperation with the Council for the Development of Cambodia, and signed the 2023-2025 Cooperation Plan on Key Areas with the Ministry of Development of Greece.

14. The National Development and Reform Commission of China signed documents on promoting industrial investment cooperation with the Ministry of Economy of Azerbaijan, the Ministry of People's Power of Economy, Finance and Foreign Trade of Venezuela, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, and will sign relevant documents with the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development of Serbia and the relevant department of Chile.

15. The Ministry of Science and Technology of China will sign the MOU on Bilateral Cooperation under the Framework of China-LAC Sustainable Food Innovation Center with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation of Argentina.

16. The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of China signed cooperation documents on digital and information communications with the Ministry of Post and Telecommunication of Algeria, the Ministry of Communication Technologies of Tunisia, the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology of Iran and the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology of the Philippines, and will sign relevant documents with the Ministry of Communication, Telecommunications and Digital Economy of Senegal and the Ministry of Digital Technology of Uzbekistan.

17. The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology of China signed the MOU on cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Development of Hungary, and the MOU on Industrial Cooperation with the Ministry of Industry of Indonesia.

18. The Ministry of Ecology and Environment of China signed cooperation documents on environmental protection, sustainable development and responding to climate change with the Department of Environment of Iran, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus and the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives of Pakistan.

19. The Ministry of Transport of China signed the MOU on Deepening International Road Transport Cooperation with the Ministry of Transport of Tajikistan, signed the MOU on Future Mobility Cooperation with the Ministry of Transport of Singapore, and signed the Protocol on Implementation on the International Road Transport Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of Mongolia with the Ministry of Road and Transport Development of Mongolia.

20. The Ministry of Commerce of China signed MOUs on Establishing the Unimpeded Trade Work Group with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina and the Ministry of Development, Industry and Trade of Nicaragua, signed the MOU on the Establishment of the Investment and Economic Cooperation Working Group with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uruguay, signed the MOU on Cooperation in the Field of Free Zones and Economic Zones with Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, and signed the MOU on Trade Promotion Cooperation with Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade of Iran.

21. The Ministry of Commerce of China signed MOUs on cooperation on electronic commerce with the Department of Trade and Industry of the Philippines and the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs of Indonesia, signed the MOU on Deepening Blue Economy Cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and National Beautification, Blue and Green Economy of Barbados, signed the MOU on Promoting Investment Cooperation in Green Development with the Council for the Development

of Cambodia, and signed the Framework Agreement on Promoting Investment Cooperation in Green Energy Power with the Ministry in the Presidency for Electricity of the Government of South Africa.

22. The Ministry of Commerce of China signed the MOU to Announce the Substantive Conclusion of the Subsequent Negotiations on the Upgrade of China-Singapore Free Trade Agreement with the Ministry of Trade and Industry of Singapore, signed the MOU on Launching the Negotiations for China-Serbia Free Trade Agreement with the Ministry of Internal and Foreign Trade of Serbia, and signed the MOU on Conclusion of the Majority Text and Initiating Market Access Negotiation of *Agreement on Trade in Services and Investments between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Belarus* with the Ministry of Economy of Belarus.

23. The People's Bank of China signed the MOU on Establishing RMB Clearing Arrangement with the National Bank of Serbia, signed the MOU on Enhanced Collaboration on CBDC with the Central Bank of the United Arab Emirates, and signed the MOU on Bilateral Financial Cooperation with the Bank Indonesia.

24. The National Development and Reform Commission of China and Shenzhen Municipal People's Government of Guangdong Province of China signed the MOU Concerning Cooperation on the Planning Knowledge and Experience Sharing for the New Capital of Indonesia with the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investment of Indonesia and Nusantara Capital Authority of Indonesia. The Ministry of Commerce of China and Fujian Provincial People's Government signed the MOU on Two Countries Twin Parks Cooperation Project with the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Investment of Indonesia.

25. The National Development and Reform Commission of China signed the MOU on Supporting Cross-Border Financing by Chinese Enterprises and Promoting the Development of the Hong Kong Bond Market with Hong Kong Monetary Authority.

26. The National Health Commission of China signed MOUs on health cooperation with the Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia and the Ministry of Health of Oman, and will sign relevant documents with the Ministry of Health of Mongolia, the Ministry of Health of Laos and the Ministry of Health of Cambodia.

27. The National Energy Administration of China signed cooperation documents with the Ministry of Energy of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Energy of Azerbaijan, and signed the MOU on renewable energy cooperation with the Ministry of Energy and Mines of Cuba.

28. The State Administration for Market Regulation of China will sign the MOU on Competition Cooperation with the Superintendence for the Promotion and Protection of Free Competition of Venezuela. The

Standardization Administration of China signed the MOU on cooperation with the Kazakhstan Institute of Standardization and Metrology.

29. The National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine of China signed the Plan of Cooperation (2023-2027) in the Area of Traditional Chinese Medicine with the Ministry of Health of Singapore.

30. The China Media Group will sign cooperation documents with the official media organizations of Egypt, Pakistan, Myanmar and other Belt and Road Partner Countries.

31. The China Export & Credit Insurance Corporation signed MOUs on cooperation with the government of Serbia, PT PLN(PERSERO), JSC “Asaka Bank of Uzbekistan” and JSC “Development Bank of Kazakhstan”.

32. The Bank of China signed the MOU on Digital Currency Cooperation with the First Abu Dhabi Bank PJSC, and the MOU for Global Strategic Cooperation with ACWA Power. The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China will sign the MOU on cooperation with the Ministry for National Economy of Hungary.

II. Cooperation Documents with International and Regional Organizations

1. The Chinese government signed *the Renewal of the Agreement on Enhancing Belt and Road Intellectual Property Cooperation* and the agreement on its amendment and extension with the World Intellectual Property Organization.

2. The Chinese government will sign the report of mid-term review on the Work Programme on Further Deepening Trade and Economic Cooperation with ASEAN.

3. The Ministry of Transport of China signed the MOU on Promoting Sustainable Transport for the SDGs with the United Nations.

4. The National Development and Reform Commission of China signed MOUs on Belt and Road cooperation with International Bamboo and Rattan Organization and Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization.

5. The State Administration for Market Regulation of China and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization will sign the project document on strengthening the capacity of China’s food inspection and testing bodies to improve trust for trade under the framework of the Belt and Road.

6. The Ministry of Ecology and Environment of China and the China Meteorological Administration signed the Agreement on Cooperation in Support of the United Nations Early Warnings for All Initiative with the World Meteorological Organization.

7. The Ministry of Water Resources of China, the Standardization Administration of China and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization will sign the MOU on Cooperation in Promoting Rural

Sustainable Development based on Small Hydro-power International Standards.

8. The Standardization Administration of China signed the MOU for Cooperation with African Electrotechnical Standardization Commission.

9. The Export-Import Bank of China signed the MOU with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

10. The World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCF) signed the MOU on cooperation with the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA).

III. Bilateral Cooperation Platforms and Projects or Mechanisms Launched by the Chinese Side

1. Established the Corporate Integrity and Compliance Evaluation System for the BRI.

2. Established the Mechanism of the China-Central Asian Transport Ministers' Meeting. To establish the China-Cambodia Railway Cooperation Mechanism. Launched the China Railway Express Portal website.

3. Established the E-Commerce Cooperation Dialogue between China and Central Asian Countries.

4. Establishing the Belt and Road Economic and Financial Capacity Building Platform, and the "Green Investment Principles for the Belt and Road" regional chapter for Africa and ASEAN.

5. To establish the China-Central Asia Investment and Financing Platform, the Belt and Road Joint Investment Platform with Hong Kong Monetary Authority, and the Cooperative Framework of Joint Investment with Indonesia Investment Authority.

6. To establish the Belt and Road Low Carbon Service Partnership. To launch the Central Asia Regional Green Technology Development Action Plan. To establish the China-ASEAN Mangrove Conservation Partnership. Established the China-Arab International Research Center for Drought, Desertification and Land Degradation.

7. To launch the Belt and Road Special Cooperation Program for Sustainable Development Technology, the Science Action Plan for Sustainable Development, the Belt and Road Special Cooperation Program for Poverty Alleviation through Science and Technology, and the Belt and Road Special Cooperation Program for Spatial Information through Science and Technology.

8. To launch the Belt and Road Comprehensive Legal Service Platform and the Belt and Road Legal Service Talent Training Program. To develop a capacity-building center for legal talents in domestic, foreign and international law. Established the China-Africa International Commercial Mediation Center.

9. To launch the China Documentary Festival “Belt and Road” International Screening, release the Vision for a Shared Future Global Short Video Showcase, and establish the “News Hotline”.

10. To launch the Belt and Road Special Cooperation Program for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and the Belt and Road Teacher Development Initiative. To organize the Belt and Road Teenager Maker Camp and Teacher Workshop.

11. Held the 17th meeting of China-Venezuela Joint High-Level Meeting, and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) 12th Special Joint Cooperation Committee Meeting and Special Joint Cooperation Committee Meeting on 10th Anniversary of CPEC.

12. Held the 2nd China-Laos Belt and Road Cooperation Forum, the 3rd China-Thailand Think-Tank Forum *Ten Years of the Belt and Road: China-Thailand Partnership for Sustainable Development*, and the program *China and Argentina: Encounter between cultures*.

13. To establish the Platform for Overseas Business Sustainable Development and the “Going Global” Comprehensive Service Center for Chinese Enterprises. The International Commercial Dispute Prevention and Settlement Organization will release the Investor-State Arbitration Rules.

14. To establish the Belt and Road High-Quality Development Promotion Association of the Yangtze River Delta, to build the Belt and Road International Production Capacity Cooperation Demonstration Zone in Anhui Province, China, and conducted Shenzhen and Singapore Smart City Cooperation.

15. To establish the Belt and Road International Center for Geoscience Education and Training and the Meteorological Training Centre for participating countries of BRI.

16. Held the China-ASEAN Education Cooperation Week. To establish a Promotion Platform for Culture Exchange and Educational Cooperation with Arab States participating in BRI. Chongqing Municipal People’s Government will carry out the cooperation project on music education with Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory.

17. To establish the China-Pakistan Belt and Road Joint Laboratory on Small Hydropower Technology, the China-Indonesia Joint Laboratory for Marine Sciences and the China-Belarus International Innovation Center.

IV. Institutional Schemes Proposed by the Chinese Side

1. The China Development Bank will set up a RMB350 billion financing window for Belt and Road cooperation.

2. The Export-Import Bank of China will set up a RMB350 billion financing window for Belt and Road cooperation.

3. An additional RMB80 billion will be injected into the Silk Road Fund to support BRI projects on the basis of market and commercial principles.

V. Cooperation Projects

1. The Chinese government signed the MOU on Cooperation in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port Project with the Kuwait government, and signed the cooperation documents on Joint Construction of China Basa-Viet Nam Bat Xat Red River Boundary River Road Bridge with the government of Viet Nam.

2. The Chinese government will sign the exchange of letters for the Addis Ababa - Djibouti Railway Materials Project with the government of Ethiopia, and the exchange of letters on the China-Aid Project of Wind Power Plants with the government of Uzbekistan.

3. The National Development and Reform Commission of China will sign the MOU on Formulating the Cooperation Programs for Development along the China-Laos Railway with the Ministry of Planning and Investment of Laos.

4. The China Development Bank as Lender will sign the RMB Revolving Credit Facility Agreement with Malayan Banking Berhad as Borrower, the Facility Agreement with Central Bank of Egypt as Borrower, the Term Facility Agreement with BANK BBVA PERÚ as Borrower, the Term Facility Agreement with African Export-Import Bank as Borrower, and the Term Facility Agreement with Bank Misr as Borrower. To complete the first disbursement of the Loan for Credit Line of Senegal (improvement of the Niayes Road and improving the fluidity of roads in the Dakar region).

5. The Export-Import Bank of China signed the RMB Term Loan Agreement with Saudi National Bank, the USD Term Loan Agreement with Africa Finance Corporation, the Cooperation Framework Agreement with Indonesia Investment Authority and the Loan agreements with Cambodia for road, bridge and reservoir projects.

6. The Export-Import Bank of China signed the MOU between Credit Guarantee and Investment Facility and China-ASEAN Investment Cooperation Fund II, and is promoting China-ASEAN Investment Cooperation Fund II to make equity investment in Pertamina Geothermal Energy Project.

7. Silk Road Fund participates in the Africa Infrastructure Investment Fund IV of Old Mutual in South Africa and the Highland Capital Central Asia Fund II in Kyrgyzstan.

8. The China International Development Cooperation Agency and National Forestry and Grassland Administration signed the Framework Agreement on supporting the "one billion trees" national movement of Mongolia and cooperation between China and Mongolia on combating

desertification with the Ministry of Economy and Development and the Forestry Agency of Mongolia.

9. Assisting Egypt to issue the first panda bond from African countries. The Bank of China issued the world's first BRI partner themed green notes. The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China issued the 2023 Green Bond issuance in CIBM (RMB 10 billion), issued the Multi-currency "Carbon Neutrality" themed overseas green bonds, and participated in the Project of Abu Dhabi Holding Group Green Loan Facility (USD 2.5 billion).

10. Supported the project finance for Malaysia East Coast Rail Link Project. Building the Nigerian Kaduna-Kano Railway Project in Nigeria, and the Gantsmod-Gashuunsukhait Port Cross-Border Railway Project in Mongolia.

11. To build the Marine Facilities for King Salman International Complex for Maritime Industries and Services Project in Saudi Arabia. Supported the project finance for the Chancay Port Project in Peru.

12. To sign the Facility Agreement of Nairobi Expressway Project in Kenya, the Loan Agreement on the Construction of Access to Quito from the Oriental Valleys and Construction of Guayasamin Bridge in Ecuador, and signed the Loan Agreement on the Guyana East Coast Demerara Road Project Phase II. To build the Elevated Expressway Project and the Bypass Expressway Project in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and the State Road of 1b Category No.27 Loznica-Valjevo-Lazarevac, Section Iverak-Lajkovac (Intersection on the Highway E-763 Belgrade-Pozega) in Serbia. Carrying out the operation and maintenance services for Metro Rail Transit System on the Orange Line in Lahore (ALL TOWN to DERA GUJRAN) in Pakistan.

13. Building the China-aid New Gwadar International Airport Project in Pakistan and the Siem Reap Angkor International Airport on BOT Scheme in Cambodia.

14. Signed the Loan Agreement on the Trinidad and Tobago New Industrial Park at Phoenix Park Project. Invested in the Zambia Jiangxi Economic Cooperation Zone Project. To invest in the Lygend Indonesia OBI Industrial Park, build the Hunan-Laos "One Road, Two Zones" Project and the China-Philippines Demonstration Park for economic and trade innovation and development.

15. Supporting the project finance for Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Logistic Park. To build the Comprehensive Service Cooperation Zone of East Africa Commercial & Logistics Industrial Park in Tanzania and an overseas warehouse for China-Europe Train Express in Mongolia. Promoting strategic cooperation projects of logistics channels and international trade with Kyrgyzstan, building the Aktau Port Container Hub Project in Kazakhstan, and realized the full coverage of "Green Channel" for rapid customs clearance of agricultural and sideline products at road ports along the border with Central Asian countries. To implement

the Air Silk Road China-Malaysia Freight Hub Project, and the China-ASEAN (Hainan) Demonstration Initiative on Cruise Connectivity.

16. Supporting the project finance for Bash 500MW and Dzhankeldy 500MW Wind Power Generation Project, and Tashkent 200MW Solar PV and 500MWh Battery Energy Storage System Project in Uzbekistan. Supporting the project finance for Manah II Photovoltaic Independent Power Project in Oman, and the project finance for Al Dhafra PV2 Solar Power Plant Project in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates. To build 750MW Solar Power Plant Project in Iraq, Ratesti 154MW Solar Power Plant Project in Romania, and Resko 51 MW Solar Power Plant Project in Poland. To sign the Loan Agreement on the 25MW Photovoltaic Solar Power Plant with 5MW Storage in Kaya, Burkina Faso.

17. To sign the Technical Agreement of the Niger River Training and Flood Control Scheme—Comprehensive Planning of Niger River Basin in Nigeria and Feasibility Study of the Priority Engineering Works. Signed the Loan Agreement on the Tonle Bassac Bridge Project (Chak Angrae Kraom-Praek Pra) in Cambodia, the Loan Agreement on the Jenelata Dam Project in Indonesia, and the Loan Agreement on the Ranomafana Hydropower Plant Project in Madagascar. To sign the Loan Agreement on the Construction of Bypass around Novisad with the Bridge over Danube River in Serbia, and the Loan Agreement on the Construction of Three Priority Bridges Crossing Pasig-Marikina River and Manggahan Floodway Bridges in the Philippines.

18. Implementing the Interoperable QR Code Cooperation Project with Sri Lanka and Malaysia. Building the National Broadband Infrastructure Project in Solomon Islands. To sign the Loan Agreement on the Rural Grid Extension Project Phase VIII in Cambodia, and support the project finance for Fixed Network ALL-IP Modernization Project in Serbia, and Huawei Exported Telkom FY23 Network Construction Project in South Africa.

19. To sign the cooperation agreements on investment in Simandou Iron Ore Project in Guinea. Investing in the Phase II Project of the Kamoya Copper-Cobalt Mine in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Colluli Potash Mining Project in Eritrea, the Boguty Tungsten Mine Project in Kazakhstan, and the Tres Quebradas Salar Project and the Cauchari-Olaroz lithium Salt Lake Development Project in Argentina. Investing in the Fujian Gulei 1.5MMTA Ethylene and Downstream Deep Processing Complex Project (SABIC FUJIAN Gulei Ethylene Project). Investing in the Nickel-Cobalt Hydroxide Hydrometallurgical Project with an Annual Output of 120,000T Nickel Metal and 15,000T Cobalt Metal, the Project with an Annual Output of 50,000T of Lithium Hydroxide and 10,000T of Lithium Carbonate, and the Project of Nickel Metal Production Line with an Annual Output of 126,000T and supporting facilities in Indonesia.

20. To support a series of financing projects for Singapore PCTCs. To build an Auto Center in Hulhumale, Maldives, and the Service Long March Tyres (Pvt) Limited Phase II in Pakistan.

21. The China Investment Corporation invested to a Renewable fuel company in South East Asia, and a Global fruit postharvest tech company headquartered in South Africa.

22. Acquiring Partial Share of Halcyon Agri Corporation Limited in Singapore, and implementing the Project of Contract Farming in Tanzania.

23. To implement the projects for public well-being and infrastructure in Ghana and Kenya and the trade supply chain project in Angola and other African countries, and the project of Keat Hong Grange—N8C12 (987Dus) in Singapore. To build the Project of the Red Sea Utility Assets and Infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, and the Project to Strengthen Ecosystem Resilience in the Ferlo Region, Senegal. Signed the Loan Agreement on Uzbekistan Olympic Village Project Lot 1 & Lot 2, and the Loan Agreement on the Rajshahi WASA Surface Water Treatment Plant Project in Bangladesh.

24. To invest in the power battery manufacturing project in Hungary and solar module and battery production line projects in Viet Nam. Implementing the Project of expanding the Angel Yeast (Egypt) annual output of yeast products.

VI. People's Livelihood and People-to-people Connectivity Projects

1. China will carry out 1,000 small-scale livelihood assistance projects.

2. The Chinese government will provide training sessions and seminars for 20,000 foreign officials and technical personnel and in-service education programs for 500 persons in China, continue to implement the Silk Roads Youth Research Grant, and launch the Belt and Road Youth Elite Program and the Belt and Road Youth Development Program.

3. To launch the BRI Green Talent Program, the "Africa Solar Belt" Program of South-South Cooperation on Climate Change, and hold the training on South-South Cooperation for Addressing Climate Change. Implementing the "Vista of the Green Silk Road" international communication programme.

4. To hold an anti-corruption seminar for Belt and Road countries. Sponsored the second session of "Research and Fellowship Program of the Belt and Road Legal Cooperation" and will hold its third session. To establish the Capacity-Building Alliance for Sustainable Investment. Held the Belt and Road Banking Regulatory Seminar.

5. Released the "Featured and Excellent" international cooperation projects in conformity assessment field. To set up Belt and Road People-to-People Connectivity Charitable Fund and implement Silk Road People-to-People Connectivity Initiative. Implementing the China Merchants C-Blue Love Village in Sri Lanka and relevant countries, and the Panda Pack

Project in Nepal, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Burundi and relevant countries.

6. Implementing WFAS the Belt and Road Tour of Acupuncture-Moxibustion in Ethiopia, the Mobile Interventional Operation Module in Laos, the Lifeline Express International Bright Journey in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, the Amity Living Water Project in Nepal, and the China-ASEAN Heart-to-Heart Program devoted to cure children with congenital heart disease.

7. The National Development and Reform Commission of China will carry out the cooperation on capacity building for Africa with the African Union, jointly implement the BRI economic reform and transformation cooperation project with the Zimbabwean side, implement the vocational training project on industrial sector and build the base for conservation, research and innovation of medicinal plants with the Indonesian side.

8. The State Taxation Administration of China released the Belt and Road Tax Administration Capacity Enhancement Group Curriculum and will provide training opportunities for 10,000 tax officials in the coming 5 years.

9. Launched the Lancang-Mekong Sweet Spring Project, carried out the pilot cooperation with relevant countries in the field of water supply safety technology in the rural areas, and to build a rubber dam over the Mohananda River in Bangladesh.

10. To establish the Ocean Forecasting System for Southeast Asia, host the China-Island Countries Forum on Ocean Cooperation and jointly launch the China-Island Countries Marine Disaster Risk Reduction Cooperation Plan.

11. Handed over the certificates of the Gwadar Seawater Desalination Project to Pakistan and the Project of Satellite Assembly, Integration and Testing Center to Egypt, and signed the exchange of letters on the China-Aid Project of National Data Center with Serbia. Building the Kenol-Sagana-Marua Highway Improvement Project: Lot 2-Dualling of Sagana-Marua (A2) Road in Kenya.

12. To sign the exchange of letters on the China-Aid Project of refined oil with Laos, announced the approval of the China-Aid Project of the Cambodia King Works Brigade. Handed over the certificates of the Emergency Food Assistance Project to Mozambique, Chad, Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Mali.

13. Announced to provide emergency aid of school uniform materials for 2024 school year to Sri Lanka, handed over the Certificate of the Nasaythong Middle School Project to Laos. Implemented the Railway Vocational and Technical College Project, the Vientiane Phia Vad Middle School Project and the Drinking Water Project for SANTIPAB High School in Laos. Operating the Luban Workshop in Kazakhstan continuously.

14. China will sign the exchange of letters for the Phase IV Advanced Agricultural Specialist Technical Assistance Project with Ethiopia. Promoting the Juncao Technology Cooperation with Rwanda, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and relevant BRI countries, the Perennial Rice Technology in Uganda and relevant BRI countries, and implementing the East Asia Poverty Reduction Cooperation Pilot Project in Laos. Cooperating on Research and Promotion of Agricultural Technologies and Water-saving Irrigation Technologies in Uzbekistan. Carrying out the Research and Preliminary Work of China-Indonesia Agricultural Machinery Service Center in the Palm Park.
15. Signed the exchange of letters for the National Surgical Center Project with Mozambique, and the Poliovirus Vaccine Project with Pakistan. Handed over the Certificate of the Project of Technical Cooperation of Abdulla Mzee Hospital in Zanzibar to Tanzania. Building the China-Thailand Traditional Chinese Medicine Center and the China-Cambodia Traditional Chinese Medicine Center. To implement the “Cataract Blindness Elimination Project” in Senegal.
16. To launch the Belt and Road News Network (BRNN) Short Video Sharing Program, the Projects of Distribution of TV and Radio Programs in BRI Partner Countries. Releasing the Project of New Silk Road — Connecting the World. To hold “The Silk Road Bond”—a Showcase of Chinese TV Programs and Film, organize the “Belt and Road” Audio-Visual Program Exchange Activity and the Belt and Road Panda Friends Project. Launched the Golden Mango TV Channel with Ghana.
17. The National Cultural Heritage Administration of China to carry out Maritime Silk Road trans-boundary conservation and nomination work, and will hold the Roundtable Conference on Maritime Silk Road Cultural Heritage Conservation, and the exhibition “Thriving for a Collaborative World: Belt and Road Cooperation in Cultural Heritage and Archaeology” and create the album of *Collection of Results in Silk Road Heritage Conservation*. To implement the Project of China-Saudi Joint Archaeological Excavation of Al Serrian and the China-aid Nateshwar Archaeological Park Project in Bangladesh.
18. The General Administration of Sports of China will hold the Belt and Road Wushu Training Camp and the Belt and Road Women’s Chess Masters World Championships in Shaanxi.
19. To launch the International Projects on Dunhuang Culture, and build a China Cultural Centre in Auckland, New Zealand.
20. China will organize the Pacific-Indian Ocean Scientific Expeditions, and popularize the Modified Clay technology for HAB mitigation to BRI countries, to protect the security of ocean environment.

21. Hong Kong SAR Government continues to implement the Belt and Road Scholarship, and will jointly produce the television variety programs with participating countries of BRI and hold the “Asia+ Festival”.

VII. White Papers and Research Reports

1. Issued *The Belt and Road Initiative: A Key Pillar of the Global Community of Shared Future*.
2. To issue the *Vision and Proposed Actions outlined on Pursuing Steady and Sustained Progress in High Quality BRI Cooperation — Prospects for the BRI in the Next Decade*.
3. To issue the *Report on Development of the Green Silk Road (2023)*.
4. To issue the *Report on Development of the Innovative Silk Road*.
5. Issued the *China's Trade and Investment Cooperation under the BRI 2013-2023*.
6. To issue the *Report on the High-quality Development of the Air Silk Road (2023)*.
7. To issue the *Report on Building Closer People-to-People Ties under the BRI*.
8. To issue the *Report on the International Cooperation and Development of Traditional Chinese Medicine under the BRI*.
9. To issue the *Report on Development of China-ASEAN Jointly Building the BRI*.
10. To issue the *Report on Development of China-Africa Jointly Building the BRI*.
11. To issue the *Report on Development of China-Latin America and the Caribbean Jointly Building the BRI*.
12. Issued the *Belt and Road Development Studies — A Synergy Approach to Global Development*.
13. Issued the *Debt Sustainability Framework for Market Access Countries of the BRI*.
14. Issued the *Trade Index of China and BRI Partner Countries*.
15. To issue *A Decade on: Innovation and Practice in Developing Green Belt and Road*.
16. To issue the *Research Report on Green Finance Practice of the BRI*.
17. To issue the *Research Report on Best Practice of Financial Support Services for the Projects of BRI*.
18. To issue the *Blue Book on Emergency Management of the BRI (2023)*.
19. To issue the *White Paper on the Silk Road Heritage Conservation*.
20. Issued the *White Paper on Seaborne Trade Digitalization and the Belt and Road Collaboration Innovation*.
21. To issue the *White Paper on Chinese Listed Companies to Build the Belt and Road 2023*.

22. To issue *Excellent International Cooperation Projects in Metrology under the BRI*.
23. To issue the *Disaster Assessment Report for Belt and Road Countries*.
24. The Innovation and Development Center for the BRI will issue the *Report on Innovation Development 2030*.
25. To issue the *Report on the Ten-Years Achievements in Connectivity of Standards' Contribution to Jointly Building the BRI*.
26. Issued the *BRI Green Development Outlook*.
27. To issue *Reports on BRI-related by International Think Tanks*.
28. The Development Research Center of the State Council of China, with the partners of the Silk Road Think Tank Network, will jointly write the *Report on Belt and Road Cooperation and the Shared Development*.
29. Issued the *Report on the Export-Import Bank of China's Participation in the Belt and Road Cooperation in the Past Ten Years*.
30. Issued the *Case Studies of Enterprises' Non-profit Activities for the BRI*.
31. Issued the *Report on the Belt and Road Infrastructure Development Index (2023)* and the *Report on Portuguese-speaking Countries' Infrastructure Development Index and Macao's Achievements in the BRI (2023)*.

Document: 3**Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel), International Court of Justice, Summary of the Order of 26 January 2024, The Hague, Netherlands.**

Source: <https://www.icj-cij.org/node/20345>

Date of the Document

Fri, 01/26/2024 - 12:00

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Summary

Unofficial

Summary 2024/1

26 January 2024

Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel) Request for the indication of provisional measures

The Court begins by recalling that, on 29 December 2023, South Africa filed in the Registry of the Court an Application instituting proceedings against Israel concerning alleged violations in the Gaza Strip of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (hereinafter the “Genocide Convention” or the “Convention”). The Application contained a Request for the indication of provisional measures, whereby South Africa, “request[ed] the Court, as a matter of extreme urgency, pending the Court’s determination of this case on the merits, to indicate the following provisional measures in relation to the Palestinian people as a group protected by the Genocide Convention”:

“(1) The State of Israel shall immediately suspend its military operations in and against Gaza.

(2) The State of Israel shall ensure that any military or irregular armed units which may be directed, supported or influenced by it, as well as any organisations and persons which may be subject to its control, direction or influence, take no steps in furtherance of the military operations referred to [in] point (1) above.

(3) The Republic of South Africa and the State of Israel shall each, in accordance with their obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, in relation to the Palestinian

people, take all reasonable measures within their power to prevent genocide.

(4) The State of Israel shall, in accordance with its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, in relation to the Palestinian people as a group protected by the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, desist from the commission of any and all acts within the scope of Article II of the Convention, in particular:

- (a) killing members of the group;
- (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to the members of the group;
- (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; and
- (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group.

(5) The State of Israel shall, pursuant to point (4) (c) above, in relation to Palestinians, desist from, and take all measures within its power including the rescinding of relevant orders, of restrictions and/or of prohibitions to prevent:

- (a) the expulsion and forced displacement from their homes;
- (b) the deprivation of:
 - (i) access to adequate food and water;
 - (ii) access to humanitarian assistance, including access to adequate fuel, shelter, clothes, hygiene and sanitation;
 - (iii) medical supplies and assistance; and
- (c) the destruction of Palestinian life in Gaza.

(6) The State of Israel shall, in relation to Palestinians, ensure that its military, as well as any irregular armed units or individuals which may be directed, supported or otherwise influenced by it and any organizations and persons which may be subject to its control, direction or influence, do not commit any acts described in (4) and (5) above, or engage in direct and public incitement to commit genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide, attempt to commit genocide, or complicity in genocide, and insofar as they do engage therein, that steps are taken towards their punishment pursuant to Articles I, II, III and IV of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

(7) The State of Israel shall take effective measures to prevent the destruction and ensure the preservation of evidence related to allegations of acts within the scope of Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; to that end, the State of Israel shall not act to deny or otherwise restrict access by fact-finding missions, international mandates and other bodies to Gaza to assist in ensuring the preservation and retention of said evidence.

(8) The State of Israel shall submit a report to the Court on all measures taken to give effect to this Order within one week, as from the date of this

Order, and thereafter at such regular intervals as the Court shall order, until a final decision on the case is rendered by the Court.

(9) The State of Israel shall refrain from any action and shall ensure that no action is taken which might aggravate or extend the dispute before the Court or make it more difficult to resolve.”

I. INTRODUCTION (PARAS. 13-14)

The Court recalls the immediate context in which the present case came before it. On 7 October 2023, Hamas and other armed groups present in the Gaza Strip carried out an attack in Israel, killing more than 1,200 persons, injuring thousands and abducting some 240 people, many of whom continue to be held hostage. Following this attack, Israel launched a large-scale military operation in Gaza, by land, air and sea, which caused massive civilian casualties, extensive destruction of civilian infrastructure and the displacement of the overwhelming majority of the population in Gaza. The Court is acutely aware of the extent of the human tragedy that is unfolding in the region and is deeply concerned about the continuing loss of life and human suffering.

The ongoing conflict in Gaza has been addressed in the framework of several organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations. In particular, resolutions have been adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations (see resolution ES-10/21 adopted on 27 October 2023 and resolution ES-10/22 adopted on 12 December 2023) and the Security Council (see resolution 2712 adopted on 15 November 2023 and resolution 2720 adopted on 22 December 2023), referring to many aspects of the conflict. The scope of the present case submitted to the Court, however, is limited, as South Africa has instituted these proceedings under the Genocide Convention.

II. PRIMA FACIE JURISDICTION (PARAS. 15-32)

1. Preliminary observations (paras. 15-18)

The Court recalls that, in accordance with its jurisprudence, it may indicate provisional measures only if the provisions relied on by the applicant appear, *prima facie*, to afford a basis on which its jurisdiction could be founded, but it need not satisfy itself in a definitive manner that it has jurisdiction as regards the merits of the case. In the present case, South Africa seeks to found the jurisdiction of the Court on Article 36, paragraph 1, of the Statute of the Court and on Article IX of the Genocide Convention. The Court must therefore first determine whether those provisions *prima facie* confer upon it jurisdiction to rule on the merits of the case, enabling it — if the other necessary conditions are fulfilled — to indicate provisional measures.

The Court notes that South Africa and Israel are parties to the Genocide Convention and that neither of them has entered a reservation to Article IX or any other provision of the Convention.

2. Existence of a dispute relating to the interpretation, application or fulfilment of the Genocide Convention (paras. 19-30)

The Court recalls that Article IX of the Genocide Convention makes the Court's jurisdiction conditional on the existence of a dispute relating to the interpretation, application or fulfilment of the Convention. Since South Africa has invoked as the basis of the Court's jurisdiction the compromissory clause of the Genocide Convention, the Court must also ascertain whether it appears that the acts and omissions complained of by the Applicant are capable of falling within the scope of that convention *ratione materiae*.

The Court notes that South Africa issued public statements in various multilateral and bilateral settings in which it expressed its view that, in light of the nature, scope and extent of Israel's military operations in Gaza, Israel's actions amounted to violations of its obligations under the Genocide Convention. For instance, at the resumed 10th emergency special session of the United Nations General Assembly on 12 December 2023, at which Israel was represented, the South African representative to the United Nations stated that "the events of the past six weeks in Gaza have illustrated that Israel is acting contrary to its obligations in terms of the Genocide Convention". South Africa recalled this statement in its Note Verbale of 21 December 2023 to the Embassy of Israel in Pretoria.

The Court notes that Israel dismissed any accusation of genocide in the context of the conflict in Gaza in a document published by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 6 December 2023 which was subsequently updated and reproduced on the website of the Israel Defense Forces on 15 December 2023 under the title "The War Against Hamas: Answering Your Most Pressing Questions", stating that "[t]he accusation of genocide against Israel is not only wholly unfounded as a matter of fact and law, it is morally repugnant". In the document, Israel also stated that "[t]he accusation of genocide . . . is not just legally and factually incoherent, it is obscene" and that there was "no . . . valid basis, in fact or law, for the outrageous charge of genocide".

In light of the above, the Court considers that the Parties appear to hold clearly opposite views as to whether certain acts or omissions allegedly committed by Israel in Gaza amount to violations by the latter of its obligations under the Genocide Convention. The Court finds that the above-mentioned elements are sufficient at this stage to establish *prima facie* the existence of a dispute between the Parties relating to the interpretation, application or fulfilment of the Genocide Convention.

As to whether the acts and omissions complained of by the Applicant appear to be capable of falling within the provisions of the Genocide Convention, the Court recalls that South Africa considers Israel to be responsible for committing genocide in Gaza and for failing to prevent and punish genocidal acts. South Africa contends that Israel has also violated

other obligations under the Genocide Convention, including those concerning “conspiracy to commit genocide, direct and public incitement to genocide, attempted genocide and complicity in genocide”.

In the Court’s view, at least some of the acts and omissions alleged by South Africa to have been committed by Israel in Gaza appear to be capable of falling within the provisions of the Convention.

3. Conclusion as to prima facie jurisdiction (paras. 31-32)

In light of the foregoing, the Court concludes that, prima facie, it has jurisdiction pursuant to Article IX of the Genocide Convention to entertain the case and that, consequently, it cannot accede to Israel’s request that the case be removed from the General List.

III. STANDING OF SOUTH AFRICA (PARAS. 33-34)

The Court notes that Israel did not challenge the standing of South Africa in the present proceedings. It recalls that all the States parties to the Genocide Convention have a common interest to ensure the prevention, suppression and punishment of genocide, by committing themselves to fulfilling the obligations contained in the Convention. It follows that any State party to the Genocide Convention may invoke the responsibility of another State party, including through the institution of proceedings before the Court, with a view to determining the alleged failure to comply with its obligations erga omnes partes under the Convention and to bring that failure to an end.

The Court concludes, prima facie, that South Africa has standing to submit to it the dispute with Israel concerning alleged violations of obligations under the Genocide Convention.

IV. THE RIGHTS WHOSE PROTECTION IS SOUGHT AND THE LINK BETWEEN SUCH RIGHTS AND THE MEASURES REQUESTED (PARAS. 35-59)

The Court recalls that its power to indicate provisional measures under Article 41 of the Statute has as its object the preservation of the respective rights claimed by the parties in a case, pending its decision on the merits thereof. It follows that the Court must be concerned to preserve by such measures the rights which may subsequently be adjudged by it to belong to either party. Therefore, the Court may exercise this power only if it is satisfied that the rights asserted by the party requesting such measures are at least plausible. Moreover, a link must exist between the rights whose protection is sought and the provisional measures being requested. The Court recalls that, in accordance with Article I of the Convention, all States parties thereto have undertaken “to prevent and to punish” the crime of genocide, that is to say any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group (Article II, para. (a)); causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group (Article II, para. (b)); deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part (Article II, para.

(c)); imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group (Article II, para. (d)); forcibly transferring children of the group to another group (Article II, para. (e)). Pursuant to Article III of the Genocide Convention, the following acts are also prohibited by the Convention: conspiracy to commit genocide (Article III, para. (b)), direct and public incitement to commit genocide (Article III, para. (c)), attempt to commit genocide (Article III, para. (d)) and complicity in genocide (Article III, para. (e)).

The Court notes that the provisions of the Convention are intended to protect the members of a national, ethnical, racial or religious group from acts of genocide or any other punishable acts enumerated in Article III. It considers that there is a correlation between the rights of members of groups protected under the Genocide Convention, the obligations incumbent on States parties thereto, and the right of any State party to seek compliance therewith by another State party. In the Court's view, the Palestinians appear to constitute a distinct "national, ethnical, racial or religious group", and hence a protected group within the meaning of Article II of the Genocide Convention.

The Court observes that the military operation being conducted by Israel following the attack of 7 October 2023 has resulted in a large number of deaths and injuries, as well as the massive destruction of homes, the forcible displacement of the vast majority of the population, and extensive damage to civilian infrastructure. While figures relating to the Gaza Strip cannot be independently verified, recent information indicates that 25,700 Palestinians have been killed, over 63,000 injuries have been reported, over 360,000 housing units have been destroyed or partially damaged and approximately 1.7 million persons have been internally displaced. Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have been deprived access to water, food, fuel, electricity and other essentials of life, as well as to medical care and medical supplies.

In this regard, the Court takes note of a statement made on 5 January 2024 by the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, a report of 21 December 2023 by the World Health Organization following a mission to North Gaza, and a statement issued on 13 January 2024 by the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

The Court also refers to the statement by the UNRWA Commissioner-General that the crisis in Gaza is "compounded by dehumanizing language". In this regard, the Court has taken note of a number of statements made by senior Israeli officials. It calls attention, in particular, to the following examples: statements made by Mr Yoav Gallant, Defence Minister of Israel, on 9 and 10 October 2023, by Mr Isaac Herzog, President of Israel, on 12 October 2023, and by Mr Israel Katz, then

Minister of Energy and Infrastructure of Israel, on 13 October 2023. The Court also takes note of a press release of 16 November 2023, in which 37 Special Rapporteurs, Independent Experts and members of Working Groups part of the Special Procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council voiced alarm over “discernibly genocidal and dehumanising rhetoric coming from senior Israeli government officials”. Concerns were also expressed on 27 October 2023 by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination about “the sharp increase in racist hate speech and dehumanization directed at Palestinians since 7 October”. In the Court’s view, the facts and circumstances mentioned above are sufficient to conclude that at least some of the rights claimed by South Africa and for which it is seeking protection are plausible. This is the case with respect to the right of the Palestinians in Gaza to be protected from acts of genocide and related prohibited acts identified in Article III, and the right of South Africa to seek Israel’s compliance with the latter’s obligations under the Convention.

The Court then turns to the condition of the link between the plausible rights claimed by South Africa and the provisional measures requested.

The Court considers that, by their very nature, at least some of the provisional measures sought by South Africa are aimed at preserving the plausible rights it asserts on the basis of the Genocide Convention in the present case, namely the right of the Palestinians in Gaza to be protected from acts of genocide and related prohibited acts mentioned in Article III, and the right of South Africa to seek Israel’s compliance with the latter’s obligations under the Convention. Therefore, a link exists between the rights claimed by South Africa that the Court has found to be plausible, and at least some of the provisional measures requested.

V. RISK OF IRREPARABLE PREJUDICE AND URGENCY (PARAS. 60-74)

The Court recalls that, pursuant to Article 41 of its Statute, it has the power to indicate provisional measures when irreparable prejudice could be caused to rights which are the subject of judicial proceedings or when the alleged disregard of such rights may entail irreparable consequences. However, this power will be exercised only if there is urgency, in the sense that there is a real and imminent risk that irreparable prejudice will be caused to the rights claimed before the Court gives its final decision.

In view of the fundamental values sought to be protected by the Genocide Convention, the Court considers that the plausible rights in question in these proceedings, namely the right of the Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip to be protected from acts of genocide and related prohibited acts identified in Article III of the Genocide Convention and the right of South Africa to seek Israel’s compliance with the latter’s obligations under the Convention, are of such a nature that prejudice to them is capable of causing irreparable harm.

The Court considers that the civilian population in the Gaza Strip remains extremely vulnerable. It recalls that the military operation conducted by Israel since 7 October 2023 has resulted, *inter alia*, in tens of thousands of deaths and injuries and the destruction of homes, schools, medical facilities and other vital infrastructure, as well as displacement on a massive scale. The Court notes that the operation is ongoing and that the Prime Minister of Israel announced on 18 January 2024 that the war “will take many more long months”. At present, many Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have no access to the most basic foodstuffs, potable water, electricity, essential medicines or heating. The World Health Organization has estimated that 15 per cent of the women giving birth in the Gaza Strip are likely to experience complications, and indicates that maternal and newborn death rates are expected to increase due to the lack of access to medical care. In these circumstances, the Court considers that the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip is at serious risk of deteriorating further before the Court renders its final judgment.

The Court takes note of Israel’s statement that it has taken certain steps to address and alleviate the conditions faced by the population in the Gaza Strip. The Court further notes that the Attorney General of Israel recently stated that a call for intentional harm to civilians may amount to a criminal offence, including that of incitement, and that several such cases are being examined by Israeli law enforcement authorities. According to the Court, while steps such as these are to be encouraged, they are insufficient to remove the risk that irreparable prejudice will be caused before the Court issues its final decision in the case.

In light of the considerations set out above, the Court considers that there is a real and imminent risk of irreparable prejudice to the plausible rights invoked by South Africa, as specified by the Court.

VI. CONCLUSION AND MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED (PARAS. 75-84)

The Court concludes on the basis of the above considerations that the conditions required by its Statute for it to indicate provisional measures are met. It is therefore necessary, pending its final decision, for the Court to indicate certain measures in order to protect the rights claimed by South Africa that the Court has found to be plausible. In the present case, having considered the terms of the provisional measures requested by South Africa and the circumstances of the case, the Court finds that the measures to be indicated need not be identical to those requested.

The Court considers that, with regard to the situation described above, Israel must, in accordance with its obligations under the Genocide Convention, in relation to Palestinians in Gaza, take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of all acts within the scope of Article II of this Convention, in particular: (a) killing members of the group; (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring

about its physical destruction in whole or in part; and (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group. The Court recalls that these acts fall within the scope of Article II of the Convention when they are committed with the intent to destroy in whole or in part a group as such. The Court further considers that Israel must ensure with immediate effect that its military forces do not commit any of the above-described acts.

The Court is also of the view that Israel must take all measures within its power to prevent and punish the direct and public incitement to commit genocide in relation to members of the Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip. The Court further considers that Israel must take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

Israel must also take effective measures to prevent the destruction and ensure the preservation of evidence related to allegations of acts within the scope of Article II and Article III of the Genocide Convention against members of the Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip.

Finally, in view of the specific provisional measures it has decided to indicate, the Court considers that Israel must submit a report to the Court on all measures taken to give effect to this Order within one month, as from the date of this Order. The report so provided shall then be communicated to South Africa, which shall be given the opportunity to submit to the Court its comments thereon.

*

The Court deems it necessary to emphasize that all parties to the conflict in the Gaza Strip are bound by international humanitarian law. It is gravely concerned about the fate of the hostages abducted during the attack on Israel on 7 October 2023 and held since then by Hamas and other armed groups, and calls for their immediate and unconditional release.

OPERATIVE CLAUSE (PARA. 86)

The full text of the operative clause of the Order reads as follows:

“For these reasons,

THE COURT,

Indicates the following provisional measures:

(1) By fifteen votes to two,

The State of Israel shall, in accordance with its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, in relation to Palestinians in Gaza, take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of all acts within the scope of Article II of this Convention, in particular:

(a) killing members of the group;

(b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

(c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; and

(d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;

IN FAVOUR: President Donoghue; Vice-President Gevorgian; Judges Tomka, Abraham, Bennouna, Yusuf, Xue, Bhandari, Robinson, Salam, Iwasawa, Nolte, Charlesworth, Brant; Judge ad hoc Moseneke;

AGAINST: Judge Sebutinde; Judge ad hoc Barak;

(2) By fifteen votes to two,

The State of Israel shall ensure with immediate effect that its military does not commit any acts described in point 1 above;

IN FAVOUR: President Donoghue; Vice-President Gevorgian; Judges Tomka, Abraham, Bennouna, Yusuf, Xue, Bhandari, Robinson, Salam, Iwasawa, Nolte, Charlesworth, Brant; Judge ad hoc Moseneke;

AGAINST: Judge Sebutinde; Judge ad hoc Barak;

(3) By sixteen votes to one,

The State of Israel shall take all measures within its power to prevent and punish the direct and public incitement to commit genocide in relation to members of the Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip;

IN FAVOUR: President Donoghue; Vice-President Gevorgian; Judges Tomka, Abraham, Bennouna, Yusuf, Xue, Bhandari, Robinson, Salam, Iwasawa, Nolte, Charlesworth, Brant; Judges ad hoc Barak, Moseneke;

AGAINST: Judge Sebutinde;

(4) By sixteen votes to one,

The State of Israel shall take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip;

IN FAVOUR: President Donoghue; Vice-President Gevorgian; Judges Tomka, Abraham, Bennouna, Yusuf, Xue, Bhandari, Robinson, Salam, Iwasawa, Nolte, Charlesworth, Brant; Judges ad hoc Barak, Moseneke;

AGAINST: Judge Sebutinde;

(5) By fifteen votes to two,

The State of Israel shall take effective measures to prevent the destruction and ensure the preservation of evidence related to allegations of acts within the scope of Article II and Article III of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide against members of the Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip;

IN FAVOUR: President Donoghue; Vice-President Gevorgian; Judges Tomka, Abraham, Bennouna, Yusuf, Xue, Bhandari, Robinson, Salam, Iwasawa, Nolte, Charlesworth, Brant; Judge ad hoc Moseneke;

AGAINST: Judge Sebutinde; Judge ad hoc Barak;

(6) By fifteen votes to two,

The State of Israel shall submit a report to the Court on all measures taken to give effect to this Order within one month as from the date of this Order.

IN FAVOUR: President Donoghue; Vice-President Gevorgian; Judges Tomka, Abraham, Bennouna, Yusuf, Xue, Bhandari, Robinson, Salam, Iwasawa, Nolte, Charlesworth, Brant; Judge ad hoc Moseneké;
 AGAINST: Judge Sebutinde; Judge ad hoc Barak.”

*

Judge XUE appends a declaration to the Order of the Court; Judge SEBUTINDE appends a dissenting opinion to the Order of the Court; Judges BHANDARI and NOLTE append declarations to the Order of the Court; Judge ad hoc BARAK appends a separate opinion to the Order of the Court.

Annex to Summary 2024/1

Declaration of Judge Xue

Judge Xue concurs with her colleagues in upholding South Africa's standing, on a *prima facie* basis, in instituting proceedings against Israel for breach of its obligations under the Genocide Convention. In explaining her position, she notes that the question of Palestine has been on the agenda of the United Nations since the inception of the Organization and that the people of Palestine, including the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, are not yet able to exercise their right to self-determination. She recalls the relevant United Nations resolutions where it is stated that “the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy”. In Judge Xue's view, this responsibility requires that the United Nations, including its principal judicial organ, ensures that the Palestinian people are protected under international law, particularly protected from the gravest crime – genocide.

In view of the humanitarian disaster in Gaza over the past one hundred and nine days, Judge Xue expresses her deep concern over the humanitarian situation in Gaza. She considers that, as a result of the Israeli military actions, the very existence of the Palestinian people in Gaza is at stake, which challenges the most elementary principles of humanity and morality. Judge Xue recalls that, over sixty years ago, when Ethiopia and Liberia instituted legal proceedings before the Court against South Africa for breach of its obligations as the Mandatory Power in South West Africa, the Court rejected the standing of those applicants for lack of legal interest. This gave rise to strong indignation of the Member States of the United Nations against the Court, severely tarnishing its reputation. In the *Barcelona Traction* case, the Court recognized that there are certain international legal obligations owed to the international community as a whole; by the very nature of their importance all States have a legal interest in their protection. They are characterized as obligations *erga omnes*. The Court, however, did not touch on the question of standing in that judgment. While the law and practice are still evolving, for a protected

group such as the Palestinian people Judge Xue considers it least controversial that the international community has a common interest in its protection. In her view, this is the very type of case where the Court should recognize the legal standing of a State party to the Genocide Convention to institute proceedings on the basis of *erga omnes partes* to invoke the responsibility of another State party for the breach of its obligations under the Genocide Convention.

In light of the foregoing considerations and for the reasons contained in the Order of the Court, Judge Xue agrees that the provisional measures indicated in this Order are warranted under the circumstances.

Dissenting opinion of Judge Sebutinde

Judge Sebutinde respectfully dissents from the majority in this Order, arguing that the dispute between the State of Israel and the people of Palestine is essentially and historically a political one, calling for a diplomatic or negotiated settlement, and for the implementation in good faith of all relevant Security Council resolutions by all parties concerned, with a view to finding a permanent solution whereby the Israeli and Palestinian peoples can peacefully coexist. In her opinion, this is not a legal dispute susceptible of judicial settlement by the Court. Judge Sebutinde also argues that some of the preconditions for the indication of provisional measures have not been met — namely that South Africa has not demonstrated, even on a *prima facie* basis, that the acts allegedly committed by Israel and of which the Applicant complains were committed with the necessary genocidal intent and that, as a result, they are capable of falling within the scope of the Genocide Convention. Furthermore, she argues that the rights asserted by South Africa are not plausible under the Genocide Convention. Judge Sebutinde considers that the provisional measures indicated by the Court in the Order are not warranted.

Declaration of Judge Bhandari

In his declaration, Judge Bhandari states that the attacks on civilians in Israel on 7 October 2023 must be condemned but notes that Israel's military campaign in response to those attacks has led to a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.

Judge Bhandari recalls that the case has not been fully argued and that the Court does not have before it a full factual record. He further recalls that, in deciding a request for the indication of provisional measures, the Court is not deciding South Africa's claims or deciding whether to grant the requested relief.

Judge Bhandari states that the Court, in weighing the plausibility of the rights protection of which South Africa claims, must consider such evidence as is before it at this stage. It must take into account the widespread destruction in Gaza and loss of life that the population of Gaza has thus far endured. In determining the plausibility of these rights at the

provisional measures stage, the Court need not make a final determination on the existence of intent under Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. In Judge Bhandari's view, the widespread nature of the military campaign in Gaza, as well as the loss of life, injury, destruction and humanitarian needs following from it, are by themselves capable of supporting a plausibility finding with respect to rights under Article II. The Court was justified in granting provisional measures in the terms it did.

Finally, Judge Bhandari states that all participants in the conflict must ensure that all fighting and hostilities come to an immediate halt and that remaining hostages captured on 7 October 2023 are unconditionally released.

Declaration of Judge Nolte

Judge Nolte submits a declaration in which he sets out the reasons for his agreement with the Court's decision to indicate provisional measures in respect of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. In his view, the measures indicated rest primarily on the plausible claim by South Africa that certain statements by Israeli State officials, including members of its military, give rise to a real and imminent risk of irreparable prejudice to the rights of Palestinians under the Genocide Convention.

Separate opinion of Judge ad hoc Barak

1. In his opinion Judge ad hoc Barak explains that the Court rejected South Africa's main contention, which concerns the suspension of the military operations in the Gaza Strip. Instead, the Court adopted measures that recall Israel's existing obligations under the Genocide Convention. In his view, the Court has reaffirmed Israel's right to defend its citizens and emphasized the importance of providing humanitarian aid to the population of Gaza. Judge ad hoc Barak states that the provisional measures indicated by the Court are of a significantly narrower scope than those requested by South Africa.

2. In the present case, the Court has emphasized that "all parties to the conflict in the Gaza Strip are bound by international humanitarian law", which includes Hamas. The Court has also stated that it "is gravely concerned about the fate of the hostages abducted during the attack on Israel on 7 October 2023 and held since then by Hamas and other armed groups, and calls for their immediate and unconditional release".

3. Judge ad hoc Barak recalls that the Genocide Convention holds a very special place in the heart and history of the Jewish people, both within and beyond the State of Israel. Through an autobiographical remark, he explains that genocide is more than just a word for him; it represents calculated destruction and human behaviour at its very worst. It is the gravest possible accusation and is deeply intertwined with his life experience.

4. According to Judge ad hoc Barak, Israel is a democracy with a strong legal system and an independent judicial system. In his view, whenever there is tension between national security and human rights, the former must be attained without compromising the protection of the latter. He further explains that international law is an integral part of the conduct of the Israeli State and army, and that the holdings of the Israeli Supreme Court demonstrate a commitment to the rule of law and human life.

5. With regard to the Court's *prima facie* jurisdiction, Judge ad hoc Barak is doubtful whether South Africa brought this dispute in good faith. After South Africa sent a Note Verbale to Israel on 21 December 2023, concerning the situation in Gaza, Israel replied with an offer to engage in consultations at the earliest possible opportunity. South Africa, instead of accepting this offer, which could have led to fruitful diplomatic talks, decided to institute proceedings against Israel before this Court. He regrets that Israel's attempt to open a dialogue was met with the filing of an application.

6. In the view of Judge ad hoc Barak, the present case involves an additional difficulty because the other belligerent in the armed conflict, Hamas, is not a party to the present proceedings. While this does not prevent the Court from exercising its jurisdiction, it is an essential matter to be considered when determining the appropriate measures or remedies in this case.

7. Judge ad hoc Barak considers that the Court failed to give a complete account of the immediate context in which the present case came before it. He recalls that on 7 October 2023, over 3,000 Hamas terrorists invaded Israeli territory by land, air and sea. He further recalls that over 1,200 innocent civilians, including infants and the elderly, were murdered.

Judge ad hoc Barak also explains that Hamas places its military apparatus within and below civilian infrastructure to immunize it, intentionally putting its own population at risk. Furthermore, he refers to the fate of the hostages, an agony which has been ongoing for over 100 days, and the deaths and destruction taking place in Gaza.

8. According to Judge ad hoc Barak, the appropriate legal framework for analysing the situation in Gaza is international humanitarian law, and not the Genocide Convention.

9. Regarding the Genocide Convention, Judge ad hoc Barak explains that central to the crime of genocide is the element of intent, namely the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group as such. In his view, this intent is not present. Not even under the standard of plausibility required for the indication of provisional measures. For this reason, Judge ad hoc Barak disagrees with the Court's approach regarding the plausibility of rights, comparing the present case with Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of

the Crime of Genocide (*The Gambia v. Myanmar*). In his view, the evidence presented by South Africa is not comparable to that available to the Court in the Gambia case. He recalls that Israel argued that it has adopted several measures to minimize the impact of hostilities on civilians. In his view, it is surprising that the Court took note of Israel's statements explaining the steps it has taken to alleviate the conditions faced by the population in Gaza, but then completely failed to draw conclusions from these statements when examining the existence of intent. It is even more surprising that the Court did not view any of these measures and statements as sufficient to rule out the existence of a plausible intent to commit genocide.

10. Judge ad hoc Barak also recalls that the Court has not made any findings with regard to South Africa's claims under the Genocide Convention. The conclusions reached by the Court in this preliminary stage do not prejudice in any way the claims brought by South Africa, which in his view, remain wholly unproven.

11. With regard to the specific measures indicated by the Court, Judge ad hoc Barak explains that he voted against the first and second provisional measures because he was not persuaded by South Africa's arguments on the plausibility of rights. Nevertheless, he points out that the first and second measures indicated by the Court merely restate obligations that Israel already has under Articles I and II of the Genocide Convention.

12. Regarding the third measure, which concerns acts of public incitement, he voted in favour in the hope that the measure will help to decrease tensions and discourage damaging rhetoric. He notes the concerning statements made by some authorities.

Regarding the fourth measure, he voted in favour, guided by deep humanitarian convictions and the hope that this will alleviate the consequences of the armed conflict for the most vulnerable. In his view, through this measure, the Court reminds Israel of obligations arising out of international humanitarian law, which already present in the DNA of the Israeli military.

13. According to Judge ad hoc Barak, it is regretful that the Court was unable to order South Africa to take measures to protect the rights of the hostages and to facilitate their release by Hamas. In his view, these measures are based on international humanitarian law, as are those enabling the provision of humanitarian aid. Moreover, the fate of the hostages is an integral part of the military operation in Gaza. By taking measures to facilitate the release of the hostages, South Africa could play a positive role in bringing the conflict to an end.

14. Finally, with regard to the fifth provisional measure, he explains that he voted against because South Africa has not shown that Israel has destroyed or concealed evidence.

Document: 4**The UAE Consensus Negotiations Outcome, COP28, December 2023, Dubai, United Arab Emirates**

Source: <https://www.cop28.com/en/the-uae-consensus-negotiations-outcome>

KEY NEGOTIATED OUTCOMES

At this historic COP, countries came together to deliver the ‘**UAE Consensus**’ - the most ambitious and comprehensive set of negotiated outcomes to come out of the UNFCCC process since COP21.

A key component of the UAE Consensus is the decision on the GST to assess progress since Paris and put forward a plan to close implementation gaps to 2030. In a landmark agreement to bring a sectoral approach to the COP process, it calls on Parties to transition away from fossil fuels and to triple renewables and double energy efficiency globally by 2030. The decision also recognises the need to peak global emissions by 2025, taking into account different national starting points, and encourages countries to submit economy-wide Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). It also includes recognition of the crucial need to significantly scale up adaptation finance beyond doubling to meet urgent and evolving needs, and a clear call for countries to deliver National Adaptation Plans by 2025 and implement them by 2030. Finally, recognising the crucial role finance has to play in delivering ambition, the GST decision builds momentum behind a new global climate finance architecture in support of the post-2025 climate goal to be delivered at COP29.

Even if we stopped all emissions today, accelerated adaptation is still needed to respond to the devastating climate impacts already being experienced. In line with the mandate to develop an impactful Global Goal for Adaptation promised as part of the Paris Agreement, COP28 delivered the **Emirates Framework for Global Climate Resilience**. The framework is a step change that will put adaptation focus and action on a par with mitigation by galvanising not just governments, but also all non-party stakeholders to speed up and scale up action for adaptation. It defines how to do this through:

- targets for a universal set of themes essential for sustainable development and human wellbeing (food, water, health, shelter, livelihoods, nature, biodiversity and culture); and,
- targets on how to approach adaptation at local to national levels.

The framework also calls for regional and international cooperation, including for the first time asking to also look at the need to look at the transboundary nature of climate impacts.

From Day One, countries came together to truly innovate the COP process, with the **fund for loss and damage** promised at COP27 being adopted on the very first day of COP28. The new fund, to be hosted by the World Bank for an initial period of four years, will allocate resources based on the available evidence and with a minimum percentage allocated to least developed countries and Small Islands Developing States.

In demonstrating the spirit of international solidarity, 19 countries made commitments totalling \$792 million towards the fund and funding arrangements related to loss and damage, including \$100 million from the UAE.

Accelerating the normal pace of negotiations, COP28 also delivered a **Just Transition Work Programme**, only established at COP27. This three-year programme, which starts immediately, will drive ambitious, equitable implementation across all pillars of the Paris Agreement. Continuing the Presidency's commitment to inclusion, it includes references to labour rights and social protection as part of adaptation, for the first time in the UNFCCC process.

COP28 also delivered on a **Mitigation Work Programme**, which was established at COP26, that effectively showcases opportunities and barriers to closing the ambition and implementation gap.

A Presidency-led initiative saw Parties agree that all future COP Presidencies should appoint a Presidency **Youth Climate Champion**, to help facilitate the engagement of children and youth in climate action, including in the UNFCCC process. This was the first time a Presidency has delivered this type of initiative under the Paris Agreement and will help to ensure that youth have an enhanced, highlevel voice at every future COP.

A range of other technical negotiations completed the ambitious package, including on non-market approaches and a **technology implementation program**. On broader matters, a **host for COP29** was agreed - Baku in Azerbaijan. With Belem in Brazil also confirmed as the host for **COP30**, this provides the opportunity of a 'troika' of Presidencies to inject both pace and stability into the COP process.

THE UAE CONSENSUS

To ensure that we do not lose momentum, the UAE Consensus includes multiple actions that will be taken forward throughout the COP28 Presidency:

- **GST** - First annual GST dialogue to be convened at the next UNFCCC meeting in June 2024, where countries will share best practice on using the GST outcome to inform their next NDCs. "Road map to Mission 1.5oC" to be taken forward by the UAE,

Azerbaijan and Brazil Presidencies to help ensure that international cooperation stimulates ambition in those NDCs.

- **Emirates Framework for Global Climate Resilience** - A work programme to further strengthen the indicators at the heart of the new framework will kick off in 2024. Countries need to provide written inputs to help inform this by March 2024.
- **Just Transition Work Programme** - At least two dialogues to be convened before COP29 in a hybrid format to ensure inclusivity, and countries to provide further written evidence and inputs for the work programme by March 2024.
- **Mitigation Work Programme** - Two global dialogues to be held through 2024, with countries submitting proposals for the topics they address by February 2024.
- **Presidency Youth Climate Champion** - COP28 and COP29 Presidencies will appoint the first official Youth Climate Champions after the role was institutionalized at COP28.

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1. British spellings should be used.
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4. Word "per cent" should be used instead of sign "%."
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