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About BTTN

Balochistan Think Tank Network (BTTN) was established at Quetta, on March 1, 2021. It is an autonomous, non-profit, non-partisan, and multidisciplinary Research Center with a focus not limited to Balochistan only but includes the regional and global dynamics which can influence Pakistan. Broadly, BTTN endeavors to undertake in-depth research of provincial issues with a view to developing the socio, political, and economic status of the province. Its interests also include issues of Energy, Regional Stability, Strategic Stability, Peace and Security, Arms Control and Disarmament, Non-Proliferation, Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Technology, Conflict Resolution, Regional Connectivity, and Socioeconomic development at the national level. Geopolitically, besides South Asia, BTTN's research areas also include regions of Europe and Africa.

BTTN OP-EDs

Balochistan Think Tank Network (BTTN) Faculty of Research has been writing op-eds on a regular basis on different contemporary issues that are published on various international and national platforms. The opinions expressed in this edition are the authors' individual views and do not reflect the official policy of BTTN or any governmental organization. This electronic review is compiled monthly.

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Tribalism and Women Empowerment in Balochistan

Sadia Zahra

October 01, 2024

Balochistan, Pakistan's largest province, is characterized by its deep-rooted tribal structures and socio-cultural dynamics. Governed predominantly by hereditary chieftains or Sardars, the province is home to some of the major tribes all organized into intricate clans and sub-clans. These tribal systems, including the Sardari and Jirga systems, play pivotal roles in dispute resolution and social order. However, these traditional structures often overshadow formal legal systems, resulting in a predominantly patriarchal society where men hold primary authority and women, especially in rural areas, are marginalized.

The influence of honor (izzat) on decisions related to family, marriage, and gender roles cannot be underestimated. Cultural practices, such as purdah (seclusion), further restrict women's mobility and access to opportunities. Economic activities remain largely agrarian and controlled by tribal elites, which limits broader development and perpetuates barriers for women, including early marriages, limited education, and restricted public participation. These entrenched traditions resist modernization efforts, making it challenging to advance gender equality and socio-economic development.

Balochistan's cultural landscape is marked by its ethnic diversity. The Baloch, adhere to a tribal system led by Sardars and follow the Baloch Mayar, while the Pashtuns follow Pashtunwali, a code emphasizing honor and hospitality. The Brahui, like the Baloch, follow a Sardari system and Baloch Mayar but with some variations. The Hazara community, while also adhering to the Sardari system, exhibits less dependence on Sardars, and smaller communities like the Sindhis and Punjabis contribute to the region's cultural diversity, particularly in urban areas. Despite this diversity, tribal traditions, including honor and revenge, significantly influence the socio-political landscape and complicate efforts toward modernization.

Women in Balochistan face profound challenges due to entrenched cultural norms and patriarchal power structures. Access to education is severely limited, particularly in rural areas where early marriages often take precedence over schooling. Practices such as purdah confine women to domestic roles, excluding them from public life. Early and forced marriages, often used to settle tribal disputes or strengthen family alliances, along with traditions like "Baad", exacerbate the difficulties women face. These practices render women vulnerable to forced marriages,

exploitation and domestic violence. Honor-based violence, including honor killings, further exacerbates their vulnerability as women are seen as bearers of family honor and are harshly punished for perceived transgressions.

Economically, women are marginalized with limited workforce participation and economic dependence on male relatives. Tribal Jirgas frequently override formal legal systems, perpetuating patriarchal customs that deny women legal protection. Access to healthcare, particularly reproductive services, remains inadequate in remote areas. These challenges trap women in a cycle of discrimination and subjugation, hindering progress toward gender equality.

Nationally, women in Pakistan face significant barriers to education, economic participation, sports, and media. Female literacy rates stand at 36.8%, compared to 69.5% for men, with rural Balochistan exhibiting even lower rates. Workforce participation for women is about 34%, with Balochistan showing an even lower rate due to cultural restrictions and lack of infrastructure. Women's representation in sports is marginal, with less women participating competitively.

The Hazara community, however, stands out with its higher rates of female education and sports participation, reflecting a more supportive cultural attitude towards female empowerment. Yet, this remains an exception in a province where societal norms and inadequate facilities severely limit opportunities for women. In media, women from all ethnicities, including Baloch, Pashtun, and Hazara, make up only 34% of the workforce, facing barriers like gender discrimination and security risks, which reduce their visibility in journalism and leadership roles.

To bring meaningful change to Balochistan and boost its socio-economic condition, modernization efforts must carefully navigate the province's tribal systems and cultural dynamics. A multi-layered approach is essential, starting with engaging tribal leaders and elders to gain community support. Involving them in the design and implementation of initiatives for women's education, health, and economic participation ensures alignment with cultural values. Culturally acceptable incremental changes, such as home-based schooling or female-only schools, can address mobility and purdah restrictions.

Vocational training programs should focus on traditional roles like handicrafts and agriculture, enabling women to contribute economically without challenging established norms. Highlighting

successful local examples, such as the Hazara women's achievements in education and sports, can promote gradual empowerment that fits within tribal values. Ultimately, development efforts should emphasize local ownership, involving communities at every stage to create sustainable, culturally integrated progress that enhances women's empowerment and strengthens the overall socio-economic fabric of Balochistan.

<https://strafasia.com/tribalism-and-women-empowerment-in-balochistan/#:~:text=Economically%2C%20women%20are%20marginalized%20with,that%20deny%20women%20legal%20protection.>

Societal And Phenomenological Dimensions Of Security In Pakistan

Atta Ullah

October 01, 2024

Security is often driven by insecurities. In today's world, threats arise from the collective social psyche and have become an unavoidable part of the social conscience. These threats have become so subjective, in certain cases inter-subjective, just like the concept of state, that it is difficult to differentiate between security and threats.

The line between war and peace has become blurred, making it almost impossible to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants. In addition, determining whose security from whom and by what means and methods has become the biggest challenge for security practitioners today. Equally challenging is the prospect of eradicating threats such as terrorism and insurgency, or whatever label is assigned to them, completely from society. This makes insecurities a social phenomenon, a permanent part of society that cannot be addressed in isolation from various social factors and can only be minimized to the lowest possible levels.

In the traditional sense, the state is the primary focus of security, with the security and survival of the state being the main objective. In this approach, the security of society and individuals does not enjoy the same level of primacy in the national security of the state. This approach is reminiscent of how colonial or imperial powers treated their colonies, and it has been passed down to the post-colonial nation-states.

However, in today's security environment and with the use of hybrid means of warfare, this approach has proven to be problematic and has hindered lasting peace and social stability. We are in an era of a shared concept of security where the security of individuals and society is just as important as the security of the state. It is important to recognize that the security of the state is closely tied to the security of its people and society, and vice versa. How to establish this balance should always factor in the counterterrorism/insurgency strategy and national internal security policies of the state. Failing to do so could lead to alienating people, or the society at large, from the state, which may result in support for anti-state actors.

In a post-colonial state like Pakistan, the concept of a nation-state is unfamiliar to its citizens, who believe in a purely ideological concept of the state based on historic Islamic precedents. The

concepts of the state differ primarily in terms of fixation of territory, the role of religion in state affairs versus the virtually limitless geography of a state, and the religious legitimacy of the ruler.

Two important elements of political Islam, such as the legitimacy of a ruler and authority over the use of force (the doctrine of jihad), have posed ongoing security challenges for Muslim rulers in these countries. Currently, for instance, 60–70% of conflicts occur in Muslim countries, involving Muslim states and Islamist groups. These parties oppose each other's authority and engage in jihad against one another while questioning each other's legitimacy. Thus, the never-ending source of threats to national security and stability from social practices and religion in these countries cannot be fought by military tactics alone.

In Pakistan, for instance, people live in a nation-state established in 1947. Still, their thoughts, behaviors, and actions are framed within an ideological Islamic state that has roots dating back centuries. In this context, the legitimacy of the use of force rests with society or social-religious groups and non-state actors, including the religious cults, as much as the state. However, non-state and social actors sometimes enjoy more legitimacy in the public eye than the state authorities. They do so by questioning the Islamic legitimacy of politically elected leaders, whom they view as Western puppets rather than legitimate leaders of Muslims. This has been apparent in Pakistan through the street power of unelected religious leaders who, on occasion, challenge the writ of the state, sometimes violently, and impose their particular interpretation of religious rule on society. Militant Islamists who threaten the survival of the state also use similar justification to challenge the authority of the state.

The resultant breakdown of the social contract in Pakistan, which is based on the concept of rights and duties enshrined in the constitution to bind the loyalties of individuals and groups with the state and state to protect their rights, has created a significant gap between the state and its citizens. The loyalties of citizens are now aligned with ethnic groups, kinship, religious cults, and social elites rather than with the state. This fractured relationship has had a detrimental impact on various aspects of governing the country, including public policy, internal security, national unity, and overall survival. Additionally, the weakening trust between the state and citizens has become a permanent source of threats to the territorial integrity and social cohesion in the country. Restoring this trust of people in the state and state institutes and the state's ability to protect its citizens is crucial in addressing threats to national security in contemporary times.

It is important to establish a common point of reference in national security to address social vulnerabilities that pose a threat to the unity and territorial integrity of the country. A social contract should practically bind individuals and society at large directly with the state, with their individual and collective loyalties primarily resting with the state rather than non-state groups and their leaders. Therefore, it is essential to revise the practice of the social contract to strengthen the relationship between the state, society, and individuals to address contemporary security challenges.

Additionally, reclaiming the legitimacy of the use of force is crucial in ensuring security in contemporary times. The Islamic concept of the use of force, which only rests with legitimate authority, not an individual or a proclaimed Islamist group, can shift this religious and social dimension of security in favor of the state. This concept, in its essence, states that the authority with legitimate rights over the use of force can also retract it if necessary. This aspect of the use of force, or jihad, can discourage and de-legitimize the use of force by non-state actors and groups.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/01102024-societal-and-phenomenological-dimensions-of-security-in-pakistan-oped/>

Bangladesh crisis and its implications for Pakistan

Nomeen Kasi

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History is filled with many fatal uprisings and revolutions, each for different reasons, carrying different outcomes and lessons. The French Revolution shook the monarchs of Europe. Additionally, history is replete with anti-revolutionary movements and individuals like Klemens von Metternich of Austria, who aimed to uphold supremacy of monarchy and suppress revolutionary uprisings in Europe. Despite these efforts, revolutions have always prevailed and succeeded. Revolutions are like fire; they start with a small spark and then spread quickly, covering a large area, completely changing everything in their path. This is the nature of revolutions. They begin with a spark and spread quickly. A small uprising can transform into a revolution, completely changing the system. The recent uprising in Bangladesh is a perfect example. A protest the system led to the prime minister and government's overthrow.

Sheikh Hasina Wazed, the longest-standing prime minister of Bangladesh, confronted the protests from the student union. She is the daughter of Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rahman, who played a key role in the formation of Bangladesh in 1971. Initially, the anti-government protests began in July among university students. In the beginning, there were peaceful protests against the quota system in civil service jobs. Relatives of veterans from Bangladesh's 1971 independence war occupied one-third of these jobs. Although most of the demands were met, these peaceful protests turned into wider and more violent demonstrations. During the state's suppression, more than 300 individuals lost their lives in these uprisings.

According to the World Bank FY 2022-23), Bangladesh was one of the fastest-growing economies in South Asia the world, with a growth rate of 7.2% after the global pandemic. The GDP was growing positively, but the economic conditions of the people did not improve, and they were unable to produce the required jobs for around 18 million potential job seekers. The unemployment rate reached 5.1%. Additionally, there was a hike in inflation. As a result of this, students started their agitation, which later on turned violent and toppled the Hasina Regime, forcing her flee from her country.

Among quota issues, another reason for such unrest was the increasing corruption. The prime minister herself was facing corruption allegations in particular and the government officials at higher ranks in general. While protests were largely due to the quota system, several grievances had built up against the government officials due to corruption allegations, bribery, nepotism, and money laundering charges. As the violence grew, the situation became more unstable and out of control.

The recent events in Bangladesh have had a massive impact on the region. The neighboring countries, such as India and Pakistan, face the same challenges and unemployment issues; therefore, the youth can be easily instrumentalized and mobilized by the political actors for their personal economic and political gains. With increasing technological advancement and the role of social media, the public is more aware of the political and social flux than ever before. Youth today are politically more engaged and aware of the changing dynamics, therefore showing more involvement. Bangladesh students' uprising gives a sense of hope to the youth elsewhere, as they believe they can also bring about a change in the political arena and can be successful. The politicians of Pakistan today concentrate more on their youth followers, knowing the potential they carry. The political parties are trying to gain more youth support as the educated youth can create a sense of change. The unemployed, educated male youth have been historically the initiators of rebellions and uprisings.

Historically, Pakistani politics has been marked by student activism. Even before the partition of the subcontinent, educated male youth played a key role in the struggle for. After the partition, students participated in politics and were key actors in protests against the government. And with being with the emerging populist leaders. Such events in the neighborhood strengthen the Pakistani youth to stand against the political system and bad governance, which is alarming in the current political and security situations.

The issue arises when these students' ideologies are unclear, leading them to blindly follow any charismatic leader, failing to address core issues causing political chaos in the country. They fail to address or suggest any political or social reforms. One of the reasons for this could be a lack

of knowledge, exclusiveness, and less participation in students' unions. As a result, students fail to develop and understand the political and social fabric. They are blank in ideology. However, it is impossible to maintain a social and political vacuum for students. The questioning youth is taking a key interest in the situation and demands change. They are the future leaders; hence, they play a significant role in shaping society and the political arena.

To avoid such situations and pseudo-revolutions, engaging the youth in a positive and fruitful way is essential to make them an asset to the country rather than an unwanted, unmanageable political burden. Students' unions with negative mindsets need to be managed. The student unions based on ethnicities and sectarian basis are more volatile and deserve the attention of the state. For any positive change, they should be encouraged. These unions provide a platform for the youth to raise their voice and contribute to improving governance. Unfortunately, our ethnicity-based students' union has taken the wrong direction of closing the gates of the institutions, promoting propaganda without ascertaining the truth, and shouting against the perceived wrongdoers. With proper knowledge and guidance, youth can become an important asset to the country and a step towards change against corruption and bad governance. Pakistan can learn from Bangladesh's experience, such as promoting youth engagement in politics and addressing corruption and unemployment.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2024/10/01/bangladesh-crisis-and-its-implications-for-pakistan/>

India's Unregulated Defense Exports

Shahmeer

October 02, 2024

A recent report on the Indian manufactured ammunition entering Ukraine during the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war has again shifted attention on India's growing defense industry and its credibility in terms of compliance with international obligations on the export of military and dual-use items. India has long-maintained tradition of violating international legal and regulatory frameworks for its strategic ambitions.

India, the world's largest arms importer, is trying to boost its defense industry to become a leading arms exporter.

India has refused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) besides obtaining a Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) waiver, which has been utilized for bolstering military capabilities in nuclear domain. It also exports arms to Myanmar's military junta and had fueled the Sri Lankan civil war with weapon supplies in the past. And New Delhi is now involved in exporting artillery shells and other ammunition to Ukraine through European countries.

India, the world's largest arms importer, is trying to boost its defense industry to become a leading arms exporter. Indian defense market has seen robust growth in recent years. The value of defense production in the country stood at \$11.6 billion in 2018-19 and reached \$15.3 billion in 2023-24. New Delhi has set a defense production target of \$25 billion by 2025. However, no official Indian document enlists targeted interventions and strategies to boost defense production. There comes the most lingering question that can lead to strategic ambiguities: how can India continue the growth of its defense production?

India is increasing its defense production under the aegis of threat perception from China and Pakistan. Recently, India's Chief of Army Staff Manoj Pande said in a statement that renewed geopolitical tensions emphasize the need for reliable weapon supplies.

In addition to arms supplies to Indian army, New Delhi can export military equipment to the troubled regions or conflict zones primarily to Ukraine via European countries or the war-torn Middle East to boost its defense production. Commercially available customs records show that before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Indian defense export stood at \$2.8 million and

between February 2022 to July 2024 – during the Russian invasion of Ukraine – the figure increased significantly to \$135.25 million. Seeing India's growing ammunition exports to European states their net-user violations and increasing supply chains for Ukraine, Russian officials have raised the issue with India at least on two occasions.

Despite its poor nuclear safety and security record as well as expanding unregulated defense exports, India faces no pressure and criticism from the international community.

Similarly, several civil society groups, authors, activists, and lawyers have urged India in a press conference in New Delhi to stop arms export to Israel which is a direct violation of the Convention on Genocide signed and ratified in 1959. The speakers cited reports indicating that after Israel was accused of genocide by several international humanitarian aid organizations. However, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) and the Department of Defense Production repeatedly granted licenses to three companies — Munitions India Ltd, Premier Explosives Ltd, and Adani-Elbit Advance Systems India Ltd — to export arms and ammunition to Israel.

At the same time, several political leaders within India, including those from the opposition and Modi's allies, have urged the government to stop contributing to the heinous genocide of the Palestinian people perpetrated by Israel.

Despite its poor nuclear safety and security record as well as expanding unregulated defense exports, India faces no pressure and criticism from the international community. Given this, India is likely to continue its arms export primarily because of five reasons even if they do not meet the international criteria.

First, changing geopolitical situations on India's continental borders will force it to rely on internal supply sources to meet its strategic and security objectives. Second, new procurement of weapons will necessitate the replacement of nascent technologies with old obsolete equipment. Third, India's internal security threats and growing militancy, security of a very vast landmass, and policing purposes will demand reliable internal arms and ammunition supplies. Fourth, the urge to gain economic growth and Modi's Made in India initiative requires that defense production must grow by leaps and bounds. Fifth, higher investments in the arms manufacturing sector can make way for market competition and innovation that can again contribute to economic growth.

Most importantly, it will leverage its role in the US grand strategy against China as a 'net security provider' to bypass international pressure.

In short, India's growing unregulated arms exports have not only fueled war in Europe but also helped Israel cause a humanitarian crisis and a full-fledged genocide of the people of Palestine. New Delhi has also failed to ensure its credibility to comply with the international standards of arms export that reflect its ambitious mindset and the culture of realpolitik that respects no international standards, human dignity, or global peace, but power pursuit at the cost of others.

<https://stratheia.com/indias-unregulated-defense-exports/>

The JKIA Deal: A Boon or Bane for Kenya?

Shehzadi Irum

October 3, 2024

Kenya has experienced significant unrest throughout the year, largely driven by the government's economic policies, which have sparked protests and unrest, as they have disproportionately affected the poorest segments of society, increasing the burden on already strained households.

Recently, Kenya has seen a new round of protests at Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA)—one of Africa's busiest airports, that have infuriated Kenyans and sent the country's aviation workers on strike, causing cancellations and delays in flights and stranding hundreds of passengers. The workers turned down the deal that was struck between the Kenyan government and Adani Group (one of India's most politically influential conglomerates), owned by Gautam Adani. In this deal, the Kenyan government planned to lease the country's main international airport to the Adani group.

According to a report by the Financial Times Adani's \$1.85 billion proposal includes constructing and renovating airport infrastructure, adding a second runway, modernizing the passenger terminal, and potentially enhancing its taxiways. As a swap, Adani would secure the rights to operate the airport for 30 years. After 30 years, Adani will own around 20 Percent equity share in the airport.

Adani has diverse interests in several publicly listed companies in sectors such as airports and ports, power generation, as well as coal and gas trading. He also enjoys strong ties with India's ruling party, including their Prime Minister Narendra Modi. However, in recent years, Adani's company has faced several high-profile scandals, including accusations of fraud and insider trading. Thus, this opinion piece aims to examine the strategy behind Adani's JKIA deal and explore whether this agreement constitutes a boon or bane for Kenya.

The JKIA is Kenya's largest airport, which handled nearly 10 million passengers and 400,000 tonnes of cargo in 2022-2023, this airport allegedly suffers from frequent power outages and leaking roofs, and its infrastructure urgently needs an upgrade. Consequently, Nairobi awarded a contract to the Adani group for necessary upgrades. Workers, however, are opposing the plan strongly, expressing concerns that the Adani acquisition of JKIA would lead to job losses and worsen the employment conditions for those who will remain. Besides, the few Kenyans who will

be retained may be bound to accept “inferior terms and conditions of service” which will be more favorable to Adani.

There is a strong possibility that Adani Group may use various pretexts to evict Kenyans and hire other workers on its preferred terms, who will inevitably be from India. Other critics argue that the takeover would deprive taxpayers of future profits from the airport, which generates over 5 percent of Kenya’s gross domestic product (GDP) through its freight and passenger fees. For that reason, there is a strong worker outcry. They have vehemently denounced the deal, and their anger shows no signs of easing. They stated, “Adani must go. This is not something we can afford “.

On the flip side, Kenya’s government is defending this agreement. The government said the JKIA is operating above capacity and needs modernizing, but it is not for sale. According to Kenyan government officials, JKIA was a “shame to the nation” and emphasized the urgent need for renovations. They also underlined that” to draw more tourists to our country, we need airports like those in other developed economies.” However, Kenya’s high court is thinking differently. They have suspended the proposed deal and prohibited further implementation of the agreement. The agreement will now undergo a judicial review and the petition against it has been filed by two parties: The Law Soieites of Kenyaghtthe money needed for the airport’s upgrade could be raised independently and there is no need to lease the facility in any way.

If this agreement is scrutinized carefully, it becomes clear that the JKIA deal may prove a bane to Kenya’s economic growth and development. It also becomes apparent that entering into a partnership with an investment group that has a history of serious allegations of fraud would be equivalent to pushing Kenya further back. There is a high likelihood that this agreement will turn out to be a lose-lose situation, that will have devastating consequences for Kenya’s economy, and its effects will be felt for a long time.

So we are justified in understating that this agreement indicates a misstep by the Kenyan government, creating an impression that Kenya is just a few steps away from heading towards destruction. In the end, the agreement’s implications are alarming, and one can’t help but wonder if the Kenyan government has considered the long-term consequences of its plans.

<https://www.wqi.world/the-jkia-deal-a-boon-or-bane-for-kenya>

Questioning the Anti-Nuclear Criticism in Pakistan

Atta Ullah

October 03, 2024

In Pakistan, some intellectuals have openly criticized the country's nuclear program for various reasons. The critique has also entered into the debate for some time. The arguments lack logic and rationality and are based on unfounded grounds. Traditionally, the criticism against nuclear weapons has often been based on the exaggeration of unfounded "fears about humanity bringing its extinction" with nuclear weapons, among other associated risks.

This criticism has existed since the Manhattan Project and has largely been by idealistic physicists disconnected from the ground realities. Most physicists, including some in Pakistan, only focus on the technical aspects and the scale of destruction these weapons pose. However, these tech experts do not consider the zero-sum political dynamics, and the interests of states, in driving their security interests and survival. Moreover, they also ignore the political value and psychological deterrent effect of these weapons. They fear using these weapons in extreme conditions, which every country defines by considering its security interests. However, they ignore the fact that the greatest usefulness of nuclear weapons lies in their not being used.

Conversely, the critique has also come up with more criticism in continuation of traditional propaganda against Pakistan's nuclear weapons program.

In August 2024, a research paper titled "The Limits of Anti-Nuclear Critique in Pakistan", was published in the *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*. The authors of the paper aim to 'strengthen' the nuclear disarmament movements by highlighting the limitations of anti-nuclear critique. They criticize the idea of nuclear risk reduction and co-existence with nuclear weapons as "dangerous thinking", arguing that 'real safety' can only come from the "total elimination of nuclear weapons". However, they do not provide answers as to who will achieve this and why. Throughout the paper, the authors in a self-explanatory fashion oppose the binary oppositions associated with nuclear weapons as 'safe and unsafe'. Paradoxically, they end up favoring a non-possession of nuclear weapons instead of their possession, creating a contradiction in their argument.

Their article links the few social movements occurring in Pakistan as a critique of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, even though these movements may not be related to Pakistan's nuclear weapons or its strategies vis-à-vis its adversary. The argument seems illogical and

unconvincing, and it appears to be a continuation of traditional rhetoric against Pakistan's nuclear weapons program disguised as a critique.

The authors use the term 'Arms beast' to refer to an arms race caused by Pakistan in South Asia, without giving a second thought to precisely what constitutes an arms race. Does an arms race involve excessive production of fissile material? Does it involve the conversion of all this material into warheads? If so, what size or yield of warheads are involved? Will all of them be deployed and ready to use, or will some be disassembled and de-mated, only holding symbolic value rather than being operationalized? The authors fail to specify at what point it becomes an arms race, or when it should be referred to as an 'arms walk', and at what stage this 'walk' transforms into a race. Because these factors are subject to utmost secrecy and never known to outsiders, even within the system only a handful of people are entrusted with confidential aspects of a nuclear arsenal. Most of the facts and figures about nuclear weapons, and related developments, are based on estimates, rather imperfect guesses, that lack authenticity. How do these authors claim and call it a nuclear arms race in South Asia, or especially caused by Pakistan, remains unjustified?

The authors argue that the security experts' support is based on 'social learning', but they overlook the fact that they also may have been influenced by a biased tendency towards nuclear disarmament. The authors claim to have a critique of "Intellectuals and social critics committed to disarmament", however, fail to present a successful case of nuclear disarmament between nuclear adversaries. They also fail to outline a systematic process for arms control, arms limitation, arms reduction, and other mutual measures leading toward disarmament, which has not yet occurred among any nuclear adversaries. Furthermore, they do not differentiate between forced disarmament and voluntary disarmament. Forced disarmament would involve eliminating a country's entire nuclear arsenal through the use of force, a step no country has been willing to take due to fears that the target country may use them, rather than lose them. On the other hand, voluntary disarmament or abandonment of nuclear weapons has not resulted in the promised benefits, as seen in the case of Ukraine, which abandoned its nuclear weapons only to encounter ongoing conflict and devastation.

Similarly, the criticism is generally based on the notion that these weapons are "inherently dangerous, risky, and evil". The critique does not accept any justification for risk reduction and fail-safe mechanisms that may prevent or mitigate such a scenario. As per this critique, total elimination of these weapons is the safest alternative possible!

In the case of Pakistan, there has been criticism of the economic cost of the nuclear program, military control of the weapons arsenal, and nuclear safety and security concerns. However, the latter concerns have not been fully substantiated. Questions about technical and operational management, particularly of tactical weapons and sea-based submarines, as well as the possibility of extremist ideologies posing internal threats, and the risk of these weapons falling into the hands of terrorist organizations, simply remain unjustified. It seems this criticism is simply a continuation of Western narratives against Pakistan's nuclear weapons program. Moreover, even the critique presented by these authors, intentionally or unintentionally, seems to serve the same agenda as that of a few anti-nuclear activists pushing for nuclear disarmament in Pakistan.

On the economic cost of Pakistan's nuclear program, the critique fails to mention that Pakistan's main objective of obtaining nuclear weapons was to avoid economically ruinous large-scale wars and deter external aggression. This would ultimately lead towards economic development and divert focus from wars to national development. Although, the latter goal has not been realized yet. But for the former case on the economic cost of a nuclear weapons program, it would be easier to understand by using Ukrainian losses in the ongoing conflict as a point of reference. A report, for instance, published by the World Bank within a few months of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, estimated the scale of destruction and suggested that the cost of reconstruction could be well between \$300 to \$500 billion, and could reach \$1 trillion in case war continues: which continues to the day. In its update, as of December 2023, the report places the cost of reconstruction at around \$486 Billion, which is much more than Pakistan's total GDP at around \$345 Billion as of 2024. This is again for a war limited to eastern parts of Ukraine, on merely some 25-30 % of its territory. Pakistan may have hardly invested a fraction of this amount in its nuclear weapons arsenal which deters large-scale war and destruction. If it has been, rather it is, able to avoid the above level of destruction from full-scale wars, the investment has been worth it.

On the safety and security of nuclear facilities, the authors fail to mention one of the worst nuclear disasters that took place in Japan, in 2011 called the Fukushima Disaster, which is not a nuclear weapons state. The power plant was used for electricity generation. Presently, there are some 440 nuclear plants run by around 32 countries. Why are the safety and security concerns directed only against Pakistan, but not the remaining ones? Do the critics ignore and oppose the peaceful use of nuclear technology? Or don't they think the nuclear plants used for power generation also pose similar risks to safety and security in more than 32 countries?

Likewise, the Physicist may technically draw the silver line by separating the peaceful uses of technology from Weaponization but fail to realize that it is politics that drives scientific innovation.

Technology/strategy always remains subservient to politics. Additionally, the political and security interests of countries that blur the line between peaceful uses of nuclear technology from its Weaponization are dictated by the political interest of major players in international politics, not by isolated cases of idealism and imagination of a few physicists. For instance, the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty(NPT), in its article 4, says that it is 'the right of member countries to pursue peaceful uses of nuclear technology', but fails to prevent countries, including its former member North Korea and non-members such as India, from deviating nuclear technology from peaceful uses towards weaponization. In this treaty, it is the politics, not the physics that fails to explain the Western opposition to even Iran's peaceful nuclear program, which it being a member of NPT has the right to pursue. The critics fail to realize that it is politics, rather than physics, that fails to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It is also politics, not physics, that designates certain countries as legitimate nuclear weapons states while others are labeled as non-nuclear weapons states, despite the equally destructive potential of the weapons possessed by both sets of countries.

In summary, both the critics in general and the authors of the article above-mentioned, have tried to come up with a critique out of the limits of another critique, but ultimately ended up supporting anti-nuclear narratives in Pakistan. Their critique of the 'limits of critique' has its own limitations and sometimes devolves into a criticism, without logical grounds. It is puzzling why these authors seek to create an anti-nuclear movement in Pakistan while overlooking countries like India and others that possess and modernize nuclear weapons. Additionally, they attempt to link such movements to strengthening the "anti-nuclear critique" for nuclear disarmament, despite the absence of evidence of nuclear disarmament among nuclear weapons states. These authors appear to be anti-nuclear activists without realizing the value of nuclear deterrence and its significance in deterring potential adversaries.

<https://www.wgi.world/questioning-the-anti-nuclear-criticism-in-pakistan/>

Echoes of Authoritarianism: Modi's Assault on Democratic Values

Summra Hamid

October 04, 2024

In the landscape of contemporary Indian politics, a significant transformation is underway, one that merits urgent attention and reflection. The current prime minister of India, Narendra Modi's leadership, once seen as a beacon of hope and reform, has increasingly started resembling authoritarianism, jeopardizing the foundational tenets of democracy. This opinion piece digs into the dangers posed by Modi's regime and the implications for the Indian society as a whole.

Modi's ascent to power has been marked by the construction of a robust cult of personality, akin to the propaganda strategies employed by authoritarian regimes throughout history. Much like Leni Riefenstahl's work, Modi's administration leverages filmmakers such as Vivek Agnihotri and Sudipto Sen, movies like "The Kashmir Files" (2022), "The Kerala Story," (2023) and the vaccine war to disseminate a narrative that glorifies the Prime Minister are a few examples. There is a relationship of convenience between Bollywood and the Indian government. In recent times, movies dealing with Polarizing contemporary political issues like "The Tashkent Files" (2019) and "72 Hoorain" (2023) have become a trend. These movies evidently modeled themselves as campaign runners for the 2024 general elections for the BJP and allies. Propaganda films are, thus, mobilizing Indian voters, especially the youth, toward voting for vested political interests. This narrative often glosses over critical issues, presenting a sanitized version of reality that paints Modi as an infallible leader.

State-sponsored awards and accolades create an environment where loyalty is rewarded, and dissent is punished. The distribution of national honors in India has, at times, appeared to favor individuals and works that align with the government's narratives. For example, films promoting initiatives like the National Film Awards which promotes Modi's narratives of anti-Muslimism and anti-Pakistani sentiments, highlighting a preference for projects that echo the government's policies. Similarly, the Padma Awards have occasionally been granted to individuals who support or publicly praise Modi's leadership like Kangana Ranaut, Adnan Sami and Mithun Chakraborty, suggesting a political dimension to the selection process. Cultural and literary awards have also been given to authors and artists such as Prasoon Joshi lyricist and writer and Anupam Kher with multiple projects aligning with the government's vision or promotes its achievements. Filmmakers

and artists who align with the regime enjoy privileges, while those who dare to criticize face social and professional repercussions. This approach not only stifles freedom of expression but also fosters a culture of fear among creatives, leading to self-censorship and the deterioration of artistic integrity. The systematic silence of dissenting voices is alarming. Social media platforms have become battlegrounds for free expression, where critiques of the government are often met with aggressive censorship. The removal of the “Bolta Hindustan” YouTube channel and the suspension of accounts associated with farmers’ protests highlight the regime’s intent to quash any form of opposition. By blocking critical voices, the government creates an echo chamber that distorts public perception, undermining the very essence of democratic dialogue. This environment of fear is exacerbated by the treatment of journalists and activists who challenge the government’s narratives. During the 2021 farmers’ protests, journalists like Rajdeep Sardesai and Siddharth Varadarajan faced sedition charges and accusations of promoting communal disharmony for their coverage. The Caravan magazine also encountered multiple sedition cases for its reporting on sensitive issues, including the protests. Additionally, Karnataka’s Power TV faced raids and legal actions after airing stories alleging corruption by local politicians, highlighting growing pressures on media freedom in India. Individuals like journalist Rana Ayub, Arfa Khanum Sherwani and singer Neha Singh Rathod have also faced vitriol and threats online, a chilling reminder of the risks associated with dissent. This suppression not only undermines democratic ideals but also fosters an environment where citizens are afraid to speak out, inhibiting public discourse.

A hallmark of authoritarian regimes is the systematic infiltration and control of independent institutions. Under Modi, once-proud pillars of democracy, such as the judiciary and the Election Commission, have increasingly come under the influence of the ruling party. The 2019 Ayodhya verdict, favoring Hindu parties, was seen by some as influenced by the ruling party’s agenda. Concerns have also been raised about the arbitrary use of sedition laws against journalists and activists, with inconsistent judicial responses undermining free speech. The delay in hearing petitions on electoral bonds, which allegedly benefit the ruling party, has raised questions about transparency. Additionally, the prolonged detention of activists in the Bhima Koregaon case and allegations of political interference in judicial appointments have further fueled concerns about judicial independence. In addition to these examples, the elevation of Jay Shah to the head of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is emblematic of a broader trend where merit is

secondary to loyalty. This shift creates a homogenous environment that dismisses dissenting opinions and expertise, leading to governance that prioritizes allegiance over competence. The ramifications of this trend are profound, as independent institutions are critical for ensuring checks and balances in a democratic society, and compromises on such lawful bodies will lead to corruption resultantly leading to increased crime rate in India. Modi's economic policies, often branded as necessary reforms, have disproportionately favored a select few neglecting the broader population. The close ties between the Modi administration and crony capitalists like Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani raise ethical concerns about governance. Critics argue that Modi's policies are designed to enrich a handful of industrialists, exacerbating economic disparities and undermining the principle of equitable development. Furthermore, the term "Modinomics" has emerged to describe Modi's economic approach, characterized by policies that prioritize corporate interests over the welfare of the common citizen. This focus on crony capitalism fosters resentment among marginalized communities, exacerbating existing social divisions. Moreover, it distracts citizens from pressing economic issues, such as unemployment and inflation, which remain significant challenges for the country.

In a democracy, unity in diversity is essential for progress. However, the current atmosphere in India encourages division, making it difficult for communities to engage in constructive dialogue. This fragmentation threatens the stability of their nation, as citizens become increasingly isolated in their beliefs, perpetuating a cycle of polarization. As India grapples with these profound challenges, it is imperative for citizens to recognize the threat posed by Modi's authoritarian tendencies. While some may argue that a strong leader is necessary for progress, history teaches us that unchecked power leads to the erosion of democratic values and intensified corruption. It is crucial for citizens to demand accountability, transparency, and adherence to the principles that uphold the democratic foundation of this great nation. The fight for democracy in India is not merely a political struggle; it is a moral imperative. Citizens must rise to protect their rights, uphold the Constitution, and defend the institutions that safeguard democracy. A collective effort is needed to reclaim the democratic space that is increasingly under threat, ensuring that India remains a vibrant, inclusive society.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2024/10/04/echoes-of-authoritarianism-modis-assault-on-democratic-values>

Asia-Pacific Go to Partner: China or USA?

Nomeen Kassi

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The USA is shifting its focus from the Middle East to the Asian region. This is mainly to neutralize the threat of rising China. With treaties and partnerships like QUAD and AUKUS, the USA is determined to curtail or minimize China's influence over the region.

The rising China has been perceived as a major threat and a challenge for a long time. This is evident in the U.S. intelligence community's 2022 Annual Threat Assessment Report which revolves around China's pursuit of global influence and regional preeminence. The report also predicts China doubling its nuclear stockpile in the coming 10 years. The recent Quad summit held on 21 September 2024, is again ringing bells. However, China has always answered proportionately as its economy threatens US hegemony., portraying a soft image compared to the USA's hard power.

The intertwined economic, diplomatic, and security interests in the Asian region catch the interest of the USA. It is mainly because of China's influence and presence in the region. Thereby, The U.S. has a variety of interests at stake in the region. The USA believes that China's actions can send ripples throughout the region, resulting in challenging the US hegemony. However, it's not a mere assumption. China is economically powerful enough to control and dominate the region and the globe. China became an economic giant in a very short time.

There is a gradual shift in U.S. foreign policy in Asia due to the increased geopolitical volatility, revolving around economic and security concerns. The renewed policy lines, mainly during President Obama's tenure, underline US regional interest. The Obama administration also gave the policy of 'pivot to the Asia-Pacific'. It strengthens diplomatic and economic alliances in the region. regardless, it is still criticized for being unable to deter China. Consequently, China initiated the 'Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)' as a response. Through BRI, China increases its diplomatic, economic, military, and technological presence over a large area. It is an ambiguous plan of China to develop two new trade routes that connect China with the rest of the world, aiding in creating an expanded, interdependent market for China. It will create the right conditions for China to increase its economic strength and establish a technology economy.

The USA sees BRI as "an aggressive attempt by China to expand its economic power globally". In contrast, the USA started focusing on foreign partnerships in the region that mainly revolved around security. The purpose of these partnerships is to curtail China's growth and ensure US

presence in the region. QUAD is one of the major examples. Initially, it originated after the December 2004 Indo-Pacific tsunami. But partnership has got more to it. It strengthens relations with Japan, India, Australia, and USA. Scholars believe that the Japan and U.S. alliance is “one of the region’s most important military relationships”, with 8 military facilities and more than 60,000 troops stationed there. The two remain the strongest allies and trading partners and also conduct maritime activities in the disputed territories.

It is evident that the USA is increasing its naval and military presence through activities in the region to surround China. Australia is also a defense ally that supports these activities. These activities include freedom of navigation operations. Similarly, in September 2021, the USA announced a new security partnership with Australia and the UK called AUKUS. It provides Australia with nuclear-powered submarines. It increases Australia’s military capabilities. Patricia O’Brien, an adjunct professor at Georgetown University, believes that the US is forming a global web of security arrangements that aims to combat China’s rapid and massive Global expansion. The US also formed a “Five Eyes Alliance” with the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. It is an intelligence-sharing network that focuses on the exchange of information regarding China’s foreign activities.

The recent QUAD Summit 2024 held on 21 September sparked the debate again. At the summit, the leaders reaffirmed their commitment to deepening cooperation in a joint statement. They also presented a quad vision statement for the first time. Although the Australian Department of Foreign Relations and Trade has said the nature of this partnership is diplomatic and not security, it doesn’t seem so. China sees the alliance as a ‘cold-war mentality’

Kurt Tong at the Center for Strategic and International Studies suggests that the USA should focus more on collaboration with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Economic ties can be a more useful and successful approach to counter China. It would help the US become a ‘go-to partner’ for the region, a model followed by China. The increased coordination between the US and the regional countries will have more impact on China and might force it to change its trade policies.

China possesses a soft power image while the USA portrays a hard power mechanism. China’s soft image makes it a more approachable partner for third-world countries like Pakistan. The relationship between Pakistan and the U.S. can be defined as ‘friends in need’ or strategic partners. While Pakistan’s relations with China mostly remain friendly. President Pervez Musharraf referred to China as a ‘time-tested and all-weather’ friend of Pakistan. One can argue that the USA needs to change its harsh and military approach to counter China. U.S. hard power

forces state to act in a way different from one's usual behavior, and thereby it's done involuntarily. However, the soft power used by China soft switches one's attitude in a way that their acts change voluntarily from their usual behavior, thus making China a preferred friend.

<https://www.wgi.world/asia-pacific-go-to-partner-china-or-usa/>

Looming Risk of Nuclear War

Sher Ali

October 16, 2024

The risk of nuclear war is hanging over the world as geopolitical tensions escalate. Nuclear threats are at their highest level in decades with potential flashpoints. The nuclear-armed states have increased their reliance on nuclear weapons and its relevance has ever increased. This concerning trend, particularly, in volatile regions where territorial disputes and military posturing have heightened the risk of nuclear escalation. The strained relationships between the United States and Russia amidst the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, escalating tensions between Israel and Iran, and North Korea's persistent nuclear threat create a precarious global landscape.

The escalating tensions in the Middle East significantly affect the region's security landscape. Iran and Israel are inching ever closer to a full-scale war and the region nearly took a nuclear turn after it launched a barrage ballistic missile attack on Israel on October 1. This may come to be seen as a decisive turning point as Israel is considering attacking Iran's nuclear facilities while Iran could gear up its nuclear building activities. Iran has already warned it could change its nuclear doctrine if its nuclear facilities are targeted, especially after the failure of the nuclear deal between Iran and the US-led world powers. Such a development would fundamentally change the security landscape of the Middle East. Israel initially hinted at attacking Iran's nuclear facilities in response to Tehran's ballistic missile attack, a target the country has long-eyed. However, it now appears to have cancelled such a plan amid rumours of Iran conducting its first-ever nuclear bomb test. It may be due to its strategic calculations of hardening Iranian resolve to acquire nuclear weapons while also not destroying permanently its capability to achieve that goal. This is something—that can be called Iran's threshold nuclear challenge for Israel and the US. The current situation in the Middle East represents a critical juncture in the region's geopolitics, with the potential to escalate into a nuclear crisis.

Nuclear tensions also keep rising in the Korean Peninsula. In his latest statement, North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un threatened to use nuclear weapons "without hesitation" if his country is attacked by South Korea and the United States. North Korea has designated South Korea as its main adversary and vows to annihilate it for taking sides with the US to threaten its national survival and regime survival. The Kim regime has issued similar threats to use nuclear weapons multiple times. This latest warning came amid the signing of joint nuclear deterrence guidelines between the United States and South Korea in July this year in a bid to ensure an efficient

response to DPRK's evolving nuclear threats. Also, there have been calls for nuclear weapons in South Korea to protect against its neighbour—North Korea.

The ongoing Russia-Ukraine war has significantly impacted Russia's nuclear doctrine. The conventionally stronger and technologically advanced country—Russia is increasing its dependence on nuclear. The Ukraine war has already entered a dangerous phase with Russia changing its nuclear doctrine. Under the updated doctrine, Russia would consider a nuclear strike in response to any nation's conventional attack on Russia that is supported by a nuclear power would be perceived as a joint attack and bringing Belarus under its nuclear umbrella. The new doctrine is a warning to the West over its support of Ukraine against Russia and Moscow's strategy to rely more on nuclear weapons to prevent Western support for Ukraine.

The world stands on the brink of nuclear conflict due to rising tensions between nuclear-armed countries. Although nuclear deterrence has played a central role in preventing direct conflict between nuclear-armed countries, as the catastrophic consequences of a nuclear exchange serve as a powerful disincentive to launch an attack. However, nuclear proliferation for geopolitical goals and attempts to create strategic imbalances are intensifying threat perceptions and the arms race, in turn.

The lack of cooperation between the major powers amidst the increasing geopolitical contestations and their support and exemptions to a few states have added to the complexity of the situation. Emerging technologies are also impacting the security domain. The utilization of new and emerging technologies for military superiority and dominance on the battlefield is fuelling new global and regional arms races. It also increases the risks of misunderstanding and miscalculations, thus increasing the nuclear risks.

<https://www.nation.com.pk/16-Oct-2024/looming-risk-of-nuclear-war>

AI, Autonomy, and Arms Race: The Evolving Role of Autonomous Weapons

Shahmeer

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Technological advancement has brought unprecedented change in every sphere of human life. The military domain is no exception, with militaries worldwide increasingly engaged in reaping from technological development for strategic and tactical advantages on the battlefield. Worldwide, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Army are developing weapons that can operate autonomously. Fully Autonomous Weapons. What has been called `autonomy` in weapon systems is fast emerging. Weapons are gradually designed to function autonomously and reduce the role of humans. The world has already witnessed the deployment of these weapons on the battlefield. In recent years, from the deployment of a Turkish autonomous attack drone in Libya to AI-powered drones by Ukraine and Russia to the use of Israel's Lavendar' and 'Gospel' systems in Ghaza, LAWs are already on the battleground. This emerging autonomy on the battlefield has raised concerns over its role in warfare.

Peter Asro, spokesperson for the `Campaign to Stop Killer Robots` defines Autonomous weapons as "any system capable of targeting and initiating the use of potentially lethal force without direct human supervision and direct human involvement in lethal decision making". Human-in-the-loop weapons are those machines which are capable of selecting targets and using force only with human command. Human-on-the-loop weapons are described as machines capable of selecting targets and using force under the control of human operators which can override the machine`s actions. These two categories are considered semi-autonomous weapons systems. Another category is fully autonomous weapons in which human are out of the loop. It is important to note that semi-autonomous weapons can be transformed into autonomous weapons systems given their capability to function autonomously.

Militaries across the globe are rapidly progressing and engaged in a race for dominance in military technologies, including autonomous weapons. Notably, the United States, China, and Russia are leading this technology, along with other countries such as India, Turkey, and South Korea. In recent years, Russia has made significant strides in military technologies, also focusing on increasing the level of autonomy in its weapon systems and decision-making. Russia has invested heavily in the design and application of robotic systems which also includes unmanned aerial

vehicles. In the ongoing war, Russia and Ukraine have reportedly used AI-powered drones which can kill without sight.

The US Department of Defence `Unmanned Systems Roadmap: 2007-2032` reveals that the US is seeking to develop more and more autonomous weapons systems. The Pentagon's recently announced Replicator initiative intends to develop and deploy thousands of LAWS in the military domain in the next few years. The US Navy has already shown an uncrewed gunboat attacking a fake enemy target using live rockets – without direction from a human operator. During military exercises with Cambodia last month, the Chinese army demonstrated the gun-equipped robot dog. China has also developed a new type of war drone which is capable of swiftly multiplying midair. India is also stepping into the race. The Indian army's forces are inducting swarm drone systems that are said to be operating in tandem with ground forces that can provide significant offensive and defensive edge in the battlefield and warfare. New Delhi has also introduced the Drishti-10 Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV).

AI-equipped LAWS have been central to the national security strategies of many states due to their increased precision, minimum risk, cost efficiency, and operational flexibility. Featured by modern suits and sophisticated computer algorithms, can operate independently and autonomously. States are increasingly involved in integrating autonomous features into weapon systems. Particularly major powers are investing in these technologies and developing autonomous systems. The incorporation of LAWs in national security strategies and their use in warfare comes with genuine risks. It increases the pace and tempo of warfare, a process called 'battlefield singularity'. It can also heighten the potential of erratic launches, and false alarms and manipulate the early warning systems. The capability of the use of lethal force and autonomy can redefine international relations and cause a tectonic shift in geopolitics. Seeing its precision and pace, it has made nuclear weapons vulnerable by forcing states to pre-delegate to avoid decapitation in times of crisis escalation. The vertical and horizontal proliferation of LAWs is also hard to control, resulting in an arms race, strategic instability and technological disparities. Additionally, LAWs can create risks including miscalculations, malfunction, accidents, and near-misses, thus increasing the risk of nuclear war.

Given their risk perception, the UN has declared them politically unacceptable and morally repugnant and called for a legally binding instrument for their prohibition and restriction in tandem with their development for peaceful applications. Although states call for a ban on LAWs and legal

actions and support global efforts, seizing the upper hand across fields including AI and autonomous weapons is undermining these efforts. For instance, the Indian normative stance on LAWs is highly duplicitous while advocating for the prohibition and regulation of LAWs on the one hand, and while highly investing in autonomous weapons on the other. The same is the case for the US for which lethal autonomy is central to its current national defense strategy.

In future, there would be a serious risk of deploying these weapons without human control. The next decade will witness more heated competition as both powers plan to allocate more funds for autonomous weapons. Therefore, lethal autonomous weapons systems would have a revolutionary impact on warfare in the coming years. The use of LAWs presents a worrying trend that can change the way wars are fought and cause instability and tensions. The need of the hour is to initiate legally binding multilateral instruments on the prohibition and regulations of the like AI, Drones, killer robots etc. Amid intensified geopolitical tensions, it is highly indispensable that the laws be used in compliance with international humanitarian law. Future treaties should focus on the human role. If not, the development, deployment and proliferation of the LAWs will undermine international security.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2024/10/19/ai-autonomy-and-arms-race-the-evolving-role-of-autonomous-weapons/>

Conflict Escalation and Risk Reduction between Nuclear Rivals

Zafar Khan

October 20, 2024

The contemporary world with nine states having nuclear weapons and sophisticated delivery systems is becoming more dangerous than the Cold War period between the US and the Soviet Union. There is a consistent drive for both conventional and nuclear force modernization including that of the acquisition of emerging technologies – speed, remote sensing, quantum computing, precision guided munitions, lethal autonomous weapons and many more – by the leading powers.

The Ukraine-Russia war, the power struggle between the US and China in the South and the East China Seas, the 2017 Chinese and Indian conflict in Doklam, the Balakot incident between India and Pakistan in 2019, the misfiring of India's BrahMos missile in Pakistan in March 2022, and the increasing escalatory tension in the Middle East due to Israel-Gaza war dragging Iran and the US into conflict are some of dangerous episodes that is risking the conflict escalation from military to a nuclear level.

The world continues to be in flux. Many countries without nuclear weapons are worried about their security and ultimate survival. Some of them even question the US security guarantees both in Europe and the East Asian region. Will any state sacrifice its capital by guaranteeing the security of others' capitals? Just as the US and the Soviet Union came very close to use nuclear weapons against each other during the Cuban Missile crisis in 1962, the risk of conflict escalation both during the peace and crisis time is potentially increasing by miscalculation, temptation for preemptive strikes, power struggle, and escalation dominance between the rivals. Therefore, the strategic environment of the contemporary world is becoming more complex, nasty and brutish.

From Bernard Brodie, Herman Kahn, Thomas Schelling, and Robert Jervis to the more contemporary scholars, all agree with the central argument on conflict escalation that any serious conflict between the potential rivals can escalate from the lower to the higher rung of the ladder. To put it more seriously, the Herman Kahn 44 rungs of the ladder can even quickly be bypassed into just a few rungs before the miscalculation for nuclear use between the rivals.

Although there are lots of incidents that occurred between the nuclear rivals during the peace time, it is important to mention a few of these that could have created potential risk of escalation from military to nuclear level. 1) the Goldsboro incident, North Carolina of 1961 when the US bomber B-52 carrying two hydrogen bombs crashed, 2) The NORAND incident of 1979 creating

a technical glitch in one of the computers, sending off false alarms to the US Strategic Air Command as if the Soviet Union had launched SLBM nuclear strikes, and 3) the North Dakota incident in 2007 where the US accidentally mounted six nuclear weapons on the strategic bomber B-52 that flew for 36 in the air. An American professor on nuclear studies, Scott D Sagan, argues that “no system to prevent accidents is perfect; incidents of some sort are bound to happen”.

Conflict escalation to a dangerous level may occur when there is little strategic communication. Rivals do not talk to each other. They tend to increase and modernize their deterrent forces. They get involved in proxies to contain each other. They often come up with nuclear saber rattling. Hotlines are disregarded. Leaders of rival states do not often interact with each other despite the call for invitation. Military and nuclear exercises are carried out without informing the adversary, creating scenarios for mistrust and miscalculation. They become irrational actors while demonstrating the absence of strategic patience and restraint. Today, one may closely observe these ingredients in Europe, East Asia, and the Middle East region. South Asia is no exception to this.

Unlike other nuclear flash points, South Asia may become more dangerous for a conflict escalation. As mentioned, the South Asian region has already experienced many wars, border skirmishes and more recently the Balakot incident and the misfiring of India’s BrahMos missile into Pakistan. It is India that has been disregarding the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) between the two states, ignoring the hotline mechanism in the event of crisis, developing a temptation for preemptive strikes, misfiring missiles for testing the resolve of Pakistan, modernizing and increasing its conventional and nuclear forces, considering shifts in its military and nuclear doctrinal postures, and potentially dragging Pakistan into a dangerous arms race that Pakistan may not desire.

There is no sign that India will put restraint on its deterrence force modernization. It keeps its own regional aspirations. Following up the Kautilyan aspirations, New Delhi calls the Indian Ocean as India’s Ocean. Recently, it has rejected the Japanese call for NATO type security guarantee in Asia. New Delhi follows an Act East policy. Interestingly, it has an increasing strategic partnership with the US, but at the same time it acquires S-400 and develops hypersonic BrahMos with Russia. India also buys Rafale aircrafts from France. More interestingly, on the one hand, India retains strategic partnership with Israel by acquiring new technologies especially developing its ballistic missile defense system, but at the same time it holds geopolitical relations with the Iranians. Yet, it continues to hold better relations with the perceived rivals of Iran in the Middle Eastern region.

Such geopolitical and deterrent force development favoring India creates a security dilemma thereby decreasing the security of Pakistan. Pakistan in turn will have two options: One, it may go for parity, which may become expensive that Pakistan cannot. Two, to retain strategic balance to potentially deter its adversary that Pakistan must.

In the absence of strategic balance in South Asia, the risk of escalation between Pakistan and India increases. That being noted, strategic balance contributes to the broader strategic stability in South Asia, which in turn reduces the risk of escalation. In addition to retaining strategic balance, there can be a number of CBMs and nuclear CBMs between India and Pakistan to reduce the risk of escalation. However, the good news is that nuclear deterrence is in place in South Asia despite the dangers of escalation. Neither side has fought direct wars since the arrival of nuclear weapons in South Asia. Pakistan and India exchange the list of nuclear installations and facilities on the first January of every year since the ratification of this agreement in 1991. This agreement says that the South Asian rivals would not attack each other's nuclear facilities.

Both the rivals have been practicing nuclear moratorium. However, if India tests again, Pakistan may have an option to follow suit. Since 2005, both sides had an agreement that they would notify each other in advance before carrying out missile tests. Unfortunately, India did not immediately notify after misfiring its missile in March 2022. India rejected Pakistan's proposal in the early 1970s for creating the South Asian Nuclear Free Zone. Also, it declined the creation of the strategic restraint regime Pakistan proposed in 1998.

The contemporary challenges to nuclear deterrence for all nuclear-weapon states – safety and security of nuclear-related materials, terrorism, the threat of the use of chemical/biological weapons, cyber, and sophisticated emerging technologies – may undermine the very essence of nuclear deterrence if not totally make nuclear weapons irrelevant in terms of war prevention dynamics.

Managing and/or preventing these challenges may require different types of counter strategies without potentially risking entangled escalation. Along with the principles of nuclear deterrence, each of these emerging challenges may require specific countermeasures. In other words, rather than relying merely on the Cold War type strategies, nuclear-weapon states need to confront the contemporary challenges by exercising a different combination of deterrence strategies without getting into a “commitment trap” as part of broader nuclear responsibility.

Besides, there is an urgent need for non-traditional imperatives as well such as the development of a crisis management/ crisis prevention institute in South Asia that may contribute towards crisis prevention and crisis management between the South Asian nuclear rivals when it comes to the notion of nuclear responsibility. Such imperatives may include several measures to prevent developing war-fighting strategies, reducing reliance on nuclear weapons, practicing a nuclear moratorium, a mechanism for preventing accidental nuclear war, restricting to the essentials of credible minimum deterrence, and improved means of communication for risk reduction.

The two South Asian rivals should continue to have hotlines, such hotlines may be extended to other layers of leadership as well, ensuring the practice of nuclear CBMs, effective utilization of the third-party role between the acute nuclear rivals, and measures for retaining nuclear balance rather than parity (nuclear superiority).

Of course, the proposed institute may also include the discussion for creating strategic restraint regime, efforts for peaceful uses of nuclear technology, participation in the international discussion on non-proliferation, de-mating nuclear warheads from delivery systems, and undertaking stringent safety and security mechanisms.

More importantly, South Asian security leadership needs to provide advance notice before carrying out nuclear and missile tests, and immediately report any accidental firing of a missile towards each other to prevent retaliatory nuclear strikes. Most if not all these measures can be applicable and doable between the South Asian nuclear rivals to prevent the possibility of accidental war and promote strategic stability.

<https://stratheia.com/conflict-escalation-and-risk-reduction-between-nuclear-rivals/>

India's Rising Power: A Strategic Ally or Future Rival for the U.S.?

Summra Hamid

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India's rise in global politics, marked by its deepening relationship with the United States, is reshaping regional dynamics and influencing global power structures. As India strives to position itself as a dominant global player, its growing technological advancements, military capabilities, and strategic ambitions raise significant concerns not only for neighboring countries like Pakistan and China but also for international powers, including the U.S. While the partnership between the U.S. and India is presented as a critical alliance, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, this cooperation may have far-reaching consequences, including a destabilization of the regional power balance and challenges to U.S. interests in the future.

One of the most impactful developments from the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to the U.S. is the decision to establish India's first semiconductor fabrication plant in Uttar Pradesh, supported by U.S. investment. The semiconductor fabrication plant in India is set to attract direct investment of USD 340 million, along with an estimated USD 1 billion in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). By producing advanced chips domestically, India could significantly reduce its annual import costs, which currently stand at USD 28.7 billion. The plant is aimed to support critical defense technologies, enhancing self-reliance in areas like missile-seekers, radars, drones, and military communications. This development is also expected to create jobs, stimulate economic growth, and lead to long-term cost savings. While this collaboration is seen as a strategic move to reduce dependency on Chinese manufacturing, it also raises concerns about how India's growing technological power could shift the balance of influence within the region.

Semiconductors are essential to a broad spectrum of industries, including defense, electronics, and vehicle manufacturing. India's ability to produce these critical components will enhance its self-reliance, thus reducing its dependency on other countries for high-tech goods. While this will boost India's economic and technological growth, it also introduces a new element of competition, particularly with the U.S., as India becomes less reliant on American exports. Modi's statement, "The day is not far when you will see made-in-India chips in America. This small thing will take India to another level. And this is Modi's guarantee" to the Indian diaspora in New York, further strengthens the argument of his goals of dominating American economy and becoming global power. This shift in dependency could alter the dynamics of the U.S.-India partnership, as India's

increasing technological capabilities may make it less willing to follow U.S. strategic goals in the future.

India's military modernization, strengthened by its role in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) with the U.S., Japan, and Australia, is seen as a countermeasure to China's influence in the Asia-Pacific. However, this has unsettled regional powers, including Pakistan and China, who view India's rapid military growth as a potential threat. India's defense exports increased by 78% in the first quarter of the financial year 2024-25—it is clear that India is positioning itself as a global military-industrial player. India's defense budget for FY 2024-25 has increased to INR 6.21 lakh crore (\$75 billion), up from INR 5.94 lakh crore the previous year. This boost focuses on strengthening military capabilities and infrastructure. INR 1.05 lakh crore is allocated for domestic procurement of advanced weaponry, and INR 6,500 crore is dedicated to enhancing border infrastructure. The sustenance and operational readiness budget have also seen a 48% rise to INR 92,088 crore. Additionally, INR 1.41 lakh crore is reserved for defense pensions, while the Indian Coast Guard will receive INR 7,651.80 crore. India aims to procure new weapons worth INR 1.62 trillion, with a focus on domestic manufacturing to boost self-reliance in defense. Additionally, India has set aside INR 1.62 trillion rupees (approximately \$19.64 billion) for procuring new weapons and platforms, primarily sourced through domestic defense contractors.

The implications of India's military rise are especially concerning for Pakistan, which has long relied on its nuclear arsenal as a deterrent against India. Historically, both nations have maintained a delicate military balance, but India's acquisition of advanced defense technologies and its expanding military budget could disrupt this balance, leaving Pakistan vulnerable. For Islamabad, this is more than a military challenge—it raises existential concerns regarding the security of its borders and its ability to maintain a credible defense posture. As India grows militarily and economically, Pakistan may be forced to rethink its defense strategy, with potential consequences for regional stability.

India's expanding influence and bilateral ties are not only limited to the U.S., but India is also seeking to diversify its alliances through active participation in organizations like BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). These forums provide India with a platform to assert its significance, influence, and foster collaboration with other emerging powers, such as China and Russia, on global economic and security issues. India's role in these organizations reflects its desire to balance its relationships and expand its influence beyond the West. However, this diversification could lead to friction between India and the U.S., particularly if India's positions within BRICS and the SCO conflict with U.S. interests in global governance.

India's growing military presence in the Asia-Pacific region is a cause for concern among neighboring countries. India has reinforced its military presence in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands by establishing new naval air stations, including the fully operational INS Kohassa on North Andaman Island. These stations enhance India's ability to monitor key maritime routes such as the Malacca, Lombok, and Sunda Straits. Additionally, India created an Asia-Pacific division within its Ministry of External Affairs to coordinate efforts related to the IORA, the ASEAN, and the Quad. India also collaborates with allies like the U.S. and Australia through joint military exercises and infrastructure development. These defense agreements with nations like Japan, Australia, and France have enabled India to expand its influence beyond South Asia, signaling its intention to project power throughout the region. However, India's assertive foreign policy, particularly in Kashmir and Afghanistan, could exacerbate tensions with its neighbors and contribute to regional instability. With the backing of advanced U.S. military technology, India may feel emboldened to take a more aggressive stance on its territorial disputes, further heightening the risk of conflict.

India's ascent as a global power, marked by advanced military capabilities and technological self-reliance, presents both opportunities and risks for the U.S. While the current partnership strengthens India's role as a counterbalance to China, it also fuels India's ambitions to become a dominant force in the region. India's growing influence, especially in forums like BRICS and the SCO, indicates its desire for greater autonomy on the global stage, potentially diverging from U.S. strategic interests. As India enhances its defense capabilities and economic might, regional powers like Pakistan face increased pressure, raising the possibility of destabilization in South Asia. For the U.S., supporting India's rise requires a delicate balance—fostering a strong ally without inadvertently empowering a future rival that could challenge American influence in the region and beyond.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2024/09/30/ais-dark-side-misinformation-and-disinformation/>

West vs Africa: France Retired Hurt – Hungary Padding Up

Shehzadi Irum

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In recent years, France, the historic western colonial power, has been increasingly pushed out of Africa, while Russia has consolidated its military and political weight in the region. Hungary, whose foreign policy is considered to be more aligned with Russia than other European Union (EU) countries, has started expanding its footprints on the continent. Recently, Hungary and Chad's leaders met in Budapest where they signed an agreement for Hungary to deploy 200 troops in Chad.

According to Hungary, the aim of deploying troops in Chad is to curb the influx of illegal immigrants to Europe, counter terrorism, and assist Chad economically. Hungary believes that it is impossible to stop migration from Africa to Europe without the countries of the Sahel region. This is why Hungary is building a partnership with Chad and has proposed the European Peace Facility to send nearly €14 million of its contribution to the country. Hungary has also pledged \$1 million to enhance Chad's health system, despite domestic criticism regarding its own hospitals' lack of basic supplies. Indeed, it is quite astonishing that while Hungary's people were grappling with the lack of medicines, and other supplies, in their hospitals, why is the country playing the role of Hatim al-Tai (*Arabian king who lived during the 6th century, renowned for his generosity*) towards the people of Chad?

Analysts contend that Hungary's military presence in Chad, under the guise of combating illegal immigration and terrorism, is indeed a step to advance hidden agendas. Otherwise, there's no logical argument for Hungary to deploy troops in Chad, a country that ranks among the poorest in the world and uncharted territory for Hungarian diplomacy. It is also absurd to imagine how these 200 soldiers could prevent illegal immigration from a country that is significantly larger than Hungary. Experts also express concern that Hungary's true intention might be linked to exploiting Chad's resources, which include abundant and lucrative minerals such as gold, oil, uranium, and other reserves. Besides, the most reasonable explanation may involve providing the Hungarian military with a training ground to test the latest military technology the country has recently attained.

Coupled with this, Hungary's other concealed agenda might be to adopt Vladimir Putin's footsteps, due to their close relationship. Just like Moscow, with minimal security investments, Budapest is also trying to gain political momentum at a time when France's presence in the region

is coming to an end. This goes in line with Moscow's plans to squeeze France out of Africa. Sending the Hungarian military overseas while rejecting and blocking military aid to Ukraine, makes Hungary even more likely to act in Moscow's favor. Russia has more influence in Africa than the West expects. Despite its operations in Ukraine, it has deployed a few thousand troops in the central Sahel region. However, in countries without a Russian military presence, Hungary is intervening, starting with the support to the junta and authoritarian regime in Chad. This move demonstrates Hungary's ambitions to exert global influence beyond its size.

Despite the critics' reaction, the EU has welcomed Hungary's initiative. Here the EU's stance over the Hungary-Chad agreement is surprising and nothing less than political opportunism. It seems that the EU is more interested in maintaining its unity than in addressing the evident issues at hand. By backing Hungary, they are essentially overlooking the fact that this so-called effort is possibly driven more by the desire for political and financial gains rather than a genuine concern to curb the influx of illegal immigration and counter terrorism. This is why many are left wondering, whether Hungary truly cares about the welfare of those in need or if it is merely playing a political chess game in Africa, much like France. France, for centuries, held much of Africa under its domination, forcing African people into a life of servitude, ruthlessly plundering the continent's resources. Moreover, alongside France, other Western countries also benefited immensely from Africa's riches, including through the brutal slave trade and the acquisition of minerals at derisory prices. These oppressive actions led the African people to rebel against France, and the West in general.

If we closely analyze the current situation, it's like a cricket match being played on African soil. In this match, the global umpires are biased toward their favorite team (the West) and are determined to see them win, while ignoring the legitimate appeals of the opposing team (Africa) by not signaling any dismissals. This is forcing the opposing team to resort to bouncers, pushing the batting team into a retired hurt state, and paving the way for their own victory. So far, they have been quite successful in it. They have forced an all-rounder like France (who has extensive experience playing against team Africa) to retire hurt and head back to the pavilion. In response, the West has decided to send a tailender like Hungary (who has limited experience playing against team Africa) to the field. Now only time will prove, whether Hungary will simply retire hurt or if its inning will end tragically, like that of the late cricketer Phillip Hughes.

<https://www.wgi.world/west-vs-africa-france-retired-hurt-hungary-padding-up/>

Cyberwarfare: A Dilemma for Intelligence Institutions Worldwide

Harsa Kakar

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“It takes 20 years to build a reputation and a few minutes of cyber-incident to ruin it” – Stephane Nappo. In an interconnected world like today’s, any digital challenge has far-reaching consequences than it had a century ago. On top of the line among these is cyberwarfare. It is another side effect of globalization that the world faces besides its numerous positive effects. Cyberwarfare refers to the usage of cyberattacks against a state to cause comparable damage to their vital computer systems leading to espionage, propaganda, and blackmail. This type is distinct because it keeps the identity of the attacker anonymous which prevents him from being identified directly. Hence, this feature increases the complications.

The first cyberattack is said to have been carried out in 1834 in France when criminals accessed the French telegraph system to steal financial market data. Since the world now depends on digital networking, businesses, earnings, communication, and managing infrastructure, cyberwarfare has gained popularity among attackers leading to escalated incidents of cybercrime with each passing day. Historically, the first cyberattack is said to have been carried out in 1834 in France when criminals accessed the French telegraph system to steal financial market data. It was even before the internet was a thing. These incidents have continued to occur to this day. However, their impact is far greater and the damage they cause is far-reaching today.

Cyberwarfare, unlike conventional warfare, operates in an anonymous environment which enables the state or non-state entities to conduct attacks without being identified. The globalized world we live in is dependent on digital infrastructure in all domains and this has made cyberwarfare an attractive resort for countries that hold no power to conduct conventional attacks. Thus, they conduct cyberattacks to avoid blame and have the job done.

Among these numerous high-profile incidents of cyberattacks many have occurred in recent years. Notably, the Bundestag cyberattack in Germany in 2015 was carried out by a group linked to Russian intelligence. The attackers were successful in stealing large amounts of data from German legislative offices undermining the trustworthiness of their government. Then in 2016, the US Democratic National Committee (DNC) was targeted by a cyberattack that was conducted by the Russian government’s hackers which resulted in the leakage of important emails and

confidential files. It had serious political consequences and showed that cyber criminals could now impact democratic functioning.

Similarly, in 2020, the US Department of Homeland Security faced the SolarWinds attack in which cyber criminals, who were again seemingly attached to Russian intelligence, tried to enter their software supply chain which affected a wide range of private and government sector systems. It was conducted in a way that could not be tracked down for several months. *Cyberwarfare, unlike conventional warfare, operates in an anonymous environment which enables the state or non-state entities to conduct attacks without being identified.* Later in July 2024, several countries – Australia, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand – came together and issued a notice concerning Chinese state-sponsored cybercrimes that were tracked down within their networks. In the same way, in August 2024, US government officials accused Iranian hackers of penetrating Donald Trump’s presidential campaign. Similar attempts were made in Joe Biden’s time by offering him stolen documents from the Trump campaign when they were not responded to. This incident alerted US officials about potential interference from adversaries in the upcoming US elections.

Overcoming the challenges of cyberwarfare requires a well-planned strategy that includes technological, tactical, and cooperative efforts. Among these strategies, some recommendations suggest that first and foremost, all countries need to strengthen their cyber security system including firewalls, intrusion detectors, and encryption technologies.

The international community must outline a set of consequences for cyberattacks such as economic sanctions or retaliatory actions to make the countries aware of the consequences of their actions. It is also essential to update security patches and implement a zero-trust security model that notifies every access request. Intelligence agencies need to counter cyber threats by analyzing the strategies of adversaries in cyberspace. This can be made possible by collaborating with trustworthy private companies and can also rely on the use of AI and machine learning for threat prediction. Furthermore, cyberwarfare requires global collaboration to weaken it altogether by setting standards for a state’s cyber behavior as advocated by the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts (UNGGE).

Similarly, the international community must outline a set of consequences for cyberattacks such as economic sanctions or retaliatory actions to make the countries aware of the consequences of

their actions. Besides that, educating the public and cyber workforce about cyber hygiene practices through awareness programs and government initiatives, like recognizing phishing emails, usage of long and complex passwords, etc. Moreover, organizations and intelligence institutions regularly need to update their response plans for such incidents by running simulation exercises and dummy attacks to pinpoint their weaknesses and overcome them to lessen the impact of an actual cyberattack.

To sum up, cyberwarfare appears to be a great global dilemma for countries and their sensitive institutions in an interconnected world like today. Several such high-profile attacks have been part of top news in recent years. Their impact is growing with each passing day and the anonymous nature of attackers makes it even more complicated. Overcoming the cyberwarfare challenge requires a well-planned strategy. This can be made possible by improving cybersecurity, bolstering cyber intelligence, increasing international collaboration, strengthening public-private partnerships, and learning from successful examples. If such strategies are utilized by countries in the right way at the right time, only then can they avoid cyberwarfare and its consequences.

<https://stratheia.com/cyberwarfare-a-dilemma-for-intelligence-institutions-worldwide/>

کوئٹہ والے پنجابی

Asadullah Raisani

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بلوچستان میں رہنے والوں کی اکثریت بلوچ اور پشتونوں کی ہے۔ یہ دونوں اقوام صدیوں سے موجودہ بلوچستان میں رہائش پزیر اور آباد ہیں، ان کا گزر بسر صدیوں سے مال مویشی پالنے، زمینداری اور چھوٹے موٹے کاروبار سے ہوتا رہا ہے۔ یہاں تک کہ صنعتی انقلاب بھی بلوچستان میں اپنے وقت سے بہت بعد میں پہنچا۔ قصہ مختصر یہ کہ یہاں کی اکثریت کبھی ملازمت ذہنیت کی تھی ہی نہیں۔ کام چھوٹا ہو یا بڑا یہ اپنے کاروبار میں مگن رہنے والے لوگ تھے۔

انگریز کی آمد جس طرح دنیا کے دیگر حصوں میں تبدیلی کا باعث بنی، بلوچستان بھی ان تبدیلیوں کو نہیں روک پایا۔ جہاں انگریز کے آنے سے اس خطے میں مثبت تبدیلیاں آئیں، جیسے پرنٹ میڈیا متعارف ہوا، جدید سواریاں لائی گئیں، ریل کا بہترین نظام آیا اور قبائلی نظام کے مقابلے میں جدید نظام لایا گیا وغیرہ وغیرہ۔ وہاں منفی تبدیلیوں سے بھی اس سرزمین کو اثر انداز کیا گیا، جیسے کہ انگریز کے آنے سے یہاں کے جمہوری اقداروں پر چلنے والے شفاف قبائلی نظام میں ملاوٹ کی گئی، اس قبائلی نظام کو جمہوری کی بجائے موروثی بنا دیا گیا، تاریخ میں پہلی بار پٹھانوں کو مذہب جبکہ بلوچوں کو زبان و قبائلیت کے بنیاد پر تقسیم کرنے کی سازشیں ہوئیں، ایسے نظام کو فوقیت دی گئی جس میں سب سے زیادہ فائدہ انگریز اور انگلستان کا تھا، اس دور کے مختلف معتبرین، سردار، یہاں تک کہ خان بھی مارے اور مروائے گئے۔

اس دور میں انگریز کو اپنا سرکاری نظام چلانے کے لیے ملازموں کی ضرورت تھی۔ چونکہ یہاں کے لوگ اس اعتبار سے تیار نہیں تھے اور نہ ہی پڑھنے لکھنے کا رجحان اتنا تھا کہ جتنا سابقہ ہندوستان کے دیگر حصوں میں تھا، اس وجہ سے انگریز نے موجودہ پاکستان اور ہندوستان کے دیگر حصوں سے یہاں افسر تعینات کیے تاکہ یہاں جدید نظام چل سکے۔ چونکہ یہ لوگ ملازمت سے وابستہ تھے تو یہاں کے مقامی لوگوں کو ان کی موجودگی پر زیادہ خدشات نہ تھے مگر انگریزوں کے خلاف ایک نفرت ضرور تھی۔

جہاں اس خطے میں ترقی اور جدت آرہی تھی وہاں ایسے کئی خاندان بھی یہاں آباد ہونے لگے جو بنیادی طور پر یہاں سے نہیں تھے، ان آباد کاریوں کے خلاف خدشات کے خاطر خواہ شواہد نہیں ملتے کیونکہ ان کی اکثریت نے بالواسطہ یا بلاواسطہ بلوچستان کو اپنا گھر و مسکن مان کر اس کی خدمت کی، آج بلوچستان میں ایسے خاندان بھی آباد ہیں جن کے آباؤ اجداد نسلوں سے یہاں رہتے ہیں۔ عیسوی سے آباد ہے۔ یقیناً ان کے آباؤ اجداد 1850ء میں ایک ایسے خاندان کے بارے میں مجھے حال ہی میں پتہ چلا کہ وہ یہاں سن بلوچستان کو اپنا گھر تسلیم کر چکے تھے تبھی ان کی نسلیں اس سرزمین پر آباد ہیں۔ جہاں کئی خاندانوں نے جن کی اکثریت پنجابیوں کی تھی بلوچستان کے لوگوں کی خدمت کی وہیں کچھ ایسے افسران بھی یہاں آباد ہوئے جو بلوچستان سے زیادہ انگریزوں کے وفادار تھے اور اس سرزمین کے استحصال کے لیے انگریزوں کے اعلیٰ کار بنے، جن کی وجہ سے بلوچوں میں بالخصوص اس ملازمت پیشہ طبقے کے خلاف ایک خدشے کا جذبہ بہر حال موجود تھا۔

وقت گزرنے کے ساتھ ساتھ انگریز کی پکڑ اس خطے میں کمزور ہوئی، دو عظیم جنگوں کے سبب انگلستان اتنا کمزور ہوا کہ اس ۶ میں پاکستان وجود میں آیا اور اس کے وجود میں آتے ہی مصیبتوں کے 1947ء میں یہاں سے نکلنے میں ہی سمجھداری جانی، پہاڑ اس نو مولود ملک پر ٹوٹ پڑے۔ ان مصیبتوں میں ایک بڑی مشکل وہی تھی جس کا سامنا انگریز کو تھا کہ بلوچستان کے لوگوں کی ذہنیت ملازمت پیشہ نہیں اور جدید تعلیمی نظام بھی اس خطے میں نہیں پہنچا اور نہ ہی انگریز نے اس حوالے سے کوئی خاطر خواہ کوشش کی۔ تو مجبوراً سندھ، پنجاب، خیبر پختون خواہ حتیٰ کہ آزاد کشمیر سے افسر اور دیگر ملازم بلوچستان میں تعینات کیے گئے۔ جبکہ یہاں کے مقامی لوگوں کی تعداد بہت تھوڑی تھی ان اداروں میں۔ جہاں باہر سے آنے والے کئی ملازموں نے بلوچستان کو اپنا گھر بنایا وہاں کئیوں کا رویہ مقامی لوگوں کے ساتھ درست نہیں تھا۔ جسکی وجہ سے جو نفرت پہلے انگریزوں کے خلاف تھی وہ اب سیٹلرز، بالخصوص پنجابیوں کے خلاف ہونے لگی۔ کیونکہ مغربی پاکستان میں اکثریت پنجابیوں کی تھی، چاہے وہ سیاست ہو، بیوروکریسی، فوج یا پھر کوئی اور ادارہ پنجابی اکثریت میں تھے۔ وہاں مشرقی پاکستان، جو موجودہ بنگلہ دیش ہے، میں بنگالی اس پنجابی اکثریت کے خلاف تھے تو یہاں بلوچوں میں شدید تشویش اور غم و غصہ تھا اس کے خلاف۔

۶ میں جب پاکستان میں ون یونٹ سکیم لائی گئی تو بلوچستان مشرقی پاکستان کا ایک ڈویژن، قلات ڈویژن بنا۔ 1955ء تک موجودہ پاکستان ایک ہی صوبہ تھا تو اس دوران بھی پاکستان کے مختلف حصوں سے ملازموں 1970ء سے 1955ء کی تعیناتیوں تفرریاں بلوچستان میں ہوتی رہیں لیکن اُس وقت کے حکام سے گناہ کبیرہ یہ ہوا کہ انہوں نے مغربی پاکستان کا دارالحکومت لاہور کو قرار دیا۔ اب ایک سردار جو اپنے قبیلے کا بڑا ہوتا ہے چھوٹے سے چھوٹے کام کے لیے میلوں دور گھنٹوں سفر کر کے لاہور جاتا۔ وہاں افسروں کی جانب سے کئی سرداروں کے ساتھ ناروا سلوک کیا جاتا اور انہیں گھنٹوں انتظار بھی

کروایا جاتا یہ سردار معتبرین جب لاہور سے واپس آکر ان پنجابی افسران کے ناروا سلوک کی روداد سناتے، جسے بلوچی و براہوی میں 'حال' کہتے ہیں، ان میں پنجابیوں کے خلاف مزید نفرت بڑھتی۔ نفرت کی ایک اور بڑی وجہ یہ تھی کہ کئی افسران بالخصوص پنجابی اور کشمیری یہاں کے قبائلی طور طریقوں سے واقف نہیں تھے، جبکہ اس نفرت کی ایک اور وجہ یہ بھی تھی کہ بلوچستان میں تعصب گہر کرنے لگ گیا تھا اور اب کسی بھی دوسری جگہ سے آنے والے کو باہر کا بندہ مانا جانے لگا تھا۔

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کوئٹہ والے پنجابی

Asadullah Raisani

October 30, 2024

۶ میں عام انتخابات ہوئے۔ سردار عطاء اللہ مینگل بلوچستان کے ۱۹۷۲ء میں باقاعدہ ایک صوبہ بنا اور ۱۹۷۰ء بلوچستان پہلے وزیر اعلیٰ منتخب ہوئے اور باوجود اسکے کہ وہ خود ایک سردار تھے اور سرداری انہیں میراث میں ملی تھی، وہ اس سوچ کے مالک تھے کہ بلوچستان کو اب جدت کی طرف جانا چاہیے اس لیے انہوں نے قانونی طور پر یہاں کے قبائلی نظام کو ختم کر دیا پولیس اہلکار جن کی اکثریت پنجاب سے ۲۶۰۰ مگر ان سے ایک بڑی غلطی یہ ہوئی کہ انہوں نے سینکڑوں سکول اساتذہ اور قریب تھی انہیں یہاں سے فارغ کر دیا اور یہاں کے مقامی لوگوں کو ان کی جگہ بھرتی کیا جن میں کئی صرف پانچویں پاس تھے۔ جس کی وجہ سے تعلیم کے شعبے میں ایک بہت بڑا فقدان آیا اور مقامی بلوچوں کو یہ باور ہوا کہ پنجابی نکالے جا سکتے ہیں، یہ اب بھی ممکن ہے حالانکہ جن اساتذہ کو نکالا گیا ان میں سے کئی ڈیرہ جات کے بلوچ تھے جن کی اکثریت سرائیکی بولتی ہے۔

سردار عطاء اللہ مینگل کے حامی اس فیصلے کا دفاع کرتے ہیں کہ ”مشرقی پاکستان الگ ہونے سے جو ملازمین ان کے ماتحت تھے وہ بلوچستان کو دیے گئے جہاں وسائل ویسے ہی کم تھے جس کی وجہ سے سردار عطاء اللہ مینگل نے یہاں کے مقامی لوگوں کو نئے روزگاروں پر تقرر کیا، اور اگر انہیں پنجاب سے آئے ہوئے لوگوں کو نکالنا ہی تھا تو انکے دور حکومت میں وہ قرارداد کیسے منظور ہوئی جس میں مقامی اور غیر مقامی ہونے کا فرق ختم کر دیا گیا تھا۔“

۷ بلوچستان کی تاریخ میں بہت سخت ثابت ہوئے جب ذوالفقار علی بھٹو نے نہ صرف ۱۹۷۷ء تا ۱۹۷۳ء آنے والے چار سال سردار عطاء اللہ مینگل کی حکومت معزول کی بلکہ سردار عطاء اللہ مینگل سمیت نواب اکبر خان بگٹی، نواب خیر بخش مری اور غوث بلوچستان میں امن رہا لیکن پرویز مشرف کے مارشل لا اعلیٰ کے بی ایک ۱۹۹۹ء تا ۱۹۷۷ء بخش بزنجو کو بھی جیل کیا۔ ۸ میں اکبر بگٹی شہید ہوئے، حالات خراب ہوتے دیکھ ۲۰۰۶ء آئینی بحران آیا جس کی حدیں بلوچستان تک بھی پہنچ گئیں سن ہزار فوجی اہلکار تعینات کیے گئے ۲۵ بلوچستان میں موجود فوجی تعیناتیاں بڑھا دی گئیں۔ ایک اندازے کے مطابق بلوچستان میں جن کی اکثریت پنجابیوں کی تھی جس سے پنجابیوں کے خلاف نفرت اور خدشات مزید بڑھ گئے اور بلوچستان کی تاریخ میں پہلی بار ایک مسلحہ آزادی پسند گروہ نے بلوچستان میں موجود پنجابیوں کو ٹارگٹ کرنا شروع کیا پھر اس آگ کی لپیٹ میں اردو بولنے والے، ہندکو بولنے والے، کشمیری اور دیگر سیٹلر بھی آئے جن میں سے کئی برائے نام سیٹلر تھے کیونکہ وہ نسلوں اور دہائیوں سے یہاں آباد تھے۔

ان حملوں کے بڑھتے ہوئے پیش نظر اس حقیقت کو بھی سامنے لایا گیا کہ کئی افسران نے کرپشن اور بے ایمانی سے دیگر صوبوں کے رہائشیوں کو جعلی ڈومیسائل بنا کے دیے ہیں تاکہ وہ وفاقی اداروں میں بلوچستان کے کوٹے پر آسامیاں لے سکیں۔ اگرچہ یہاں آباد پنجابی اور دیگر سیٹلر خود بھی جعلی ڈومیسائل کے حق میں نہیں کیونکہ ان جعلی ڈومیسائلز کی وجہ سے انکے اپنے حقوق (۹) میں اس حوالے سے ایک اور قرارداد بھی منظور ہوئی جس میں مقامی اور غیر ۲۰۲۳ء سے بھی سلب ہوتے ہیں اور حال ہی (۱۰) مقامی، برائے نام سیٹلر، کی بحث ختم کر کے تمام سیٹلرز کو مقامیوں کے برابر قرار دیا گیا تاکہ جعلی ڈومیسائلز کے عمل کو روکا جا سکے مگر ان کے رنگ اور نسل کے بنیاد پر انہیں نشانہ بنایا جا رہا ہے، ان کے لیے ایک عام لفظ ’پنجابی‘ استعمال کیا جاتا ہے جبکہ ان میں کئی لوگ اردو، ہند کو بولنے والے اور کشمیری یہاں تک کہ جنوبی پنجاب کے سرائیکی بولنے والے بلوچ بھی شامل ہیں۔ ان کی اکثریت درس و تدریس اور مزدوری سے وابستہ ہے، درزی گری اور بال اور داڑھی بنانے کا ہنر جانتے ہیں جس میں یہاں کے بلوچ و پشتون اور ہزارہ مہارت نہیں رکھتے، الا ماشاء اللہ۔

ان سیٹلر زکی حکمران طبقے سے شکایت ہے کہ ’ہمارا نام مہروں کی طرح استعمال تو ہوتا ہے پر ہماری حفاظت کے لیے کوئی خاطر خواہ اقدامات نہیں لیے گئے نہ لیے جارہے ہیں۔‘ اس سے بھی بڑا المیہ یہ کہ جب ڈر کے مارے یہ لوگ پنجاب یا کراچی منتقل ہوتے ہیں تو انہیں ’کوئٹہ والے پنجابی‘ کہا جاتا ہے اور کم و بیش انہیں وہاں بھی برابر کا شہری تصور نہیں کیا جاتا۔ اس سے بڑا دکھ کیا ہوگا کہ دہائیاں اور نسلیں لگا دیں بلوچستان کو اپنا گھر بنانے میں لیکن بعد میں سب کچھ چھوڑ کر جانا پڑا اور جہاں آپ گئے وہاں آپ کی پہچان بلوچستان اور کوئٹہ ہی رہے، کہ یہ تو ’کوئٹہ والے پنجابی‘ ہیں۔ اس لیے اس بات کو انتہائی سنجیدگی سے سمجھنا چاہیے کہ جو سیٹلر یہاں قانونی طور پر آباد ہیں انہیں مار کر صرف اس صوبے کا مزید نقصان ہی کیا جا سکتا ہے کیونکہ جدت کے لینے شرط ہے رنگ و نسل، مذہب اور لسانیت کو بالائے طاق رکھ کر قابلیت کو فروغ دیا جائے۔ اس کی بہترین مثالیں موجود ہیں جیسے کہ امریکہ، سنگاپور اور کینیڈا جہاں شہریت حاصل کرنے کے کئی طریقوں میں سے چند طریقوں کا انحصار آپ کی قابلیت یا کسی شعبے میں مہارت پر ہوتا ہے، جہاں قابلیت اور قانون کو تقویت حاصل ہے۔ مختصراً یہ کہ شہید نواب اکبر خان بگٹی کے کلمات کی روشنی میں ہی بلوچستان ترقی کر سکتا ہے کیونکہ انہوں نے کہا تھا، ’جو بھی بلوچستان میں آباد ہے، یہاں رہتا ہے، چاہے وہ بلوچ ہو، برابری

بولتا ہو، پٹھان ہو، پنجابی ہو، سندھی ہو، ایرانی ہو یا پھر افریقہ سے ہی کیوں نہ آیا ہو، اگر وہ بلوچستان کو اپنا وطن مانتا ہے تو اسے
”یہاں برابر کے حقوق حاصل ہیں، یہاں کسی کے حقوق مختلف نہیں، نہ کسی کو کسی پہ برتری حاصل ہے۔“

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