

Balochistan Think Tank Network



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Edited & compiled by

Mr. Hamza Nasir

Supervised by

Dr. Siraj Bashir

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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.

SUMMARY OF OP-Eds

Pahalgam Attack: India's Intelligence Failure or Political Strategy?

Sarina Tareen

May 1, 2025

The article explores whether the Pahalgam attack was a failure of intelligence or a strategic political move by India. It critiques India's tendency to exploit crises for political gains. The author urges accountability and honest dialogue for lasting peace.

AI-led technologies: replacing the human commander?

Zafar Khan

May 3, 2025

The op-ed evaluates the potential of AI in military leadership. It warns that AI lacks the nuanced judgment of human commanders. Effective deterrence still relies on human restraint, not automation.

Pakistan's Commitment to Peace in South Asia

Rabia Nadeem

May 6, 2025

The article defends Pakistan's diplomatic approach amidst rising tensions. It criticizes baseless accusations that endanger regional peace. Restraint is presented as a strength in a nuclear-armed region.

Emerging Technologies: South Asian Strategic Stability

Fizza Mahak Batool

May 11, 2025

This piece warns against India's tech-driven military expansion. It argues such militarization risks destabilizing South Asia. The article calls for balancing innovation with diplomacy.

Economic Cost of Afghan Deportation

Hamza Nasir

May 11, 2025

The article highlights economic damage from expelling Afghan migrants. It notes severe impacts on Balochistan's informal economy and labor market. The piece questions the sustainability of short-term security over economic stability.

Geostrategic Significance of Balochistan

Zafar Khan

May 13, 2025

Balochistan is portrayed as central to global strategic interests. Its location makes it both valuable and vulnerable. The piece calls for thoughtful engagement with the region.

Reassessing Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia

Zafar Khan

May 14, 2025

India's rationale for preventive strikes is critically examined. The article warns that these actions undermine nuclear deterrence. It cautions that strategic recklessness risks destabilizing the whole region

Lessons from History: Indo-Pak Escalations in Nuclear Era

Alamgir Gul

May 14, 2025

The piece reviews historical Indo-Pak conflicts and tensions. It accuses India of leveraging nationalism and false-flag tactics. The op-ed calls for de-escalation and open, transparent diplomacy.

Pahalgam Attack: Propaganda Reloaded

Shehzadi Irum

May 14, 2025

The op-ed portrays the attack as part of Indian propaganda targeting Pakistan. It argues that these narrative silences the Kashmiri perspective. Justice and truth are emphasized as the core aims of Pakistan's stance.

India's Blind Spot in South Asia

Sher Ali

May 15, 2025

The article criticizes India's aggressive stance in the region. It highlights Pakistan's restraint and deterrence as effective responses. The piece stresses that provocations cannot replace sincere peace initiatives.

Trump's Tariff War and its Global Consequences

Hamza Nasir

May 15, 2025

The piece analyzes Trump's embrace of economic nationalism and protectionist policies. It argues that tariffs undermine global economic stability and cooperation. Ultimately, the world economy bears the cost of such inward-looking impulses.

India's Enduring Strategic Paralysis in South Asia

Ali Abbas

May 16, 2025

India is depicted as responding with desperation instead of a coherent strategy. The op-ed emphasizes Pakistan's calm and credible approach in contrast. It concludes that misinformation and aggression are ineffective for long-term stability.

India's Acquisition of Directed Energy Weapons

Atta Ullah

May 18, 2025

The op-ed examines India's pursuit of advanced weaponry and its regional implications. It raises concerns about triggering a destabilizing arms race in South Asia. The piece stresses that national prestige must not come at the cost of strategic caution.

Unpacking Modi's Sindoor Speech: A Trail of Terror

Sadia Zahra

May 18, 2025

The article criticizes Modi's dramatic rhetoric as harmful to regional peace and stability. It denounces performative politics, urging a shift toward genuine dialogue. It asserts that real strength lies in restraint and commitment to diplomacy.

Bluff or Balance: Countering Operation Sindoor Narrative

Usama Khalid

May 19, 2025,

The piece questions India's interpretation of nuclear deterrence and its strategic signaling. It cautions against misrepresenting Pakistan's defensive posture as aggression. True deterrence, it argues, is demonstrated through restraint rather than provocative rhetoric.

Pahalgam: The Story of False Flag Operations and IWT

Harsa Kakar

May 21, 2025

The op-ed links the attack to India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, framing it as a strategic move. It criticizes India for choosing opportunism over evidence-based diplomacy. The piece emphasizes that true regional stability requires sustained dialogue, not symbolic political gestures.

بلوچستان اور ایک اور نازک دور

Asad Ullah Raisani

May 21, 2025

لوچستان میں سرداروں کا اثر زوال پذیر ہے اور متوسط طبقے سے ابھرتی نئی نسل سیاسی و عسکری جوجہد کی قیادت کر رہی ہے۔ اب وقت آ گیا ہے کہ ریاست عملی اقدامات کے ذریعے اس باشعور نسل کو سیاسی عمل میں شامل کرے تاکہ حقیقی استحکام ممکن ہو۔

Lack of Consensus on Lethal Autonomous Weapon System

Ali Abbas

May, 21 2025

The article from Stratheia discusses the lack of international consensus on regulating Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS). It highlights concerns over the ethical and legal implications of autonomous weapons, particularly regarding their compliance with international humanitarian law and the potential for misuse without clear global guidelines.

Lethal Autonomous Weapons in the Indian Defense: Implications for Pakistan

Fizza Mehak Batool

May, 21 2025

India's use of AI-powered lethal autonomous weapons like the Harop and Heron drones in operations enhances precision and reduces human casualties. This may push Pakistan to advance its own AI weapons, risking a regional arms race. Experts call for clear policies and international regulations to ensure ethical use and stability.

Emerging Tech Race in South Asia

Mahbano Zahid

May, 21 2025

This piece tells how India's rapid military tech advancements risk destabilizing South Asia, and adds that regional cooperation and safeguards are crucial to prevent innovation from escalating into conflict.

From Failure to Finger-Pointing: India's Evasion strategy

Alamgir Gul

May, 21 2025

This piece tells how India's escalating war rhetoric and alleged false flag operations heighten tensions in South Asia, risking regional stability. It adds that responsible diplomacy—not manufactured crises—is essential between nuclear-armed neighbors.

Declining World Order and the Crisis of Arms Control

Shah Meer

May, 21 2025

This piece tells how the global arms race, driven by emerging technologies and geopolitical rivalries, threatens strategic stability and existing arms control frameworks. It adds that a new, inclusive multilateral arms control architecture is urgently needed to address modern security challenges.

Demystifying the Economic Impact of an Indo- Pak War

Hamza Nasir

May, 23 2025

This piece tells how renewed conflict between Pakistan and India would carry devastating economic consequences, disrupting trade, investment, and development across South Asia. It adds that true national security lies in economic cooperation, not militaristic provocation.

Youm-e-Takbeer: Pakistan's Pursuit of Credible Deterrence

Zafar Khan

May, 28 2025

The article highlights Pakistan's commitment to maintaining credible nuclear deterrence in response to India's military strategies. It underscores the risks of regional instability from preventive strikes and emphasizes the need for strong military capabilities and continuous diplomatic efforts to ensure lasting peace and stability in South Asia.

Youm-e-Takbeer: Pakistan's Pursuit of Nuclear Deterrence

Nomeen Kassi

May, 30 2025

The article highlights the significance of Youm-e-Takbeer, commemorating Pakistan's nuclear tests conducted on May 28, 1998. Nomeen Kassi emphasizes that Pakistan's

nuclear program is a cornerstone of its defense strategy, representing a firm commitment to preserving national sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of regional security threats.

Weaponising Water: India's Destabilising Role in South Asia

Sadia Zahra

May, 31 2025

Sadia Zahra critiques India's manipulation of water resources as a means of exerting pressure on Pakistan, particularly its suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty. She argues that this action reveals India's hegemonic aspirations and threatens the delicate balance of peace and cooperation in South Asia.

Contents

Pahalgam Attack: India's Intelligence Failure or Political Strategy?

Sarina Tareen.....1

AI-led technologies: replacing the human commander?

Zafar Khan..... 5

Pakistan's Commitment to Peace in South Asia

Rabia Nadeem 8

Emerging Technologies: South Asian Strategic Stability

Fizza Mahak Batool10

Economic Cost of Afghan Deportation

Hamza Nasir..... 13

Geostrategic Significance of Balochistan

Zafar Khan..... 17

Reassessing Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia

Zafar Khan..... 22

Lessons from History: Indo-Pak Escalations in Nuclear Era

Alamgir Gul.....25

Pahalgam Attack: Propaganda Reloaded

Shehzadi Irum.....28

India's Blind Spot in South Asia

Sher Ali.....31

Trump's Tariff War and its Global Consequences

Hamza Nasir.....33

India's Enduring Strategic Paralysis in South Asia

Ali Abbas.....	36
India's Acquisition of Directed Energy Weapons	
Atta Ullah.....	39
Unpacking Modi's Sindoor Speech: A Trail of Terror	
Sadia Zahra.....	43
Bluff or Balance: Countering Operation Sindoor Narrative	
Usama Khalid.....	46
Pahalgam: The Story of False Flag Operations and MT	
Harsa	
Kakar.....	49 بلوچستان
اورایک اور نژک دور	
Asad Ullah Raisani.....	51
Lack of Consensus on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems	
Ali Abbas.....	54
Lethal Autonomous Weapons in the Indian Defense: Implications for Pakistan	
Fizza Mehak Batool.....	57
Emerging Tech Race in South Asia	
Mahbano Zahid.....	60
From Failure to Finger-Pointing: India's Evasion strategy	
Alamgir Gul.....	63
Declining World Order and the Crisis of Arms Control	
Shah Meer.....	66
Demystifying the economic impact of an indo pak war	
Hamza Nasir.....	69
Youm-e-Takbeer: Pakistan's Pursuit of Credible Deterrence	
Zafar Khan.....	72
Youm-e-Takbeer: Pakistan's Pursuit of Nuclear Deterrence	

Nomeen Kassi.....75

Weaponising Water: India's Destabilising Role in South Asia

Sadia Zahra.....78

Pahalgam Attack: India's Intelligence Failure or Political Strategy?

Sarina Tareen

May 01, 2025

In 2020, a renowned analyst warned that the BJP-RSS government had prepared an ambiguous plan. Ranging from a wide spectrum of measures, which include false flag operations and plot attacks against Azad Kashmir and attempts to fracture Pakistan's image again. He warned that India could even engineer internal conflict among Kashmiris themselves, "To get Kashmiris killed by Kashmiris", which would serve to increase its control over the disputed region. These predictions now resonate louder than ever, demanding urgent attention to the current situation in Kashmir. The terrorist strike forced India's political stability and security arrangements into total disarray

These concerns are validated in the wake of the recent 22nd April terrorist attack in Pahaglam, in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The terrorist strike forced India's political stability and security arrangements into total disarray. The recent attack has revived worries about how the Modi government uses national security crisis to gain political leverage and deflect domestic criticism. Such incidents show the potential for how they are politicalized and also used as a method for distracting attention from critical domestic concerns. Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Force (BSF) units, together with regional local police. Despite the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and Rapid Response Teams (RRR) team's deployment and heightened surveillance measures, militants infiltrated the area

It is imperative to interrogate whether India's security failure is accidental or a deliberately constructed narrative? To add, an attack in Pahaglam, which functions as a key tourism center of Anantnag district, resulted in multiple fatalities and widespread panic throughout India. The incident exposed critical security shortcomings in the area heavily guarded by the army, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Force (BSF) units, together with regional local police. Despite the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and Rapid Response Teams (RRR) team's deployment and heightened surveillance measures, militants infiltrated the area. The Indian counterinsurgency framework showed important failures during this attack despite deploying numerous security forces at the tourist location.

Consequently, AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi, alleged that the Pahalgam terror attack resulted from the “Intelligence Failure”. As per a source, a terrorist group made a remark hinting at the attack, a few days prior to the incident. Intelligence agencies, along with security forces, failed to act upon the warning. The very grave tragedy ultimately occurred, and it was due to this failure. Many political analysts argue that the Modi government has once again externalized the threat by blaming Pakistan

Following the attack, the government initiated a heavy-handed crackdown, as well as joint patrols, strengthened checkpoints, with mass raids across a 5-km radius. Public anger within Kashmir has barely calmed down despite these measures as well as the crackdown. Many political analysts argue that the Modi government has once again externalized the threat by blaming Pakistan. This government enabled the attack, they argue, rather than investigating the internal shortcomings.

In response to the Pahalgam attack, the Indian government adopted a hardline diplomatic stance rather than confronting its internal failures. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri announced the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). The IWT is a historic water-sharing accord with Pakistan, and it was signed back in 1960. The treaty’s Article XII was in effect violated by such a move. For any changes, Article XII requires mutual consent. It marks a first unilateral withdrawal from within the framework in those six-plus decades, a shift symbolizing diplomatic disengagement instead of conflict management. Additionally, India expelled Pakistani diplomats, barred Pakistani nationals from entering India under the SAARC visa program, and reduced the Indian diplomatic staff in Islamabad from 55 to 30. The pattern is not new. Following the 2016 Uri terrorist attack, India conducted publicly announced “surgical strikes” across the Line of Control (LoC)

The pattern is not new. Following the 2016 Uri terrorist attack, India conducted publicly announced “surgical strikes” across the Line of Control (LoC). Research studies later documented that the announcement broadcasting the strike operation publicly served political purposes. Surgical strikes terminology acted to fulfil two critical objectives at once. On the one hand, the military operation presented visible leadership strength while avoiding the full-scale escalating tensions, particularly considering the nuclear backdrop of South Asia. On the other hand, Media support created a national image of muscular

and resilient India, which helped the BJP project an identity as the party committed to national security. The strike came when India was dealing with the aftermath of its demonetization policy.

Notably, the attack was designed to divert public attention from internal security and to boost public sentiments towards nationalism for political benefit. The strike came when India was dealing with the aftermath of its demonetization policy. The policy which removed high-value banknotes generated opposition from political competitors because they blamed it as economic mismanagement.

The current reaction to the Pahalgam attack adopts familiar strategies. The government presents this incident as foreign aggression from Pakistan to mobilize national support and conceal its failures in security measures. This strategy functions to improve the nationalist reputation. The political move occurs during a period when the Modi government encounters rising opposition over unemployment, inflation, and intensifying social unrest. The Indian government creates opposing narratives about Pakistani aggression to unite the country against foreign enemies. In broader academic terms, the foreign policy choice of India matches the theory of diversionary policies

In broader academic terms, the foreign policy choice of India matches the theory of diversionary policies. When leaders encounter a restive domestic population, they tend to create external emergencies that unite the people. For numerous successive decades, India has used the threat from Pakistan to create national unity. Conversely, the 2024 Reasi Bus ambush deviated from the previous patterns of India's diversionary foreign policy. The incident resulted in the deaths of nine Hindu pilgrims and left 41 others injured. During this period, the Modi Government tactfully avoided openly accusing Pakistan of links with The Resistance Front (TRF) a Lahkar-e-Tiba (LeT) proxy organization because national elections were underway, which required political stability more than escalation.

However, the Pahaglam attack displays an ongoing weakness, which persists in India's counterterrorism framework. This event demonstrates how security events are repeatedly used by political parties as a strategic measure to gain political dominance. The BJP, in particular, capitalizes on anti-Pakistan and anti-Muslim hatred to gather political support despite worsening internal issues and heightening social rifts. Therefore,

ensuring geopolitical stability in the South Asia region requires a paradigmatic shift away from externally oriented blame game towards constructive regional engagement.

<https://stratheia.com/pahalgam-attack-indias-intelligence-failure-or-political-strategy/>

AI-led technologies: replacing the human commander?

Zafar Khan

May 3, 2025

Given the return of great power politics in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the world falls further into strategic flux where each state struggles for its survival and territorial integrity. As this happens, emerging technologies such as AI, quantum computing, integrated internet, speed in the form of hypersonic glide vehicles, remote sensing, lethal autonomous weapon systems, swarms of drones, anti-drones, etc, are preconceived to be the "game changer" for winning battles and wars quickly and decisively. The evolving AI-led world is called "the global third nuclear age."

The proponents of AI-led technologies continue to presume that yet another revolution in military affairs appears imminent. Amidst the growing body of literature on emerging technologies, particularly on AI, many leading scholars appear to be concluding rather quickly that AI integration in the land, air and sea could transform the dynamics of warfare, endanger the survivability of retaliatory capabilities, transform the doctrinal force posturing, make the strategic rivals more offensive when it comes offense-defense dilemma, create AI-led human commander and make nuclear deterrence irrelevant.

The proponents of AI argue that the lethal autonomous weapon systems in the form of "autonomous drone swarms" would be able to launch, fly, target and strike at will without having "the humans in or on the loop". In doing so, many scholars presume that AI-related weapons – while revolutionising the dynamics of warfighting strategies – would replace the traditional method of tactical and operational imperatives.

Others argue that traditional weapon systems – such as artillery, tanks, aircraft and bombers – as well as nuclear weapons could be undermined by AI-related autonomous weapons. Still others equally argue that AI-related weapon systems might affect nuclear strategies and the related decision-making.

For example, in the changing nature and character of warfare when it comes to AI-related technologies, Denise Garcia radically argued that "the development of AI and its uses for lethal purposes in war fundamentally change the nature of warfare." In the similar context,

Kenneth Pyne also argues that "AI alters the nature of war by introducing non-human decision-making."

Nevertheless, the opponents of AI-related technologies are more skeptical about the dramatic impact of these technologies in terms of winning the battles rather quickly and decisively. They question if such technologies could undermine the traditional methods of warfighting strategies bolstered with tactical and operational military tactics.

They also criticise and caution the proponent of AI-related technologies that such technologies could potentially undermine the traditional warfighting military weaponry. For example, Anthony King argues that although autonomous weapons may become common, it is unclear whether such weapons will be remotely as revolutionary as many scholars routinely assume. Therefore, robot wars will not take place.

When it comes to the ambitious rationale for replacing the human commander, it is not clear whether the world's evolving complex security environment could primarily have the AI-led machine replacing the human commander in the battlefield. Also, it is not clear what consequences this could have between the nuclear rivals. We do not have any strong evidence that the leading technological powers will have the machine replacing the human commander on the battlefield. Security analysts largely preconceive that the world may have a machine commander.

The Clausewitzian world – which is based upon the essentials of empathy, correct decision, restraint and judgment – warned that in the "real world" composed by humans, chaos cannot simply be left to "a sort of algebra of action". This shows that "if all variables and outcomes could be known, and if war was a purely rational affair, there would be no need of the physical existence of armies, but only of the theoretical relations between them."

The perceived "narrow" AI may play some role in decision-making, but there is little evidence that AI technologies without the human commander particularly in the military domain could have done enough to distinguish between the different dynamics and posturing of warfare activities. For example, Hunter and Bowen argue, "That narrow AI can play games like Chess and Go effectively, or fly a simulated aircraft, does not mean that narrow AI can be relied upon to perform command duties in war."

Let's conclude with a cautious assessment: one, it is unlikely that AI-related autonomous systems could almost have limitless capacity to find, strike and destroy targets. Two, the significance of other military systems including the human military commanders could not altogether be sidelined and/or undermined. Three, AI-related weapons would favour the defence rather than the offence.

Other leading scholars also question the lethality and predominance of AI-related technologies by undermining the more traditional and classic warfighting strategies. They clearly argue from the Kitchin vision of war that "we will not have a model of an AI major-general", thereby dismissing the over-ambitious possibility of AI replacing human commanders.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2543620/ai-led-technologies-replacing-the-human-commander>

Pakistan's Commitment to Peace in South Asia

Rabia Nadeem

May 6, 2025

The recent deadly attack that took place in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) Pahalgam region in which 26 tourists were killed, has rekindled the dangerous tensions between Pakistan and India, between the two nuclear armed nations. The Indian reports suggests that 4-5 militants carried out the attack, and the Indian media swiftly accused Pakistan without waiting for an official investigation or statement from the Indian government. The Indian media hastily shifted blame to Pakistan, raising concerns about knee-jerk nationalism. The media fueled public outrage and increased cross-border tensions instead of scrutinizing their government's intelligence and security lapses, especially in a high-security tourist area. India shifted the focus of its security failures to blaming Pakistan

After the attack, India shifted the focus of its security failures to blaming Pakistan. This blame game was followed by escalating tensions through various measures, including talks of suspending the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), downgrading diplomatic relations, imposing visa restrictions under the SAARC, closing the Attari border, and using aggressive rhetoric. Indian leaders including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, warned of "unimaginable punishment" for the attackers and their backers, while the congressperson went so far as to suggest that "Rawalpindi should be flattened." Such reactions, taken without solid evidence, were highly irresponsible, especially considering the nuclear capabilities of both countries. "Water and blood cannot flow together"

The most spontaneous and alarming act by India was the suspension of the IWT a pact that has survived wars and decades of hostility. This step seems consistent with Modi earlier intentions, as he had hinted earlier as leveraging water as a tool after Uri attack, stating "water and blood cannot flow together". However, moving hastily toward unilateral suspension based on unverified claims violates international law and sets a dangerous precedent. It implies India may be using the attack to renegotiate the treaty to its favor.

Moreover, the cross-border fire continues to trade across the line of control (LOC). India doesn't appear to be willing to ease tensions. Analysts believe the Indian hostile action is driven by multiple factors. Popular pressure: Modi's Government after years of attributing

India as “invincible”, now faces public pressure to assert dominance. Political opportunism: The militants of Pahalgam attack targeted the Hindu tourists, that fits into the very narrative of BJP. The incident allows Modi to gain support from Hindu majority and regain the lost ground in Kashmir. Tourism and Image Management: the Pahalgam attack is damaging the India’s image in terms of security, but the harsh response serves as proof that will not be lenient on security issues in order to restore the trust of tourist and investors. Geopolitical Signaling: India wants to assert itself as a regional hegemon, showcasing military strength and an uncompromising stance on security to solidify its dominance in Pakistan offered an independent investigation with the assistance of neutral states, which India refused

Pakistan’s response was measured and justifiable. Following the meeting of the National Security Council, Islamabad warned that any attempt to block water would be considered – an act of war. Pakistan also called the Pahalgam attack – a false flag operation by India. Additionally, Pakistan offered an independent investigation with the assistance of neutral states, which India refused. India’s refusal to accept this investigation casts further doubt and strengthens Pakistan diplomatically. “An eye for an eye will make the whole world blind.”

In conclusion, India must undertake a greater responsibility in maintaining peace in the region and should take sincere diplomatic initiatives to move forward. The ongoing cycle of blame and retaliation must come to an end. Peace in South Asia should not be sacrificed for political gains or emotional nationalism. As Mahatma Gandhi wisely said, “An eye for an eye will make the whole world blind.” It is time for both nations to choose dialogue over conflict and cooperation over hostility for the greater good of their people and the region.

<https://stratheia.com/pakistans-commitment-to-peace-in-south-asia/>

Emerging Technologies: South Asian Strategic Stability

Fizza Mahak Batool

May 11, 2025

Emerging Technologies, mainly the Internet of Things (IOT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), drones, autonomous weapon systems (AWS), robotics, and hypersonic missiles, are the dominant development of the century as major powers are pursuing them to enhance their supremacy in the international system. South Asia is no exception, as emerging technologies are shaping South Asia's security landscape. India is also integrating emerging technologies into its defense systems, which has implications for the Strategic Stability of the region.

India is integrating AI into its defense system—Army, Navy, and Air Force, to enhance its warfare capabilities Under the 'strategic implementation of AI for National security and defense' in 2019, the Indian Department of Defense established the Defense AI Council (DAIC) and the Defense AI Project Agency (DAIPA) to provide AI-based transformation within the Indian military and defense system.

Substantively, the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO), in 1958, formed the Centre for AI and Robotics(CAIR) to heighten the technological capabilities of Indian defense for improved combat tactics. In 2018, the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) declared to transform the defense system of India through AI incorporation, causing the deployment of about 140 AI-based surveillance systems, mainly cameras, radar feeds, and sensors, along the Pakistan and China borders and technologies for atmosphere prediction, imagery analysis, drone-collision avoidance, and ship tracking. In 2021, the Indian army facilitated 75 aerial drones with AI capabilities to enrich Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) competencies

Besides, India has also followed autonomous weapons systems in its defense system, such as drones, unmanned ground vehicles (UGVs), and autonomous fast intercept boats (AFIBs). The fundamental advancements in AWS include the Drishti-10 medium altitude long endurance (MALE), MQ-9B Reaper Drone, S-400 anti-ballistic Missile defense (BMD) system, and the remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS). In 2021, the Indian army facilitated 75 aerial drones with AI capabilities to enrich Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) competencies. Consequently, AI plays a major role in

cyberwarfare and electronic warfare by providing cyber defense against malicious software and adversary attacks.

These technological advancements are based on the IOT capabilities, which enable them to be connected and perform tasks. Therefore, the drones, sensors, autonomous weapons, and other modern weapons in the Indian Defense use IOT for their operation. Similarly, India is deploying robotics technologies for various purposes, mainly continuous surveillance, effective patrolling in dangerous areas, automated threat detection, communication systems, and reduced human resource dependence. Substantially, India is also pursuing high-range missile technologies.

In November 2024, it tested a long-range, exceeding 1,500 km, domestically developed hypersonic missile, which placed it into the small group of countries, namely China, the US, and Russia, with advanced missile technologies. Likewise, in the same month, India launched its indigenous nuclear-capable K-4 missiles from INS Arighaat, a nuclear-powered submarine. Moreover, it tested its Phase-II Ballistic Missile in July 2024, which is a testament to India's growing arsenal, both in terms of quantity and quality, of missile systems. India is integrating the emerging technologies heavily into its defense system, through both indigenous efforts and global partnerships

Pakistan tested its Fatah-II rocket system, a small-range ballistic missile, and Shaheen-II, with a 2000 km range, in May 2024 and August 2024, respectively. However, in December 2024, the US imposed sanctions on Pakistan's missile systems under Executive Order 13382, which mentions the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their impact on the masses. Furthermore, Pakistan has relied on conventional force and nuclear deterrence while neglecting investments in the AI incorporation in its defense system. Also, Pakistan is a supporter of the ban on autonomous weapons systems, specifically in the Convention on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Hence, India is integrating the emerging technologies heavily into its defense system, through both indigenous efforts and global partnerships, while Pakistan lags in terms of military technological developments.

The integration of emerging technologies in the defense system of India can impact South Asian strategic stability. Initially, by changing the balance of power between India and

Pakistan, because of increased Indian capabilities, Pakistan's threat perception against India increases, forcing Pakistan to build its defense capabilities. Furthermore, the increased missile technologies of India can decrease deterrence between India and Pakistan. It can increase the first strike capabilities of India, allowing it to initiate an armed conflict against Pakistan. Similarly, the increased reliance of India on AI and AWS can decrease the chances of diplomacy and amicable conflict resolution measures between India and Pakistan. This in turn pushes them towards military confrontation. Pakistan can engage diplomatically, specifically through confidence-building measures (CBMs) and arms control treaties, with India to address the security concerns posed by India's technological growth

For Pakistan, to maintain a strategic balance with India, several steps need to be taken. Firstly, Pakistan should rationally increase its military capabilities through the integration of emerging technologies, mainly AI, AWS, and missile technologies, which will maintain the deterrence capabilities of Pakistan as well against its potential adversary, India. To increase its capabilities, Pakistan can adopt strategic partnerships and cooperation with powerful states, such as the US, China, and Russia. Moreover, Pakistan needs to focus on its economic growth to invest in modern technologies.

Also, Pakistan can engage diplomatically, specifically through confidence-building measures (CBMs) and arms control treaties, with India to address the security concerns posed by India's technological growth. Similarly, to address the ethical concerns of India's increased technologies, Pakistan can engage in international forums and increase the pressure on India to engage in diplomatic talks for regional stability. Hence, through adopting these means, the strategic stability of South Asia can be maintained, avoiding both historical rivals from getting into a wider-scale conflict.

[https://stratheaia.com/emerging-technologies-south-asian-strategic-stability/`](https://stratheaia.com/emerging-technologies-south-asian-strategic-stability/)

Economic Cost of Afghan Deportation

Hamza Nasir

May 11, 2025

Many consider that Pakistan's decision to remove Afghan immigrants from its territory has caused international and domestic debates. The Pakistani government strongly supports deporting undocumented people because of legal rules and concerns, which may impinge upon national security. This indicates that security remains first and foremost. Therefore, the government believes such a category of undocumented Afghan immigrants could potentially endanger the security of the country. As the government primarily focuses on enforcing laws by protecting its borders, many argue that it often ignores the bigger economic problems that Pakistan might face out of this process.

It may be argued that the forced removal of Afghan immigrants who spent decades working in Pakistan's economy puts entire economic sectors at risk while breaking informal trading networks and damaging susceptible urban centers and regional financial systems, particularly in Balochistan province.

The informal labor economy of Pakistan exists today because of the years of immigrant labor supplied by Afghan workers. All sectors of Pakistan's informal labor market included Afghan workers who performed brick kiln production as well as market vending and road transport and building construction activities. Business operations face difficulties due to the abrupt departure of Afghan migrant workers in these specific sectors. The current strain creates difficulties for Pakistan's national economy because it must manage high prices and limited growth while unemployment keeps rising

The high number of Afghans residing in Quetta and Peshawar has created workforce shortages that constrain both small businesses and contractors in maintaining their staff. Existing Pakistani labor rates induce businesses to raise their compensation because they want to hire these workers, but this cost increase jeopardizes the survival prospects of minimal-profit businesses. The current strain creates difficulties for Pakistan's national economy because it must manage high prices and limited growth while unemployment keeps rising.

Deportation policies affect the largest and least developed provincial area of Pakistan, which is Balochistan, most forcefully. The status of provincial capital belongs to Quetta because it serves as a commercial trading center that connects with the Afghan border. The connection between Afghan immigrants and Quetta's economy developed through employment practices, buying power, and trading operations.

Small-scale business owners from Afghanistan operated their ventures throughout the Meezan Chowk and Kandahari Bazaar markets in Quetta. Non-skilled workers from Afghanistan provided their labor to agricultural work along with construction and transport sectors. The informal sector's existence depended on their active involvement, and simultaneously they increased the market for residential property as well as food, goods, fuel, and other fundamental necessities. With their forced exit, Quetta's economy is witnessing a dual shock—both a loss of labor and a contraction in consumer demand

With their forced exit, Quetta's economy is witnessing a dual shock—both a loss of labor and a contraction in consumer demand. Rents in lower-income areas are falling due to a sudden surplus in available housing.

Daily markets have seen a noticeable drop in foot traffic. For a province already suffering from chronic underinvestment, minimal infrastructure, and one of the highest poverty rates in the country, this shock could not have come at a worse time. Their daily expenditure on rent, utilities, groceries, healthcare, and education created an ecosystem of demand that supported countless small and medium enterprises (SMEs)

Afghans in Pakistan were not just economic participants as workers—they were also consumers. Their daily expenditure on rent, utilities, groceries, healthcare, and education created an ecosystem of demand that supported countless small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The ongoing deportation campaign has led to a sharp decline in this demand, particularly in urban centers.

In areas like Quetta and Karachi's Sohrab Goth—home to large Afghan communities—local shops, tuition centers, and private clinics report fewer customers. This drop-in activity directly threatens the survival of microbusinesses that were already struggling in the post-COVID and post-flood recovery period.

Commerce and unofficial banking activities serve as another unobserved result that faces disruption from deportation activities. Many Afghan migrants served as connectors linking the parallel trade systems between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The activities of legitimate and black-market trading entities along Pakistan's borders enabled economic survival for residents of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial territories. The deportation of essential regional trade network maintainers will cause economic difficulties for exporters and importers along with freight operators because these networks are likely to decline.

The informal hawala system played a vital role by enabling Afghan families to send and receive money transfers through such networks across Pakistan. The disappearance of this financial activity might cause instability in already weak microfinance systems that operate in border regions along with refugee settlement areas.

The process of mass removal of inhabitants causes substantial financial costs to the state. It entails the state's allocation of major financial resources both in the maintenance of frontier security and detention procedures and frontier services management systems and transportation infrastructure. These funds from essential development targets such as the public health sector and social protection with the education sector should be allocated to Balochistan urgently so that the government can benefit the area, which has been mostly neglected by the regional and provincial parties in the past.

This action has been diplomatically criticized by international human rights organizations, which could further deteriorate the ties between Kabul and the rest of Afghanistan. If relations with the Taliban government deteriorate, they will be securing border instability, which will inevitably increase the risks of insecurity and trade operations in the region. On Pakistan's side, this multifaceted economic result from Afghan deportations is still relevant to the assessment by Pakistani decision-makers of its national security needs. Even though Afghan immigrants did not have proper immigration status, these people were fully integrated within the Pakistani socio-economic fabric. The removal of 1.5 to 3 million Afghan migrants took away their labor force and depleted their consumer spending, which affected underdeveloped areas such as Balochistan in particular. The

economy has to overcome such structural hurdles that it requires continued economic strength

The removal will not happen as long as there is no complete implementation of the total removal of the documentation between different governmental approaches through sustained partnerships creating documentation and local integration and regional diplomatic actions. The economy has to overcome such structural hurdles that it requires continued economic strength; thus, all new economic policies in Pakistan have to be assessed based on sustainability criteria to measure their effectiveness.

How a country goes about these two things—security and development, as well as practical decision-making and empathetic leadership—depends on the country itself. Instead of economic reduction plans, Pakistan needs to adopt economic strength-building strategies to secure borders and secure future success.

<https://stratheia.com/economic-cost-of-afghan-deportation/>

Geostrategic Significance of Balochistan

Zafar Khan

May 12, 2025

It is always interesting to analyze Balochistan from geographical and historical imperatives. To understand the external and internal challenges that the province Balochistan faces, one still needs to comprehend the broader picture of evolving world order affecting this part of the world. In other words, simply, we cannot escape from the harsh realities of geographical and historical imperatives of international politics affecting the province Balochistan in general and Pakistan in particular. Due to its sheer value bearing geopolitical and geostrategic significance, the province Balochistan must bring both opportunities and challenges. It is only a matter of time how this could be translated.

We all know Balochistan makes about 44% of Pakistan in land mass, thus it naturally becomes the largest province. It has 1468km porous border with Afghanistan in the North and 900km border with Iran, Sistan-Balochistan in the west. Also, it has about 800km coastline stretching up to the Arabian Sea in its South. Balochistan is located in a geopolitical crush zone. Due to its geopolitical and geostrategic significance, almost all major powers from the Persian empire under the reign of Nadir Shah Afshar, famously known as the Napoleon of Persia, Peter the Great of the Russian empire, the Great Britain, the Soviet Union and, of course, the US in the more contemporary time focused on this region. Regional players such as China, India, and a number of Middle Eastern countries are also interested in this part of the world

All other regional players such as China, India, and a number of Middle Eastern countries are also interested in this part of the world for a variety of geo-economic, geopolitical and geo-strategic reasons. Brig Agha Ahmad Gul, the former head of BTTN and a renowned intellectual having extensive knowledge on Balochistan's history and geography often quote three Balochistan: the Kalati-Balochistan famously referring to the time of Nadir Shah Afshar and Ahmed Shah Durrani in the middle of 18th century, the British-Balochistan when the Britian had ruled this part of the world since 1839, and the contemporary Balochistan after partition of the sub-continent since 1970 when Balochistan re-emerged and gained its status as a province. Today, we have more than 15000 government schools, a number of colleges and more than 10 universities

Therefore, from 1947 till 1970 during the famous General Ayub Khan's one-unit period, Balochistan was more famously called, the Balochistan States Union (BSU). Initially, we had only a small number of schools, colleges and no national level university until 1970. Today, we have more than 15000 government schools, a number of colleges and more than 10 universities. Of course, the University of Balochistan is the oldest university while BUITEMS remains one of the leading universities with an increasing international ranking offering both research and development programs of high-quality standard. Their students, like most of you all, have remarkable potential to demonstrate research and development endeavors.

When it comes to evolving centrality of Balochistan, the province does not only provide route to the landlocked countries such as Afghanistan and the Central Asian Republics up to the Arabian Sea for a variety of trade and economic activities, but it also provides a short-cut route to China potentially avoiding the Strait of Malacca dilemma where China with its competing strategies with the US could be strangled thereby slowing down the Chinese rise and dominance in Asia. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as broader part of China's grand strategy of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is one such opportunity

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as broader part of China's grand strategy of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is one such opportunity for the Chinese as an alternative against the US grand strategy of Offshore Balancing. It provides an alternative shortcut route to the Chinese increasing economic and trade activities. It does not only benefit the Chinese, but potentially benefit the people of Balochistan, Pakistan. Thereby, the success of CPEC can be argued as a linchpin for socio-economic progress of Balochistan including other parts of Pakistan if it is successfully initiated, managed and implemented with sustainable strategy. Major powers competing strategies and their geopolitical interests in the region are influencing our policies and strategies

Since both China and the US are in a consistent struggle for competition in Asia and since both the leading powers are interested in this part of the world, their competition, influences, and the struggle for dominance will trickle down and affect the smaller and the middle powers of the region. Therefore, Balochistan cannot be ignored. As mentioned

earlier, we are lying in the geopolitical and geostrategic crush zone. Major powers competing strategies and their geopolitical interests in the region are influencing our policies and strategies on how and why we need to quickly accommodate ourselves to the evolving changing world order. The fundamental principle of international politics teaches us that there is no permanent friend and no permanent enemy

The fundamental principle of international politics teaches us that there is no permanent friend and no permanent enemy. It is only the national interest that matters the most. It is a reality how the world works as it is, not the way we like the world to be. Those who closely read and understand international relations must know such principles of international politics. The fundamental question is how to understand and exploit the geostrategic and geopolitical value of Balochistan, Pakistan to the best of our advantages and to the worst of our adversaries.

First, we need to develop a sustainable national strategy comprising all essential ingredients of national sources to address both the traditional and non-traditional security issues Balochistan is confronting from a much broader perspective. The strategy must be consistent and thorough, irrespective of any political government.

The strategy must not focus on only one section while neglecting the other. It must be holistic in its approach addressing all outstanding issues. Hard and complex issues may require graduated approaches. But there could be a number of doable solutions for each issue which could be made part of the proposed sustainable strategy. For every single problem, there should be a doable, reliable and agreed-upon solution.

Second, bad governance is the linchpin of all issues we confront. Today, many may argue that most of the problems the province Balochistan faces are because of the absence of good governance. Governance includes almost everything from the rule of law to accountability and from effective and timely decision-making to effective management. It is also important to note that more than 90% of bureaucracy belongs to the locals of Balochistan. It is about time they deliver timely and efficiently

The broader national strategy should include to improve upon the governance issue. Once this fundamental issue is resolved, we will have many issues resolved as well. But I must argue that both Baloch and Pashtoon bureaucrats as part of the governance

system are serving other parts of the country. It is also important to note that more than 90% of bureaucracy belongs to the locals of Balochistan. It is about time they deliver timely and efficiently for the broader socio-economic development of Balochistan.

Third, since the province Balochistan potentially bears geopolitical and geostrategic interests including that of geoeconomic importance, we need to exploit the value that we have. There should be a fair combination of geoeconomic and geopolitical positioning for cashing out the maximum advantages. Therefore, the relations with Iran, Afghanistan, the Central Asian countries, and including other regional players across the Arabian Sea should be dealt tactfully. We should take all these countries on board for the socio-economic uplift of Balochistan and Pakistan. Balancing strategy must be crafted, adopted and managed to deal with all the regional stakeholders. Obviously, the success of this province must be presumed as the success of the country. Pakistan has already initiated a number of development projects as part of CPEC and has been trying to ensure the safety and security of the broader CPEC mega project

Fourth, China is important for Pakistan given the growing economic and strategic partnership the two countries have. CPEC begins from the Deep-Sea Port Gwadar connecting other provinces of Pakistan. It is a linchpin for regional connectivity bearing various development programs including the development of exclusive economic zones that ultimately will benefit the people of Balochistan and Pakistan. Pakistan has already initiated a number of development projects as part of CPEC and has been trying to ensure the safety and security of the broader CPEC mega project despite having limited sources.

Fifth, one of the renown Chinese strategist Sun Tzu remarked in his book the Art of War that “know yourself and know your enemy.” This is quite relevant in the 21st century. The leading powers, including the regional competing players, are affecting and exploiting this part of the world. With weak governance system and less economic wherewithal, 70% of Pakistani youth that is supposed to be a blessing for the country may be exploited to weaken the country thereby undermining the supreme national interest. We need to help resolve conflicts through robust political means

Finally, it can be argued that to be strong outside, we first need to be strong at home. We need to protect our masses from being exploited by external forces. We need to play a

balancing-strategy to meet our national interest. Therefore, sustaining good relations with all the regional players, including that of the leading powers, is imperative. We need to have a sustainable strategy for the socio-economic development of Balochistan. We need to help resolve conflicts through robust political means. Our political and bureaucratic entities need to bridge the gaps for the betterment of this province. A prosperous Balochistan means prosperous Pakistan. Balochistan is the crown jewel of Pakistan thereby it must be safeguarded.

Along with the geopolitical and geostrategic importance of Balochistan, the imperatives for geo-economics need to be incentivized and utilized. Therefore, we must never miss opportunities of regional players investment for regional connectivity provided such opportunities meet our national interest. Because at the end of the day, it is the vital security interests for Balochistan and Pakistan that would matter the most while dealing with all the regional players including that of the major powers in the system.

<https://stratheia.com/geostrategic-significance-of-balochistan/>

Reassessing Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia

Zafar Khan

May 14, 2025

In the wake of the Pahalgam incident on 22 April that killed 26 Indian tourists, the tension between Pakistan and India intensified. On 7 May, India attacked some 6 sites of Pakistan, primarily villages in Punjab and Azad Kashmir, which reportedly killed 31 and injured more than 50 noncombatants.

It is reported by many credible national and international sources that Pakistan in retaliation shot down at least 5 Indian jets that included 3 state-of-the-art Rafale aircraft. Neither side crossed each other's airspace while attacking each other despite the border contingency.

However, India continued to hit Pakistan, sending more than 70 Israeli-made Harop drones. Pakistan claimed to have shot all of them down. The question is: why has India under the pretext of terrorism been looking for preventive strikes below the nuclear threshold and what does it mean for broader South Asian strategic stability?

Although the two South Asian nuclear rivals are not aiming for a large-scale war after going nuclear, many argue that India, which is many times stronger than Pakistan in terms of conventional force, has aggressively been looking for space to wage a limited war under the nuclear overhang.

India is undertaking a dangerous shift in the South Asian deterrence dynamics, thereby practising coercive strategy against Pakistan. Out of frustration, it has crossed such a dangerous threshold many times with expected retaliation. Primarily, there are multiple reasons:

One, India has been modernising both its conventional and nuclear force capabilities by having a growing strategic partnership with several international players such as the US, Israel, France and Russia.

Two, India with its growing strategic partnership with the US especially being in the QUAD for containment of China has developed a hubris which can be blind, dangerous and short-lived particularly against a nuclear rival. Therefore, India in dangerous confidence is cashing out on this opportunity against Pakistan for preventive strike without producing

credible evidence and/or without even caring much about international norms and values. It is also dangerously replicating Israeli policies in South Asia.

Three, India while following the Chanakian principles poses to be the hegemon of the broader South Asian region. It aspires to have escalation dominance and would continue to undermine the nuclear threshold. In a dangerous precedent, it could opt for more preventive strikes against Pakistan for any inevitable crisis largely orchestrated by India.

Four, it is always tempted to undermine Pakistan's policy of credible minimum deterrence and its doctrinal posture of full spectrum deterrence falling within the ambit of minimum deterrence.

Pakistan's nuclear policy is largely misperceived by many Indian analysts, including Happyman Jacob in his recent piece in The Hindustan Times. Either Jacob badly lacks a conceptual understanding on nuclear strategy or misreads the evolving events between India and Pakistan, as follow:

a) Amidst the escalatory conflict between the South Asian nuclear rivals, India targeted a few Pakistani airbases and hit and damaged the Neelum Jhelum hydropower project, prompting Pakistan to retaliate in somewhat similar pattern to restore deterrence. Nevertheless, India became cautious not to further escalate given the fear of escalation to a nuclear level.

b) Exercising greater restraint being a responsible nuclear state, Pakistan continues to keep its conventional and nuclear deterrence intact against its potential adversary. Pakistan's nuclear forces bolstered with sophisticated delivery systems along with production of effective strategic countermeasures have become a reality that the adversary cannot escape away. Given such reality, the Indian security leadership may think many times before escalating the crisis up the ladder.

On the one hand, Pakistan should have the following imperatives:

1) It should continue to demonstrate being a confident and responsible state, practising a full spectrum deterrence falling within the ambit of credible minimum deterrence specific to India.

2) It should continue to modernise its retaliatory capabilities as part of effective countermeasures largely supported by emerging technologies. This is for restoring deterrence and broader strategic stability in South Asia.

3) It should continue to develop strategies by plugging the gaps that India has been exploiting to the best of its tactical and strategic advantages.

4) It needs to engage with leading international and regional players for crisis management and ultimately conflict resolution of all outstanding issues including the core issue of Kashmir. The unresolved Kashmir issue has been a nuclear flashpoint. Unless it is resolved, crises in South Asia are inevitable.

5) Despite India's hubris and rejection of the proposed strategic restraint regime in South Asia, Pakistan needs to urge India on such an imperative through both diplomatic and political channels.

On the other hand, the international community, especially the US, needs to: i) practice a balancing strategy in South Asia, as siding with one against the other is not a viable strategy which may not only harm their own geopolitical and geo-economic interests, but also threatens more serious crises in South Asia; ii) exercise its influence over India to potentially avoid its hubris and temptation for preventive strikes that accidentally could escalate to dangerous level, as it is not in the best interest of India itself; c) convince India that in the absence of direct talks with Pakistan and without producing credible evidence to any undesirable episode, it cannot simply make terrorism a pretext to preempt Pakistan; and, d) be itself unequivocally clear that two nuclear powers should never fight given the danger and wider implications of the use of nuclear forces.

Unfortunately, Indian security leadership appears to be crossing such thresholds, undermining the broader South Asian strategic stabilit

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2545656/reassessing-nuclear-deterrence-in-south-asia>

Lessons from History: Indo-Pak Escalations in Nuclear Era

Alamgir Gul

May 14, 2025

When countries with long-standing grievances obtain nuclear weapons, tensions rise, and the likelihood of war is increased. That might be unavoidable. Regardless of one's stance on deterrent optimism or pessimism, the fact remains that escalation between adversaries in a nuclear environment is a serious concern, with an unacceptable risk of it spiraling out of control. In fact, it can be argued that the extreme religious differences between India and Pakistan, the unique geographic conditions, and the existence of extremists, and chauvinists give the situation between the two countries a frightening urgency.

An era of peace and security was supposed to be established following the 1998 nuclear tests, but the propaganda and false-flag operations by Indian government in Kashmir escalated and increased tensions in South Asia. The concept of deterrence was well-established and logical, whereas proxy wars and propaganda were not. Both the initiator and the affected are inclined to move toward a sub-conventional warfare in the case of the proxy war, with the initiator seeking to gain an advantage and the affected seeking to escape this odd "no peace-no war" phase.

Pakistan is the nation most affected by the threat of terrorism and has been fighting it for decades. Terrorism is a global problem. No one can doubt Pakistan's ability to combat terrorism, and holding Pakistan accountable for aiding and abetting terrorism is a nebulous justification.

India's May 7 attack on Pakistan, based on unproven claims linking Pakistan to the Pahalgam incident and alleged terrorist targets, was reckless and may compel Pakistan to adopt stronger security measures to protect its sovereignty.

India propagated and orchestrated Operation Sindoor, which is threatening regional peace and security. It is the result of war-frenzied, mythologically motivated minds operating in Delhi under a Hindutva regime that seems to be running out of political capital. More than 57 international flights were in danger at the time of the incident because India was so focused on defeating Pakistan that it did not even care about civil aviation protocols.

After unilaterally suspending the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), obstructing the flow of water from the Chenab River into Pakistan, and conducting sorties on Pakistan's six locations—Sialkot, Bahawalpur, Shakargarh, Muridke, Kotli, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir—this is yet another flagrant breach of international standards.

In addition to destroying infrastructure, including schools and a mosque, the Indian action resulted in 31 civilian deaths and 46 injuries in Pakistan. Furthermore, there are rumors that India is aiming to destroy the Nauseri Dam, which is a component of the Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower project and could have serious geological repercussions.

Pakistan has reserved the right to respond under Article 51 of the UN Charter, which upholds a member state's right to self-defense. Pakistan's military approach was defensive rather than provocative, as it has demonstrated. Similarly, its conventional superiority was unquestionably established as it maintained its composure during India's humiliating collapse in a matter of hours.

If India hadn't revealed its devious plans against Pakistan, it would have consented to participate in an "independent" investigation into the Pahalgam tragedy.

In a statement, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry claimed that "Indian leadership has once again exploited the bogey of terrorism to further its false victim narrative, endangering regional peace and security." Due to India's careless actions, a major conflict between the two nuclear-armed states is now more likely.

The UN urged the neighbors with nuclear weapons to use the utmost military restraint. In a statement released by his spokesperson, Secretary-General António Guterres stated that "the world cannot afford a military confrontation between India and Pakistan."

China regrets the military action taken by India. In a statement, a spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry expressed concern over the current state of affairs. "Pakistan and India have been and will remain neighbors." They are also China's neighbors. China is against terrorism in all its forms. We implore both sides to act in the greater interest of peace and stability, maintain composure, use restraint, and abstain from actions that could make matters more complicated.

While jingoism and chauvinism are present in India, some aspects of India's media, culture, and politics have been encouraging their nation to engage in conflict. Maybe when they think of war, they think of action movies from Bollywood. Conflict's true reality is far more sinister. Numerous lives would be lost, and suffering would rise on both sides in even a traditional conflict. The thought of a nuclear conflict is too horrifying to bear. Thus, the march to war must be stopped and common sense must win out. For the situation to de-escalate and return to a more manageable state, the NSAs and the DGMOs must maintain their contacts in addition to international efforts.

<https://strafasia.com/lessons-from-history-indo-pak-escalations-in-nuclear-era/>

Pahalgam Attack: Propaganda Reloaded

Shehzadi Irum

May 14, 2025

Deception and betrayal have long been a part of global politics, but some states adopt them so skillfully that the distinction between truth and lies becomes blurred. Sadly, India's history is full of such bitter examples. A look at India's past reveals a clear pattern: whether they need to push a certain agenda, they don't hesitate to stage events, twist facts, and run massive propaganda campaigns. It's almost like a habit now – create the drama first, then find ways to justify it later, without ever giving real evidence. So many incidents over the years have felt less like genuine tragedies and more like carefully pre-planned moves to fuel public emotions and target others, especially Pakistan. Pulwama was no different than Pahalgam. It fits right into that same old story – a loud, emotional narrative built overnight, but when you dig deeper, all you find are questions, contradictions, and a truth they mask from the world.

The attack on Pahalgam is the latest drama in India's ongoing series of plotted propaganda. According to Indian media, the attack on April 22 in the Baisaran valley – a highly visited tourist location near Pahalgam town of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K), killed nearly 30 people, and injured more than 20 others, most of them were tourists. India, which has consistently blamed Pakistan in the past, is now shamelessly directing the same false accusation toward it, with no solid evidence. What's even more absurd is that while Indian media confidently broadcast the deaths of a married couple, the same couple later appeared very much alive. If nothing else, Indian media deserves full marks for creativity and zero for credibility.

However, Islamabad assertively rejected these baseless accusations from the very beginning, calling the attack a staged drama orchestrated by New Delhi, just like Pulwama, which was later exposed as a complete hoax. India was humiliated then, and they're heading for the same shame again – only this time, they have the full backing of the US officeholders of Indian origin, encouraging their dirty games even further. The real motive behind this incident is twofold: to put immense pressure on Pakistan, ruining its ability to take a strong and principled stand on the Gaza genocide, and second, to poison

the world's view of the Kashmiri legitimate freedom struggle by painting it as "state-sponsored terrorism".

By creating manufactured controversy and unjustly blaming Pakistan, the Indian government took extreme and irrational steps, expelling Pakistani diplomats, shutting down the Attari and Wagah border crossing, and most alarmingly, suspending the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), which is vital for Pakistan's water security. This is not just an irresponsible act – it is a clear violation of international law. The Indian regime, drunk on power and blinded by hatred, seems either too ignorant or too arrogant to grasp the fact that the IWT is not a mere bilateral understanding but a legally binding international treaty, brokered and guaranteed by the World Bank, which cannot be unilaterally annulled. By stooping to such low levels, India once again exposes its dangerous immaturity on the world stage. For Pakistan, this is yet another case of being scapegoated – another staged attack to inflame public sentiments and divert attention from their own failures and cling to power.

These tactics are far from new. Since 9/11, when India perceived Muslims to be weakened globally, it has repeatedly resorted to theatrics of this nature. Whenever Prime Minister Modi faces domestic criticism or internal pressures, such diversions are manufactured to shift focus. By fueling anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistan narratives, the BJP strategically tries to suppress domestic issues. This toxic strategy not only polarizes Indian society but also puts Indian Muslims at greater risk, making them frequent targets of hostility and violence.

The Pahalgam attack is nothing but another round of propaganda – a pre-planned move to tarnish Pakistan and incite hatred against Muslims. However, Pakistan has strongly condemned the attack because, at the core, we believe that every human life is invaluable, and no innocent life should be lost in such a manner. These kinds of incidents and the toxic reaction that follows, once again, bring to light the truth behind Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision for a separate homeland based upon the "Two-Nation Theory". If Pakistan had never come into being, Muslims would have been enduring the same suffering and violence that Indian Muslims face today, particularly after the Pahalgam attack. The pain, hostility, and marginalization they endure under a system

built on religious intolerance could have easily been our reality as well. The Pahalgam attack serves as a painful reminder of why Quaid-e-Azam's vision was so crucial: to shield the rights, dignity, and safety of Muslims from the forces that perpetrate hate and violence.

<https://centrefordevelopmentandstability.com/pahalgam-attack-propaganda-reloaded>

India's Blind Spot in South Asia

Sher Ali

May 15, 2025

In the immediate aftermath of a militant attack at Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir that killed 26 people, India initiated hostilities against Pakistan on baseless accusations. It attacked civilian sites inside Azad Kashmir and parts of Punjab through missiles and drones. Under the pretext of terrorism, India targeted non-combatant sites inside Pakistan.

India claims victory to satisfy its population for political gains at home, increase its regional and global standings and attempt to set up a new normal. However, as a result of Pakistan's befitting counteractions on May 10, India could not achieve its objectives across diplomatic, strategic, and technological domains.

Unrealistically, many in India claim to have undermined Pakistan's nuclear deterrence by targeting civilian sites inside Pakistan, as a result of which 33 innocent civilians lost their lives, with more than 40 got injured. India did not attack strategic sites inside Pakistan due to the fear of retaliation from the Pakistani side and escalation to the nuclear level.

Though there is a disparity in conventional forces between Pakistan and India, PAF once again demonstrated remarkable skills, maneuverability and will to safeguard the country's sovereignty. In contrast, the IAF, which recently inducted one of the world's most sophisticated French-made Rafale jets into its fleet, is reported to have lost five jets, including 3 Rafale, on May 7, in no time. This is a very big setback to India, which spends billions of dollars to modernise its air force.

Also, India's launch of more than 70 sophisticated Harop drones could not cause lethality and destruction as assumed, as these were effectively neutralised by Pakistan, mainly through a soft-kill approach, showcasing modern warfare capabilities and technological strides.

After the May 7 attacks on Pakistan, an increasing uncertainty prevailed in India. The imminent fear of retaliation by Pakistan, which was justifiable under international law, left India in a state of extreme uncertainty, as evidenced by the suspension of its billion-dollar IPL cricket event and the decline of the Indian rupee due to the security situation.

Furthermore, amid heightened situations, India suspended civilian operations at 24 airports.

After showing aggression, India, through massive use of propaganda, attempted to show it to the world that it has acted in self-defence, and that Pakistan has already targeted its territories. India's accusations of missile and drone attacks from the Pakistani side also show that it wanted to de-escalate at that point, as the prospects of countermeasures by Pakistan grew.

Yet again, India could not disregard Pakistan's nuclear deterrence and establish a new normal. While some in India argue that in 2016, 2019, and now, in 2025, Pakistan made no mention of the use of nuclear weapons. It is important to note that every nuclear weapon state has a nuclear doctrine and sets a threshold for nuclear weapon use at a certain level. Pakistan's nuclear forces, fortified with sophisticated delivery systems, have become a reality that the adversary cannot evade.

Pakistan showed strategic patience and exercised maximum restraint, making its case firm and justifiable in the light of international law before it launched the operation 'Bunyan Marsoos'. Pakistan's coordinated ground-based and aerial strikes seemed to have effectively bypassed India's advanced defence systems, which were supposed to be inescapable.

Pakistan took bold and firm actions and targeted the strategic sites inside India. Initially, India was reluctant to leave a space for diplomacy. But its massive diplomatic outreach amid a spiral of worries that led to the US brokering a ceasefire indicates a reversal in its stance.

The crisis brought India and Pakistan very close to a wider conflict, and the risk of nuclear escalation has never before reached this level. The situation worsened due to the absence of a dialogue mechanism and an effective crisis management mechanism. The US should play a role in resolving the longstanding issues, managing the regional security environment and maintaining strategic stability in South Asia, which is key to peace and stability in the region and beyond.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2545877/indias-blind-spot-in-south-asia>

Trump's Tariff War and its Global Consequences

Hamza Nasir

May 15, 2025

Indeed, economic policy is not a sovereign role, but its formulation is becoming increasingly geopolitical: it occurs in a globe that is more interconnected than ever before. Undoubtedly, the most significant change in global economic strategy was former US President Donald Trump's trade war, particularly with China. Tariffs were once used as weapons of targeted economic defense, but under Trump, they have become a tool for nationalistic economic dominance. Is there going to be a global recession soon? We get a sobering look at how these programs failed to deliver on their promises and nearly plunged the world into a recession.

Fundamentally, though, Trump's rationale was based on corruption: he claimed that by imposing high tariffs on Chinese goods, he was able to reduce the trade deficit, preserve American jobs, and restore home manufacturing. The idea was that there would be a multiplier effect, which would be funded by customers and companies who give "buy American" preference. However, the simple equation does not capture the complexity of the global economic ecology. International relationships were strained, global markets were upset, and American consumers suffered as a result of this boomerang.

The biggest and first consequence of these tariffs was a rise in prices for US consumers. Tariffs are forms of taxes on imports. Trump levied duties on Chinese steel, electronics, and consumer goods, and the costs did not disappear; they were added to the rest of the supply chain. Raw materials costed more for American businesses, and everyday goods cost more for American households. The Tax Foundation said the tariff war made an additional \$1,300 per year for the average US household. It was all meant to safeguard the average worker, but paradoxically, it ended up making their wallet more stretched.

But China's counterattack was prompt and precise. Trump's rural base was the target of Beijing's retaliatory tariffs on US agricultural exports. For instance, there was less demand for soybean producers. The solution was billions of dollars in subsidies to appease farmers, which is ironic given that the Trump administration promoted market capitalism and less government involvement.

This trade war is having a ripple impact on global supply chains. Modern manufacturing does not go from one country to another. Most items' components are obtained from a dozen or more countries. Tariffs can disrupt this system, causing delays, inefficiencies, and higher production costs. If businesses could not afford it, they rearranged their priorities or pushed the customers. However, in order to remain profitable, some companies were compelled to lay off employees. Tariffs threatened employment rather than protecting it.

This, however, went beyond the economic. Politically, the trade war represented a move toward isolationism and unilateralism. The move alienated US allies, already uncomfortable with the Trump administration's withdrawal from important international agreements. The steel and aluminum tariffs blindsided long-standing US allies such as Europe, Canada, and Japan. The Trump administration preferred to rather point the gun at their own friends instead of rallying their allies to work together in addressing trade-related concerns with China. By doing so, it corroded the global consensus that it is important for the international community to seek fair solutions on issues such as intellectual property rights and market access with China.

Uncertainty was increased by tariffs. Companies detest uncertainty. The world economy collapsed as businesses, including some banks, delayed hiring and investment decisions, which fueled concerns of a further market decline. The World Trade Organization reduced its projection for trade growth. To calm markets, the European Central Bank, the US Federal Reserve, and other central banks devised emergency measures.

If this 'economic nationalism and counter – tariff' pattern continues, the recession could come back on the horizon. The economic slowdown is not confined to US-China trade. But there are such shock waves through global financial systems, emerging markets, and commodity prices. The tremor that the whole world feels when the two largest economies in the world clash.

It is not possible for any single powerful country to set the rules of the global trade. Exactly to prevent confrontations such as the ones now being staged, there are institutions such as the World Trade Organization, regional blocs, and cooperative frameworks. Trump's

tariff war sidelined the U.S. and global economy's own mechanisms, and yet his actions weakened the very architecture of global commerce.

As the 2020s Unfold. By safeguarding everything, some countries get short-term votes while harming the economy in the long run. Tariffs are a brutal instrument that might harm a fragile global economy. They interrupt rather than build. They separate rather than unite.

If meaningful efforts are made to safeguard workers, policies should not follow Mr. Trump's dance but rather focus on education, innovation, and trade agreements that include workers and the environment. A global coordinated struggle against unfair trade by China should be more than just populist bluster and a one-man show.

Economic nationalism can no longer even pass as a strength in a globalized world. Strength is in real cooperation, strategy, and vision. Tariffs, if misused, turn that strength into self-inflicted weakness.

<https://strafasia.com/trumps-tariff-war-and-its-global-consequences/>

India's Enduring Strategic Paralysis in South Asia

Ali Abbas

May 16, 2025

Even Hellan Larsen in a recent article wrote on “Escaping Strategic Paralysis” where he delved into the concept of Asymmetric Nuclear Escalation and how nuclear armed states attempt to address military inaction borne out of the fear of nuclear war. In the article, he specifically talks about Pakistan-India nuclear dynamics and how India's evolving nuclear policy has seen a myriad of change, albeit subtly. The most recent development relating to India's deterrence policy vis-à-vis Pakistan is a dedicated focus on escalation dominance and damage limitation strategies

The most recent development relating to India's deterrence policy vis-à-vis Pakistan is a dedicated focus on escalation dominance and damage limitation strategies most notably characterized by bolstering credible first strike capabilities, also known as, counterforce targeting. Christopher Clary and Vipin Narang have also alluded to similar developments in India in their widely read paper, “India's Counterforce Temptations: Strategic Dilemmas, Doctrines and Capabilities”. Both the papers, however, revolve around the mistaken notion that Pakistan allegedly supports cross-border terrorism within Indian Occupied Kashmir, as if trying to justify India's unhindered and highly destabilizing modernization of its nuclear forces.

The truth remains intact, however, that India has for the past seven decades failed to ensure sustained peace in the Kashmiri territory under its occupation. Nor does it realize that its heavy-handed approach in Kashmir only flares up more resentment in the ordinary people. India has not provided any substantive proof regarding Pakistan's alleged involvement in the Pahalgam incident just as it has failed to provide evidence of the former's involvement in previous attacks on Indian troops in the past. The only advantage here is for India, whose fundamentalist government as well as a large chunk of its population chronically feed on war-mongering narratives and anti-Pakistan discourse

Pakistan has been tackling with its own terrorism problem for more than two decades, and its policymakers know well that there are no advantages to be derived from supporting militant outfits across the border. The only advantage here is for India, whose fundamentalist government as well as a large chunk of its population chronically feed on

war-mongering narratives and anti-Pakistan discourse. This trend was amply highlighted in the recent Pak-India conflict where India's massive misinformation campaign was exposed by Pakistan as well as independent observers from across the globe. However, continuing on the tradition of denial, pro-Indian media has not officially admitted to spreading fake-news, propaganda, and misinformation. Pakistan has time and again asked for impartial investigations into any militant attack and this time around Pakistan's response remained the same.

India's strategic paralysis still remains a reality. India's massive retaliation policy, its conventional-pause strategy such as the 'Cold Start', or its subtle shift to damage limitation strategies such as counterforce targeting have failed to impress any meaningful effects on Pakistan. Even its massive air launched offensive coupled with conventional missile strikes did not impress any meaningful impact to India's advantage – Pakistan responded with a strong resolve by downing India's most advanced jet, the Rafale, as confirmed by the international media. Policymakers in India have taken Joseph Goebbels statement at face value when he uttered his well-known quote, "a lie repeated a hundred times becomes the truth"

India's self-constructed fantasy about Pakistan's support for cross-border terrorism is a solo performance aimed at deliberately maligning Pakistan's image in the international community. Perhaps policymakers in India have taken Joseph Goebbels statement at face value when he uttered his well-known quote, "a lie repeated a hundred times becomes the truth". What's more concerning is that as the West sees India's potential as a tool to counter China, western academicians in congruence with their Indian counterparts are jumping into India's narrative bandwagon of maligning Pakistan by blaming it for supporting militant outfits in Kashmir – again without providing any substantial evidence for their claims. Pakistan once again proved its dominance in the domain of air-warfare after downing India's most sophisticated attack aircraft, the Rafale, after India's irresponsible attack across the International Border

The desperation in India is at its highest point. It has effectively failed to, in the words of India centric 'experts' to deter Pakistan. A more realistic way of putting it into words is that it has failed to bully Pakistan into a corner. But recent statements from India about

suspending the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) is one of the many desperate and utterly illogical signaling attempts by India to escape strategic paralysis. Indian fears of taking another military action against Pakistan and those fears were only exacerbated by the recent humiliation faced by the Indian armed forces and air force. Pakistan once again proved its dominance in the domain of air-warfare after downing India's most sophisticated attack aircraft, the Rafale, after India's irresponsible attack across the International Border.

By claiming to suspend the IWT, India is trying to lure Pakistan into a reaction. A reaction that will justify its aggressive stance against Pakistan. But Pakistan knows better that it should respond and not react. Contrary to India's fantasies, Pakistan is not isolated by any standards. It still enjoys strategic level cooperation by its allies – namely China, the Gulf countries, Turkey, and Iran just to name a few. The recent Indian statements are borne out of severe desperation and Pakistan should remain composed in its response by focusing on non-violent resolutions to the long-standing issue of water distribution

The costs of starting a fresh conflict with Pakistan remains high for India, and relatively higher than the benefits it will derive from any conflict. The recent Indian statements are borne out of severe desperation and Pakistan should remain composed in its response by focusing on non-violent resolutions to the long-standing issue of water distribution. However, this does not mean Pakistan should turn the other cheek if India departs on a misadventure. The country's conventional and nuclear forces are the first line of defense and they will continue to play that role no matter what comes from the other side of the border similar to the resolute defensive measures taken by them in the post-Pahalgam Indo-Pak conflict.

<https://stratheaia.com/indias-enduring-strategic-paralysis-in-south-asia/>

India's Acquisition of Directed Energy Weapons

Atta Ullah

May 18, 2025

India has been on the path of acquiring Directed Energy Weapons (DEW) for decades. In previous projects, under the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), it has been working on various laser-based air defense systems. These include the controversial Kali series, Mk-I, and the latest ones, such as Surya and Mk-II (A). On April 13, 2025, DRDO tested the latest laser-DEW called Mk-II(A), an advanced version of Mk-I. According to the official accounts, the success has put India in “an exclusive and limited club of nations” that possess high-powered laser-DEW. Previously, India has been flirting with the idea of soft kill against aerial threats such as aircraft, missiles, and satellites in hypothetical war scenarios with its adversaries, with laser technology and directed energy

Previously, India has been flirting with the idea of soft kill against aerial threats such as aircraft, missiles, and satellites in hypothetical war scenarios with its adversaries, with laser technology and directed energy. The much-touted and officially denied KALI (Kilo Ampere Liner Injector), a linear electron accelerator or particle accelerator that generates a strong pulse of energy to destroy an object, has been in the development phase for decades. Besides a series of laser-based KALI weapons systems with varying capacities, in March this year, India tested the latest Surya with a reported 20km range, 300 kW beam power, that, reportedly, can track aerial threats such as Drones, missiles, and other projectiles using concentrated energy beams to neutralize and destroy them. DURGA II, directionally unrestricted Ray-gun Array, is another 100 kW DEWs system deployed on multiple military platforms such as fighter aircraft, naval ships, and ground vehicles. The Center for High Energy Systems and Sciences (CHESS), a forefront of DRDO, has been working on a broad spectrum of laser, microwave, and other beam control technologies, including the recent test of Mk-II (A)

The Mk-II (A) mounted, with a 2-kilowatt laser and an approximate range of 1 Km, is capable of engaging, tracking, and destroying swarm drones, and neutralizing surveillance devices such as sensors, antennas, and other electronic circuits. The Center for High Energy Systems and Sciences (CHESS), a forefront of DRDO, has been working

on a broad spectrum of laser, microwave, and other beam control technologies, including the recent test of Mk-II (A).

The DEWs deployed against Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), drone swarms, fixed-wing aircraft, and low-flying missiles are particularly cost-effective and efficient in missile interception compared to conventional kinetic hit-to-kill missile interception. Once regarded as the weapons of the future, laser and directed energy weapons are deemed as a perfect gray zone weapon in contemporary irregular warfare. The DEWs, unlike traditional weapons that use bullets or explosive munitions, use electromagnetic beams, high-power microwaves, particle beams, pulsed Radio Frequency (RF), and other beam control technology by harnessing concentrated energy. Hence, these, with minimum reliance on logistics and operational cost, may have unlimited firepower given a continued power supply. It is important to note that DEWs are not a panacea for all adversities; various factors can hinder their effectiveness, including weather conditions such as rain, fog, and dust, which can scatter the laser and diminish its power.

The DEWs offer aerial defense against airborne threats. However, while there are meager benefits, there are also associated challenges with DEWs and countermeasures that may provoke a vicious cycle of action and reaction between the two South Asian nuclear rivals. It is important to note that DEWs are not a panacea for all adversities; various factors can hinder their effectiveness, including weather conditions such as rain, fog, and dust, which can scatter the laser and diminish its power. Additionally, effective countermeasures, like reflective coatings and electronic hardening, may challenge the overall efficacy of DEWs.

India's paranoia about prestige and political motives behind joining any "exclusive club of nations" that distinguishes it from its adversaries mostly outshines its technological and technical capabilities. The history of DRDO suggests a long list of prestige-driven initiatives with organizational competition and rivalry at the cost of operational capability and effectiveness. These technological developments offer some merger benefits, albeit greater challenges for regional peace and stability. Because the DEWs do not fall under any Arms control regime, their unchecked proliferation in South Asia increases challenges regarding their use in cross-border military operations and may strain an already fragile

stability in the region. India, as usual, is always on a path of militarizing and weaponizing technology in any possible way without a concern for the associated risk for regional peace and stability

India, as usual, is always on a path of militarizing and weaponizing technology in any possible way without a concern for the associated risk for regional peace and stability. The weaponization of emerging and other conventional technologies poses a greater risk of an arms race and instability due to a lack of any formal arms control regime or unambiguous international norms on prohibitions.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) regulates the use of force in conflicts and obliges the parties to an armed conflict to use fair means and ways of warfare. Currently, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) addresses specific conventional weapons, including technologies based on laser energy and impulse. Within this framework, Blinding Laser Weapons (BLWs) were banned. These anti-personal BLWs, a subtype of Directed Energy Weapons, were prohibited under Protocol IV, adopted in 1995, of the CCW for causing “unnecessary suffering” and “superfluous injury,” such as permanent blinding. The DEWs emit severely harmful radiation, even when they are non-lethal. The targets of directed energy may face long-term psychological effects.

The DEWs emit severely harmful radiation, even when they are non-lethal. The targets of directed energy may face long-term psychological effects. For example, exposure to electromagnetic beams or similar directed energy radiation can adversely affect the human nervous system, potentially leading to mental and psychological illness over time. Recently, there has been an increase in reported incidents of directed energy attacks against government officials, many of whom had developed mysterious illnesses with unusual symptoms. Although these attacks are not violent or fatal, they are difficult to detect and diagnose, making treatment challenging. Unlike other types of weapons and perpetrators, directed energy attacks are extremely hard to trace and attribute, which may encourage their continued use despite prohibition under IHL. There is a dire need for confidence-building and risk reduction measures on emerging technologies and other conventional means of warfare in South Asia

India, as usual, sets the precedent of weaponizing every technology within its range. The weaponization of dual-use technologies, in the absence of any arms control measures, only worsens the already fragile stability and increases the risk of an arms race in the region. Therefore, there is a dire need for confidence-building and risk reduction measures on emerging technologies and other conventional means of warfare in South Asia.

<https://stratheia.com/indias-acquisition-of-direct-energy-weapons/>

Unpacking Modi's Sindoor Speech: A Trail of Terror

Sadia Zahra

May 18, 2025

After the Indian Air Force internationally embarrassing performance during "Operation Sindoor," Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech to the nation exemplifies his government preference for aggressive rhetoric aimed at inflaming nationalist sentiments. While such speeches may resonate with domestic audiences, they reveal a troubling disregard for regional stability and international diplomacy. India's claims of surgical strikes and alleged victories over Pakistan, whether in Kargil, Balakot, 1965 Pak-Indo War or now "Operation Sindoor" follow a familiar script akin to its Bollywood movies, where India portrays itself as the victim and Pakistan as the villain.

However, history shows that whenever Pakistan gains the upper hand, India quickly calls for a ceasefire and later frames it as their victory.

This pattern is well-documented with history bearing witness to India's attempts to rewrite the narrative in its favour. Not only does history refute these claims, but even Indian officials have acknowledged Pakistan's resilience. Lt Gen P. R. Shankar recently admitted in a webinar that Pakistani fighters are not easily defeated. These acknowledgments reveal the emptiness of Modi's words.

US intelligence suggests Israel is preparing strike on Iranian nuclear facilities: Report

Furthermore, Modi's arrogance and refusal to engage in meaningful dialogue creates a dangerous dynamic, escalating tensions between two nuclear-armed neighbours. His recent statement that "Operation Sindoor has not ended but has been postponed" underscores India's unwillingness to pursue peace, instead fueling unrest and deepening divisions in South Asia. His claim that "we have taken revenge and received the price of erasing Sindoor" by destroying terrorist camps is equally misleading. In reality, India did not target enemy camps but attacked the homes of innocent Kashmiris, killing children and causing immense suffering to their mothers. Such actions amount to terrorism and further reveal the hypocrisy of Modi's rhetoric.

Modi's repeated claims about Pakistan fostering terrorism ignore the immense sacrifices Pakistan has made, losing thousands of lives while dismantling terror networks. Ironically,

while Modi accuses Pakistan of terrorism, evidence points to India's own involvement in destabilizing Pakistan. The case of Kulbhushan Jadhav, a serving Indian Naval Officer captured in Pakistan is a glaring example. His confession and the documentation of India's support for the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) highlight India's duplicity. Bike lifters nabbed, 5 stolen motorcycles recovered

Despite such provocations, Pakistan has consistently advocated for peace and has consistently confronted these accusations on international platforms, presenting clear evidence. At the UN Assembly, Pakistan's former foreign minister stated, "India blames Pakistan for terrorism, but it is India itself that is involved in fostering unrest within Pakistan. They accuse us of harbouring Osama bin Laden, a man who is no longer alive, while the butcher of Gujarat lives and he is India's prime minister. If you ask the people of Gujarat who spreads terror, they would point to their own prime minister." This remark starkly highlights India's double standards and its unwillingness to confront its own actions. Instead of addressing legitimate concerns about the terrorism inflicted upon Kashmiris under Indian occupation, Modi has conveniently weaponized the term "terrorism" to deflect criticism and justify his government's heavy-handed policies.

PHEC chairperson convenes first strategic dialogue at FJWU

Modi's speech repeated a familiar stance that India will only engage with Pakistan on matters of "terrorism and POK." These ultimatums reveal a shallow understanding of diplomacy, India's reluctance to address broader issues like Kashmir or participate in confidence building measures with Pakistan signals a disinterest in achieving true peace. Additionally, If India truly believes "this is not an era of war," as Modi claims, then why his constant focus is on military posturing? The reality is that Modi's rhetoric is not about securing peace but about securing votes, often at the cost of regional harmony.

South Asia, one of the world's most populous and resource-constrained regions, cannot afford the luxury of militaristic adventurism. Climate change, poverty, unemployment, and inequality are far greater threats to the region's future than perceived rivalries. Yet, India's focus remains on projecting power through hostile rhetoric and actions that undermine collective progress.

Forgotten Pakistanis in Bangladesh

Pakistan, on the other hand, has consistently advocated for peace and regional cooperation. Islamabad's calls for dialogue, including on the issue of Kashmir, remain open despite India's repeated rebuffs. For Pakistan, the path forward lies in fostering mutual understanding and working towards shared prosperity. India must recognize that its aggressive posturing does not strengthen its position but isolates it on the global stage. Genuine power comes not from military might but from the ability to lead by example. The future of South Asia depends on visionary leadership that prioritizes dialogue, cooperation, and sustainable development over conflict. For the sake of over a billion lives across this region, it is time to silence the drums of war and begin the difficult but necessary task of building peace.

Modi's speech, filled with bravado and bluster, serves as a stark reminder of how far we still have to go to achieve this vision. However, as Defence Minister of Pakistan said, "Pakistan remains steadfast in its commitment to peace, but it will not hesitate to defend its sovereignty if provoked."

<https://www.nation.com.pk/18-May-2025/unpacking-modi-s-sindoor-speech-a-trail-of-terror>

Bluff or Balance: Countering Operation Sindoor Narrative

Usama Khalid

May 19, 2025

On 7th May 2025, an opinion piece appeared in India's premier newspaper, The Hindustan Times titled, 'The many messages in Operation Sindoor'. Publishing such an ill-informed and shortsightedly analyzed pieces during a hostile crisis situation for the attraction of the readers is part of the adversarial state's propagandist strategy. However, this particular piece was jotted down by Happymon Jacob, who is considered one of the sane voices among the nuclear and defence experts in South Asia. Jacob is currently serving as an associate professor of disarmament studies at the School of International Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. Happymon Jacob quite vehemently made certain assertions without being vigilant about the sensitivity of the evolving matter and questioned the effectiveness of Pakistan's nuclear deterrence and called it a bluff

The article is focused on the Indian aggression that was committed across the Line of Control (LoC) and the Working Boundary (an International Border between India and Pakistan) in the early hours of 7th May. Happymon Jacob quite vehemently made certain assertions without being vigilant about the sensitivity of the evolving matter and questioned the effectiveness of Pakistan's nuclear deterrence and called it a bluff. Like many Indian analysts, Jacob has also declared such Indian aggression a renewed and revamped counter-terrorism strategy and unilaterally pronounced it successful. Pakistan reserves the right, according to the United Nations charter, of Self-Defense

Jacob has talked about – India's evolving counter-terrorism strategy, according to which India would not hesitate to take pre-emptive measures to target so-called terrorists anywhere inside Pakistan. However, this point cannot be neglected: Pakistan at the international level is an independent state that has its sovereignty over its land, air and maritime spheres and if some state threatens or violates it, then Pakistan reserves the right, according to the United Nations charter, of Self-Defense.

This is exactly how the events unfolded in the sequence. India thought that her aggression would be accepted, and Pakistan might not respond, but how could it be allowed by another sovereign state that possesses tri-services force concentration to inflict immense damage upon the adversary? Here in this conflict, one major element of deterrence

cannot be discounted, and that is both India and Pakistan are Nuclear Weapon States (NWSs). Although Jacob questioned the viability of Pakistan's nuclear deterrence, which will be discussed later, still he conceptualizes as one of the primary factors in South Asia's security landscape. Counterforce targeting by the Pakistan Armed Forces at the two fronts proved to be the detrimental blow at the Indian war mongering aspirations in the region

The military response by Pakistan on 10 May further dented the Indian claim of terming such heinous violation of the international law a New Normal. If such actions of the adversary go unanswered, then it may be termed a successful strategy, but counterforce targeting by the Pakistan Armed Forces at the two fronts proved to be the detrimental blow at the Indian war mongering aspirations in the region.

The ultra-Hindu nationalist agenda of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) under the leadership of Narendra Modi is based on hegemonic designs of Hindutva ideology according to which India will emerge as regional great power with an extended geographical existence and resource might discounting all other factors. In this current crisis as well, India behaved like one by ignoring the international calls of restraint and dialogue, and instead embarked on the path by targeting the counter value positions inside the mainland Pakistan that claimed numerous innocent civilian Pakistanis lives. However, the author on the other side jubilantly claimed that precision targeting has been carried out under the so-called renewed counter-terrorism policy of India to avoid casualties, but the opposite happened.

Happymon has been quite impressed with the Indian military pressers, which were largely misleading during the crisis. Those ill-informed press briefings are testament to not having media's questions and answers sessions. Apart from this, on the diplomatic front also, India was busy spreading misinformation, like the Indian high commissioner to the United Kingdom, who, in a live interview with Sky News, propagated false information by labelling the local Pakistani cleric as the brother of the banned entity. However, on the other side the Pakistani military spokesperson has presented the cases each time with hardcore professionalism, proofs and evidence. Without allowing the international media to ask bitter questions, learned Indians should refrain from terming such pressers as the most

systematic ones even during an evolving scenario. Pakistan Air Force (PAF) at the aerial level and Pakistan Army on ground have proven that they are capable of responding to the conventionally superior force concentration of the adversary at the time of conventional crisis

The author remains hugely He lamented Pakistan's deterrence policy of Full Spectrum Deterrence (FSD) falling within the ambit of credible minimum deterrence specific to India. Pakistan Air Force (PAF) at the aerial level and Pakistan Army on ground have proven that they are capable of responding to the conventionally superior force concentration of the adversary at the time of conventional crisis. Therefore, if the crisis has not escalated to the levels of nuclear threshold, then how somebody can question credibility of Pakistan's nuclear deterrence.

The immature analysis by Jacob of such a caliber during an evolving conflict is quite concerning for the academic circle of India, as it seems that they also succumbed to the false propagation of their politico-military elite, irrespective of what the international community is indicating about the on-ground situation. The operational preparedness by the Pakistan armed forces at the conventional and sub-conventional level after this short but decisive stint should not be questioned. India is shifting from being the world's largest democracy to the world's largest autocracy under the current ultra-nationalist Hindu regime of BJP led by Narendra Modi

India is shifting from being the world's largest democracy to the world's largest autocracy under the current ultra-nationalist Hindu regime of BJP led by Narendra Modi. Banning the sane voices during the hostile crisis like situation shows where India is actually headed. As far as nuclear deterrence is concerned, Pakistan's nuclear deterrence remains robust and credible, as demonstrated by the prevailing strategic balance with India, a state significantly larger in both geographic and military terms. The persistent threat of nuclear retaliation has effectively dissuaded India from initiating a full-scale invasion or engaging in overt military aggression against Pakistan.

<https://stratheia.com/bluff-or-balance-counter-acting-operation-sindoor-narrative/>

Pahalgam: The Story of False Flag Operations and IWT

Harsa Kakar

May 21, 2025

The story of the “Indian false flag operations” continued as recently on April 22, 2025, when a deadly terror attack was carried out against unarmed innocent civilians in Pahalgam who were there to visit the valley as tourists. Reportedly, 26 Tourists were killed on the spot, and two more critically injured breathed their last on April 24, 2025, with the other 20 critically injured still in the ICU. The attack left yet another mark on the lives of Kashmiri people, being threatened, and speaks highly of the Indian forces’ inability to secure the valley from terrorism. India has again pointed fingers at Pakistan. In the aftermath of this unfortunate incident. India responded by diplomatic protest in the form of the adjournment of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) (1960) with Pakistan and cancellation of Pakistani visas, asking Pakistani nationals to leave the country within 48 hours, and also a full-fledged expulsion of Pakistan’s diplomats from India. This has led to increased bilateral tensions between the countries.

India has accused Pakistan of involvement in the terror attack when Kashmir Resistance, aka the Resistance Front (TRF), referred to as a proxy of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) group (by India), is said to have claimed responsibility for the attack. India has claimed that about five of the terrorists’ digital footprints trace back to Pakistan. However, these claims have not been proven so far.

Pakistan’s government officials have denied all claims of its involvement and condemned the attack, and sympathized with the death of innocent tourists in the valley. In response to India’s diplomatic protests, Pakistan has suspended the Samjhauta Express, a train service travelling to India for an unpredictable period for now. However, a clear response to the situation from Pakistan is yet to come.

The main issue in the whole situation is India’s suspension of the IWT of 1960 with Pakistan. India is very well aware of Pakistan’s dependence on the water from the mighty Indus River for its daily usage. Pakistan has referred to it as a ‘politically motivated’ decision from India. It is worth noting that this suspension of the treaty comes at a time when there is a rising debate of Pakistan’s increasing water needs that require Pakistan

to reconsider terms with India on the Indus River through renegotiations in the Indus Water Treaty.

Also, there is a controversy on the rise related to the Indus River System Authority (IRSA) agreement in which provinces like KPK, Punjab, and Sindh have been demanding a rise in their percentage due to a decrease in their water tables and lesser rainfalls as a consequence of climate change. At a time like this, it is suitable to claim that the terror attack in Pahalgam, as unfortunate as it is, has come as a good fortune for India, providing a leverage to unilaterally put the IWT in abeyance when the issue could have been addressed through diplomatic negotiations.

Timely policy options could include the activation of backchannel diplomacy by the nationals and the officials from both countries to help ease the increasing tension. It is to be ensured by both countries to avoid politically motivated decisions in their future dealings with each other, to avoid conflict. Additionally, both countries should opt for counter terrorism cooperation to fight terrorism, being the key players of South Asia and being prone to major terror attacks in recent times. Similarly, both countries need to resume their dialogue process and restart their confidence-building measures to resolve their dispute mutually. Also, intermediaries like the US, Russia, or China, if involved, need to play a constructive and positive role. Their focus should be to manage the conflict from rising to a serious military conflict between the South Asian rivals.

In essence, as much as the current terror attack in the valley is concerned, it is very unfortunate and must be prevented from occurring in the future at all costs. However, pointing fingers will not solve anything between India and Pakistan. To solve the issue, India's suspension of the IWT is questionable and politically motivated at its best. Alternatively, both countries need to look for measures to counter terrorism mutually, and the path of back-channel diplomacy needs to be followed to ease tensions and find a way out.

https://www.ia-forum.org/Content/ViewInternal_Document.cfm?contenttype_id=1&ContentID=15069

بلوچستان اور ایک اور نازک دور

Asad Ullah Raisani

May 21, 2025

یہ ملک کی تاریخ میں پہلی بار نہیں کہ بلوچستان ایک مقبول موضوع بن چکا ہے۔ چاہے وہ سیاستدان ہوں، ماہرینِ تعلیم، میڈیا پرسنز، تجزیہ کار، یا سیکورٹی اداروں کے اہلکار—آج پاکستان میں تقریباً ہر سطح پر بلوچستان پر بات ہو رہی ہے۔ بدقسمتی سے، بجائے اس کے کہ اس پر بات کی جائے کہ بلوچستان کے اس مسلسل اور بظاہر نہ ختم ہونے والے "نازک دور" کو ختم کرنے کے لیے عملی طور پر کیا اقدامات کیے جا سکتے ہیں، اکثریت کی گفتگو صرف مسائل کے گرد گھومتی ہے اور ان اکثریت میں بھی کئی ایسے ہیں جو بلوچستان کے مسائل سے صحیح طور پر واقف نہیں۔

بلوچستان کے مسائل کی جب بھی بات کی جاتی ہے تو اکثر صوبے میں بدامنی کے اسباب کو صحیح طور پر نہیں سمجھتا جاتا۔ کچھ افراد تمام مسائل کا ذمہ دار سرداروں کو ٹھہراتے ہیں، جبکہ بعض کا ماننا ہے کہ مرکز نے بلوچوں کو ان کے قدرتی وسائل اور معدنیات میں ان کا جائز حصہ نہیں دیا۔ کچھ لوگ یہ بھی دلیل دیتے ہیں کہ بعض اداروں نے بلوچستان میں سیاسی عمل کو جڑ پکڑنے نہیں دیا اور کچھ کا کہنا ہے کہ بیرونی مداخلت کی وجہ سے بلوچستان کے حالات میں بہتری نہیں آتی۔ یہ تمام آراء مکمل طور پر غلط نہیں ہیں، ان میں کسی حد تک سچائی ضرور موجود ہے۔

تاہم، مستقبل کے لیے کوئی مؤثر اور حقیقی لائحہ عمل مرتب کرنے کے لیے ضروری ہے کہ صوبے کے مسائل کو ماضی کی بغاوتوں اور جدوجہدوں کا موجودہ صورتحال سے موازنہ کر کے سمجھا جائے، اور اس حقیقت کو تسلیم کیا جائے کہ آج کے بلوچستان کے مسائل میں سرداروں کی حیثیت دن بہ دن غیر متعلق ہوتی جا رہی ہے۔

سے اب تک کئی مسلح بغاوتوں کا سامنا کر چکا ہے، جن کی بنیاد سیاسی محرومی، اور ناانصافیوں 1948 بلوچستان پر رکھی گئی۔ پیچھلے تمام بغاوتوں اور انسرجنسی کی قیادت کسی نہ کسی سردار یا سرداروں نے کی۔ معروف مصنفین اور ماہرین، جیسے شیر محمد مری، سیلگ بیرسن و دیگر کے مطابق پہلی بغاوت اس وقت سامنے آئی جب قلات کے آخری خان، میر احمد یار خان کے بھائی پرنس عبد الکریم نے بلوچستان کے پاکستان سے الحاق کی مخالفت کی۔

میں ون یونٹ اسکیم کے نفاذ کے بعد سامنے آئی، جس کے خلاف خان آف قلات 1955 دوسری بغاوت یا انسرجنسی میں 1962 سال کی عمر میں مسلح مزاحمت کا آغاز کیا۔ تیسری بغاوت 90 نے احتجاج کیا اور نواب نوروز خان نے اس وقت شروع ہوئی جب صدر ایوب خان نے چند بلوچ رہنماؤں سے ان کے روایتی القابات جیسے سردار اور نواب واپس لے کر اپنے من پسند لوگوں کو ان القابات سے نوازا، جس سے مسلح ردعمل نے جنم لیا۔ تاہم، یہ تینوں بغاوتیں نسبتاً مختصر المدت ثابت ہوئیں۔

میں اس وقت پھوٹی جب ذوالفقار علی بھٹو نے بلوچستان کی منتخب حکومت کو 1973 سب سے خونریز انسرجنسی برطرف کر دیا۔ بیرپسن کی کتاب کے مطابق، اس بغاوت میں ہزاروں فوجی اہلکار اور بلوچ باغی مارے گئے۔ اگرچہ کے درمیان صوبے میں نسبتاً سکون رہا، مگر روایتی قبائلی رہنما جیسے نواب خیر بخش مری، 1999 سے 1977

نواب اکبر بگٹی اور سردار عطا اللہ مینگل کی اہمیت برقرار رہی۔ جلاوطنی یا سیاسی دباؤ کے باوجود، یہ سردار بلوچ شناخت اور سیاست کے مرکزی کردار و بلوچ حقوق اور خود مختاری کے دفاع کی علامت رہے۔

میں شروع ہوئی۔ اس بغاوت کی 2004 جہاں تک بلوچستان میں جاری حالیہ شورش یا انسرجنسی کی بات ہے، یہ جڑیں سیاسی پسماندگی اور قدرتی وسائل کے کنٹرول پر دیرینہ شکایات میں تھیں۔ اس کے بعد سے یہ ملک کی تاریخ میں سب سے طویل عرصے تک چلنے والی بغاوت بن گئی ہے۔

میں ڈاکٹر شازیہ خالد کے ریپ کیس کے بعد اس بغاوت میں کشیدگی بڑھ گئی۔ اکبر بگٹی نے اس زیادتی کی 2005 شدید الفاظ میں مذمت کی اور حکومت سے چند مطالبات کیئے۔ اکبر بگٹی کے مطالبات کو اس وقت کے صدر جنرل میں (2006) نے نظر انداز کر دیا، جس کے نتیجے میں پرتشدد جھڑپیں ہوئیں اور 1999-2008 پرویز مشرف (اکبر بگٹی کی موت واقع ہوئی۔ اس واقعہ نے ایک بڑے پیمانے پر شورش کو جنم دیا، یہاں تک کہ مکران کے علاقے تک، ایک ایسا علاقہ جو پچھلی بغاوتوں میں شامل نہیں رہا، پہنچ گیا اور عسکریت پسند گروپوں میں بھرتی میں نمایاں اضافہ ہوا۔

تاہم، یہ سمجھنا ضروری ہے کہ آج جاری شورش اور بلوچوں کے حقوق کے لیے جاری پرامن جدوجہد دونوں میں سرداروں نے بلوچوں پر اپنا تسلط کھو دیا ہے۔ بلوچوں نے تیزی سے اپنے قبائلی رہنماؤں سے خود کو دور کرنا شروع کر دیا ہے۔ آج سیاست میں داخل ہونے والے بہت سے بلوچ ایسے شخصیات کو مثالی بناتے ہیں جو طلبہ سیاست سے ابھرے، متوسط طبقے کے پس منظر سے آئے اور نچلی سطح پر سرگرمی کے ذریعے اپنے موجودہ سیاسی عہدوں پر پہنچے۔

اسی طرح جو لوگ بلوچ عسکریت پسند گروپوں میں شامل ہوئے ہیں یا شمولیت کے خواہشمند ہیں وہ بھی کسی سردار کے زیر اثر ایسا نہیں کر رہے۔ اس کے بجائے، وہ مسلح تحریکوں کے مشترکہ خواہشات اور شکایات سے متاثر ہیں۔ نتیجے کے طور پر، اب بہت سے عسکریت پسند، سرداروں کے گھرانوں کی بجائے متوسط گھرانوں سے آتے ہیں۔

بلوچوں کے بنیادی حقوق کے لیے سرگرم کچھ کارکنوں کی بڑھتی ہوئی شہرت سے یہ بات مزید واضح ہوتی ہے کہ بلوچ اب سرکار اور سردار سے بیزاری کا اظہار کرنے لگے ہیں اور سرداروں سے کافی حد تک دستبردار ہو چکے ہیں۔ یہاں تک کہ بعض قوم پرست سیاست دانوں کے بلند و بالا سیاسی کیریئر بھی ایسی تحریکوں میں سے ایک کی حمایت کے اظہار سے قائم رہتے ہیں جس کی قیادت غیر سردار کرتے ہیں۔ یہ حکام کے ساتھ ساتھ بلوچوں کے لیے بھی وضاحت اور پیچیدگی دونوں لاتا ہے۔

تاریخی طور پر ریاست کے لیے چند قبائلی سرداروں سے بات چیت کرنا آسان ہوتا تھا، مگر آج کی شورش ایک غیر مرکزی شکل اختیار کر چکی ہے، جس میں متوسط طبقے کے بلوچ نوجوان قبائلی قیادت سے ہٹ کر خود مختار انداز میں سرگرم ہیں۔ اس تبدیلی نے تنازع کو قابو پانے کے لیے مزید پیچیدہ بنا دیا ہے، کیونکہ موجودہ عسکریت پسندوں کے ارادوں کو سمجھنا مشکل ہے اور ممکنہ طور پر انہیں بیرونی حمایت بھی حاصل ہے۔

سیاسی طور پر، بلوچ قبائلی قیادت سے تیزی سے مایوس ہو رہے ہیں، وہ ایسے نمائندوں کی تلاش میں ہیں جو نچلی سطح کی تحریکوں سے نکلیں اور ان کی خواہشات و شکایات کو سمجھیں اور انکی حقیقی نمائندگی کریں۔ جبکہ بلوچوں کی نمائندگی کا دعویٰ کرنے والوں کے پاس اکثر حقیقی حمایت کی کمی ہوتی ہے، جبکہ بااثر آوازوں کو نظر انداز کر دیا جاتا ہے۔

قبائلی اختیار کا کمزور پڑنا ایک موقع فراہم کرتا ہے کہ ایک نئی، تعلیم یافتہ بلوچ قیادت ابھرے۔ تاہم، سیاسی انجینئرنگ کا عمل مسلسل انتخابی نظام پر اعتماد کو نقصان پہنچا رہا ہے، جس سے بلوچستان کے لوگوں میں مایوسی میں اضافہ ہو رہا ہے۔ اس بات کو سمجھنے کی ضرورت ہے کہ نئی بلوچ نسل، جو احتساب اور انصاف پر زور دیتی ہے، ایک زیادہ جمہوری اور شمولیتی سیاسی ثقافت کی راہ ہموار کر سکتی ہے۔

یقین صرف دعووں یا سخت رویوں سے بحال نہیں ہوتا۔ بلوچ عوام کا اداروں پر اعتماد صرف زبانی وعدوں سے واپس نہیں آئے گا، خاص طور پر جب وہ برسوں سے وعدہ خلافیوں کے عادی ہو چکے ہیں۔ اب وقت آ گیا ہے کہ باتوں کو فوری، سنجیدہ اور عملی اقدامات کے ذریعے عمل میں بدلا جائے، کیونکہ بلوچستان کے لوگ مزید صبر کے متحمل نہیں رہے۔

آج بلوچستان واقعاً ایک نازک موڑ پر کھڑا ہے اور نازک دور سے گزر رہا ہے جہاں پرانے طریقے اپنی افادیت کھو چکے ہیں۔ سردار اب بلوچ قوم کی آواز کے واحد ترجمان نہیں رہے۔ ایک نئی، تعلیم یافتہ اور باشعور نسل سامنے آ چکی ہے جو ایک مختلف طرز سیاست کی خواہاں ہے — ایسی سیاست جو حقوق، انصاف اور احتساب پر مبنی ہو۔

اگر ریاست اب بھی انہی فرسودہ ڈھانچوں پر انحصار کرتی رہی، یا جمہوری عمل کے لیے گنجائش پیدا کرنے میں ناکام رہی، تو وہ اس نوجوان نسل کو کھو دے گی جو اب بھی امید رکھتی ہے، لہذا اس نازک دور سے نکلنے کے لیے نوجوانوں کے لیے سیاسی راہیں ہموار کی جائیں۔ جیسا کہ جان ایڈمز نے کہا تھا: "ریاست قانون کی بالادستی سے چلنی چاہیے، افراد کی مرضی سے نہیں۔" بلوچستان بھی یہی چاہتا ہے۔

<https://dailyurducolums.com/blog/asadullah-raisani/balochistan-aur-aik-aur-nazuk-daur.aspx>

Lack of Consensus on Lethal Autonomous Weapon System

Ali Abbas

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The United Nations General Assembly discussed the future of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) and deliberated on whether this new domain of warfare should enjoy a natural growth trajectory or be limited in its scope and effect. The UN Secretary General, António Guterres called them “politically unacceptable, and “morally repugnant”, expressing his deep regret at the indiscriminate development of such weapons. However, there is a collective ambiguity regarding the future of AI and Robotics in warfare. The US, China, Russia, the UK, and India to name a few, oppose the imposition of any caps or limitations on LAWS. The EU’s response remains mixed where Germany and France support some degree of regulation while others are open to restrictions. Pakistan proposes temporal, spatial, and target related limitations on the use of such weapons so as to minimize unwarranted escalation

Pakistan has maintained its strong opposition to fully autonomous lethal weapons that work in the “human-out-of-the-loop” design. It argues that the provisions of IHL remain incompatible with the design of the LAWS as they undermine basic principles of accountability and responsibility – both of which are the basic premises that the convention is based on. Regarding weapons that cannot be banned otherwise, Pakistan proposes temporal, spatial, and target related limitations on the use of such weapons so as to minimize unwarranted escalation. Due to the problems of attribution, actors who employ LAWS may breach others’ sovereignty and catalyze escalation

The latter proposal by Pakistan stands in line with the legal issues pertaining to LAWS which advocate for appropriate distinction between combatants and civilians. In addition to that, the concept of proportionality, that determines actions such as self-defense, are threatened by the induction of LAWS – due to the inherent challenges to attribution in autonomous weapons, state actors may be tempted to not use these weapons proportionately. Another concern relates to the UN Charter itself that prohibits extra judicial killings and assassinations, especially of high-profile entities. Again, due to the problems of attribution, actors who employ LAWS may breach others’ sovereignty and catalyze escalation.

One may believe that the current debates on limiting or banning LAWS would not bear any substantial results to the betterment of humanity at large any time soon. For instance, nuclear weapons have a far greater potential for destruction, yet it took the major powers more than two decades to finalize a framework, known as the NPT, to limit the proliferation and use of nuclear weapons. Only after thousands of tests and after maturing the technology did the major nuclear powers agree to stop the expansion of their nuclear programs. This was inevitably rejected by many states which include Pakistan and India, who suspected that the NPT's original motive was to make nuclear weapons exclusive rather than control the destabilizing effects of nuclear proliferation. Skeptics of the NPT contend that universal application of limitations is necessary

Skeptics of the NPT contend that universal application of limitations is necessary. The NPT clearly disregards such claims recognizing the nuclear status of the P5, i.e. the US, Russia, China, France, and Britain, while simultaneously refusing to recognize the nuclear status of nations that became nuclear powers after 1 January 1967 – this is highlighted in the treaty's article 9, para 3.

The disarmament efforts revolving around LAWS may be overridden by major powers' national interest calculations. A trend seems to exist where countries that possess some degree of autonomous weapons capabilities do not want to lose their 'hard-gained' edge by relinquishing those weapons. On the other hand, nations that do not possess such weapons or have not developed them yet are lobbying for additional protocols in the IHL that will regulate and limit the use of these weapons, and in some cases have proposed an outright ban on fully autonomous weapons for reasons discussed above.

Another consideration is that states that often rely on aggressive foreign and defense policies will nonetheless benefit from employing LAWS, irrespective of their moral and ethical implications – in a realist world, morality is often given negligible priority any way. In the uncertain global security environment, states will push to pursue these weapons more rigorously

It seems unlikely that a broad consensus on the future of LAWS will be reached in the short-run. In the uncertain global security environment, states will push to pursue these weapons more rigorously due to national interest, power projection aspirations, and

aggressive defense calculations, lest they lose their competitive edge vis-à-vis their adversary.

From a liberal perspective, the current state of affairs can only be described as an unfortunate descent towards a state of devastation. For realists, the trend of LAWS induction is a matter of bolstering national security, maintaining the balance of power, establishing conventional deterrence, and attaining pride in technological advancement. When it comes to warfare and weapons, actors typically disregard liberal concepts and adhere to realist ones

When it comes to warfare and weapons, actors typically disregard liberal concepts and adhere to realist ones. If that is indeed the case, prohibition of LAWS will remain highly unlikely unless a major catastrophe, borne out of unregulated use of LAWS, implies a shock significant enough to change the views of all parties involved.

<https://stratheia.com/lack-of-consensus-on-lethal-autonomous-weapon-systems/>

Lethal Autonomous Weapons in the Indian Defense: Implications for Pakistan

Fizza Mehak Batool

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Emerging technologies have transformed the defense postures of states, and the major states are integrating them into their systems. India is no exception, as it also incorporates modern technologies into its defense system. One such advancement is the lethal autonomous weapons system (LAWS), a weaponry system based on AI and robotics that provides offensive and defensive capabilities, enabling it to target the adversary without human involvement.

LAWS are divided into three groups based on their level of autonomy: tele-operation, semi-autonomous, and fully autonomous systems. India has, till now, incorporated tele-operation and semi-autonomous weapons. Today, LAWS are integrated into the three major fields of the Indian defense, namely the Mhow (Army), INS Valsura (Navy), and Air Force Station Rajokri (Air Force). This integration in the Indian Defense brings several implications for Pakistan, which Pakistan needs to counter through certain steps to maintain regional stability.

The Indian army is using the LAWS for border security and conventional weaponry systems, such as the rail-mounted robotics that can easily recognize faces and facial expressions and are particularly used in the border areas by the army. Furthermore, several swarms and drones have been upgraded by integrating Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) features, which give them the characteristics to detect and attack targets independently. Also, the army is taking a step to equip the soldiers with devices, which are light, convenient, and easy to wear, that possess Natural Language Processing (NLP) features to expand their abilities to collect information regarding the opponents and understand them.

Similarly, the Navy has amalgamated LAWS into its system, such as maritime motion pattern recognition & anomaly detection, acoustic and magnetic signature analysis, and AI-enabled voice transcription software. It initiated its project Autonomous Fast Intercept Boat (AFIB) in 2022, which performs autonomous functions to examine, rescue, and

conduct surveillance even in opaque maritime traffic and shallow water. In 2023, it initiated its first underwater vehicles (UUV), named Neerakshi, to conduct underwater surveys for mine revealing and discarding. In addition, the AI-powered Combat Management System (CMS) is also being promoted in warships to increase their timely and fast assessment and decision-making.

Consequently, the Indian Air Force (IAF) is also adopting autonomous weapons into its systems, such as the enemy aircraft activity recognition & classification system that identifies enemy aircraft and gives them predictive analysis features. To replace the Russian MiG-29 K fighter jets, the IAF has designed its Manned-unmanned teaming (MUM-T) aptitudes, with its Twin-Engine Deck Based Fighter (TEDBF) program. Further, IAF is also retaining predictive monitoring systems, mainly the PRO-HM+ system, for the preservation of weapons and aircraft by ascertaining tendencies, arrangements, and connections of aircraft behavior.

India and Pakistan, since their independence, have had hostile relations because of several factors, mainly national identity, territory, and the power position in the region. India has a hegemonic behavior, while Pakistan has always challenged India's desire to dominate the region. Therefore, India considers Pakistan "the regional destabilizer". After the inception of nuclear capabilities by both states, the region saw a strategic balance. However, the advancement of LAWS in the Indian defense has transformed warfare capabilities, raising concerns about the strategic balance between India and Pakistan. These developments have several implications for Pakistan.

The LAWS integration has increased both India's defensive and offensive capabilities. As a result, it gains benefits, specifically in ISR, border management, and timely adversary targeting, which disturbs the existing strategic balance in the region. Further, India's disproportionate expansion of LAWS brings the threat of a new and technology-driven arms race in South Asia.

In addition, crisis escalation between both states may be rapid because the autonomous systems may take immediate decisions and leave less time for negotiations. Moreover, LAWS threatens the International Humanitarian Law (IHL), mainly the principles of proportionality, distinction, and precautions, because a machine cannot distinguish

between a non-combatant and a combatant. The integration of LAWS in the Indian defense raises similar concerns. For instance, during an armed conflict between the two states, rapid decisions and operations that violate IHL and cause humanitarian concerns.

To take countermeasures, Pakistan needs to develop a comprehensive policy to ensure its national security and regional balance with India. Firstly, Pakistan needs to invest in its autonomous capabilities, including the development of electronic warfare systems, enhancement of cyber warfare tools, and establishment of direct-energy weapons (DEWs), which aim to increase the asymmetric capabilities against India.

Secondly, Pakistan must invest in both the major types of LAWS, that is, 'human-in-the-loop' and 'Human-on-the-loop', which will increase surveillance, reconnaissance, and offensive systems. However, Pakistan needs to ensure that its developments closely align with the IHL to avoid humanitarian casualties.

Thirdly, to opt for these developments, Pakistan must go for international partnerships with technologically advanced states, such as China, which can help in both technological transfer and capacity-building. Fourthly, Pakistan and India should be engaged through Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) to reduce the risks associated with the LAWS and to form a code of conduct related to their manufacturing and usage. Hence, these diplomatic engagements and steps will help in controlling the arms race and bringing stability to the region.

<https://thegsinsight.com/lethal-autonomous-weapons-in-the-indian-defense-implications-for-pakistan/>

Emerging Tech Race in South Asia

Mahbano Zahid

May, 21 2025

The tech boom of the twenty-first century is changing every aspect of life, but nowhere are the stakes higher or the impact more noticeable than in South Asia's. The same innovations that promise improved governance and faster growth are rushing onto the battlefield, upending the precarious power dynamics in the region.

With billions being invested in next-generation missiles, drone swarms, and AI-enabled command systems, India, the largest economy on the subcontinent, is currently at the forefront of this change. Though it may fulfill a desire for prestige and deterrence, its quick military modernization runs the risk of causing new instability in an already unstable region.

India's aspirations are not merely hypothetical. An Agni-V intercontinental ballistic missile equipped with multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs), a single rocket that can drop multiple nuclear warheads on various cities, was flight-tested in New Delhi in March 2024. The technology "fuels a full-scale arms race" by speeding up decision-making and making missile-defense calculations more difficult for China and Pakistan.

In November 2024, India joined the elite club of hypersonic powers following a test by the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) of a Mach-5-plus missile that could maneuver erratically and breach any known interceptor shield. The already slim margin for error between rivals with nuclear weapons is further reduced by hypersonic weapons, which reduce warning times to minutes.

India is also making rapid progress in unmanned space. The Indian Army launched its first known drone-on-military assault on Pakistani air defense sites in Lahore and Multan on May 9, 2025, using loitering suicide drones to carry out precise strikes. In addition to showcasing a fleet of AI-guided platforms capable of identifying targets and striking without endangering pilots.

Moreover, with the introduction of Russian-made S-400 missile defense batteries, the drive for quantum-secure communications, and initiatives like the National Mission on Quantum Technologies and the Defence Artificial Intelligence Council, India's toolkit

starts to resemble a menu of escalation options rather than just deterrents. Every new development tightens what strategists refer to as the “action–reaction” spiral in the region.

What makes this risky? First, crisis stability is complicated by MIRVs and hypersonics. A leader has an incentive to attack first if they are worried about losing their troops “in the opening salvo.” Second, autonomous drones shorten the decision-making process because software, not human judgment, can escalate or terminate a conversation in a matter of seconds. Third, the crisis-management hotlines, no-first-use understandings, and arms-control practices that saved the US and the USSR from disaster during their own Cold War are still absent from South Asia.

Pakistan is aware of the danger, but its capacity to keep up is limited by its economic limitations, energy scarcity, and ongoing socio economic issues. Although Pakistan’s declared objective of enhancing intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance is reasonable, the disparity will grow unless it is combined with more extensive economic and governance reforms.

As they construct their own digital futures, the smaller South Asian nations like Bangladesh, Nepal, and Bhutan observe with unease. Blockchain IDs and AI-powered disaster relief are celebrated in their “Smart Bangladesh,” “Digital Nepal,” and “Digital Drukyl” plans; however, every dollar diverted to defense technology is a dollar not used for poverty alleviation or climate resilience.

What then needs to be done? Three steps are particularly noticeable. First, a trilateral discussion on emerging-tech risk reduction is required between China, India, and Pakistan. This discussion should resemble U.S-Soviet discussions that resulted in test-ban treaties and hotlines. Second, transparency measures like shared AI safety protocols, data-exchange centers, and pre-launch notifications should be implemented by regional powers. Third, standards that maintain meaningful human control over autonomous and hypersonic weapons must be pushed for by international organizations, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the United Nations.

The calculus that humans construct around technology is not neutral; technology itself is. Although India’s pursuit of ever-more-advanced arrows may seem like a strategic “catch-up,” in a nuclear-populated area, even a single misinterpreted tweet or radar malfunction

could turn innovation into disaster. Digital technologies have the potential to bring prosperity to South Asia, but only if its leaders are unwilling to allow them to turn into sources of instability. They still have the option of choosing a more dangerous or smarter area.

<https://www.wgi.world/emerging-tech-race-in-south-asia/>

From Failure to Finger-Pointing: India's Evasion strategy

Alamgir Gul

May, 21 2025

The South Asian region has emerged as one of the most significant elements shaping the current international security landscape. It is largely due to India's perception of its two closest neighbors — China and Pakistan — as strategic adversaries capable of threatening its ambitions to become a global power. India's increasing adventurism and war rhetoric, evidenced by frequent border clashes along the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan and the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China, have raised regional tensions.

The Pulwama-Balakot crisis of 2019 and the Ladakh-Galwan standoff of 2020 are particularly noteworthy in this context. During both crises, India faced swift and appropriate responses, resulting in significant diplomatic and military embarrassment. Many observers believe these incidents were the result of calculated false flag operations by India, orchestrated to achieve specific strategic objectives. The Pulwama attack in February 2019, which triggered a brief military confrontation with Pakistan, is widely seen as a controversial event possibly staged to justify aggressive posturing.

India's continued war rhetoric and its alleged resort to false flag operations further exacerbate fears of escalation in South Asia. India has a history of accusing Pakistan of being responsible for any terrorist attack on its soil, even though Indian intelligence services have been involved in the majority of terrorist attacks against Pakistan, Jammu and Kashmir, and Sikhs in Canada, the US, and the UK. All of these historical facts directly link Indian malfeasance to the Indian false-flag operations. The attack on a tourist destination in Pahalgam, in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), is an attempt to portray the Kashmiri independence movement as state-sponsored terrorism, aiming to tarnish Pakistan's image on the international stage. Under the Modi-led BJP government, these tactics have intensified, reflecting a broader strategy to externalize internal security challenges.

The Pahalgam attack is particularly troubling due to the location, an area heavily fortified and recognized as one of the most militarized regions in the world. Reports estimate a civilian-to-soldier ratio of nearly 1:9. Such a high security presence raises serious questions about internal operational lapses or coordination failures. Moreover, Indian

media outlets appeared to launch a synchronized narrative, swiftly blaming Pakistan without any forensic investigation or substantiated evidence.

In the immediate aftermath of the attack, India's foreign secretary accused Pakistan of being linked to the incident, labeling it as a "cross-border" attack. This knee-jerk reaction further complicates diplomatic relations. Most notably, India has unilaterally suspended the Indus Waters Treaty under the pretext of this alleged false flag incident. This act violates Article 12(4) of the treaty, which stipulates that it cannot be terminated without the mutual written consent of both parties.

Meanwhile, escalating atrocities in Kashmir, particularly following the revocation of Article 370 in August 2019, have drawn widespread international condemnation of the Modi government's extremist policies. A growing belief is that India's motivation for orchestrating false flag operations may be to divert attention from ongoing human rights violations and internal challenges such as religious extremism, civil unrest, insurgencies, and economic distress.

This frustration has been amplified by critical reports from organizations such as Human Rights Watch, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), and the EU DisinfoLab. Given this context, the likelihood of India resorting to another false flag operation cannot be ruled out.

The Pahalgam attack may have been staged for political reasons, according to strong circumstantial evidence. It followed a string of unfavorable geopolitical events for India, including President Trump's outreach to Islamabad and the strengthening of Pakistan-Afghan and Bangladeshi ties.

Pakistan has consistently denounced terrorism in all of its forms and manifestations as a matter of state policy, in accordance with international standards and in accordance with the United Nations resolutions. It cannot be categorically described as a perpetrator of terrorism because it has suffered greatly over the last forty years. The complicated dynamics of regional terrorism are highlighted by the arrest of RAW members like Kulbhushan Jadhav, Indian connections to the 2014 APS Peshawar attack, and the most recent fatal attack on the Jaffer Express in Balochistan.

It is hoped that, moving forward, India will deviate from its established pattern and approach such sensitive incidents with caution, especially considering the volatile dynamics between two nuclear-armed neighbors. The incumbent government should seek electoral validation based on its governance and performance — not by capitalizing on manufactured crises. It is imperative that India abandons its obsession with false flag narratives and sets a new, responsible precedent for regional stability.

<https://pakistanprime.pk/international/1990/>

Declining World Order and the Crisis of Arms Control

Shah Meer

May, 21 2025

The emergence of China, the resurgence of Russia, the advent of nascent technologies, conventional asymmetries among the countries, and the declining world order have necessitated a critical revisit to global arms control architecture. Major power—US, China, and Russia – and emerging states: India, Iran, and North Korea respectively are highly engaged in military modernization efforts and enhancement of their strategic capabilities. Simultaneously, the international legally binding and multilateral instruments are turning fragile in the wake of the renewed multipolar global power distribution. Collectively, the vertical and horizontal proliferation of arms, coupled with a reduced commitment to global multilateral arrangements, pose profound threats to international security. From 1979 to 2019, China experienced a miraculous economic growth, with average annual GDP growth rate of 9.4% in the said period. From 1979 to 2019, China experienced a miraculous economic growth, with average annual GDP growth rate of 9.4% in the said period. It increased China's economic and diplomatic influence and allowed it to significantly invest in its military modernization efforts. Beijing's military budget from 1989 to 2025 increased over 2,100 percent, and by 2049, it has articulated a strategic objective to transform People's Liberation Army (PLA) into a force that is on par with world's leading militaries, while ignoring its implications on global strategic stability and arms control efforts. In response, to restore strategic balance and find solutions to its asymmetric arsenal, the Kremlin is investing in several arms, including cruise missiles, hypersonic missiles, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, and other emerging technologies.

Counterintuitively, the US-Russia alienation has also increased in the post-Cold War period. A series of events such as the expansion of The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) towards the Urals, the termination of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) by the US in 2002 and subsequent Russian withdrawal from the START II treaty, Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, the Syria Conflict, the termination of Intermediate-Range Nuclear Force Treaty (INF) in 2019, and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war have exacerbated the tensions between the two powers. In response, to restore strategic balance and find solutions to its asymmetric arsenal, the Kremlin is investing in several

arms, including cruise missiles, hypersonic missiles, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, and other emerging technologies.

Emerging technologies and cutting-edge advancements in the military domain in the shape of Artificial Intelligence (AI), hypersonic weapons, autonomous and unmanned systems, cyberspace, quantum technologies, and directed energy weapons have increased the tendency of states to acquire and integrate them into their military strategy. This development has far-reaching effects on global and regional strategic stability, balance of power, and global arms control initiatives. There is a – ‘spiral of arms proliferation’ on a global level – that affects regional military balance leading to strategic instability, security dilemmas, and arms proliferation

Conventional asymmetries between the countries, most prominently India and Pakistan, The US and Russia, and China and India primarily persuade the latter nations to restore the conventional balance when the regional and international arms control initiatives are losing strength. China’s ambitions of making a world-class force by 2049 to balance the US has caused a strategic imbalance between China and India.

New Delhi’s pursuit to balance China may persuade Islamabad to look for strategic countermeasures. Similarly, The US allies and its deployment of non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe, termination of arms control treaties of the Cold War period, and NATO expansion forced Moscow to build a resilient defense structure against the perceived Western threats. Additionally, US-North Korea adversarial relations have led Pyongyang to actively develop and expand its arsenal especially inter-continental ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and repository of its nuclear warheads to respond to the American threats. Thus, there is a – ‘spiral of arms proliferation’ on a global level – that affects regional military balance leading to strategic instability, security dilemmas, and arms proliferation. During the Cold War, such a spiral of arms proliferation was constrained by the sheer commitment of the diverging blocs to arms balance and through global institutionalism that helped initiate arms control architecture. During the Cold War, such a spiral of arms proliferation was constrained by the sheer commitment of the diverging blocs to arms balance and through global institutionalism that helped initiate arms control architecture. Through these mechanisms, several arms control treaties were

concluded by the US and the erstwhile Soviet Union which even today provides theoretical and literary grounds to modern-day arms control efforts. Contrarily, marked by the multipolar power structure, reducing hold of international norms and standards, and the advent of nascent technologies, the 21st-century world order is highly fragile to respond to the growing arms spiral. There is a need for a new comprehensive and multilateral arms control architecture on the global stage

Hence, there is a need for a new comprehensive and multilateral arms control architecture on the global stage that must include the tenets of the Cold War period's parity-based architecture along with a Behavioral Arms Control (BAC) framework. It must have clear guidelines for risk reduction, confidence-building measures, verification, and inspection protocols; it should contain conflict resolution mechanisms; it must be inclusive and transparent, it must be responsive and immune from manipulation.

<https://stratheia.com/declining-world-order-and-the-crisis-of-arms-control/#:~:text=The%20emergence%20of%20China%2C%20the,to%20global%20arms%20control%20architecture>

Demystifying the Economic Impact of an Indo-Pak War

Hamza Nasir

May, 23 2025

The recent Pahalgam Attack has once again escalated tensions between Pakistan and India, fueling fears of military confrontation. While political rhetoric dominates the headlines, the severe economic costs of such a conflict ranging from disrupted trade to long-term developmental setbacks remain overlooked. This snapping of relations between Pakistan and India has not happened for the first time. From the wars of 1947 to the wars of 1965 and 1971 to the Kargil conflict, cross-border activities and occasional hot skirmishes have always threatened the stability of South Asia. While the military effects of the conflict between these two nuclear-armed South Asian neighbors are certain and tangible, the economic impacts are latent, longer lasting, and, nevertheless, grossly understated.

Expanding the conflict between Pakistan and India to a full-scale war would be as disastrous in human terms as in economic terms and would have detrimental effects on both Pakistan's and India's economies, as well as the economies of neighbouring nations and the whole world. Critical resources are always diverted from development to defense when armed conflict erupts. But in any war, governments are compelled to spend more on the military via redirections to the budget or even borrowing. A conflict, even for a limited period, would impose strain on a public finance already burdened with fiscal deficits, rising debt, and limited foreign exchange reserves for Pakistan. The immediate loss would be in trade, investment, and industrial productivity. The closure of borders, broken supply chains, and the collapse of investor confidence would wipe out the latest economic gains. The continuing decline of agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, and services, already suffering from inflation and unemployment, would continue.

Although security remains a priority for the state particularly in a volatile and unpredictable strategic environment compared to many other indicators, many economists argue that a rupee spent on weapons and troop mobilization is one rupee less for education, health, and infrastructure. Recovering from war is often not just about repairing physical infrastructure but rebuilding institutional trust and investor confidence, both of which are tricky in unstable places. The social fabric also suffers. It also includes devaluation of prosperity, psychological trauma, internal displacement, increased poverty, and inflation.

When war comes, it means loss of livelihoods, price hikes, and disrupted education for the middle and lower classes, whose scars will likely last for years.

Despite goodwill deserting its shores, Pakistan and India remain economically linked, formally and informally. These linkages would sever in a war, increasing the isolation of each. Then it would not only further weaken SAARC politically but also make it further irrelevant. As opposed to the kind of economic cooperation seen in ASEAN or the EU, South Asia, which already has one of the lowest levels of intraregional trade globally, would move farther away from that integration if the threat of transit obstruction is allowed to restrict cooperation. Traditional partners and countries wary of regional instability would stop pumping foreign direct investment. The perception and reality of these security costs would drive out engagement and international partnerships that both nations desperately need for long-term development.

Any spurts in violence are sure to cause spikes in global markets, affect trade routes throughout the region and, most of all, raise the alarm of investors around the world, as both of the countries are key players in South Asia. The slightest whiff of a nuclear flashpoint to the war would unsettle the energy markets and the geopolitical alliances. Those global powers would have to begin applying diplomatic means to contain the situation, deflecting their focus and resources from global cooperation in climate, health, and technology. The price of conflict in South Asia is simply too high; history is clear on this. India needs to appreciate the fact that its provocations in inflaming regional tensions will cost it economically far more than Pakistan and therefore its national security should be based on economic security, regional interaction, and strategic diplomacy – not in reckless militarism.

While nationalism prospers in the short term, the long-term cost of war is economic regression, social fragmentation, and a lost generation. Both are at a time of great domestic challenges — poverty, inequality, climate threats — and can ill afford conflict. In a world where all countries depend on one another, real power comes from economic fortitude, working together, and judicious international behaviour. Though peace is a difficult thing, it remains the most profitable policy.

[https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2025/05/23/demystifying-the-economic-impact-of-an-
indo-pak-war/](https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2025/05/23/demystifying-the-economic-impact-of-an-<u>indo-pak-war/</u>)

Youm-e-Takbeer: Pakistan's Pursuit of Credible Deterrence

Zafar Khan

May, 28 2025

Pakistan developed and tested nuclear weapons for deterrence purposes. All its nuclear weapons including that of sophisticated delivery systems bolstered with emerging technologies are India-centric. In fact, India-specificity remains the linchpin of Pakistan's nuclear policy since the very inception of nuclearization of South Asia initiated first by its adversary India. Unlike India, Pakistan does not aspire for a regional and global hegemony. It does not have to be in hubris. Unlike India, Pakistan does not have any nuclear theft records

It does not challenge the security of major powers such as the US and many European countries through its expanded ranges of intercontinental ballistic missiles. Its nuclear forces are in the safe and secure hands. Unlike India, Pakistan does not have any nuclear theft records. India has many, but the world remains elusive of India's safety and security of its nuclear technology. This is alarming. Many consider that India is becoming a global security threat. Still, one wonders why the world community remains silent when it comes to India's hegemonic designs for escalation dominance, increasing its conventional and nuclear forces, becoming the world's leading arms importing countries, involved in creating proxies for heinous crimes, terrorism, and cowardly attacks not only in Pakistan, but across the globe and making terrorism as a pretext for carrying out preventive strikes against a sovereign and independent Pakistan. All in its delusion, India considers Pakistan to be a weak and likely to be a failed state thereby with its increasing conventional superiority and nuclear forces, India gets tempted to carry out preventive strikes. It proves to be India's illusion. Such hubris and temptation are fraught with failure like it failed in the more recent India-Pakistan crisis. India is not only creating crisis instability, arms race, and risk of escalation, but also engulfing the entire region for nuclear weapon use, which will have global consequences

This is India's dangerous confidence dragging India into a commitment trap the consequences of which India may face like never before. Many serious and leading scholars consider that it would not benefit India in any case. India is not only creating

crisis instability, arms race, and risk of escalation, but also engulfing the entire region for nuclear weapon use, which will have global consequences. Following are important imperatives for India, Pakistan and the international community more especially the US: First, the Indian masses and its security leadership must prevent Modi who is using terrorism as a pretext for his political objectives while risking the lives of billions in Asia. Modi must be ousted from power by the Indian masses themselves. They should understand the aggressive Hindutva ideology led by Modi along with his warmongering cabinet members that is not in the supreme interest of India and its relations with the global community. India should also accept the quality and credibility of Pakistan nuclear weapons and the related delivery systems, all specific to India

The Indian security leadership needs to accept Pakistan's conventional force capabilities supported by the new technologies. This was demonstrated in the recent India-Pakistan conflict. India should also accept the quality and credibility of Pakistan nuclear weapons and the related delivery systems, all specific to India. They deter India every day. It has become a reality that India cannot deny even if it needs to appease its masses for winning an election.

Second, it is important for Pakistan that it continues to retain full spectrum deterrence falling under the ambit of credible minimum deterrence while covering multi-domain warfare tactics. It needs to acquire sophisticated newer technologies to enhance its conventional force capability. In addition to practicing strategies such as dispersal, sheltering, hardening, and concealment, Pakistan realizes that speed, remote sensing, pinpoint accuracy, and appropriate ranges would potentially avoid vulnerabilities. Unlike India's preventive strike strategies, the proposed political and diplomatic dialogue will be useful for the two nuclear rivals for managing and resolving a number of issues

Despite India's unwillingness and rejection of a number of Pakistan's peaceful proposals, Pakistan needs to urge India for a mutual dialogue by restoring confidence building measures. Unlike India's preventive strike strategies, the proposed political and diplomatic dialogue will be useful for the two nuclear rivals for managing and resolving a number of issues. Third, the international community more importantly the US needs to urge India that its strategies for preventive strikes are flawed risking dangerous military escalation to a nuclear level that may not benefit India what it may perceive of. Despite the longstanding managerial role of the US in South Asia, the US needs to continue its balancing role in South Asia. Siding one against the other may not be a viable strategy for the US geoeconomic and geopolitical interest in the region. The US needs to understand the changing behavior of India that has become a revisionist state while challenging the status-quo

The US needs to understand the changing behavior of India that has become a revisionist state while challenging the status-quo. This does not only harm the geostrategic interest of the US and its allies in South Asia, but it may push the US away from the Indian-Ocean region since India considers the Indian Ocean as India's ocean. It is a wake-up call for the international community. India must realize that it is dialogue, not preventive strikes that ultimately will define a roadmap for a stable South Asia Finally, one hopes that better sense prevails, and the South Asian rivals are urged to resume dialogue to manage and resolve outstanding issues including that of longstanding issue of Kashmir. India must realize that it is dialogue, not preventive strikes that ultimately will define a roadmap for a stable South Asia.

<https://stratheaia.com/youm-e-takbeer-pakistans-pursuit-of-credible-deterrence/>

Youm-e-Takbeer: Pakistan`s Pursuit of Nuclear Deterrence

Nomeen Kassi

May, 30 2025

Youm-e-Takbeer, or the “Day of Greatness” celebrated on 28th May, announces a major change in the strategic security position of Pakistan by becoming a nuclear power. All thanks to the efforts of scientists from the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) and Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, Pakistan conducted 5 Nuclear tests in Chaghi district of Balochistan, as a response to India’s nuclear tests (Pokhran I-II) conducted in 1974 and on May 11 and 13, 1998. One can argue that this response was predictable after India resorted to nuclear explosions because Pakistan had traditionally labelled its nuclear policy with that of India. Pakistan was left with no choice, as India’s explosions had created a zero-sum situation for Pakistan. Pakistan has to deter its potential adversary, India, from carrying out preventive strikes against its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

India’s aspiration for military superiority in South Asia compelled Pakistan to gradually drift towards nuclearization. Pakistan had to maintain credible minimum deterrence, which highlighted the necessity to improve its nuclear and conventional military capabilities to retain strategic balance and broader strategic stability. Pakistan has to deter its potential adversary, India, from carrying out preventive strikes against its territorial integrity and sovereignty. After the military debacle in the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war, Pakistan decided to work toward building a nuclear weapon capability in 1972. However, Pakistan had not yet acquired nuclear technology for deterrence before India’s first nuclear test in May 1974, which marked a significant turning point. It convinced Pakistan of the imperative to acquire nuclear weapons. India’s test additionally rewarded them with increased advantage in conventional force, while further adding pressure on Pakistan’s efforts to preserve a broad equilibrium with India and neutralize the Indian nuclear threat. In January 1987, Indian journalist Kuldip Nayar claimed that in an interview, Pakistan’s leading nuclear scientist, Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, told him that Pakistan had acquired nuclear weapons capability. Following this revelation, Indian politicians started provoking Pakistan and gave harsh comments. To illustrate, then Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Madan Lal Khurana started asserting immense pressure on Pakistan to understand that India was now a nuclear weapons power and declared that “if Pakistan wanted to fight

another war with us, they should tell us the place and time, as we are ready for that.” Similarly, the BJP’s spokesman, K. L. Sharma, issued an equally strident statement, warning that Pakistan would have to face “India’s wrath” if Pakistan continued with its “anti-India policy.” “Gentlemen, I come in friendship, but we in the East do not measure our relationship in planes and tanks. You can keep our F16s and our money. Our national security is non-negotiable.”

The world played its role to stop Pakistan from acquiring nuclear weapons. The United States imposed economic and military sanctions on Pakistan regarding the nuclear issue in 1990. As a result, the United States embargoed a wide range of military equipment, including 28 F-16s that Pakistan had paid for. In a meeting with the top US military and State Department officials, Pakistan’s army chief at the time, General Waheed Kakar, was offered to release all Pakistani equipment’s including the planes, if Pakistan agreed to freeze its nuclear Programme and allow a one-time inspection to verify a cap on enrichment in April 1994. To this, General patiently replied, “Gentlemen, I come in friendship, but we in the East do not measure our relationship in planes and tanks. You can keep our F16s and our money. Our national security is non-negotiable.” Pakistan faced countless obstacles in its nuclear journey.

Maleeha Lodhi, who was Pakistan’s ambassador to Washington and an attendee at the gathering, comments on this stance as “one example of how resolutely and uncompromisingly Pakistan maintained its position on an issue vital to its security.” If Pakistan had not done so and surrendered to international pressure, it would not have acquired the nuclear capability, which is and has been the guarantor of the country’s security today. Pakistan faced countless obstacles in its nuclear journey. It braved Western embargoes, sanctions, additionally, US opposition, and unrelenting international pressure. Motivated by strategic security concerns and related statements, Pakistan ultimately conducted its nuclear test in 1998 following India’s second test that same year. Chagai-I is the code name of five simultaneous underground nuclear tests conducted by Pakistan on 28 May 1998. This development made Pakistan the seventh nuclear power in the world and the first Muslim-majority country to possess nuclear weapons. This step became a hurdle in India’s aspiration to become a regional hegemon. This advancement was much needed by Pakistan as its adversary, India, is much larger in all aspects, and

Pakistan needs to maintain its deterrence. A sizable number of people in Pakistan believed that India would use its nuclear status to pressure Pakistan to accept India's perspectives on the regional issues, and especially on India-Pakistan disputes. Pakistan never aimed for regional hegemony, in contrary wanted to maintain credible minimum deterrence for national security and strategic stability. The achievement of nuclear capability not only strengthens Pakistan's defense capability but also ensures strategic stability and balance of power in South Asia. This step became a hurdle in India's aspiration to become a regional hegemon. It is a proud moment for Pakistan, symbolizing security strength, national pride, and unity to make Pakistan a state that enemies cannot lay their eyes on.

28th May is celebrated to honor the determination and bravery of all those who made efforts for Pakistan's safety through nuclear capability. This day reflects on the principle of sovereignty and self-reliance in terms of security and integrity of the state. It is a proud moment for Pakistan, symbolizing security strength, national pride, and unity to make Pakistan a state that enemies cannot lay their eyes on. The story of Pakistan's pursuit of a nuclear capability is worth recalling, reminding ourselves of the daunting challenges that were faced. Because of the exceptional efforts of those who built Pakistan's nuclear capability, its security is assured against a full-fledged war by India. Pakistan Zindabad.

<https://stratheia.com/youm-e-takbeer-pakistans-pursuit-of-nuclear-deterrence/>

Weaponising water: India's destabilising role in South Asia

Sadia Zahra

May, 31 2025

India's aggressive and unilateral approach to regional geopolitics, exemplified by its suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), is a stark reminder of its willingness to prioritise hegemonic ambitions over regional stability. This weaponisation of shared natural resources highlights India's increasing disregard for international norms and raises critical questions about its commitment to sustainable and cooperative regional development. India also failed to present credible evidence linking Pakistan to the Pahalgam incident and instead used unfounded allegations to portray Pakistan as a scapegoat while rationalising its own escalating hostility. Such actions further obstruct dialogue and hamper regional cooperation.

Meanwhile, Pakistan has consistently advocated for a fair and neutral investigation into the Pahalgam incident, showing its commitment to justice and transparency. Even in the face of aerial provocations and civilian casualties, Pakistan refrained from retaliation until it was left with no choice.

India seems to be using unfounded accusations to strategically target Pakistan internationally and deflect from its internal issues, like human rights abuses in Kashmir and anti-Muslim violence in India. It much prefers hostility and dominance over constructive engagement and peacebuilding. South Asia is already one of the most water-stressed regions in the world, facing climate change, resource shortages and economic inequality. The IWT once ensured fair distribution of water between India and Pakistan, but India's decision to weaken this treaty now threatens Pakistan's agricultural sector, which supports over 70% of its population.

Cutting water supplies worsens Pakistan's food security and hinders climate adaptation while also setting a dangerous precedent for powerful nations to weaponise shared resources. Such actions sow mistrust, making regional cooperation even harder.

India's actions reveal a deep contradiction in its foreign policy. On one hand, it wants to be seen as a global leader in climate action and international cooperation, aiming to be a vishwaguru (global teacher). While on the other, its divisive regional behaviour reflects

selfishness and power plays. This double standard damages India's global reputation and weakens its moral authority on climate justice and sustainable development.

Global response to this crisis has been disappointing. While Pakistan's procurement of \$1.4 billion from the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Facility is a positive step for climate adaptation, India's IWT violation barely faces accountability. Global inaction sends a dangerous message: powerful nations can break treaties without consequences. This ultimately encourages similar behaviour elsewhere and weakens international systems. South Asia now stands at a crucial moment. The region can either continue down a path of conflicts fuelled by resource disputes or work together to find common solutions. The South Asian Water Security Initiative (SAWSI), building on the principles of the IWT, could promote fair water sharing, joint efforts to combat climate change, and better regional stability.

But it can only succeed if India changes steps away from its current aggressive policies and takes on the role of a responsible leader, working for mutual trust and shared progress. Otherwise, water conflicts even risk causing global instability. Water has always been a symbol of life and growth, sustaining civilisations for millennia. Its weaponisation risks destroying that legacy and deepening divisions across South Asia.

The international community must recognise the gravity of this crisis and hold India accountable for its actions, prioritising peace over political gain. India must also rethink its priorities and let go of its hegemonic ambitions, embracing a future built on collaboration and coexistence. Only then can it restore its credibility and ensure a more peaceful and prosperous South Asia.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2548656/weaponising-water-indias-destabilising-role-in-south-asia>