

CHANGING REGIONAL SECURITY COMPLEXES, RISING POWERS AND THE FUTURE OF STRATEGIC STABILITY IN SOUTH ASIA

*Dr. Adil Sultan**

Abstract

The evolving great power rivalry between the US and China, and India's desire to de-hyphenate its securitization priorities from Pakistan and play a more active role in the US led Indo-Pacific strategy - to help contain China's rise could blur the lines between the global as well as regional security complexes. India, which has formally given up its non-aligned status and joined the US led alliance - is being offered unprecedented assistance by the US and other western allies - to help build its military and political stature. The India-US foundational agreements negotiated between the two sides as part of their overall strategic partnership would facilitate India's access to sensitive data from the US owned surveillance systems and plan future military operations against Pakistan. India is also engaged in 'hybrid interference' to create internal turmoil in Pakistan by using the media and international institutions like the Financial Action Task Force. To deal with these multifaceted challenges, Pakistan may have to reassess its national security priorities and develop an indigenous concept of 'comprehensive security' that must be based on its own strengths and weaknesses and should be able to cater for traditional as well as non-traditional security threats.

Keywords: South Asia, Indo-Pacific, Regional Security Complex (RSC), Strategic Stability, India-US Strategic Partnership, Hybrid Interference.

Introduction

The evolving geo-strategic competition between the United States and China that was earlier confined to the Asia-Pacific region and involved a few countries from the Pacific-rim region has now expanded in its scope and objectives with Indian Ocean becoming part of the new Regional Security Complex (RSC)¹ that has been labelled as the Indo-Pacific region. The ongoing

¹Dr Adil Sultan is a Visiting Research Fellow at the King's College London. The author's email address is: adilsultan66@gmail.com.

power competition between the US and China with Indo-Pacific as the epicentre and India's willingness to play a major role as a US ally - to help contain China's rise, are some of the factors that could adversely affect strategic stability in South Asia.

The relatively new nomenclature of 'Indo-Pacific' that is based on the changing security orientation of the global powers - is not only symbolic but has the potential to trigger military competition amongst the global as well as the regional countries. India's efforts to seek military and political support from its western allies, especially the US, would have adverse impact on Pakistan's security calculus as it may be compelled to explore alternative means for restoring strategic balance in the region.

Regions are not a fixity and could evolve with the change in securitization and de-securitization priorities of regional actors. These are generally understood to comprise of geographically clustered sets of units embedded in a larger system with different nomenclatures to help better understand patterns of amity and enmity. All regions have peculiar characteristics that are shaped by the inter-play of security, economic and political interests, but regions remain vulnerable to external interference and influence, especially from the major powers that have greater political and economic clout.

The term Indo-Pacific was first used by Australia to help justify its 'two-ocean' geography (the Indian and the Pacific Oceans) as it was viewed as one contiguous area. The US till very late was using both Asia-Pacific as well as Indo-Asia-Pacific, but 'Indo-Pacific' has become a more commonly used term and a geo-political nomenclature² which is frequently referred to in the US security strategies and defense papers.

The Sino-American rivalry has given additional credence to this new term as several of the regional countries that are closely aligned to the US view the US led Indo-Pacific strategy as an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and a means to contain latter's rise. These views are not necessarily shared by all the regional countries as South Korea and Canada, which are the major US allies but remain reluctant to officially endorse the US led Indo-Pacific strategy.³

The US along with other partner countries is also in the process of reviving the Quadrilateral alliance or the 'Quad', which for now remains an

informal alliance for consultations and hosting of joint military drills between the US, Australia, Japan and India. The Quad has yet to evolve a cohesive strategy backed by institutional mechanism to implement its roadmap, since all four partner nations seem to have diverse interests. Japan and Australia remain more concerned about China's role in the South China Sea; whereas India is exploiting the Quad to build its military credentials by projecting China as its major adversary. The US, which remains the most influential player is interested in preserving its status as an undisputed global power, which could become questionable with China becoming more assertive in its immediate neighbourhood and at the international level.

The efforts to expand the scope of the partnership amongst Quad members has led to the speculations that the alliance may eventually transform into a military pact on the pattern of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), with some dubbing the Quad as the 'Asian NATO.'⁴ However, unlike the western NATO alliance structure the Quad members have strong economic interdependence thus making them vulnerable to Chinese economic coercion, if these countries ever attempt to forge a formal military alliance against their major trading partner.

China's response to this relatively new development of re-labelling the region has been dismissive since it prefers to term it as the 'Asian' region where its leadership role could remain uncontested. The term Indo-Pacific is viewed as an attempt to legitimize India's role in the Pacific region and to curtail China's influence. However, if India is able to legitimize its role in the Pacific region, this may also provide incentive and a justification for China to use the same logic and claim the Indian Ocean as its legitimate area of influence and formally shift to a 'two-oceans' school of thought with more active presence in the region.

Helping India Emerge as a Rising Power

The end of the Cold War that led to the disintegration of the former Soviet Union brought opportunities for countries like India to project itself as an alternate potential global power. This required India to build its military potential and enhance its political standing, which could be achieved by formally joining the US led western alliance. The US, which itself was looking for partners in the region appeared a willing collaborator to help India's rise. The rapprochement efforts between the US and India initiated by President Clinton in 2000 have had enjoyed bi-partisan support in Washington as India is viewed as a reliable partner,

which if assisted militarily and politically could stand-up against China and help safeguard US interests in the region. This assumption formed the basis of India-US strategic partnership, which is intended to build India's conventional, nuclear and space-based capabilities by facilitating India to acquire sensitive and dual-use technologies.

India-US Strategic Partnership

In 2004, both India and the US laid the foundation of their long-term strategic partnership. The framework document agreed between the two sides was labelled as the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP), which became the basis for expanding their bilateral engagements in the field of space, civil nuclear energy and dual-use sensitive technology.⁵

The Joint Statement of Jul 18, 2005,⁶ provided a future roadmap for building a strategic partnership that included commitment to build closer ties in space exploration, satellite navigation and satellite launch. The most significant concession was the offer of civil nuclear cooperation agreement to a Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) country like India, which could allow it to keep its nuclear weapons program outside the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards while the US and rest of the nuclear supplier states would help India meet its civilian nuclear energy needs.

The India-US civil nuclear cooperation agreement could not have materialized without the US amending its own domestic laws which otherwise prohibit nuclear cooperation with a country that has not signed the NPT. To operationalize the agreement, the US also had to extract India-specific exemption from the 48-member Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). Interestingly, the NSG that came into being in 1975 as a result of India's misuse of civil nuclear technology for building nuclear weapons was coerced by the US to allow nuclear trade with a country that was the reason for NSG's own existence.

As a beneficiary of the US largesse in the form of a nuclear cooperation agreement, India pushed ahead to accrue political advantages by building its case for the permanent membership of the NSG. To help India bring into mainstream nonproliferation regime, President Obama during his visit to India in Nov 2010 announced support for India's inclusion in the four export control regimes, which also included the NSG.⁷ As a result of joint US-India efforts, India has been admitted into three of the four export control regimes, i.e., the Missile Technology

Control Regime (MTCR), Australia Group and the Waassenaar Arrangement. The membership of these regimes enables India to trade in sensitive dual-use technologies that could also be used for developing Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). India, however, has not been able to get the membership of the NSG due to the objections raised by several countries who remain uncomfortable in admitting a country that is unwilling to sign the NPT and accept full scope IAEA safeguards.

As part of the emerging strategic partnership, the US has also loosened its export control rules by reinterpreting the MTCR guidelines thus making it possible for India to acquire state of the art *Predator* armed drones.⁸ The MTCR prohibits transfer of sensitive technologies and equipment including the unmanned drones with ranges more than 300 km and systems that can carry more than 500 Kgs payload.⁹ Predator drones can fly for prolonged periods and can carry payload of about 1700 Kgs, and are therefore restricted items. India could potentially use these drones for carrying out surgical strikes across the Line of Control in the future, instead of using its Air Force which is risky and could incur severe reputational cost, especially if the adversary is able to shoot down its aircraft as was the case during Pulwama crisis.

Since India has been declared eligible for trade in sensitive technologies, India's *ultima ratio*, for pursuing the NSG membership seems mainly guided by its quest for enhancing its international standing and to provide legitimacy to India's nuclear status.¹⁰ Its membership in the other three export control regimes was also intended mainly to build its credentials for inclusion into the NSG.

The issue of NSG membership that was essentially technical in nature has become a political irritant. If the US and other supporters of India's candidature had pursued its case for the NSG membership on a non-discriminatory and objective criterion that could be applicable to all the non-NPT nuclear possessor states, it would have helped strengthen the global nonproliferation norms. Instead, by adopting a country-specific approach, the US and other supporters of India's NSG membership have turned the issue into a major political and diplomatic controversy that has polarized the international community and may have further weakened the global nonproliferation norms.

The India-US Foundational Agreements

India and the US started their regular strategic dialogue in 2009 that remained focussed on regional security, economic cooperation, defense and other related issues. This was later renamed as India-US Strategic and Commercial Dialogue in 2015 and subsequently transformed into a 2+2 format involving foreign and defense ministers from both the sides with a narrower focus on defense and issues related to the Indo-Pacific region.

As part of this new engagement, India and the US have signed Foundational Agreements that aim to improve interoperability of the two militaries. These agreements include the 2002 General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA); 2016 Logistics Exchange Memorandum Agreement (LEMOA); the 2018 Communications Compatibility and Security Arrangement (COMCASA); and the most recent one that was signed in 2020 is Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA).

Under the LEMOA, both countries would be able to use military logistic facilities of each other thus enhancing interoperability and plan joint military exercises, whereas COMCASA allows both sides to operate same communication systems and allowing India to access intelligence data and real time imagery from the US surveillance platforms. GSOMIA on the other hand was intended to safeguard information shared by the US with the Indian entities.¹¹

BECA, which is the last of the four foundational agreements and also the most significant one from Pakistan's perspective, would enable India to access classified real-time Signal Intelligence (SIGINT) and other sensitive information gathered by the US satellites about India's Northern and Western borders. This could enhance Indian military's situational awareness and would be helpful in planning offensive military operations, including the possibility of aerial surgical strikes or counterforce conventional or nuclear strikes against Pakistan's strategic assets.

The Joint Statement issued after the last 2+2 ministerial dialogue held between the US and India, the two countries expressed satisfaction on the progress made in the implementation of the previous agreements and agreed to review their bilateral military-to-military engagements which would include the holding of joint military exercises, training and expert exchanges.¹² These

developments are likely to create discomfort amongst its neighbours, including China and Pakistan.

The Future of Strategic Stability in South Asia

As a result of the India-US strategic partnership India is being helped to make qualitative and quantitative improvement in its conventional as well as nuclear capabilities that are more likely to be used against Pakistan. Emboldened by its newly found salience in the global politics, India has assumed increasingly assertive posture and is attempting to alter the status of disputed territory of Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir (IIOK). It is also experimenting new military doctrines and providing twisted interpretations to its 2003 nuclear policy. India's growing propensity to indulge in 'hybrid interference'¹³ and the rise of 'militant nationalism' has further widened the trust deficit between the two nuclear neighbours, which if remains unaddressed could lead to inadvertent escalation.

India's Emerging Military Doctrines

The nuclearization of South Asia restored the strategic balance between India and Pakistan making it difficult for either of the two to use military means to achieve their political objectives. Frustrated with the lack of military options, India started contemplating a limited war fighting doctrine of Cold Start that was introduced in 2004, which aims to launch punitive strikes against Pakistan, while remaining below Pakistan's perceived strategic threshold. In response, Pakistan introduced what it terms as the 'Full Spectrum Deterrence' posture, which includes range of conventional as well as nuclear options to deter the entire spectrum of threats from the Indian side.

In 2016, India also came out with its doctrine of 'surgical strikes' by claiming that it had launched ground-based surgical strikes across the Line of Control (LoC). Pakistan denied any such strike taking place and therefore did not retaliate, which could have encouraged the Indian leadership to exploit it for domestic-political advantage and threaten Pakistan with similar punitive measures in the future.

In February 2019, India attempted aerial surgical strikes with an assumption that Pakistan would be restrained from retaliating for fear of escalation and the Indian leadership could once again exploit it to its advantage, as was the case in 2016. However, Pakistan's decision to provide a matching

response as part of what is generally known as the 'Quid Pro Quo Plus' strategy, not only surprised the Indian decision makers but caused major embarrassment to India's military credibility when two of the Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft were shot down and one pilot was captured inside the Pakistani territory.

PM Modi, who had used the 2016 episode to build his image of a strong nationalist leader willing to take 'punitive' measures against another nuclear weapon state was found caught in his own commitment trap. Under pressure from the domestic audience, PM Modi opted for extreme measure and threatened Pakistan with nuclear retribution by ordering readying the dual-capable Prithvi missiles.¹⁴ This was a serious escalation with a potential to end up into a nuclear holocaust, and therefore, had to be deterred by promising a matching response that eventually led both sides to back down and a major war was averted.

The crisis also indicated lack of understanding of the nuclear dynamics amongst India's political and military elite. The military that is generally kept outside the nuclear planning and decision making process in India attempted a punitive aerial surgical strike assuming that Pakistan would not respond. After having to face the embarrassment at the hands of a relatively smaller Air Force, the Indian political leadership went up on the escalation ladder, which if not credibly deterred, could have ended up into a nuclear exchange.

India's risky nuclear delusions are also reflected in the ongoing controversy surrounding its 'No First Use' (NFU) posture. Several senior members of India's nuclear command authority have pointed towards the possibility that India might alter its NFU commitment in the future.¹⁵ There is also some evidence to suggest that India is also building capabilities in the form of precision strike weapons to launch pre-emptive counterforce strike. Both these developments are disturbing from the Pakistani perspective and may force it to take remedial measures that may include improving the survivability of its nuclear arsenal to avoid 'use it or lose it dilemma.'

'Hybrid Interference' as a 'Wedging' Strategy

India's growing salience in international politics may have encouraged and provided incentive to its leadership to intervene in domestic politics of other countries, including the major western powers such as the US and the UK. PM Modi's endorsement of Trump's re-election at a public rally held at Houston in September 2019 in a gathering of 50,000 Indian diaspora was one such example of

interference in the election process of another sovereign country.¹⁶ Similarly, the UK based Indian diaspora also attempted to influence national elections by supporting pro-India candidates, which eventually led to a strong backlash as it constituted interference and influencing the outcome of UK's national elections.¹⁷

India's 'hybrid interference'¹⁸ is more prominent in its immediate neighbourhood as it attempts to shape the national security priorities of its relatively smaller neighbours by using its enhanced political and military stature. Hybrid interference is defined as "the synchronized use of multiple non-military means of interference tailored to heighten divisions within target societies."¹⁹ Some of the measures that could be employed as part of this strategy include "deniable cyber operations, disseminating false information, financing anti-government groups, infiltrating agents of influence, corrupting political actors, and offering economic inducements to selective actors, ideally to lure them into making a – conscious or unconscious political bargain with the hybrid agent."²⁰ There are three different ways to achieve this objective: clandestine diplomacy, geo-economics and disinformation.²¹

South Asia is not new to hybrid warfare or hybrid interference as India had used similar tactics in the past to disintegrate Pakistan in 1971. India is also accused of inciting insurgencies in Pakistan by exploiting ethnic and communal disenchantment that continues to remain a cause for concern. Its enhanced diplomatic engagement with Pakistan's traditional allies in the Middle East, the use of international institutions such as Financial Action Task Force (FATF),²² and malicious disinformation campaigns launched against Pakistan through a network of fictitious think tanks and media sources spread over several important capitals of the world²³ are some of the examples of hybrid interference that India seems to be pursuing against Pakistan. These have the potential to keep the region unstable and prone to crisis escalation.

The Rise of Militant Nationalism in India

India's drift from a secular state to a fundamentalist has been quick and a result of the current BJP leadership's preference to exploit 'religious nationalism'²⁴ for domestic political gains. The BJP, which prides itself as a Hindu nationalist party and is a political arm of the right wing Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is promoting a new breed of leaders who have strong ideological leanings with the RSS and believe in establishing a 'pure' Hindu state.²⁵

The proponents of Hindu nationalism believe that “Hinduism – not the precarious balancing of all ethnic and religious communities residing in India – is the ultimate source of the country’s identity.”²⁶ For Hindu nationalists, India’s Hindu identity is important to “foster the kind of coherent national community needed for both social stability and global recognition,” and that the Hindu nation “is the exclusive domain of the Hindu people. Non-Hindus would be forced to assimilate in ways that honoured Hindu cultural customs to the detriment, and eventually, the dissolution of their own traditions.”²⁷

PM Modi and other senior BJP leaders with their strong RSS lineage have pushed the country towards this relatively new form of nationalism by providing more space to the right-wing RSS that views Hinduism and nationalism synonymous to India’s identity and existence, thus giving rise to ‘militant nationalism,’ where anyone opposed to the idea of a Hindu state is seen as anti-state and working against Hinduism.

The BJP since coming into power has used Pakistan to fuel nationalist sentiments and has blamed its neighbour for most of its own governance failures. It is also in the process of changing the status of the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir by revoking Articles 370 and 35A, which provided special status to the residents of the disputed territory.²⁸ It is also trying to alter the demography of the region by allowing non-resident Indians to acquire local domicile that would allow them to buy properties and land belonging to the local Kashmiris. This has led to strong resentment from the local populace, especially the majority Muslim population since the new measures are specifically targeted to alter the demographic balance.²⁹

The international community, especially India’s strategic partners, instead of discouraging the growing militant tendencies seems to have accommodated the growing influence of RSS on national decision making, and some of their senior representatives find it appropriate to visit the RSS headquarters.³⁰ These disturbing trends are also evident amongst India’s military leadership who consider it appropriate to share stage with the RSS leadership that is accused of fomenting hatred and extremism in the country. Several former senior military officers have criticized these trends as India’s military leadership seems to be swayed by the growing wave of neo-nationalism,³¹ and instead of upholding military’s traditions some of the senior leaders seem more eager to please the RSS leadership.

Maintaining Strategic Stability: Options for Pakistan

India's desire to de-hyphenate its security equation from Pakistan and play a major role in the US led Indo-Pacific strategy by significantly enhancing its military capabilities with the help of the US would also have the potential to undermine strategic stability in South Asia. In view of their long history of conflict, India's military modernization would add pressure on Pakistan to take corrective measures that could ensure that the credibility of its deterrence posture is not compromised. This doesn't necessarily entail choosing one major power over the other, which itself would be a major challenge keeping in view its close partnership with China and a long history of strategic ties with the US. Pakistan could nevertheless use the opportunity to reset its national security priorities without compromising on its traditional security needs. It must also maintain a balance in its relations with the major global powers to avoid being trapped into becoming a frontline ally, which in the past had cost dearly with serious consequences for Pakistan's national security interests. To deal with the emerging challenges, Pakistan must develop innovative means that could help ensure the credibility of its military deterrence and provide space to counter hybrid interference being used to keep the country unstable.

Re-setting National Security Priorities

Recent statements from the senior Pakistani leadership indicate a desire to shift national security priorities with more emphasis on the economic growth and human security as part of the new approach to attain 'comprehensive security.'³² Economic progress remains one of the vital elements of national security and has assumed greater significance in the post-Cold War world order providing incentive for many to reorient their security priorities and shift focus towards non-traditional security issues. However, states like Pakistan that continue to face existential challenges due to outstanding territorial disputes and a long history of wars and military crises may not have the luxury of significantly altering their national security discourse and would therefore be forced to develop their own model of comprehensive security rather than emulating the western construct of national security.

All states strive for comprehensive security which itself remains a 'relative' term as no country could claim to have achieved absolute or comprehensive security. A state can at best achieve relative comprehensive security as per its power potential and the nature of internal and external challenges, and it is not a bargain between traditional or non-traditional security threats. However, states

that fail to maintain a balance between the traditional and non-traditional security needs, as per their own indigenous needs, and drift towards the extreme ends of the security spectrum (prioritizing one over the other) – are more likely to lose their sovereignty and would be forced to survive on borrowed security.

Pakistan has already reduced its defense budget over the past few years,³³ which is approximately one-sixth of what India spends to modernize its conventional as well as nuclear military capabilities. Its nuclear deterrence allows it to keep the lid on defense spending, but if the void in conventional military spending continues to increase this would bring additional pressure on nuclear deterrence thus adding pressure on the decision makers to enhance defense spending, which may become problematic with the change in national security orientation.

Since the acquisition of nuclear weapons Pakistan has been under pressure to limit its nuclear weapons program and to concentrate on its economic growth. This was intended to dissuade Pakistan from challenging India's hegemony in the region and not necessarily to help Pakistan overcome economic difficulties. It is therefore essential that Pakistan resist the temptation to follow the borrowed concept of 'comprehensive security' and develop an indigenous model that could be seen as more credible and is in line with the overall national potential.

Maintaining a Credible Military Deterrent

Despite spending one-sixth of what India spends to modernize its military Pakistan has been able to maintain strategic balance in the region due to the existence of nuclear weapons. However, with continuous growth in India's conventional military capabilities Pakistan may have to further increase its reliance on its nuclear deterrence, which could adversely impact strategic stability in the region. It is therefore imperative that instead of increasing its reliance on the nuclear capability, Pakistan must continue to maintain a rough conventional parity that could ensure the credibility of its conventional as well as nuclear deterrent without engaging in an arms race that Pakistan cannot afford and will have no meaningful outcome.

Since the nuclearization of South Asia, Pakistan has used its nuclear capability to prevent a major war with India by developing options that helped deter India from launching limited military offensives in support of its political

objectives. This was achieved through tailored deterrence by developing conventional as well as nuclear responses that could help deter the other side from contemplating even a limited military offensive. Pakistan must therefore continue to evolve its overall military strategy to cater for the entire spectrum of threats that includes both conventional as well as nuclear without engaging in an arms race.

Countering India's Hybrid Interference

India is using traditional and non-traditional means to alter regional security dynamics and to assert its leadership role in the region. Its efforts to alter the geography and demography of the occupied territory of Kashmir and the use of various hybrid means to create instability inside Pakistan - are some of the existential challenges that Pakistan will have to address by itself. Stabilizing political environment and adopting inclusive approaches could help reduce dissent amongst the disenchanted segments of the society. Strengthening national institutions, improving governance and regulating best media practices are also critical to prevent misperceptions and instability. Engaging in a 'tit-for-tat' kind of hybrid warfare is unlikely to have a lasting impact. It is therefore essential that instead of engaging in a counter hybrid interference, Pakistan must act to plug its own gaps as a denial strategy and reduce the incentive for the adversaries to indulge in such practices.

Conclusion

The future of strategic stability in South Asia would remain dependent on the nature of relations between India and Pakistan and also on the securitization priorities of major global powers. India's desire to de-hyphenate its security equation from Pakistan and build conventional as well as nuclear capabilities to be recognized as a potent military power against China would nevertheless have direct bearing for Pakistan's national security interests. Unlike India, based on its past experiences, Pakistan must resist the temptation of aligning itself with any of the rival global powers to once again play the role of a major frontline ally.

Future conflicts would most certainly require addressing both kinetic and non-kinetic threats and would be different in their scope and nature. This would mean addressing the full spectrum of security threats by strengthening all elements of national power that include traditional as well as non-traditional elements of national security. Since there is no single model that fits all, it is

therefore imperative that Pakistan carves out its own indigenous model of comprehensive security, while taking into consideration the fact that the international relations continue to be guided by geo-politics and not necessarily geo-economics.

References

- ¹ RSCs can be defined as “a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot reasonably be considered apart from one another.” Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, “Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security”, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)
- ² John Hemmings, “Global Britain in the Indo-Pacific”, Asia Studies Centre, Research paper No. 2/ 2018 (London: Henry Jackson Society, May 2018), p.17.
- ³ Felix Heiduk and Gudrun Wacker, “From Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific: Significance, Implementation and Challenges”, SWP Research Paper, 2020/ RP 09, July 2020. <https://www.swp-berlin.org/10.18449/2020RP09/#ft-dz4663e199>.
- ⁴ “Quad summit next step towards an Asian NATO”, *Asia Times*, Mar 13, 2021. <https://asiatimes.com/2021/03/quad-summit-next-step-towards-an-asian-nato/>
- ⁵ <https://web.archive.org/web/20060923030006/http://www.bis.doc.gov/News/2004/US-IndiaNextStep.htm>
- ⁶ “Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh”, Jul 18, 2005. <https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/sca/rls/pr/2005/49763.htm>.
- ⁷ “Joint Statement by President Obama and Prime Minister Singh of India”, 08 November 2010. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov>
- ⁸ “India to Buy First U.S. Armed Drones to Counter China, Pakistan” *Bloomberg*, Mar 9, 2021. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-03-09/india-to-buy-first-u-s-armed-drones-to-counter-china-pakistan>
- ⁹ “In Victory for Lobbyists, Trump Administration Loosens Drone Export Rules”, POGO, Oct 26, 2020. <https://www.pogo.org/investigation/2020/10/in-victory-for-lobbyists-trump-administration-loosens-drone-export-rules/>
- ¹⁰ Mark Hibbs, “Eyes on the prize: India’s pursuit of membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group”, *The Nonproliferation Review*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10736700.2018.1436253>.
- ¹¹ “What the 4 Indo-US defence agreements mean for India”, *Time Of India*, Nov 14, 2020. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/what-the-4-indo-us-defence-agreements-mean-for-india/articleshow/78949570.cms>
- ¹² “Joint Statement on the third India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue”, Oct 27, 2020. <https://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/33145/Joint+Statement+on+the+third+IndiaUS+2+2+Ministerial+Dialogue>
- ¹³ Mikael Wigell, “Hybrid Interference as a Wedge Strategy: A Theory of External Interference in Liberal Democracy”, *International Affairs*, Volume 95, Issue 2, March 2019, Pp. 255-275. <https://academic.oup.com/ia/article-abstract/95/2/255/5320385?redirectedFrom=fulltext>
- ¹⁴ “India, Pakistan threatened to unleash missiles at each other: sources”, *Reuters*, March 17, 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-kashmir-crisis-insight-idUSKCN1QY03T>
- ¹⁵ “No first use nuclear policy may change in future, says Rajnath Singh on India’s defense strategy”, *India Today*, Aug 16, 2019. <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/india-no-first-use-nuclear-policy-may-change-rajnath-singh-1581403-2019-08-16>.
- ¹⁶ “Backlash against Modi as Indian PM endorses Trump for 2020 in breach of diplomatic convention”, *Independent*, Sep 23, 2019. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/modi-trump-howdy-houston-texas-rally-2020-election-a9116926.html>.
- ¹⁷ “British Indians warn Hindu nationalist party not to meddle in UK elections”, *The Guardian*, Nov 11, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/nov/11/british-indians-warn-hindu-party-not-to-meddle-in-uk-elections>.
- ¹⁸ Mikael Wigell, “Hybrid Interference as a Wedge Strategy: A Theory of External Interference in Liberal Democracy”, *International Affairs*, Volume 95, Issue 2, March 2019, Pp. 255-275. <https://academic.oup.com/ia/article-abstract/95/2/255/5320385?redirectedFrom=fulltext>
- ¹⁹ Mikael Wigell, “Hybrid Interference as a Wedge Strategy: A Theory of External Interference in Liberal Democracy”, *International Affairs*, Volume 95, Issue 2, March 2019, Pp. 255-275. <https://academic.oup.com/ia/article-abstract/95/2/255/5320385?redirectedFrom=fulltext>
- ²⁰ Mikael Wigell, “Hybrid Interference as a Wedge Strategy: A Theory of External Interference in Liberal Democracy”, *International Affairs*, Volume 95, Issue 2, March 2019, Pp. 255-275. <https://academic.oup.com/ia/article-abstract/95/2/255/5320385?redirectedFrom=fulltext>
- ²¹ Mikael Wigell, “Hybrid Interference as a Wedge Strategy: A Theory of External Interference in Liberal Democracy”, *International Affairs*, Volume 95, Issue 2, March 2019, Pp. 255-275. <https://academic.oup.com/ia/article-abstract/95/2/255/5320385?redirectedFrom=fulltext>
- ²² “Pakistan’s rejects India’s ‘malicious’ statement linking LeT leader’s conviction with FATF”, *DAWN*, Jan 9, 2021. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1600598>
- ²³ “Indian disinformation”, *DAWN*, Dec 11, 2020. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1595146>.
- ²⁴ Milan Vaishnav, “Religious Nationalism and India’s Future”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP)*, Apr 4, 2019. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/04/04/religious-nationalism-and-india-s-future-pub-78703>
- ²⁵ “Yogi Adityanath says nothing wrong with Hindu Rashtra concept, BJP defends him”, *Hindustan Times*, April 6, 2017. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/up-cm-yogi-adityanath-says-there-s-nothing-wrong-with-hindu-rashtra-concept-bjp-defends-him/story-ajcXorQV7bpclddfm8oP8l.html>

-
- ²⁶ Milan Vaishnav, "Religious Nationalism and India's Future", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP)*, Apr 4, 2019. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/04/04/religious-nationalism-and-india-s-future-pub-78703>
- ²⁷ Milan Vaishnav, "Religious Nationalism and India's Future", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP)*, Apr 4, 2019. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/04/04/religious-nationalism-and-india-s-future-pub-78703>
- ²⁸ "Article 370: What happened with Kashmir and why it matters?", BBC, Aug 6, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-49234708>.
- ²⁹ "Demographic flooding: India introduces new Kashmir domicile law", Al Jazeera, April 1, 2020. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/4/1/demographic-flooding-india-introduces-new-kashmir-domicile-law>.
- ³⁰ "Australian High Commissioner meets RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat in Nagpur", *The Economic Times*, Nov 16, 2020. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/australian-high-commissioner-meets-rss-chief-mohan-bhagwat-in-nagpur/articleshow/79240517.cms?from=mdr>
- ³¹ "CDS Bipin Rawat told Gorakhpur students to rediscover culture but forgot military tradition" *The Print*, Dec 10, 2020. <https://theprint.in/opinion/cds-bipin-rawat-told-gorakhpur-students-to-rediscover-culture-but-forgot-military-tradition/563901/>
- ³² Syed Ali Zia Jaffery, "Debating Comprehensive Security in Pakistan", *Pakistan Politico*, Mar 21, 2021. <http://pakistanpolitico.com/isd21/>
- ³³ Speech by Gen Bajwa at the Islamabad Security Dialogue, *DAWN*, Mar 18, 2021. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1613207>