

## MILITARY STRATEGIES OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN: A PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

*The paper argues that India-Pakistan's crafting of escalatory strategies against each other is dangerously destabilizing the strategic stability and deterrence matrix of South Asia. While the geostrategic transformation has accorded India a critical role under the United States' Indo-Pacific strategy to contain the rise of China. Most significantly, India's conventional and nuclear strategy appears to be aggressive and, on the other hand, Pakistan has crafted a highly reactive "full spectrum" nuclear strategy too to inflict a severe punishment upon rival with aim to deter India from either coercing or imposing a limited war particularly in the wake of restructuring of its nuclear No First Use (NFU) policy. Pakistan's volatility coupled with India's restructuring of nuclear policy is a sure recipe for catastrophic disaster either by doing "crazy things," "firing nuclear shots," or by displaying "will" to strike first?*

**Keywords:** India, Pakistan, Nuclear, Deterrence, Draft Nuclear Doctrine (DND), NFU, War, Strategy.

### Introduction

**T**he history of warfare in every age was structured by the states through incorporating the military weapons and technological developments that subsequently impacted the broader contours of their tactics, strategies both offensive and defensive to sustain the balance of power. The military technology always had a direct impact on crafting of states' strategies, influencing the balance of power calculus, and war potentials. History is replete

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with examples of description of different periods by calculating the influence of both offensive and defensive strategies of warfare, and the technological capabilities that favoured their offensive/defensive strategies that in most of the cases tended to increase the prospects of a war and contributed to “empire-building”.<sup>1</sup> History of the warfare indicated that it was primarily the interplay of offence-defence strategies and weapon systems available that influenced the future outcome of war.<sup>2</sup> The application of offence-defence assessments may be true in some cases; as they were not necessarily exclusively influenced by a clear definition or conceptualization of the key concepts of offensive/defensive and the balance of power. However, little is known about the offensive/defensive balance of power and its impact on war.<sup>3</sup>

However, in the information/hi-tech weaponry age, the dynamics of warfare has been dramatically transformed with the onset of New Revolution in Military Affairs (NRMA), which is expected to greatly disrupt, if not overtake, the existing military concepts, and capabilities that raises questions about the re-evaluation of new dynamics of warfare in 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> It requires new conceptualization that how NRMA technologies would improve or undermine states’ strategies, and as how to effectively employ them in harmony with NRMA technologies to fight the future wars. Proliferation of NRMA technologies is likely to benefit all the states, however, it also depends on state’s proficiency in new technologies research and development and ability to effectively absorb and channelize these technologies by conceptualizing them into new war fighting strategies. Technologies ranging from sensors, communications coupled with electronic revolution would provide accuracy, reliability, and ensure the survivability of nuclear assets.

The interface of NRMA with the information age’s communication technologies and strategies would likewise hugely impact the future trajectory of war between India and Pakistan as well. Presently, both nuclear-armed states have no bilateral communication mechanism to strategically stabilize their military posturing. In fact, the communication mechanism has a critical role in safeguarding the survivability of their nuclear forces or to enable them to de-escalate a crisis short of a nuclear conflict. Secondly, this entails ensuring of resilient command and control and communication mechanisms, and sufficient deployment of nuclear forces – both in size and quantity, and political resolve to conduct devastating retaliatory strikes notwithstanding size of their forces.

## The Argument

The paper argues that India and Pakistan have crafted highly escalatory nuclear strategies against each other, which are dangerously destabilizing the strategic stability and deterrence matrix of South Asia. India's conventional and nuclear strategies appears to be proactive, if not, aggressive. Pakistan has too crafted a highly reactive strategy vis-à-vis India. Furthermore, the contemporary geostrategic and geo-economic changes have also delicately shifted the balance of power equation away from the West towards East. In this geostrategic transformation, India is destined to play a critical role. Geostrategic transformation has triggered a serious rivalry between the major powers – the United States (US), China and their allies, including India. The geostrategic alteration has enhanced India's economic, geopolitical, and military significance in the Indo-Pacific region in line with the United States' policy to contain the rise of China that clearly seems to be challenging the traditional supremacy of the US in the Indo-Pacific region.

The emerging Indo-US strategic convergence is likewise encouraging New Delhi to systematically confront numerous intrastate and interstate security challenges in the geopolitics of Indo-Pacific particularly against Pakistan. In reaction, Pakistan has also tailored a "full spectrum" strategy both for the conventional and strategic contingencies against India. Therefore, further fluctuations in the balance of power equation would enhance the probability of a catastrophic war. The Cold War nuclear strategy literature only focused on the US-Soviet Union's rivalry.<sup>5</sup> Primarily, their emphasis remained on deterrence theory, including debate on the operational merits of various posturing and doctrines, and the idea of stability between the US and Soviet Union regardless of arms race, crisis, and as how to ensure a stable nuclear deterrence.

## Indian Threat Perceptions

According to Pant and Bommakanti India's modernization of defence forces is a challenging and complex development – as how to create "balance between manpower and firepower" with "acquisition of weaponry from indigenous sources and the import of arms." They argue that "India's efforts to revamp and restructure its military in response to security challenges are characterized by a quest to meet the needs of the three services."<sup>6</sup> Essentially, the geostrategic changes – both at the global and regional levels are also influencing Indian defence forces preparedness to manage the emerging

conflicts/challenges by crafting a proactive military strategy principally against China and Pakistan.<sup>7</sup>

The Indian policymakers perceive multiple security threats to its security in the conventional, sub-conventional, and nuclear domains. Presently, India has numerous disputes and competing territorial claims with Pakistan and China. In the case of India-Pakistan, the Line of Control (LoC) is a de facto boundary. On the other hand, in the context of China and India, the Line of Actual Control (LAC) is still undefined boundary, which is making it the most contentious border issue between the two. India and China perceive military threat from each other along the continental frontiers and in the maritime realm as well. Currently, China has emerged as the predominant military, geo-economic, industrial, and military power in the geopolitics of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

In the maritime sphere, the regular surface and subsurface naval deployments of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is quite a formidable force in the Indo-Pacific region. PLAN has set-up some Chinese bases together with vibrant logistics and supply lines in region that is expected to further shrink Indian Navy's geostrategic outreach.<sup>8</sup> Whereas India has numerous naval and strategic partnership agreements with different countries of the Indo-Pacific region in line with the US Indo-Pacific partnership<sup>9</sup> under which India is United States' "Major Defence Partner." On the other hand, Pakistan and China too have formalized considerable geo-economic, military, and naval cooperation arrangements particularly in the shape of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which includes the development of naval and logistic ports of Gwadar and Karachi in Pakistan.

These ports in future could serve as the critical naval facilities to confront the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century geopolitics in Indo-Pacific. However, in the case of Indo-US defence partnership, they have established a vibrant interoperability, defence trade, technology sharing, industrial collaboration, including in defence innovation sectors. They signed the Communications, Compatibility and Security Agreement in 2018, which is clearly a reflection of their budding military-to-military relationship that is expected to facilitate them greater interoperability and real-time secure information-sharing architecture to meet their future strategic requirements.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, their bilateral Defence Technology and Trade Initiative is additionally enhancing bilateral cooperation in

the defence technology sharing and building of industry-to-industry arrangements. They are in addition identifying the opportunities to increase their “co-development and co-production of defense systems for the sustainment and modernization of military forces” and to increase the frequency of their tri-service exercises.<sup>11</sup>

## **India-Pakistan’s Competing Strategies**

### **Conceptualizing Strategies**

Militaries of India and Pakistan are deeply influenced by their conflicting historical, strategic, and cultural heritages. In fact, the traditional concepts, constructs and strategies since the times of Thucydides are not expected to survive the future tests and challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century warfare. Nowadays, war is oriented toward NRMA weapon systems’ integration into states strategies. In essence, strategy is the theory and practice of employment and “threat of use of organized force for political purposes.”<sup>12</sup> Host of intelligent machines are being produced and operated by Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies that possess immense capabilities to inflict massive violence and destruction on the rival state(s) with a higher degree of speed and accuracy than ever imagined before. Brose writes that “success will require a different kind of military, one built around large numbers of small, inexpensive, expendable, and highly autonomous systems.”<sup>13</sup>

The volatility of India-Pakistan’s military and strategic dynamics can be fathomed by critically analysing their heightened state of tension and vulnerability to a single spark from military exchange across the international border/LoC in Kashmir particularly in presence of their highly proactive and reactive strategies that has potential to trigger an all-out conventional, even a catastrophic nuclear conflict. The fragility of India-Pakistan’s triggers of war requires a dispassionate analysis in view of their rationale to conceptualize highly conflicting and dangerous strategies against each other. They need to understand that strategies emphasizing escalation are “brinkmanship,” competition of resolve, and competition in risk taking.<sup>14</sup> Brodie observed that strategy that is not realistic, is not preferable and is essentially “pre-eminently” flawed and non-pragmatic.<sup>15</sup>

Pakistan has planned a “full spectrum” nuclear strategy by integrating conventional, strategic, and nuclear forces against India’s conceptualization of “Cold Start Doctrine” (CSD) to operationalize surgical strike plan. Possibly

Pakistan may also plan to integrate different forces into its strategy to deter India from operationalizing CSD.<sup>16</sup> Indian CSD, or proactive conventional strategy, was planned in the 1980s for a conventional war fighting under the nuclear overhang. This strategy was then christened “Sunderji Doctrine” that revolved around India’s seven defensive corps called the “holding corps” to be deployed in the vicinity of border with Pakistan. The holding corps comprised of infantry divisions to conduct static defence further reinforced with the mobile mechanized divisions. The “Sunderji Doctrine” intended to neutralize rival’s offensive and a limited incursion. Indian Army’s ostensible plan against Pakistan was additionally supported by its three strike formations.<sup>17</sup> While the parity of strategic forces has heightened, fear about the survivability of India-Pakistan’s nuclear forces would directly impact the strategic stability of the region.

## Strategic Dimensions

### Principles of Strategy

Strategy has to be synergized with “symmetry of objectives, concepts, and resources to increase the probability of policy success and the favourable consequences that follow from that success. It is a process that seeks to apply a degree of rationality and linearity to circumstances that may or may not be either,” observes Yarger.<sup>18</sup> Strategy is a complex affair that “provides a coherent blueprint to bridge the gap between the realities of today and a desired future.”<sup>19</sup> Essentially, strategy should be holistic that may enable the state to protect its vital interests with employment of other instruments of power to achieve objectives and to create strategic “effects in favour of the interest based on policy guidance.”<sup>20</sup> Yarger outlines certain principles of strategy that political objectives should dominate the contours of strategy, and to be “holistic in outlook,” and capable to adopt to “shifting conditions.” Therefore, it has to be effective and efficient; and *flexible* and *adaptable* to the peculiar strategic milieu.<sup>21</sup>

### CSD & BJP

Before focusing on various dimensions of India-Pakistan’s conflicting strategies, it is important to highlight the likely impact on the dynamics of conflict and the whole geostrategic environment. After Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP) election victory in May 2019 - in which it returned to power with a clear parliamentary majority of over 300 seats in a 545 strong parliament - *Lok Sabha*.<sup>22</sup> After BJP’s re-election, one US newspaper predicted that it would turn the world’s

biggest liberal democracy into an “illiberal one.”<sup>23</sup> It further opined that “India’s key public institutions - its media, universities, and law courts – may have been subordinated to a government that regards opposition as an illegitimate obstacle to an overarching aim: creating an India entirely different from the secular dream of Nehru and Gandhi.”<sup>24</sup> While in the strategic domain, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to behave in more assertive mode against Pakistan. Incidentally, earlier India had refused to acknowledge the existence of CSD vis-à-vis Pakistan. In reality, CSD was in existence since 2004, which by now has greatly matured into a quite powerful strategy *ready* to be *employed* in a limited conventional conflict against Pakistan.

In January 2017, the Chief of Army Staff of India, General Bipin Rawat, for the first time, publicly accepted existence of CSD. Rawat remarked: “The Cold Start doctrine exists for conventional military operations. Whether we have to conduct conventional operations for such strikes is a decision well thought through, involving the government and the Cabinet Committee on Security.”<sup>25</sup> Rawat’s statement was diametrically opposite to his predecessor - General V. K. Singh’s public pronouncement in which the latter remarked that “CSD did not exist, although he did acknowledge that the Indian Army possessed a ‘pro-active strategy’ for war with Pakistan.”<sup>26</sup> Therefore, in reaction, Pakistan is expected to accordingly tailor its military strategy by exploring all available options vis-à-vis CSD.

### **Pakistan’s Full Spectrum Nuclear Strategy**

To bolster deterrence posture, Pakistan continues to refuse to adopt a No First Use nuclear policy. While its “full spectrum nuclear strategy is based upon the concept of proportionate calibration against the perceived threat of a limited strike by the conventionally much superior military forces of India. Pakistan’s strategy is emitting robust signalling vis-à-vis the apparent strikes with the objective to deter the adversary from operationalizing its flawed limited war doctrine,” writes Zulfqar Khan. Principally, Pakistan’s strategy and “its strategic nuclear forces would perform the function of a dynamic reserve asset and as an ultimate deterrent against India.”<sup>27</sup> The Pakistani policymakers and strategists have to carefully conceptualize strategy to achieve state’s political objectives<sup>28</sup> particularly when the balance of power equation is asymmetrical. The balance of power is a potent factor in order to maintain a strategic stability and to prevent hegemony of the rival state.<sup>29</sup> This additionally makes military strategy much more complex and unstable mainly when the

relatively disadvantaged Pakistan does not adhere to No First Use nuclear policy, and has prepared to give a “full spectrum response to any threat to country’s sovereignty and security” remarked Pakistan’s the then Director General of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Major General Asif Ghafoor, on September 5, 2019.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, it is important to take stock of the existing strategic vulnerability dynamics between the two, and then to realistically let their respective strategies perform the role of a practical and realistic “guide” to realise the goals “efficiently” even under all “circumstances.”<sup>31</sup>

Hence, in such a volatile security environment, it will be completely irrational to craft strategies to impose a limited war against a comparatively disadvantaged nuclear Pakistan. Incidentally, the existing military equation between India and Pakistan vividly indicates that despite both countries’ military and geo-economic imbalance, they are still ostensibly under the mutual vulnerability dilemma because of their fairly *balanced strategic forces*.<sup>32</sup> This situation has created a catch-22 type strategic *impasse* and *mutual* vulnerability between the two that will make it impossible for any state to conclude a war at “a favourable conclusion”<sup>33</sup> *irrespective* of their imbalanced power capacities. This has created a paradoxical “stability-instability”<sup>34</sup> security dilemma owing to their symmetrical nuclear capabilities, which has also deeply squeezed both countries conventional war fighting strategies.

## Basis of Deterrence

Theoretically, CSD was crafted in the aftermath of Indian Army’s failure to swiftly mobilize its strike and holding corps against Pakistan during the military standoff of 2001-2002. India’s mobilization plan was codenamed *Operation Parakram*. During the crisis, reportedly India took three weeks to mobilise its strike/holding corps toward the Western border with Pakistan.<sup>35</sup>

During the Cold War, mutual vulnerability paradox between the then Soviet Union and the US nuclear forces had also created a situation under which no one could “credibly threaten” to use “strategic nuclear forces” against the other.<sup>36</sup> Boulding writes that “if (deterrence) were really stable...it would cease to deter. If the probability of nuclear weapons going off were zero, they would not deter anybody.”<sup>37</sup> Morgan notes that rational leadership of the rivals would not order employment of nuclear forces thereby leading to cancelling out of each other’s nuclear strategies.<sup>38</sup> Thomas Schelling argues that the

*“shared risk of war”* (italics in original) - meaning either by advertent or inadvertent act of the rival can further complicate the security dynamics consequently leading crisis to a catastrophic brink thereby “dragging the other with him.”<sup>39</sup> However, dilemma is, that how to make threat credible and not to make it sound “like a bluff”? Quintessentially, deterrence comprises of capabilities, “not intentions,” which can change at any time particularly during crisis. Therefore, only a “persuasive threat of war may deter an aggressor” that is capable of influencing rival state’s behaviour.<sup>40</sup> In essence, crises are essentially a “contest of nerve and risk-taking” and of “pain and endurance.”<sup>41</sup> The dawn of the nuclear revolution has made war impossible to contemplate as it will only bring pain and destruction; therefore, war between the nuclear states should not occur.<sup>42</sup>

## **Commensurate Strategizing Conventional Blitzkrieg**

The CSD was evolved by the Indian policymakers by keeping in perspective the inclusiveness of commensurate strategy with its grand, national, defence, and military strategies right down to the active theatre level. Outwardly, India has elaborately organized and war-gamed CSD by integrating and creating eight division-size Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) to achieve operational and tactical level objectives vis-à-vis Pakistan. Presently, both countries’ power potential is asymmetrical in which India enjoys military advantage over Pakistan. The IBGs supposedly consists of infantry, artillery, armour and air support assets that in India’s calculus would enable it to operate independently on the battlefield. In case of any major terrorist attack, if attributed to any Pakistan-based group or non-state actor, then, India may employ IBGs by rapidly penetrating into Pakistani territory at any point either along the LoC in Kashmir or the international border with intent to conquer limited area(s).

Currently, Indian forces deployment is already in the close vicinity of Pakistan. India’s most of the military commands are specifically designed/ deployed against Pakistan, and over 81% of Indian Air Force’s bases are also configured against Pakistan. India has also arrayed its eight division sized IBGs, and seven missile groups specifically configured to counter Pakistan.<sup>43</sup> Shireen Mazari observes that CSD is calibrated to undertake pre-emptive strikes against Pakistan for which the India has inducted hypersonic cruise missile – BrahMos I-II, which is destined to play a pivotal role in Indian military strategy. She

further explains that it was all in response to Pakistan's development of Nasr short-range cruise missile and, besides, in August 2019, it test fired the night-launch version of the Surface-to-Surface Ballistic Missile (SSBM) Ghaznavi with 290 kilometres range, to signal Pakistan's operational readiness to cater for any aggressive venture from New Delhi <sup>44</sup> supported by heavy armoured, mechanized infantry, and air assets into Pakistani territory in a matter of 48-72 hours at the onset of military blitzkrieg.<sup>45</sup>

Indian military commanders' rationale behind CSD is, to execute a rapid and decisive limited conventional military offensive into Pakistani territory in reaction to any alleged Pakistan-sponsored asymmetrical attack against India, before the international community could intervene or before Pakistan reaches a point to contemplate retaliatory nuclear strikes against Indian forces. However, so far, Indian military hierarchy has remained ambiguous about it. Incidentally, it was in August 2019 that Indian Defence Minister indicated that India's nuclear strategy of No First Use (NFU) in future would "depend on the circumstances."<sup>46</sup>

### India's NFU Policy

Indian policymakers seem to have perilous illusion that CSD would not disrupt Pakistan's military command and control system or endanger its strategic assets, including security of locations/facilities that might trigger a nuclear retaliation from Pakistani side in a crisis, if ever, the former decides to operationalize CSD. An offensive military doctrine calibrated against another nuclear state would fundamentally be against the basic principles of rational strategy.<sup>47</sup> The strategy has to be comprehensive in nature and it should factor in *all facets of probabilities* before venturing into any aggressive *brinkmanship* or a *military venture* against a nuclear state.

Presently, Pakistan possesses abundant competence to operationalize its conventional and nuclear forces at a favourable time against any target of its choosing in India or *beyond*. For example, Worldwide Threat Assessment for 2018 published by the US Director of National Intelligence Daniel R. Coats states, "Pakistan continues to produce nuclear weapons and develop new types of nuclear weapons, including short-range tactical weapons, sea-based cruise missiles, air launched cruise missiles, and longer-range ballistic missiles. These new types of nuclear weapons will introduce new risks for escalation dynamics and security in the region." The Pakistani National Command Authority's (NCA) meeting of December 21, 2017, also took note of "certain destabilizing

actions” taking place in region, including “the massive arms build-up in the conventional domain, nuclearization of the Indian Ocean Region and plans for development/deployment of (ballistic missile defense).” Whereas the 2016, NCA meeting too had focused on conventional weapons development plan.<sup>48</sup> For Pakistani nuclear forces capability to target India – see Table-1. Why India is under illusion that it probably might get away with a limited conventional strike against Pakistan before latter could conceptualize employment of last resort weapon in case India militarily ventures into Pakistan. However, ostensive withdrawal of Indian nuclear NFU policy would further complicate the deterrence and strategic stability matrix. Incidentally, Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in August 2019 remarked that India’s NFU pledge is not for indefinite period. Therefore, in future conflict, it may *not* remain bound to NFU policy.<sup>49</sup>

**Table-1: Pakistani Nuclear Forces-2018**

Type	Number of launchers	Year Deployed	Range (Kilometres)	Warhead x Yield (Kilotons)	Number of Warheads
<b>Aircraft</b>	24	1998	1,600	1 x bomb	24
F-16A/B Mirage III/V	12	1998	2,100	1 x bomb (or Ra-ad)	12
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>36</b>				<b>36</b>
<b>Land-Based Ballistic Missiles</b>					
Abdali (Hatf-2)	10	2015	200	1 x 5-12 kt.	10
Ghaznavi (Hatf-3)	16	2004	300	1 x 5-12 kt.	16
Shaheen-1 (Hatf-4)	16	2003	750	1 x 5-12 kt.	16
Shaheen-1A (Hatf-4)	-	2003	900	1 x 5-12 kt.	-
Shaheen-2 (Hatf-6)	12	2014	1,500	1 x 5-12 kt.	-
Shaheen-3 (Hatf-6)	1	2018	2,700	1 x 10-40 kt.	-
Ghauri (Hatf-5)	24	2003	1,250	1 x 10-40 kt.	24
Nasr (Hatf-9)	24	2013	60-70	1 x 5-12 kt.	24
Ababeel (Hatf-?)	-	-	2,200	MIRV or MRV.	-
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>102</b>				<b>102</b>
<b>Ground and Air-Launched Cruise Missiles</b>					
Babur Glcm (Hatf-7)	12	2014	350	1 x 5-12 kt.	12
Babur-2/1(B) GLCM (Hatf-?)	-	-	700	1 x 5-12 kt.	

Ra'ad Alcm (Hatf-8)	-	2017	350	1 x 5-12 kt.	-
Ra'ad-2 Alcm (Hatf-?)	-	2018	350	1 x 5-12 kt.	-
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>12</b>				<b>12</b>
Babur-3 Slcm (Hatf-?)	-	-	450	1 x 5-12 kt.	-
<b>Total</b>					<b>140-150</b>

**Source:** Hans M. Christensen, Robert S. Norris and Julia Diamond, "Pakistani Nuclear Forces, 2018," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* 74, no. 5 (August 31, 2018): 349.

## February 2019 Crisis

Indian Defence Minister had given this statement in the wake of Modi government's unilateral decision to abrogate the Article 370 and 35-A of the Indian Constitution. The *Foreign Policy* observed that "Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision to unilaterally alter Kashmir's special status was a key issue in its election campaign for his Hindu nationalist BJP that tantamount to demotion of Jammu and Kashmir's autonomous status by bringing it directly under New Delhi's control." As a consequence, the "non-Kashmiri Indians can now buy land in the state, leading to inevitable fears that Hindus could attempt to settle in the area and change the demography of the Muslim-majority state."<sup>50</sup> India tried to contain situation from further deterioration by imposing curfew and shutting down all modes of communications with rest of the world, and allegedly perpetrated gross human right violations.<sup>51</sup> Shankar states that "New Delhi has orchestrated mass detentions of mainstream and separatist politicians, civil society members, lawyers, and businesspeople to keep a lid on information flowing in and out of the Kashmir Valley. But the Indian government has repeatedly said there is no law and order crisis in the state."<sup>52</sup>

## Land Warfare Doctrine – 2018

The Indian Army's "Land warfare Doctrine – 2018" outlines that if it was forced to "prosecute a conventional war, it shall be to meet our National politico-military objectives and be executed to ensure comprehensive military gains." Its combat operations will be operationalized through the "Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) under the command of a combined arms operational headquarters."<sup>53</sup> This doctrine stipulates that in the nuclear realm, the "war prevention through deterrence" was its fundamental objective. At the same time, it has also made elaborate arrangements for war fighting both in terms of manpower, material, and tactical doctrine to prosecute CSD. It stresses establishment of "joint operations" plan to achieve the operational requirement for target elimination strategy.

“Integrated planning and conduct of networked theatre battles will therefore be part of the Indian Army’s strategy for prosecuting war. A strong well-structured and demonstrated strategic capability will be essential to deter war. We shall continue to enhance deterrence by development of niche capabilities, strategic posturing and upgradation of infrastructure.”<sup>54</sup> To draw parallel with the present-day South Asia with the Cold War dynamics between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact countries, the former Soviet Union had possessed massive conventional forces advantage over the US and its NATO allies. The NATO countries had chalked out an elaborate plan to operationalize its nuclear first-use strategy under an “unimaginable circumstances,” writes Paul Bracken.<sup>55</sup> In spite of US/NATO countries’ strategic and technological edge over the Soviets, the former still aggressively adhered to a policy of nuclear first use policy. For instance, in South Asia, Pakistan does not possess requisite conventional forces or a technological edge over India; therefore, Pakistan’s vulnerability and insecurity against the Indian military, technological, and relative geopolitical and geo-economic rise puts Islamabad in a serious security quandary.

## Establishing Deterrence

Presently, Pakistan is under tremendous pressure to reinforce its deterrence and defence capabilities to craft a tailored strategy against India to reduce its “prospective costs and risks in the event that deterrence fails.” Snyder writes that “deterrence works on the enemy’s *intentions*; the *deterrent value* of military forces is their effect in reducing the likelihood of enemy military moves.”<sup>56</sup> Therefore, it is crucial for Pakistan to possess a robust counterforce, tactical, and strategic weaponry capacity, to craft a *flexible* and *adaptable* military strategy, and a rational nuclear defence planning particularly when its power potential against the rival is lopsided. For Pakistan, it is observed – a flexible, adaptable and proportionate tactical, conventional and nuclear forces under its full spectrum employment plan would *enhance* its deterrent forces value against India’s pro-active military strategizing. It would supposedly enable Pakistan to prevent any Indian plan to contemplate employment of conventional forces or to use them pre-emptively, or to resort to nuclear first use against Pakistan, as it was revealed by Indian Defence Minister.

Incidentally, the former strategic force commander of India, B.S. Nagal, ironically supported the concept of a pre-emptive strike, which in his perspective the Indian policy of NFU would only encourage Pakistan to aggressive posturing

at the sub-conventional level. While the former Indian Air Force Chief, B. S. Dhanoa, in October 2017 also claimed that it can target Pakistan's nuclear sites and carry out surgical strikes.<sup>57</sup> Hence, it is important to fathom the complexity of India-Pakistan's conventional forces matrix in parallel with their strategic forces' employment strategies. In conventional military domain, Pakistan can swiftly mobilize over 300,000 troops accompanied by two strike corps, and the Army Reserve North and Army Reserve South against any Indian endeavour to execute CSD.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, Pakistan has recalibrated its military plan and adopted a "New Concept of War Fighting (NCWF)" to enhance the "inter-service coordination and reduce the mobilization time for the Pakistan Army."<sup>59</sup>

Contemporary Pakistan is under pressure to integrate conventional, strategic, and tactical nuclear forces to prevent India from operationalizing CSD. Of course, it is expected to increase the probability of a conventional war conceived under CSD spiralling out of control. During the Cold War, "a tactical nuclear response to conventional aggression in Europe," observes Snyder, was regulated on a "semi-automatic" standard operating procedures by integrating NATO's war plans, organization and strategy against the Warsaw Pact. In spite of elaborate war plan, essentially, NATO's strategy still remained ambivalent concerning the question of deterrence and defence.<sup>60</sup> However, in 1967, a new "Overall Strategic Concept for the Defence of the NATO Area" had identified "three types of military response" vis-à-vis Warsaw Pact: symmetrical and "direct defence" to "defeat the aggression;" deliberate escalation to defeat aggression; and to further evolve the concept of "General Nuclear Response" transiting to "massive nuclear strikes against the total nuclear threat, other military targets, and urban-industrial targets as required."<sup>61</sup> On the contrary, militarily, geopolitically, and geo-economically disadvantaged Pakistan in comparison to India need to possess a robust deterrent forces as a critical instrument to protect political and military objectives by exploiting its nuclear capability with intent to dissuade India to stop coercing and compelling Pakistan. Therefore, Pakistan would focus on the essentials of deterrence to *strengthen* its denial and punishment capabilities.

Snyder underscores that nuclear states must "exercise a conscious choice between the objectives of deterrence and defence, since the relative proportion of 'punishment capacity' to 'denial capacity' in their military establishments has become a matter of choice."<sup>62</sup> Deterrence and defence would require a robust conventional, strategic, tactical, and NRMA technological capabilities to sustain a viable deterrent posture and to reinforce Pakistan's defensive needs. Snyder

observes that if deterrer is rational, than its response would be resolute due to four factors: territorial or other “intangible gains” to be achieved; cost of such a conflict; success of holding a conquered territory or the “other values at stake;” and “the probability of future enemy attacks or other objectives which would follow from various response.”

On the other hand, the “deterrer will select the response which minimizes his expectation of cost or maximizes his expectation of gain.”<sup>63</sup> It is significant to note that credibility of deterrer’s response would largely depend on aggressor’s image of the rival state’s costs and benefits calculus, and deterrer’s competence to act proactively in a crisis. Both countries seem to be determined to enforce their distinct nuclear deterrence strategies, which after Indian Defence Minister’s indication of restructuring of NFU has additionally complicated the viability and sustainability of a stable deterrence matrix in a crisis situation. Now, Pakistan would be under tremendous trepidation that India might employ strategic forces pre-emptively.<sup>64</sup>

Sustainability of deterrence would largely depend on the quantum of punishment strategy vis-à-vis the rival that may foreclose the propensity to contemplate gaining a short or long-term territorial or political objectives – either because of asymmetrical power equation or under a limited war scenario. Therefore, Pakistan’s punishment strategy principally has to be sufficiently robust to hold India’s massive conventional war machine at bay. While its deterrence policy has to be premised on a forceful deterring capability against India’s massive expansion of conventional and strategic forces in view of its geopolitical and geo-economic rise in parallel with expanding orbit of strategic partnerships with the US and its allies in the Indo-Pacific. All these factors would tend to push Pakistan to enhance its strategic capability to establish a *forceful* and a credible deterrence shield against India. Thus, Pakistan’s successful establishment of a balance of terror coupled with military, NRMA technological capabilities, flexible and adaptable strategy, including political resolve to inflict severe punishment upon the rival would go long way in deterring India either from coercing or imposing a limited war.

### **BJP’s 2019 Election Manifesto**

Apparently, India is restructuring its nuclear doctrine on more aggressive and ambiguous trajectory. It is likely to further magnify Pakistan’s fear, insecurity, and vulnerability vis-à-vis India. Hence, in reaction to India’s restructuring of NFU

policy, Pakistan would be under pressure to *revisit* its conventional and nuclear strategies with intent to premise on more robust and feasible defence parameters to deter India. During the 2014 election campaign, incidentally BJP's election manifesto had clearly stated to restructure India's nuclear policy. Now, Modi's re-election and his minister's announcement to change India's NFU policy, from Pakistani perspective, is a quite worrisome development. Consequently, Pakistan would be under compulsion to accordingly tailor its nuclear strategy on more offensive trajectory. Indian indication of restructuring of its nuclear policy would further intensify the "fog of war" that would generate more uncertainty during crisis.<sup>65</sup>

## **Draft Nuclear Doctrine**

Since independence, Indian nuclear policy continued on an ambiguous nuclear trajectory. It was after the nuclear tests of 1998 that it declared itself a nuclear weapon state. In August 1999, India's National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) published a Draft Nuclear Doctrine (DND), which was subject to revision after every five years by the NSAB, or by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS). The CCS in a press release on January 4, 2003, stated that DND's "No First Use" option would be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian Territory or against its armed forces personnel anywhere; and its nuclear retaliation to a first-strike would be "massive" to inflict "unacceptable damage" on the aggressor.<sup>66</sup> The cardinal principle of DND was based on a "credible minimum deterrence" posturing from 2003 to August 2019. The 2003 CCS statement correspondingly indicated that India was planning to review its NFU option. Furthermore, from 2003 to 2019, Indian policymakers continuously evolved nuclear plan from the "massive retaliation" concept to a "flexible" retaliatory policy, and critically evaluated and included new terms of "credible" and "minimum" deterrence posture into its nuclear lexicon presumably with intent to further strengthen its retaliatory nuclear capability, and to create ambiguity.<sup>67</sup>

Indian indication of a probable reorganisation of its NFU was not a surprise, at least, for Pakistan and China.<sup>68</sup> It merely removed all semblance of scepticism concerning the validity of Indian NFU policy. It is imperative to emphasize that "balance of terror is primarily a *deterrent* balance rather than a *defensive* balance." To underscore, "a 'balance of terror' is said to exist when a potential aggressor faces the prospect of retaliatory damage sufficient to deter him, not when he faces the prospect of defeat or frustration of his aims." Sufficient reserve potential of a state to absorb the "first blow" with residual capability to

retaliate with adequate force to destroy or to “prostrate the attacker” are potent factors to establish a stable deterrence.<sup>69</sup> Published sources indicate that both India and Pakistan possess adequate capabilities to absorb the first blow and then to retaliate back.<sup>70</sup>

## Pakistan’s Balancing Strategy

Here two factors are quite significant: 1) Pakistan has sufficient defensive and substantial offensive capability to defend and prevent India from undertaking any military misadventure under CSD plan; and 2) India has to realize that albeit the traditional element of national power like the natural and human resources, technological, industrial, relative power in the world politics, geography, and military capabilities are important instruments of national power; however, New Delhi has to factor in Pakistan’s strategic, military, ballistic missiles (Table-1), strategic planning, and the balance of terror capabilities and political resolve to defend itself. Therefore, Pakistan would perpetually strive to make deterrence and defence capabilities more robust, as strategic and tactical balancing strategies are interdependent and would impact each other in different ways.<sup>71</sup> Accordingly, it is essential for Pakistan to enhance military capability in parallel with crafting of a flexible balancing strategy, and to muster political resolve to credibly retaliate against the rival. Besides, Pakistan has to sustain a fine balance between the conventional, tactical and strategic spectrum by amalgamating all capabilities *to deny any space to the rival*, and to resolutely defend against aggressor without letting it any political or military gains. Hence, the future wars would not necessarily be exclusively dependent on the “raw physical collision of military forces,” rather it has assumed the shape of “contest of wills, or a bargaining process.”<sup>72</sup> Presently, there is no single balance of power theory that could holistically explain it, however, there are various balance of power theories from the realist perspective. At the core of every theory lies the realist theory that world politics is anarchic, and the states have to protect their own vital national security and political objectives by *maximizing* power.

It is important to take other factors into account, for example, establishing a robust and an effective deterrence requires stringent procedures, because it is “not automatic” affair, intrinsically it is considerably difficult and intricate to achieve.<sup>73</sup> Wohlstetter observes that “deterrence is a matter of comparative risks” that requires “great ingenuity and realism at any given level of nuclear technology to devise a stable equilibrium” vis-à-vis the rival nuclear state.<sup>74</sup> Deterrence requires perpetual efforts and a serious cost-benefit analysis

before crafting a risky strategy to achieve state's certain policy objectives.<sup>75</sup> Quintessentially, deterrence consists of different psychological variables as well, including cultures and personalities involved in the decision making process. Bracken remarked that viability of deterrence largely "depends on who's in charge," which in his perspective is a troubling affair. Therefore, sometime in exceptional circumstances, it could make the "whole deterrence equation less reliable."<sup>76</sup>

Modi's far-right BJP is determined to change the political and constitutional structure of India from a secular democracy into a Hindu state.<sup>77</sup> On the other hand, Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan is also determined to resolutely counter India's revocation of Article 370 and threat to annex the Azad Kashmir (Pakistan administered part of Kashmir). While, Khan in his address to the nation on August 26, 2019, stated that: "If the (Kashmir) conflict moves towards war then remember both nations have nuclear weapons, and no one is a winner in a nuclear war. It will have global ramifications. The superpowers of the world have a huge responsibility...whether they support us or not, Pakistan will do everything possible" to protect its critical national interests.<sup>78</sup> Khan again reiterated his resolve to "fight" till the end during his address to the United Nations General Assembly on September 27, 2019. The political resolve of Modi and Khan clearly indicates predominant influence of divergent historical, religious, cultural values, strategic thought, and personality make-up, which in presence of their nuclear capabilities is raising the stakes. This essentially makes South Asian deterrence lopsided.<sup>79</sup> The most dangerous and risky indicator is both leaders' firm resolve to take action against each other in a crisis - either by first or pre-emptive employment of nuclear weapons.

## **Concluding Remarks**

Pakistan is taking change of Indian NFU policy and CSD very seriously, and has accordingly optimized its tactical, strategic, and conventional military forces to effectively respond to India's transforming war fighting strategy. Reportedly, Pakistan has also restructured its military plan and adopted the "New Concept of War Fighting (NCWF)" to "improve inter-service coordination and reduce the mobilization time for the Pakistan Army."<sup>80</sup> As it was argued that it would be virtually very risky, if not impossible, for India to operationalize CSD, as Pakistan clearly possesses capability to mobilize its forces much faster than India under its NCWF and full spectrum strategy.<sup>81</sup> In parallel, Pakistan is also reconfiguring its full spectrum strategy against India.<sup>82</sup> Pakistan's volatility

coupled with India's indication of restructuring of nuclear policy is a sure recipe for catastrophic disaster either by doing "crazy things," "firing nuclear shots," or by displaying "will" by both countries' leadership to strike first?<sup>83</sup> This would further raise the prospects of a catastrophic war either by miscalculation, misperception, accidentally, advertently or inadvertently, a real probability.

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