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S E C C O N U O L 1 8

MAY 5-6, 2018

US NPR:

The New Nuclear Arms Race

Adil Sultan

The 2018 US Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) that has once again increased the salience of low yield theatre or the tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs) in the US military strategy will not only reverse the gains made in the post - Cold War period but is also likely to influence the nuclear choices of several other nuclear weapon states. The sudden urge to modernize nuclear inventory and visible US abhorrence towards major arms control treaties may encourage some of the nuclear aspirants to give up their nonproliferation obligations and join the nuclear club. A nuclear arms race may have already begun.

Amongst several of the challenges outlined in the US NPR, Russia emerges as the leading threat because of its military expansion and willingness to use TNWs against NATO forces, as part of its 'escalate to de-escalate' strategy. China is seen as a major competitor and a potential threat that could undermine US interests in the Pacific region. The North Korean nuclear program and Iran's nuclear ambitions are the two other main challenges that the US intends dealing by tailoring its deterrence posture.

The draft US NPR recommends increase in the number of existing B-61 TNWs and replacing it with improved version of TNWs (B 61 -12) by 2021. Modification of the existing nuclear capable submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) and development of new submarine launched cruise

missiles (SCLM), equipped with low yield nuclear warheads have also been suggested, to enable quick deployment of US non-strategic nuclear capability in the troubled regions, including East Asia but this would allow the US to influence other ongoing regional rivalries such as the South Asia.

The US NPR is a significant departure from the earlier 2010 NPR that had recommended the reduction in the number of US non-strategic weapons from the NATO countries, since Russia was no longer seen as a major threat to NATO's security after the end of the Cold War. This was also reflected

“The NPR is likely to reignite the Cold War nuclear competition, but the new competition may not necessarily be dyadic in nature.”

in NATO's Strategic Concept of 2010, following which the political leaders of Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Norway, called for the removal of non-strategic weapons from Europe, but this move was opposed by some of the Baltic states and Poland, who felt vulnerable against Russia.

Renewed emphasis on TNWs is based on an assumption that the existing US strategic deterrence comprising long-range ICBMs capability may not be sufficient to deter some of the regional challenges; therefore, deployment of low

yield nuclear weapons could discourage the adversary from indulging in nuclear coercion of the US allies. This according to the US thinkers would help raise the nuclear threshold; but it may have the opposite impact with increased possibility of a limited nuclear war.

The recent NPR prepared by the US Department of Defense (DoD) is in contrast to Trump's presidential statements, in which he had questioned the value of NATO and demanded that the alliance should contribute more towards their defence and pay for the US security guarantees. Instead, the US is now planning to spend \$ 1.2 trillion over the next three decades to enhance security of NATO alliance. The renewed eagerness to fight a limited nuclear war in the European heartland may interest some of the younger NATO members who are threatened by the Russian presence in their neighbourhood but would create further strain amongst some of the older NATO states that have shown greater interest in the recent past to negotiate new treaty to ban nuclear weapons.

The US desire to re-introduce low yield nuclear weapons in East Asia in the form of SLBMs and the SLCMs would make it difficult for its regional allies - South Korea and Japan to reconcile their moral and security delineations and convince their publics the need to fight a limited nuclear war on their own territories. This is also likely to anger China that considers East Asia as its legitimate zone of influence and the US presence in the region as a mean to contain its natural rise.

Amongst other issues, the US NPR reiterates the commitment not to target states that are in compliance with their NPT related obligations, while keeping the option of using nuclear weapons against certain NPT signatories that the US considers are not in good standing. There remains some ambiguity about the non-NPT states, as the guarantee



Source: AFP

of non-use of nuclear weapons remains conditional to the NPT status only.

The draft NPR has also reversed priorities towards most arms control related issues. The US is likely to retain the option of nuclear testing and will not seek Senate ratification for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), thus rendering any hope of its early entry into force. The US will support the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), but without any commitment to honour its disarmament obligations under Article VI. The draft NPR is also critical of the recently concluded Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNWs) by terming it as unrealistic under the existing

international environment. It may have also dashed any hopes for the revival of fissile material negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament (CD), since the US now plans to build more facilities to meet its expanded inventory requirements.

The NPR is likely to reignite the Cold War nuclear competition, but the new competition may not necessarily be dyadic in nature. It would most likely be multi-tiered with more nuclear powers working to strengthen their respective regional or global deterrence equations. Low yield weapons or the TNWs are likely to assume greater importance in nuclear inventories of all nuclear possessor states. If the

US decides to test its new nuclear weapons; others might follow, as has been argued by some in India that this would offer an opportunity to validate its thermonuclear tests.

Notwithstanding the likely negative nuclear trajectory, other major powers, especially Russia and China could help fill the leadership vacuum created by the declining credibility of the US and provide the much needed stewardship; or else, they can entrap themselves in a never ending nuclear arms race.

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The Prospects of Russian-Pakistani Partnership

Andrew Korybko

Russia and Pakistan have been involved in a fast-moving rapprochement over the past couple of years that has since seen them develop a multidimensional partnership that's approaching a strategic status. The driving impetus behind their relations has been the US' War on Afghanistan and the resultant non-state security threats that are emanating from this landlocked country, which has taken on a renewed urgency ever since reports of Daesh appearing there first began to circulate around 2015. With an eye on the future, but careful to understand events from the immediate past that make the time ahead possible, here is what can be expected from the Russian-Pakistani partnership:

Afghan Diplomacy

As was mentioned, Afghanistan is the driver of Russian-Pakistani cooperation, and the two nuclear-armed Great Powers put aside their historical Cold War-era rivalry in order to revive the stalled Afghan peace process, albeit in a multipolar format centered in Moscow. The effort has yet to yield any tangible success pertaining to the conflict itself, but it's importantly created new high-

level channels of communication between Russia and Pakistan, among the other participants that are involved, and has thus far served as a trust-building exercise for taking relations to the next step.

Anti-Terrorist Exercises

Being that each party is seriously concerned about the spread of Daesh and other terrorist threats from Afghanistan either into their own territory (like Pakistan) or sphere of security influence (as Russia views the Central Asian Republics), it is only logical that they would eventually commence their first-ever anti-terrorist drills in 2016 in the mountainous regions of northern Pakistan. The exercise was such a success that it was repeated the following year in Russia's Northern Caucasus and plans to be held yearly. This represents a milestone in the Russian-Pakistani partnership and is proof of just how far relations have come over the past few years.

Moreover, Moscow went through with these drills despite New Delhi's vehement resistance and even a fake news campaign in its national media alleging that Russia had cancelled them.

The significance of this is that evidence is emerging that Russian-Indian ties are fraying after years of neglect by both sides and a sole focus on pecuniary interests such as those derived from the weapons and nuclear industries, however strategic they may be. For Russia to go forth with its anti-terrorist exercises with Pakistan and resist heavy Indian pressure to forgo this move is extraordinary and indicative of Moscow's desire to become the Eurasian supercontinent's supreme "balancing" force in the 21st century.

Conventional Military Ties

A lot remains to be desired in the realm of conventional military ties between Russia and Pakistan, but judging by the positive inertia of their rapprochement and India's simultaneous pivot towards the US (the first steps of which began at least a decade ago following the Bush Administration's nuclear energy outreaches to New Delhi in 2005), it's only a matter of time before this sphere begins to enjoy the fruits of the intense labor that Russian and Pakistani diplomats have put into their partnership. Right now Moscow's history of arms sales to Islamabad is quite small, with the only real major shipment being four

helicopters for anti-terrorist purposes.

That, however, has a symbolic value because it confirmed the growing trust between both sides and was proof that Pakistan is engaged in a conventional military dialogue with Russia behind the scenes. Trump's recent suspension of military aid to Pakistan could inadvertently end up being a godsend for Russian-Pakistani relations because it might give Moscow a reason to more robustly expand its arms shipments to

ties with Pakistan as restoring balance to South Asia, Pakistan wants to use its relationship with Russia as a bargaining tool for striking better economic deals with China by showing Beijing that Islamabad has other possible investment partners if certain Silk Road contracts aren't up to its liking.

Russia and China are already strategic partners so there's no harm in them engaging in win-win friendly competition with one another in Pakistan

South Asian state's territory are excellent starting points for the commercial relationship, but in order to actualize each party's full potential, their private small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) must eventually use CPEC-connected trade routes through Central Asia and Siberia to enhance their ties.

Although the socio-economic and cultural spheres are the most lacking at the moment, they are paradoxically



Source: AFP

Islamabad, recognizing the long-term market potential that is available and prudently taking steps to mitigate the impending losses that it is poised to experience as the US' military-industrial complex makes inroads in India.

Geopolitical Balancing

One of the greatest benefits that Russia and Pakistan can provide to one another is that they can help the other "balance" relations with their historical partner, in this case India and China, respectively. Each bilateral relationship is different nowadays and can't be qualitatively compared, but the value in growing Russian-Pakistani relations is that Moscow and Islamabad can acquire more leverage over New Delhi and Beijing, albeit for opposite reasons.

Whereas Russia wants to hedge its strategic losses from India pivoting towards the US and therefore sees its new

for the benefit of more solidly developing multipolarity, while Russia might see an opportunity to sell S-400 anti-air missile defense systems to Pakistan following its fallout with the US in order to cleverly further conventional military relations with Islamabad via a plausible pretext that New Delhi would be forced to accept.

Socio-Economic and Cultural Improvements

Lastly, the fields in which Russian-Pakistani relations are lacking the most are the socio-economic and cultural ones, and the solution to this long-running lack of personal and commercial contact with one another is for there to be state-to-state agreements in facilitating more academic exchanges, visa-free travel arrangements, and business deals.

The North-South gas pipeline and the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India one that Russia is helping to build across the

the most important for solidifying the Russian-Pakistani rapprochement and taking it to its strategic conclusion by ultimately reshaping Eurasian geopolitics.

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Pakistan's Place in The Changing World

Moed Yusuf

The Evolving Global Order

The world has moved from its unipolar moment into multipolarity; China has arrived; Russia has resurged; and the era of singular U.S. dominance is over. This

is the buzz in Pakistan's officialdom and the broader policy community. Many are excited at the prospect of being firmly anchored in the Chinese camp. Some also see this as a means of offsetting U.S. pressure and the India-U.S. partnership.

Indeed, the shift in the center of gravity away from the U.S. is undeniable. The trend in terms of China's economic rise and accelerated military modernization has been clear for some time. China has also begun to show an uncharacteristically high appetite for diplomatic involvement



Source: AFP

and assertiveness in global conflicts. For many developing countries, the lure of Chinese financial liquidity and its willingness to invest in fragile states is irresistible. Russia, for its part, has made no secret of its interventionist policies to challenge the U.S. in its Eastern

European and Central Asian backyards. And yet, the Pakistani take on the evolving global order needs a rethink. It reflects a Cold War hangover. The bipolar world was all about alliance politics. The neatness of the two superpower

camp and Washington's and Moscow's obsession with alliance credibility considerations made their and their allies' behavior rather predictable: they sought to defend their allies in proxy theaters while the allies maneuvered to draw maximum payoffs for their

loyalty to their respective patrons. Non-superpowers weren't free to switch camps at will; the costs of doing so were often too high.

The emerging global order is different in two crucial respects. First, unipolarity is loosening but not disappearing. U.S. competitors are catching up and are able to offer countries attractive incentives to elicit their support on key issues or in specific regions of the world. Overall though, the U.S. military preponderance remains all but absolute, and even "economic, technological, and other wellsprings of national power....are concentrated in the United States to a degree never before experienced in the history of the modern system of states" (World Out of Balance: International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy, 2008). China is the only country with the economic resources to develop power projection capabilities necessary for a superpower, but it gains little by actively subverting the international political and economic order that it greatly depends on and benefits from. While China and Russia are exhibiting increased issue-based cooperation, their own differences are stark. When one parses China-Russia engagement, one finds no broad balancing coalition emerging with the objective of eclipsing the U.S.'s position as the leader of the world. This may change – the events of the last year since U.S. President Donald Trump took office are accentuating tensions – but even if such an effort were to evolve, the power differential between the U.S. and its competitors makes it materially impossible for them to achieve a decisive break from unipolarity for the foreseeable future (Brokered Bargaining in Nuclear Environments: U.S. Crisis Management in South Asia, 2018).

Second, rather than solidifying into hard U.S. versus anti-U.S. camps ala the Cold War – this is the increasingly prevalent view among segments of Pakistan's

officialdom – alliance structures are likely to remain in flux for the foreseeable future. The most successful middle and weak states will be those who are able to make themselves relevant for multiple great powers simultaneously rather than anchoring themselves in one camp in opposition to the other. India, with its

“ China will be unlikely to do anything for its partners that could risk rupturing its heavily-interdependent relationship with the U.S. ”

burgeoning relationship with the U.S., a lingering partnership with Russia, and a nearly-\$100 billion trade with China has already proven so. Indeed, save exceptions, support for allies from the rising great powers is likely to be carefully calibrated. China will be unlikely to do anything for its partners that could risk rupturing its heavily-interdependent relationship with the U.S. To the contrary, it will continue to counsel its partners not to put it in a position where it must confront the U.S. on their behalf. No surprises here; it is only logical for a state for whom more-of-the-same amounts to a constantly narrowing power differential with leader of the world. Also, countries seeking Chinese support may begin to revise their own cost-benefit analyses of being decidedly pro-China. China's mercantilist model of engagement that often demands preferential treatment and exceptions to domestic legal regulations, lacks focus on institutional strengthening in host countries, and forces an influx of Chinese labor into already-labor surplus countries could entail greater long-term costs than are initially apparent. Concerns about CPEC in some Pakistani quarters are warranted in this regard.

The Dangers of a Willfully Partisan Pakistan

Pakistan is at a crossroads. Misreading these global developments could force it to adopt an unnecessarily partisan foreign policy stance and force the Western world (and India) into outright opposition. This would only make it easier for the most critical Western voices to push for greater Pakistani diplomatic isolation. Paradoxically, as Pakistan's options for international support narrow, it would weaken Pakistan's negotiating hand with China while putting China in precisely the situation it wants to avoid vis-à-vis the U.S. (in terms of defending Pakistan's interests).

There are other reasons that make partisanship a self-defeating proposition for Pakistan. First, the U.S. role as Pakistan's largest export market, its unparalleled clout over international financial institutions that Pakistan seems set to continue depending on, and the military's deeply-embedded preference for western hardware together represent one of the major factors determining Pakistan's economic and military viability. Its importance cannot be overstated.

Second, Beijing has been persistent and explicit in signaling its desire for Pakistan not to allow its ties with the U.S. to rupture. American and Chinese interests vis-à-vis Pakistan diverge on the question of the U.S.-India partnership and India's potential role as a counterweight to China. But there are far fewer disagreements between them on Afghanistan and Pakistan's securitized policy approaches to defending its regional interests. Increasingly, China has pulled away from vocalizing support for Pakistan's ambivalent and defensive stance on the presence of terrorist outfits on its soil. While the U.S. may take this narrative too far for China's liking, privately

Chinese interlocutors are also quick to point to the unsustainability of Pakistan's selective approach to counterterrorism. From China's perspective, not only is the presence of militant groups on Pakistan's soil the most likely reason for a potential U.S.-Pakistan rupture and possible U.S. actions to punish Pakistan thereafter but it is also one reason for the continued tit-for-tat India-Pakistan hostility at the sub-conventional level that Pakistan itself alleges has made CPEC a target of Indian-sponsored subversion.

Third, and most important, partisanship will take away Pakistan's only realistic opportunity to break out of its current cycle of low economic growth and domestic insecurity, a combination that is leaving Pakistan behind as India, China, and the larger region forge ahead. Data is now indisputable: Pakistan's differential with India will mirror that of India's with Sri Lanka in less than two decades if the current growth trajectories remain intact. This projection factors in the CPEC's injection into Pakistan's economy.

The alternative – the only one that can change the economic equation favorably and increase Pakistan's strategic leverage in the region – is for Pakistan to cash in on its geography by turning into a geo-economic hub. This promise has never materialized because geostrategy has always trumped economic means of power projection in the minds of Pakistan's planners.

Pakistani leaders must recognize three realities: (i) CPEC's optimization requires connecting this north-south axis with the lateral east-west one stretching from energy-rich Central Asia to India and further east. The returns from unlocking South Asia are projected to be astronomically higher than in the CPEC-only scenario; (ii) several connectivity projects in and around the region involving India designed to bypass Pakistan are viable only because of Pakistan's decision to block the east-

west axis; and (iii) interdependence between economies creates mutual leverage and can act as an equalizer for weaker parties. This is pertinent to the India-Pakistan dynamic.

Offering up Pakistan as a trade and transit hub for the South and Central Asian region could transform Pakistani territory into a melting pot for great power cooperation. The east-west axis is analogous to the U.S. idea of a 'new silk road'. Connecting this with CPEC would create natural synergies between the Chinese and American visions for the region. Meanwhile, efforts to involve other western and regional countries in CPEC should make CPEC broader and less threatening to those who currently view it with suspicion. In as much as these initiatives are meant to afford a peace dividend, Afghanistan and Pakistan will gain tremendously as many of the energy projects pass through some of the most restive parts of the two countries, again serving a common U.S. and Chinese interest. Opening land routes for east-west trade also implies that Pakistan will gain access to Central Asia (which Afghanistan blocks right now as retaliation for Pakistan blocking access for Afghanistan to India) while reducing the appeal of the Iranian port of Chahbahar, at least as a competitor to Gwadar and India's principal access point to Afghanistan and Central Asia. Crucially, millions of Indian citizens in western India would become dependent on energy flowing from Central Asia through Pakistani territory or on the smooth flow of trade in the opposite direction. Traditionally competitive regional and global actors would then develop a genuine stake in each other's stability. As gains from connectivity grow, regional states may begin to see reason to work jointly to eliminate terrorist groups that may seek to undermine regional connectivity. This has never happened before in South Asia.

The flip side of Pakistan's geographical

locale must also not be ignored. Pakistan sits at the intersection of the three most active nodes of great power competition: Asia Pacific; Middle East; and Afghanistan and Russia's extended Central Asian backyard. With turbulent borders, deeply competitive relations with several of its immediate and near neighbors, some of whom are active participants in these nodes of competition, and an extremely weak writ in parts of its territory, there is little possibility of Pakistan avoiding the fallout of competition in these theaters if it continues to be seen as an unhelpful/destabilizing force. Posing as a proxy for one or the other great power camp in such a context will only increase the vulnerability to pressure from the opposite camp.

What is proposed here is no less than a paradigm shift in Pakistan's very approach to global politics. It will require a break from long-entrenched bureaucratic and organizational interests and thought processes that have driven policies thus far. More so, it will take decisive leadership and a coherent vision. The world would also have to play its part in understanding Pakistan's security predicament and support it as it creates the space to affect this change.

The good news is that Pakistan policy makers recognize that the status quo is no longer tenable. Few, if any, challenge the proposed future. Yet, I find decision makers afraid to take transformative decisions. Corollary: inertia persists, and in fact, at times, the system hunkers down further in defense of continuing what it knows best. This logjam must be broken. For with every passing day, Pakistan is falling further behind its peers. If Pakistani leaders truly want to leave a governable country behind for their upcoming generations, this can't go on like this.

Moeed W. Yusuf is the Associate Vice President of the Asia Center at the U.S. Institute of Peace.



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NUCLEAR DEAL WITH IRAN



Building on the Nonproliferation Value of the Nuclear Deal with Iran

Kelsey Davenport

The nuclear deal negotiated between Iran and six countries known as the P5+1 (China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States) succeeded in resolving a decades-long nuclear crisis. But continued success of the accord is not guaranteed. U.S. President Donald Trump has put the future of the agreement in doubt by threatening to pull the United States out of the deal unless the U.S. Congress

and Washington's European partners take steps to "fix" the agreement.

Trump's "flaws," however, are not based on deficiencies in the deal itself. Rather, Trump has changed the goalposts for defining success of the deal, including by holding it accountable for failing to stem Iranian activities, such as ballistic missile launches, that it was never designed to address. Trump also faults the deal for failing to lock in certain limits in

perpetuity.

Trump's misguided and dangerous attempt to coerce Iran into accepting additional terms not only risks the current limitations on Iran's nuclear program, but also the opportunity to build on the innovative elements of the deal. Rather than trying to renegotiate the deal – an effort that will only undermine U.S. credibility and risks violating the agreement – the United States and its negotiating partners



Source: AFP

should be looking at options to build on the deal. Building on the deal would strengthen nonproliferation efforts writ large and address concerns about the future of Iran's program after limits expire.

The following are a few ideas for building on elements of the agreement in a responsible way to bolster nonproliferation efforts.

Fuel Supply Guarantees

The nuclear deal with Iran raises the concept of commensurability between domestic fuel production and demand. For instance, during the first fifteen years of the deal, Iran's uranium enrichment production is tied to its fuel needs for the research reactor under construction at Arak.

Fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor will be brought in periodically and Russia is providing fuel for the power reactor at Bushehr.

Building on this concept of commensurability, states in the region pursuing nuclear power should be encouraged not to develop domestic uranium enrichment. States that export reactors can contribute to this goal by writing in permanent fuel supplies guarantees for any future reactor contracts. Russia, for instance, wrote permanent fuel supply guarantees into the memorandum of understanding for new reactors in Iran. With the new International Atomic Energy Agency administrated fuel bank in Kazakhstan providing additional supply assurance, states

could commit to forgo uranium enrichment and accept fuel supply contracts without fear of disruption. For Iran in particular, fuel supply contracts for future reactors could serve as a disincentive to expand uranium enrichment after the limits on its program expire.

A related strategy would be to accelerate work to phase out the use of reactor fuel greater than 5 percent uranium-235 for any purposes by any country in the Middle East. Six countries in the Middle East currently have research reactors, seven of which are fueled by uranium enriched to 20 percent or higher. Providing international technical support to convert all reactors to low-enriched fuel and committing to provide fuel

supplies for the lifetime of the reactors would serve as a further disincentive for states to pursue domestic uranium enrichment.

Pursue a Regional Reprocessing Ban

On the plutonium side, the deal prohibits reprocessing spent fuel for a definite period of 15 years and notes Iran's intention of forgoing reprocessing in perpetuity. Similarly, this is based on an assessment that Iran does not need a reprocessing capability, particularly as Russia will take back the spent fuel from the Bushehr power reactor and the other units under contract to be built at that site.

While the commitment to extend the reprocessing ban beyond 15 years is nonbinding, it creates an opportunity to pursue a reprocessing ban at the regional level. There currently is no need for any state in the region to pursue plutonium reprocessing. Currently, Israel is the only state with reprocessing capabilities. Given the age of Israel's Dimona reactor, it is likely that the reactor is nearing the end of its lifespan. A reprocessing ban would preserve Israel's strategic advantage, given that the state has already developed nuclear weapons. Other states in the region have also already agreed to forgo reprocessing, further demonstrating that there is no need for domestic fuel separation. For example, the United Arab Emirates agreed to give up the right to reprocessing technology in its nuclear cooperation agreement with the United States, a condition that Washington should be sure to include in the nuclear cooperation agreement its contemplating with Saudi Arabia. Locking in a ban before further development of civil nuclear power programs proceed further would be advantageous to stave off the

proliferation risk.

A region-wide commitment would serve as an incentive for Iran to refrain from reprocessing after the 15 year limitation expires. Additionally, it would provide a much-needed impetus for the Middle East weapons of mass destruction free zone process. While all states in the region have committed to the aspiration goal of such a zone, progress remains stalled since the 2015 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference ended without consensus.

Build Nuclear Security Cooperation

Another route to expand upon the nuclear deal with Iran is to look at fully realizing and building upon some of the recommended actions on nuclear security and safety in Annex III of the JCPOA. Unlike other provisions in the deal, the Annex III recommendations for nuclear cooperation in research, safety, and security, are not required. However, full implementation of several of these measures would provide greater assurance to the region and the international community that Iran's nuclear activities are peaceful.

Several of the measures also could create space for regional coordination and resource sharing to address a mutual concern: the threat of nuclear terrorism. Given that other states in the region are beginning to develop nuclear energy programs, strengthening nuclear security at the state level will be critical for guarding against nuclear terrorism and can play an important role in preventing proliferation.

One recommendation in Annex III proposes establishing a nuclear safety center in Iran to support trainings for personnel involved with Iran's nuclear industry. Work on this center

is already underway, as the EU and Iran began a feasibility study on establishing the center in 2016 as part of the larger series of high-level dialogues between the EU and Iran on nuclear cooperation.

Once established, the center should be expanded to address nuclear security, taking into account IAEA best practices, and ideally working with the broad Nuclear Security Training and Support Center network set up by the agency. Iran's center would benefit from access to additional resources and specialized trainings provided through the network, such as guidance on detection technology maintenance and calibration, transport security, physical protection, provision of equipment, and training modules.

Integration with the network and building bilateral relationships with other centers in the region (such as the centers in Jordan and Turkey) would provide a platform for developing regionally focused activities that address the unique threats to the Middle East. A regional network could draw on lessons from the Asian Regional Network, which includes centers from South Korea, China, and Japan, allowing for specialization and training exchanges

There is legitimate reason to be concerned about the future of Iran's nuclear program after certain limits expire. While there are prohibitions in the nuclear deal that exist in perpetuity, pursuing additional restrictions and transparency measures at the regional, or international level, will only reinforce the nuclear deal and nonproliferation efforts.

Kelsey Davenport is the Director for nonproliferation policy at the Arms Control Association, where she provides research and analysis on the nuclear and missile programs in Iran, North Korea, India, and Pakistan and on nuclear security issues.



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SERPENTI

Prof. Adil Najam is the founding Dean of Boston University's School of International Affairs, the Pardee School. He was the former Vice Chancellor of the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS). Dr. Adil Najam was the lead author of the second and third reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), work for which the IPCC was awarded the Nobel Award in 2006. His research spans a range on international policy issues, including environment and development, climate change, human security and human development, global governance, and higher education, amongst others. Pakistan Politico in an exclusive interview ask Dr. Najam about the climate security nexus.

Could you shed some light on why you chose to do some academic work on a less-talked about constituent of national security, especially at a time when kinetic and other security-related factors are dominating academia and media?

My concern about the climate-security link comes from the security side of the equation, much more than from the climate or environment side. The single most important question that should occupy the attention of anyone studying security is: What or who is making us insecure? How? And, what can be done about it?

The moment you confront this question honestly and seriously, you come

to the realization that the so-called 'traditional' security discourse, while critically important, is also incomplete. To ignore non-traditional dimensions of security is, in fact, to make the modern state less secure, including on national security. This led me to my 2003 book "Environment, Development and Human Security" and has now, fifteen years later, brought me back to the question of climate and security in Pakistan in a research project I am

"WATER IS PAKISTAN'S BIGGEST SECURITY CHALLENGE"

doing along with my BU Pardee School colleague Henrik Selin.

Why climate?

Mostly because climate change is rapidly and dangerously expanding the 'theatre of insecurity', especially in countries like Pakistan and South Asia as a whole. Water. Food. Drought. Heatwaves. Disasters. Migration. Disease. These are just a few of the additional insecurity

stresses that climate change exacerbates. And because nature does not respect political boundaries, all these things happen across countries and regions. But, most importantly, climatic change is defined by its elements of unpredictability and surprise. And nothing complicates security the way unpredictability and surprise can.

Look around Pakistan or at South Asia as a whole, even in the last ten years, and you see a constant procession of climatic crises that not only make the lives of people miserable, they actually make them insecure. It is not just that every time there is a flood or drought or disaster it distracts the security apparatus from its 'traditional' duties by turning them into relief officials. It is also that each episode also imposes new law and order burdens and ultimately they gnaw away at efficacy and effectiveness of the security apparatus.

But is it really fair to see climate change as a military challenge?

I do believe that the key challenges from the climate and security nexus relate to climate impacts as threat-multipliers, primarily but not only, to internal security and very often in terms of human insecurities. However, the purely military and military preparedness aspects cannot be ignored either. Whether it is Hannibal taking his elephants up the Alps, Napoleon getting his army to return from Russia, or Alexander trying to cross the Indus, the



Source: AFP

importance of climate to security has always been abundantly clear to military planners. What Climate Change does is that it adds the dimension of ‘change’ and, therefore, huge surprise, to the equation. That is not a pretty scenario.

Do you think that security planners across the world, and in Pakistan, appreciate change as a security threat, especially when they have more immediate threats like terrorism,

insurgencies, etc. to worry about.

From my experience, I find that when you propose the linkage to senior security planners – certainly in both U.S.A. and in Pakistan – they instinctively see the connection and recognize its importance. In fact, they will then talk about it in fairly sophisticated ways. However, it is also very clear – and they will acknowledge this – that climate change is NOT at all a priority on their

security radars. There are too many more immediate distractions that they have to worry about. Plus, climate change is too complex and uncertain a challenge for them to be able to grapple with.

What aspects of climate change impacts should Pakistani security planners be most worried about?

Water. Above all else. There is no doubt in my mind that water is one of the biggest security challenges for Pakistan.

It is existential. It is no longer long-term; it is immediate-term. It may even be as big or bigger than any inter-state threat we have from our very hostile neighborhood.

The interesting thing, related to your last question, is that there is a near consensus that water is not just a major developmental concern for Pakistan, but a potential security challenge. That it has been and can be a trigger to violence. That it is both a quantity and quality challenge. That it has both domestic and national security dimensions. On all of this, everyone agrees. But beyond this – and especially on the question of what to do about it – there is no discussion. Very little thought, and no action. Here is a looming existential threat everyone recognizes. Yet, we seem to be just waiting for something bad to happen; then we will respond. Here is the bad news: ‘Then’ would already be too late.

So, how should Pakistan, including its security planners, think about climate change?

There have been essentially two ways in which security planners around the world, including in Pakistan, have thought about climate change. The first is in terms of being a provider for disaster relief. When climatic or other disasters strike, the security apparatus is often deployed as the first- and front-line of disaster relief. In Pakistan this has now taken institutional form in the shape of the National Disaster Management

Authority (NDMA). This is important, even critical, work. But for most part it is reactive and it is very expensive. Importantly, in a world of climate change the likelihood of disasters is constantly increasing. Which means that no matter how good we make our disaster relief apparatus, it will continuously be surpassed by the increasingly number of disasters.

The second is to think about reducing the environmental impact of security infrastructure and activities. After all, and certainly in Pakistan, the environmental footprint of security institutions is huge: massive civil installations and vehicular fleets; employer of, literally, armies of people; implementer of large projects, manager of gigantic tracts of land; producer of vast amounts of pollution; etc. In all these and other capacities, the security infrastructure is a very large producer of environmental impacts, including greenhouse gasses. Therefore, in some countries militaries use their leverage of scale to reduce environmental impacts, and especially make significant reductions in greenhouse emissions. In Pakistan, our security forces have not yet, but should, do more on its own environmental impact since that could have large positive benefits for the country.

There is, of course, a third aspect which, I think, is most important for Pakistan: to reduce the likely impacts of the threat

before it actually manifests itself. Security folks call this threat management. Climate people call it resilience. In our case it means taking steps that will increase our ability to withstand the impacts of future climate events that might impinge on security. A lot of this will be about building more resilient infrastructure. But it is also about improved water management strategies, enhanced energy and food security, better urban planning, and including an analysis of climatic variables in strategic security deployments.

Is this what you mean by what you call living in the “Age of Adaptation”?

Yes. Climate change is a reality. And its biggest implication is that we now have to learn how to live in the ‘Age of Adaptation.’ That means adapting to new realities, including on security.

Early warning and disaster relief is good, but that only means having the ability to get out of the way of or dealing with the impacts of disaster. Reducing our own emissions is absolutely necessary, but Pakistan is a fairly small country in terms of its emissions and our actions alone cannot shift the direction of climate change. Most important of all is to reduce the impacts of the climatic threat by building resilience. In the Age of Adaptation, resilience will be the single biggest guarantor of a nation’s climatic security. To think about climate in a security context, is to think about resilience.

Grand Strategy



The Challenge of Reaching AD 2100

Ilhan Niaz

The comprehension of the total assets at the disposal of a state in relation to rational objectives vital for survival and prosperity and modified by the total capabilities of adversaries and allies is the essence of grand strategy. As observed by Cardinal Richelieu, the French first minister from 1624 to 1642 who oversaw the consolidation of absolutism at home while setting France on course to becoming the strongest Continental European power until the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815, states prevail or perish entirely in the temporal realm. A state's understanding of the world around it and of itself is fundamental to the articulation and pursuit of goals on the international stage. The greater the ideological pretensions, moral obstructions, and internal impediments, to the free exercise of rationality by the state elites charged with strategizing, the less effective their policies are likely to be. Conversely, greater intellectual rigor and clarity improve the possibility of wiser decisions being made.

The factors states need to consider in order to develop grand strategy include geography, environment, history, demography, mentality, governance, wealth, productivity, military power and scientific-technological capability. The great challenge for statesmen is to countenance these diverse subjects in an integrated manner, seeking, as it were, enlightenment in relation to the courses of action available to their state. This challenge is compounded by the fact that academic specialists tend to see problems in isolation, bureaucracies tend towards inertial momentum,

journalists are captivated by events and personalities, and political leaders are all too often driven by expediency. From the first pages of recorded history, to our era of information overload, rulers and leaders, be they Persian emperors or American presidents, have taken the intellectually lazy way out or succumbed

“ While Pakistan has proven adept at building its military power, the challenges that threaten the country's future are rooted in demographics, environment, governance, epistemology, and productivity ”

to narcissism and hubris induced by the spectacle of their country's military power and economic wealth, convinced, like Xerxes, they can lash the sea into obedience to their will. Relatively recent examples further underscore the point that a powerful but irrational adversary can be bogged down or even defeated if it fails to compensate for the effects of factors other than its military and economic strength. This is exemplified by the Nazi German invasion of the Soviet Union and by the US invasions and occupations of Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Of course, the same set of objective considerations that can blunt or defeat the projection of power by a great empire can also limit the consequences of failure. Due to geography, Germany's misadventure

in the Soviet Union meant that within four years of its invasion the Third Reich had ceased to exist. Achaemenid Persia failed to conquer the city-states of the Greek mainland but the Persian Empire did not collapse as a result because the Greeks lacked the numbers and the unity to press their advantage while the strategic depth of Persia ruled out the possibility of a quick victory. In a like manner, American floundering in Afghanistan and Iraq cannot lead to the destruction of the United States though they diminish its credibility and accelerate its relative decline. Countries like Pakistan, which have less of a margin for error, can ill-afford the luxuries of narcissism or hubris that have exacted a heavy toll from the greatest power both past and present.

Pakistan's rulers often talk about geostrategic location though they do so in a manner divorced from environmental, demographic, and historical factors. To start with, Pakistan occupies a great frontier region between the historic power centers of Persia, Central Asia, and South Asia. Existing at a location where three major geopolitical and historical tectonic plates meet has exposed the territories comprising Pakistan to hundreds of major invasions and migrations and tremendous violence and instability. The psychosocial impact of exposure to such conditions, as observed by Zafar Iqbal Rathore, is that Pakistanis are aggressive, insecure, lack the ability to trust others, confuse cunning with wisdom, long for miracles and saviors, and excel at the tactical while being strategically immature. The lack of



continuity in terms of political order and administrative writ has meant that Pakistan is an ancient society (like China) devoid of a sense of history (unlike the Chinese state). A wise Pakistani leadership would be cognizant of the inherent fragility of its circumstances and eschew policies, however clever they may seem, that increase the quotient of instability within itself and its neighborhood.

While Pakistan has proven adept at building its military power, the challenges that threaten the country's future are rooted in demographics, environment, governance, epistemology, and productivity. The present territories of Pakistan had 30 million people in 1947 and currently have 208 million – a seven-fold increase in 70 years. Projections indicate that the population could double from its current level by 2050 while the growth momentum is so strong that even a decelerating growth rate will result in a significant and potentially unsustainable increase in absolute numbers. If China's population had grown at the same rate as Pakistan's then today the former would have a population of over 3 billion from 450 million in 1949. Pakistan's population growth has exhausted its water supply with acute pervasive shortages afflicting all major urban centers, and per capita availability of fresh water headed to dangerously low levels within the next 15 years. The productivity, competitiveness, health, and education, of this teeming population are, relative to others in the region, in decline, with one-fifth stunted

and one-half (women) systematically abused, excluded, and deprived of opportunities. And, the melting ice on the cake is that global warming and man-made climate change threaten to turn most of the heavily populated flood plains of Pakistan (and India) and key coastal areas uninhabitable in the next 50-80 years. Pakistan's nuclear missiles and armored divisions cannot protect it from the almost inevitable perfect storm of environmental collapse and Malthusian correction that is likely to materialize within the lifetimes of those born after 1980.

And then there is the governance dimension. However enlightened or benevolent a leader may be, his or her ability to affect outcomes depends on the administrative machinery charged with implementing policies. While relying on the Chinese to implement CPEC and repeatedly drawing on the military as an administrative reserve can generate some progress, it is ultimately the quality of the civil administration that largely determines the quality of governance. Pakistan desperately needs to modernize its civilian state apparatus but between political indifference and the intellectual bankruptcy of international donors not only is meaningful reform not going to take place but such reforms as are carried out under the influence of irrational foreign tutelage serve to accelerate the decline they ostensibly seek to reverse. The challenge of improving the intellectual and moral quality of Pakistan's three million plus civilian state employees is

so vast that few really know where to begin and while there is plenty of wise advice (given for free) resting peacefully in the archives no one who matters is interested in it.

So what might a Pakistani grand strategy aimed at surviving to the next century look like? To start, Pakistan needs to seek unconditional and full-spectrum normalization of relations with all of its neighbors and follow the Chinese example of not allowing territorial disputes, however galling, to impede rational integration into a regional architecture that would help everybody deal with the coming environmental and demographic crises. Another change would be to focus on improving internal governance with a view to generating the capacity to defuse the ecological and population bombs that Pakistan is sleeping on while planning for a + 4 degrees Celsius world. Reversing Pakistan's epistemological regression into a pre-Enlightenment framework will be required to rationally address these challenges and necessitate a liberalization of the education system and a comprehensive internal dialogue on improving productivity. With Pakistan experiencing an unprecedented level of political stability there is no time left to commence the serious internal dialogue needed on the many components of a grand strategy to see it through to 2100.

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Terrorism Then and Now:

The Shifting Sands of Terrorist Violence in Pakistan (2001-2018)

Muhammad Feyyaz

The typical non-state terrorism indiscriminately targeting the civilians erupted in Pakistan following the US invasion of Afghanistan during October 2001. It was predominantly sectarian prior to this war. Though remarkably contained owing to a coordinated and sustained national counter terrorism campaign by Pakistani military, law enforcement forces and strategic organizations, the threat persists. It has in fact simultaneously become ideologically more diffused and in substantial measures organizationally amorphous but increasingly atrocious manifest in the staggering death tolls across the entire country by fewer attacks than previously. Picking up impetus from early 2017, and continuing well into current year, the enabling conditions and the statistics project the specter of a violent landscape that looms large indeed without portending the probability of the magnitude of an existential threat experienced during the last decade.

It is not clear whether counter terrorism practitioners, policy makers and researchers in Pakistan take notice of trends and patterns underlying the seemingly uniform phenomenon but to be sure, clandestine political terrorism in this country since its advent has undergone fundamental changes. Attention is hence warranted to set the

TERRORIST VIOLENCE IN PAKISTAN

parameters for the public debate and to shape the agenda of the academic community as well as the government to effectively combat the threat. Ironically, the literature is also not sizeable enough to compose a distinct body of indigenous knowledge on the subject with a few noteworthy exceptions.

One important study during 2013 identified eight broad themes in the trend pattern of terrorism in Pakistan - (i) as expression of religious constructions; (ii) as a protest and rallying symbol (ideological); (iii) as instrument of policy (political); (iv) as violent criminal behavior (organized crime); (v) as a warfare implement (spatiotemporal swathe); (vi) as propaganda tool (visual warfare through media); (vii) as vengeance (norm); and (viii) as vigilantism (state function). The temporal scope of this research was the period between 2006 and 2012 when terrorism had become survival interest of the state. Another empirical

contribution during 2014, which spanned examination of violence during the past three decades, engendered certain pattern of terrorist incidents in Pakistan encompassing its politico-religious nature, methodology and spatial dimension, and inferred that multifaceted character of terrorism in Pakistan correlates with changes in the geopolitical environment. Both of these renditions shared some implicit overlaps and had drawn from an earlier longitudinal dissertation (2010) that had investigated 'incident Patterns, Terrorists' Characteristics, and the Impact of Terrorist Arrests on Terrorism,' in Pakistan. A major lacuna of these iterations specifically the latter two, was the lumping together violent acts performed as part of an insurgency, a nuanced civil war and sectarianism by up-the-surface rebels, political fronts and religious organizations with those constituting characteristic terrorism.

Further, the literature does not clearly point out that the first Pakistani militant group to break from broader Sunni social movement to go underground was Lashkar-e- Jhangvi. The Shia-Sunni violence in the preceding period was executed by the henchmen embedded within the organizational structures of religio-political organizations. Indeed perpetrations committed by LeJ and to an extent also by its twain, Jundullah, were and are terroristic but

characterized by millennial beliefs. This typology of terrorism which is historic including among others, by the Zealots and Sicarii against the Romans and the Assassin creed against the Seljuk, is distinguished from conventional clandestine political violence.

There a few other publications mostly in form of security reports by research organizations like Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, Islamabad, that focus on determining modulations in the organizational behaviour of oppositional violence manifested in its intensity, decline and emerging areas of terrorist activity. Such behaviour has also been at the centre of groups' studies, primarily the consequences accruing from fracture of principal-agent relationship over policy change by the sponsor. This has produced in Pakistani context the renegades the like of Punjabi Taliban and Jamaat-al-Furqan etc from sectarian as well as Jihadi organizations who turned their guns against the state following the decision to participate in war on terror.

Somehow, the above configurations have become redundant if not entirely obsolete as the later text will demonstrate.

Up until the accidental assassination of Nawab Akbar Bugti in a search operation during August 2006, the drone strike on a TNSM madrassah in Bajuary agency in end 2006, beginning of the military operations in Swat during early 2007 and the storming of Lal Masjid by the military during July 2007, there were two distinct paradigms of violence – tribal warfare targeting Pakistan Army in FATA since late 2004, and the non-organizational but cell or small scale renegades driven terrorism in mainstream Pakistan primarily engaging state symbols and structures.

These events at once spawned a twofold variety of violent entities – Baloch armed groups and Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) coalesced by earlier



similarly loose Taliban avatars, and the reframing of millennialism by TNSM to embrace violent anti-state activism by dissolving cadres into newly born Swati chapter of TTP under Fazalullah. Even though Baloch armed militancy was compelled by political reasons and whereas it assimilated terror tactics more against non-Baloch settlers, it was not purely clandestinely organized activity due to at times pitched battles waged by insurgents against security forces as well as political support fringes within Balochistan sympathizing with their cause. It was essentially a reactionary low intensity conflict adopting terrorism among other means to propagate political objectives.

Nevertheless, what was particularly defining about this period was the genesis of non-sectarian religious terror organizations in Pakistan. Parallel with TTP, there were other formidable collectives already operating and evolved subsequently in various agencies of FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

province lead by diverse ideologues – Gul Bahadur, Mangal Bagh, Panjsheris not to mention further fragmentation of LeJ, the Kashmiri Jihadi groups and other major organizations and individuals with international or global ambitions – Al Qaida, Islamic movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), East Turkestan Islamic movement (ETIM), Arab Afghans etc -

Intriguingly, consequent to military operation Zarb-e-Azb in North Waziristan launched during June 2014 accompanied coincidentally by the rise of Daesh and installation of its Khorsan chapter in Pak-Afghan region as well as the later announcement of Al Qaida in Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), another unique trend has been produced which despite continually growing albeit isolated information in this field of study, has found least if any reference for conceptualization as a novel phenomenon in the journalistic, security and academic literature and has also largely remained unnoticed among



Source: AFP

practitioners.

Practically, it is symbolized by (a) the end of organization based terrorism, (b) the inflection in the notion or perception of effectiveness of terrorism and (c) diffusion of encouraging cues for radicalization and violent means among more educated and affluent segments of society. In ways, it can be assumed that the effective life cycle of non-sectarian religious which spanned between seven and eight years, has come to end and with it Pakistani Taliban's revolutionary goals, nonetheless the radicalism, not necessarily religious, but possibly inspired by moral outrage and end of times narratives of Daesh and Ghazwa-e- Hind of AQIS, seems to be taking root and are socially proliferating.

Conceivably, the catalyst to the metamorphosis (a&b) lies in a number of outcomes generated by Zarb-a-Azb i.e., (i) critical severance of operational capability by dismantling infrastructural or industrial potential

of terrorists, (ii) squeezing of human resource (including of IMU and ETIM) through a range of repressive, legal and social actions, programs and initiatives i.e., capture and trial, battles, encounters / string operations, capital punishments, disengagement, de-radicalization, movement restrictions, financial strangulation and (iii) and most importantly the forced cross border displacement of organizational or command and control habitats of TTP and its local as well as foreign affiliates. Al Qaida Centre had already been decisively eliminated through earlier military operations or the remainder of it had relocated to Middle East theatre.

In particular, the third change by implication, has forced TTP to contract trans-border safe havens under the protective shelter of the Afghan and Indian intelligence agencies. The pre-June 2014 paradigm of terrorism in Pakistan has therefore faded if not completely ceased. Resultantly, TTP,

its cadres and other splinters residing in border regions of Afghanistan, have lost erstwhile autonomy, and become almost entirely subservient to their foreign handlers. Because their long term goals of political change (supposedly imposing of shari'a) are no more possible also due to absence of popular support, these have likely changed to short time survival stakes to placate the Principals. The concept of effectiveness of terrorism has also transformed i.e., success of terrorism is no more translated by the destruction or erosion of the state and its political system or cultural ethos of Pakistani population, but merely to perpetuate violence for fomenting instability specifically in FATA, parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, the latter due to its enhanced geo-strategic and economic significance in the wake of CPEC enterprise.

In real terms, Pakistan thus needs to manage two states (Afghanistan and India) sponsored proxy war, and overwhelm conspiratorial 'ideas,' by Daesh and AQIS. For the former, it is imperative to continue strengthening western border control processes and mechanisms, to proactively engage Afghanistan based on mutuality of interests, and lastly, the aggressive pursuit of covert efforts to disintegrate the TTP and other groups from within evinced by surrendering terrorists, to its keep internal dynamics of whatever left of Pakistani Taliban fluid. All said and done, however, to checkmate 'ideas,' it is ultimately the domain of strategic communication where heavy investment is called for to prevent breeding of violent extremism in the society and formation of terrorist cells or small group as and when arise.

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The NSS and the QCG:

Sustainability for Afghanistan post 2017

Hamzah Rifaat Hussain

The Trump administration's national security strategy of 2017 with its South Asia section on page 50, prioritizes sustainable peace and stability in Afghanistan. The harsh wording against Pakistan is indicative of a zero-tolerance approach by Washington on issues such as extremism, cross border terrorism and reckless adventurism in the region. The merits of sidelining a Non- NATO ally such as Pakistan over India is contentious given the role that the country has played in curbing extremism domestically and how cross border terrorism equally emanates from Afghanistan as well. Yet what is more alarming is that the NSS criminally fails in promoting the conventional wisdom that frameworks such as the Quadrilateral Coordination Group which consists of China, Pakistan, the United States and Afghanistan brings to the table.

Unlike the NSS, the QCG is a framework for deliberation, discussion, bringing stakeholders onto the negotiating table and proposing strategies which places heavy emphasis on reconciliation and dialogue in Afghanistan. The first meeting of QCG was in January 2016 yet the initiative was grappled with problems such as the reluctance of the Afghan Taliban to come to the negotiating table and a deteriorating relationship between Kabul and Islamabad jeopardizing prospects for peace. Nevertheless the QCG continues to hold promise and will play a pivotal role in 2018 as myopic and zero-sum strategies for tackling the Afghanistan quagmire continue to emanate

from Washington. Beijing's desire to settle disputes through economic development and wield influence over Pakistan for a win-win situation in Afghanistan instead of a zero-sum game which props up India as a counterweight at the expense of members of the QCG is the requirement as military action and binary approaches have only exasperated the Afghan quagmire. It is precisely the binary approach in the NSS which is alarming and a mooted point for policy makers.

If examined closely, page 50 of the NSS which deals with South Asia and Central castigates Pakistan and reiterates the 'do-more' mantra which had alienated Pakistan after Trump's 2018 tweet. It also sidelines China completely and puts emphasis on expanding the Indo-US strategic partnership to allow India to play a more integral role in the Indian Ocean. Such binary proposals negate on ground realities in Afghanistan which are complex and require a holistic and deeper understanding. The country is defined by war lordism, an integral role of the Jirga system in governing the affairs of the country, a rampant opium trade, ethnic and sectarian tensions as well as an active presence of the Islamic State in the Khorasan province of the country. Various stakeholders have competing interests as well where the Taliban's stronghold in the country is threatened by the emergence of the Islamic State. Country's such as Pakistan have wielded considerable influence over the Taliban as the Murree peace process clearly demonstrates and by sidelining Islamabad's role in countering the Afghanistan quagmire,

The Trump administration is allowing rogue elements to establish a stronger footprint in the country as well as carry out heinous attacks such as the one recently at the Intercontinental Luxury Hotel in Kabul.



There is talk of economic cooperation in the region but at the expense of China which rings hollow. Firstly, China is the only country which is championing the cause of linking Eastern and Western Asia through the OBOR initiative of which Afghanistan is a central cog in the wider goal of promoting regional prosperity. The rationale from China is that economic growth in Afghanistan can curb extremism and promote stability. While the merits of the argument are debatable, it is certainly

more convincing than having boots on the ground in a country where less than 60% of its territory is beyond the central government's control. This lack of imagination in the NSS is conspicuous which is likely to embolden adversaries rather than coax them.

The NSS is promoting greater daylight between Afghanistan and Pakistan which serves as a stark reminder that the NSS seeks to divide and polarize Islamabad and Kabul. Joint intelligence sharing as well as the constitution of a bilateral joint working group which

the Afghan National Forces and above all, improving the state of the economy.

It is evident that a constructive approach which deals with human, political and economic security severely lacks in the NSS and upon first examination it is more a case of advancing US interests in South Asia than tackling security. Constructive engagement for promoting security requires an understanding of ethnic, religious and political complexities in Afghanistan which is known for not wielding to Western imposed or sanctioned arrangements.

which vaguely talks about development and peace in Afghanistan yet fails to account for variables which play a role in ensuring that that sustainable peace is realized.

Hence, the role of the QCG becomes critical as Trump's security strategy has come to the fore. It is through such a framework that conventional wisdom can still seep for Afghanistan's future which is inextricably linked with Pakistan's stability and China's economic ambitions. Given that the United States is a party to the framework, it would



Source: AFP

deals with the religious clergy and prospects of bilateral dialogue between the Ashraf Ghani government and the Taliban will become a thing of the past. Support for a regional framework and an Afghan owned and Afghan led peace process is also absent, which could potentially promote greater schisms between regional powers such as China, Pakistan and India to carry forward with deep rooted solutions such as tackling the opium trade, promoting democracy, boosting the capability of

Defeating ISIS in Khorasan province for example, requires an understanding of the demographic composition of province as well as identification of political players which play a key role in the province. Similarly, reconciliation cannot be realized without dealing with the ethnic complexities of Afghanistan which includes an understanding of the role that Tajiks and Uzbeks have played in the democratic process in Afghanistan's history. None of these factors are even touched upon in the NSS

be interesting to witness what sort of a role Washington would play. It can be rest assured however, that Donald Trump's binary and zero-sum approach will only contribute towards instability and marks a massive departure from the role of the QCG which despite its flaws, champions the cause of reconciliation and sustainable peace in Afghanistan which is desperately needed.

Hamza Rifaat Hussain is an anchor in PTV World.

US-Pakistan Relations Won't Thrive, But They'll Survive

Michael Kugelman

WASHINGTON AND ISLAMABAD AREN'T BOUND TO BE BESTIES. BUT THEY CAN STILL FIND WAYS TO WORK TOGETHER.

If there's one truism about U.S. foreign relations, it's that America is highly selective about its best friends.

The United States boasts cordial relations with plenty of countries, and faces troubled ties with many more. There are precious few countries, however, that have enjoyed deep and lasting partnerships with Washington—what in American parlance is described as “strategic” or “special” relationships.

The few such relationships that do exist offer lessons for the U.S.-Pakistan partnership, which has experienced some very hard times over the last year. The main takeaway is that U.S.-Pakistan relations will not thrive anytime soon—but they will survive.

Washington's closest allies include the United Kingdom and Australia, which often attract the “special” designation. Then there is the foolproof relationship with Israel. Washington's treaty allies in East Asia, particularly Japan and

South Korea, come to mind as well. Additionally, Washington has long described its relationship with Saudi Arabia as strategic. Finally, India may soon join this prestigious club. There is a growing bipartisan consensus in Washington that advocates for strategic partnership with New Delhi.

As prized as these partnerships are, none of them are problem-free. Washington's relations with Israel and Saudi Arabia lapsed during the Obama administration. Its ties with the UK and Australia have taken modest tumbles under Trump. And for all the momentum in US-India relations, New Delhi is still allergic to the term “alliance.”

Still, these relationships offer the best insights into what drives America's closest and most lasting friendships. They are characterized by shared interests (from combating terror to ensuring the supply of oil in the Mideast), similar values (such as democracy), common enemies (from ISIS to China), and—perhaps most importantly—deep levels of military cooperation ranging from basing agreements to joint operations. These relationships also enjoy deep repositories of goodwill and trust, and public opinion in each country is largely positive toward the other.

To be sure, not all of America's top relationships feature all these criteria. American value systems are sharply at odds with those of the Saudis, for example, while India isn't about to fight wars alongside the United States anytime soon. Still, they do embody

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Source: AFP

many if not most of these criteria.

This all has two broad implications for U.S.-Pakistan relations moving forward.

First, it's time to put to bed any notion of strategic partnership. Despite periods of strength during the Cold War, when the two banded together to target the Soviets, and more recently during the first few years of the Obama administration, when Washington sought to broaden the relationship to help secure Pakistani assistance in the war in Afghanistan, U.S.-Pakistan relations lack the core criteria to mature into a deep, lasting partnership.

Interests and objectives diverge in a big way, and in a range of contexts—from approaches to terrorism and endgames in Afghanistan to perceptions of India. The Trump administration's South Asia strategy has only expanded these divergences. It has elevated to top priority the issue of Pakistan-based terrorists that target Americans in Afghanistan, while calling for a greater Indian role in Afghanistan. In fact, Washington's growing partnership with New Delhi, which has full-throated support in the Trump White House, crystallizes the divergent interests in US-Pakistan relations. Indeed, the strategic imperatives that bring Americans and Indians together—cracking down on terrorists of all stripes and pushing back against the rise of China—drive Americans and Pakistanis apart.

Mutual trust is also in short supply in US-Pakistan relations. Indeed, after decades of two-way duplicity, recouping ample goodwill will be a tall order. America still smarts about how Pakistan equivocated about the development of its nuclear weapons program and used US security assistance for purposes other than those intended. Pakistan won't soon forget the aggressive US spy craft tactics that made Raymond Davis and Shakil Afridi household and hated names. And Trump's truculent and threatening tweets won't make

restoring trust any easier.

More broadly, public perceptions of the other are abysmal. The most recent Pew Research Center polling of Pakistan, from 2015, found that only a quarter of Pakistanis had a favorable view of America. And that was in the pre-Trump era. Other surveys find that Americans are deeply mistrustful of Pakistan.

Additionally, U.S.-Pakistan military cooperation lacks depth. It wasn't like this. Decades ago, the two countries participated together in collective defense organizations (SEATO and CENTO). During the Cold War, the United States enjoyed the use of a listening post in Peshawar. More recently, Pakistan opened up its military bases for America to operate drones, and Washington provided billions in security assistance. Today, there is limited counterterrorism and intelligence cooperation, and Pakistan—at least for now—lets America use supply routes on its soil. But that's about it.

And yet, this limited military cooperation hints at a second, more positive, implication that can be drawn from America's closest relationships: US-Pakistan relations, warts and all, are destined to survive. They do have a few common enemies—al-Qaeda and ISIS, for instance—and share an interest in eliminating these common threats. Additionally, the relationship lacks trust, but it's not as if rampant hostility is threatening to tear it apart. I oversaw a Track II dialogue on US-Pakistan relations last year, and tellingly not one of the several dozen participants advocated for a dismantling of the relationship. Beyond the bluster and bombast in each side's public messaging, the relationship quietly retains a modest reservoir of goodwill—thanks, in great part, to seven decades of bilateral engagement.

So what's in store for US-Pakistan relations in 2018? Speculation is rife that

America will resort to harsh pressure tactics, raising the risk of Pakistani retaliations and a dangerous cycle of escalation. Ultimately, the trajectory of bilateral ties depends on how much risk America and Pakistan are willing to tolerate. The harder America pushes or provokes Pakistan, the greater the likelihood of Pakistani retaliations—such as shutting down supply lines and suspending all intelligence cooperation—that could imperil US war-fighting efforts in Afghanistan and its counterterrorism operations in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region. Meanwhile, the longer Pakistan resists American demands to crack down on or turn over terrorists, the greater the possibility it could be subjected to damaging punitive measures—from expanded drone strikes or unilateral raids to cutoffs in IMF loans.

Still, these are worst-case scenarios. In international relations—and even in today's volatile and violent world—worst-case scenarios rarely materialize.

So in 2018, expect tense times for Washington and Islamabad. Given that it's an election year for both countries, expect a fair amount of saber-rattling, which plays well for domestic audiences. At the same time, barring catastrophic crises, expect the two sides to lower their expectations, focus on what's realistic, and quietly pursue some narrowly defined areas of cooperation—from curbing ISIS and countering the spread of IEDs to continuing to partner multilaterally in efforts to kick start a reconciliation process in Afghanistan.

Washington and Islamabad aren't bound to be besties. But they can still find ways to work together, even if their relationship is put to the test in potentially unprecedented ways.

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Why is Syria a target to imperialist forces?

Paul Antonopoulos

Syria is one of the few states in the world since the Vietnam War that has resisted US imperialism until Washington has tired itself out and almost fully withdrawn. Although the Syrian war is still occurring, we have seen Trump scrap the CIA funding of jihadist groups in July 2017, demonstrating the slow US withdrawal from Syria. However, the most critical question we must ask is why Syria is being targeted by the American Empire to begin with? The two main tenets to this question is Syria's role within the Axis of Resistance and its geostrategic location at the crossroads of pipeline diplomacy.

The Axis of Resistance is a coalition between Iran, Syria and the Shi'ite Lebanese paramilitary group, Hezbollah, and has proven to be a powerful anti-imperialist, anti-Western and anti-Zionist force in the Middle East. Although commentators argue the Axis of Resistance is a Shi'ite axis because Iran is a Shi'ite theocracy, Syria is ruled by an Alawite president, and Hezbollah is a Shi'ite militia force, this simple analysis overlooks that Iran is a multiethnic Islamic Republic while Syria is a secular Arab nationalist republic. Such forms of government would normally be at odds with each other, but because of the shared vision that the Middle East should be free from imperialistic ambitions and intervention, it has forced these states to be aligned with one another.

The overthrow of the pro-US Shah in Iran in 1979 saw a power shift that would directly challenge US hegemonic designs on the region, and

most importantly, threaten its most important partner in the Middle East, the Zionist entity known as Israel. With a powerful Iran reinvigorated

the new Ayatollah's could not be tolerated by the US. Syria's alignment to the Islamic Republic of Iran is not based on a shared religious affiliation, even



by a religious zeal and openly stating it wanted to export its revolution and defeat Israel in a military confrontation,

if the Alawite's are an offshoot of Shi'a Islam, but rather because both states are directly affected by the existence of

Israel and US imperialism.

Syria currently hosts around 600,000 Palestinian refugees and Israel has occupied the oil-rich Golan Heights since the Six-Day War in 1967 when the Zionist entity captured the territory. Iran on the other hand views itself as a leading Islamic nation and believes that it is the duty for all Muslims to engage in a struggle for the Palestinian cause. It is for this reason that the shared

However, despite the threat to Israel, why is the Axis of Resistance completely intolerable to Washington's designs on the Middle East?

The most important point comes to oil and gas, particularly pipelines. On the eve of the Syrian war, a Qatar-Turkey pipeline was proposed that would bring Qatari gas from the shared Iranian-Qatari South Pars/North Dome Gas Condensate field in the Persian Gulf, to

Agence France-Presse claiming that Assad refused to sign a pipeline deal to "protect the interests of his Russian ally, which is Europe's top supplier of natural gas." However, from the very same gas field, but on the Iranian controlled portion, Syria has been receptive to the building of the Islamic Pipeline in the post-war period, in which the pipeline would pass through Iraq, Syria and onwards to Europe. Asia Times correspondent Pepe Escobar stated that "The Iran-Iraq-Syria pipeline – if its ever built – would solidify a predominantly Shi'ite axis through an economic, steel umbilical cord". An axis consisting of Iran, Iraq and Syria is not through religious identity, as has already been emphasised, but through economic and geopolitical necessities, contrary to what Escobar claims.

The Syrian war presents an opportunity for the US to destroy the Islamic Pipeline proposal by toppling the Iranian-sympathetic Assad in Damascus, which would further isolate Tehran. This is especially true as Syria is the only Arab state that is allied with Iran. However, not only Iranian energy is being compromised because of the difficulty in having Iranian gas and oil reach European markets because of the chaos in Syria and Iraq, but also Syrian energy being exploited by Israel.

The discovery of oil in the southern Israeli-occupied Golan Heights serves as a major reason why Syria is being targeted by the imperialist powers. Genie Energy were given exclusive rights to the exploration and drilling for this oil. The Board of Advisors to Genie Energy include the 46th US Vice President, Dick Cheney; former CIA head and chairman of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, James Woolsey; Jacob Lord Rothschild of the London banking dynasty family; and media mogul Rupert Murdoch.

It is because of its attempted energy and security considerations that



Source: AFP

hostility with Israel and the struggle against US imperialism has forced the Axis of Resistance into existence.

European markets with a pipeline that would pass through Syria; the proposed pipeline was rejected by Damascus, with

Israel assist US imperialist ambitions in the destruction of the Syrian state. The Golan Heights, which has a 20,000-strong indigenous Syrian Druze population, are now outnumbered by approximately 25,000 Israeli settlers. Although the United Nations and Washington has not recognised Israeli control over the Golan Heights, the extraction of Syrian resources serves not only to bolster Israeli and US capitalist interests, but it also weakens Syria as it loses on revenues that could be used towards state-building or re-paying its increasing foreign debt in the incoming post-war period.

The Axis of Resistance poses as the only real threat to the Israeli state, and therefore the long-protracted war against Syria has the potential to weaken the coalition. Although Israel has not engaged in a direct frontal attack against Syria, it does enough to systematically target Hezbollah and preserve jihadist forces fighting against the Syrian Army near the Golan Heights. The Israeli Minister of Defense claimed in 2015 that “...On a strategic level, in other words, we are not intervening on anyone’s behalf”. Israel views the protracted war against Syria to be to its own benefit.

With Washington labelling Iran and Syria as a part of the ‘Axis of Evil’, and Hezbollah designated as a terrorist organisation, it becomes clearer that American foreign policy in the Middle East is strategically geared towards completely isolating and encircling Iran. However, unlike its invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, on the eastern and western borders of Iran respectively, the United States has attempted to expand its neo-colonial web through proxy war and covertly sponsoring terrorist organisation.

Respected left-wing scholar Michael Parenti argues that a “Third Worldization” of the United States has emerged. Effectively what is meant by this is that there has been an acceleration

of impoverishment in civil society because of Washington’s interest in only serving transnational corporations. Parenti argues that the global American military empire is driven by the idea to secure capital expansion. With this explained, Syria’s lack of reception to the US has limited American capital expansion into the country, thus making it a direct target to US imperialism.

Therefore, the main tenets for why Syria has been targeted by the American Empire is because of its anti-Zionist ideology and resistance to allowing American influence in the country. It is only because of the desire for the US to control the flow of Middle Eastern gas and oil that it has become imperative that the Syrian state is destroyed, allowing for Western corporations to control Syrian oil and for pipelines from US-friendly states to freely pass through.

As seen in Libya, the US-dominated NATO did not necessarily want to govern Libya, but rather ensure that plans for a change in currency trade away from the US dollar were halted and that Western-corporate control of the oil was achieved. The success of Washington’s Libyan Experiment was replicated in America’s proxy war against the Syrian state. However, military and policy planners in the United States failed to acknowledge that unlike an isolated Libya, Syria has allies willing to intervene, as seen with Hezbollah’s troop deployment to Syria in 2012, the deployment of Iranian military advisors in 2012, and the Russian aerial intervention that began in September 2015. Libya was afforded no such help when imperialist ambitions targeted it and completely isolated the besieged state.

Syria however has always been targeted by US imperialists, which is why the wave of the so-called Arab Spring finally opened the opportunity to destabilise the country. On the eve of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, General Wesley Clark,

a retired 4-star U.S. Army general and Supreme Allied Commander of NATO during the 1999 War on Yugoslavia, revealed that he was made aware in 2002 of a plan that was set where the United States would intervene in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and finally Iran (Antonopoulos and Cottle, 2017: 12). Although this did not occur within the five-year time frame that General Wesley Clarke was told, we have seen the destabilisation of all states since 2003, with the exception of Iran, which has instead successfully resisted intense US-led sanctions against it.

In the end, it is now inevitable that the US has failed with its goals in Syria. The strength of the Axis of Resistance, who also had the help of thousands of volunteers from Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen and Pakistan, has successfully resisted American imperialism in Syria.

Paul Antonopoulos is a Research Fellow at the Center for Syncretic Studies.

THE SYRIAN WAR PRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE US TO DESTROY THE ISLAMIC PIPELINE PROPOSAL BY TOPPLING THE IRANIAN-SYMPATHETIC ASSAD IN DAMASCUS, WHICH WOULD FURTHER ISOLATE TEHRAN.

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Letters to Uncle Sam:

Manto on Pak-US Relations

Rizwan Zeb

Should literature be taken seriously by political scientists and historians? Is there any link between literature and political developments? Can literature be more helpful in understanding political developments than just providing quotable quotes? If the answer is Yes, then what is it? This scribe is of the view that literature can play a significant role in understanding political developments. How? Consider: arguably, the greatest novel of all times, Leo Tolstoy's War and Peace chronicles Napoleon's invasion of Russia and its effects on aristocratic Russia, Maxim Gorkey's Mother is an excellent expose of Russia at the verge of socialist revolution. Mirza Ghalib's letters provide its readers contemporaneous account of the fall of Delhi. Faiz and Jalib's poetry comes handy to all political activists and players. In recent past, Ustad Daman's poetry about Z. A. Bhutto's changing stance on Kashmir was reflective of how a segment within the Pakistani society viewed the situation. In more recent times, Mohsin Hamid's Reluctant Fundamentalist and Arundhati Roy's The Ministry of Utmost Happiness are a case in point.

A lot has been written and said about Pakistan-US relations especially since President Trump announced his New Afghanistan and South Asia strategy especially his emphasis on the billions and billions of dollars paid to Islamabad by Washington over the years to do its bidding. Is this what the Pak-US relations all about? Washington pays Islamabad and Pakistan provide

its services? Obviously, this is a very narrow and inadequate description of Pak-US relations yet there are a number of questions about this bilateral relationship that remain unanswered for well over 60 years now. Over the years, how has this relationship been perceived and viewed by men and women of letters in Pakistan?

Sadat Hasan Manto (1912-1955) arguably the greatest short story writer of Urdu literature who is no less than D H Lawrence, Oscar Wilde and Maupassant, has in his impressive and prophetic letters to Uncle Sam provided a very interesting and perceptive description of Pak-US relations and what shape it might take in future. These nine letters written between 1951-1954 provide an excellent critique of Pakistan's foreign policy formulation and American aims and objectives in entering into this bilateral relationship. Although at the time, this relationship was still just beginning and taking shape, yet Manto was perceptive enough to prophesize that it will evolve into a patron-client relationship.

What motivated Manto to write these letters? According to the available varied information, either he already wrote the first letter when "someone" from the American embassy approached him to contribute a short story for a journal that the embassy was planning to publish and was willing to pay him Rs 500 for it (Manto was not willing to accept anything more than 200 nor he was willing to address or accept any editorial changes) or that this incident resulted in the first of the total nine letters that

Manto the nephew wrote to this chahca, Uncle Sam.

In his first letter, Manto not only addresses the tragedy of the partition but also points to the class structure of Pakistan. "I am poor because my country is poor." He wrote, adding, "You will ask and ask with a lot of amazement why my country is poor when so many Packards, Buicks and Max Factors reach it from your country." Manto's answer to this: "My country's population which rides these Packards and Buick is not my country; my country is that where me and those worse than myself live." In the second letter, using Pakistan as an example, Manto points to the dependency factor in American alliances with the third world countries against the emerging Communist threat. Manto states: "As long as Pakistan needs wheat, I cannot be disrespectful to you." Third letter is interesting in the sense that in it, Manto competes with Uncle Sam's other nephews throughout the world claiming that he is the most obedient of them all (is this a symbolic reference to Pakistan in its relations with USA?). he wrote: "Although you have millions and billions of nephews but you wouldn't find a nephew like me even in atomic light; do turn your attention here once in a while, just one interested gaze is enough. Just announce that your country, may god preserve it till world's end, will give military aid to my country..." Manto goes on criticize US for all destruction and havoc it has created in Hiroshima, Nagasaki and elsewhere before requesting his uncle to give him a "tiny atomic bomb" to kill

the mullahs and the stone they use to publicly clean themselves. In this letter, Manto points to the Military industrial complexes in USA and how it fuel wars around the world to sell their weapons: “ The military pact with us is a great success, do stick to it. Over there with India you should also establish similar relation, sell outdated weapons to both because you must have made redundant those weapons which you used in the last war. Your spare weaponry would be useful this way and your factories would not remain idle.” Manto’s fourth letter is perhaps the most significant in the series because in it, he pointed how religiously motivated political actors are American assets against its war against the red bear, the USSR: “India may grovel before you a million times but will definitely make a military pact with Pakistan because you are really worried about the integrity of this largest Islamic sultanate of the world and why not, as our mullhas are the best antidote to Russia’s communism.” Manto was foresighted enough to prophesize this decades before President Carter’s National Security advisor late Zbigniew Brzezinski confessed that arming



Muslim fundamentalists to defeat the communist evil empire was a fair price to pay. In this fifth letter, Manto points to American foreign policy duplicity. On one hand, America aspires for global peace, on another, it develops lethal weapons including the hydrogen bomb. Manto highlights how Washington is using its propaganda machine to highlight Soviet Union’s heavy handedness in Poland, Czechoslovakia etc., but whatever, Washington is doing is for global peace: “I have heard that you have made the hydrogen bomb just so that there should be absolute world peace. Although God knows better, but I am sure of what you say because I have eaten your wheat and after all, I am your nephew.” Manto blamed the communists for destroying the sixth letter to his uncle which he posted but never reached his dear uncle Sam. In his seventh letter, Manto continues his emphasis on American war economy. In keeping with the reports of a stagnation in American economy, Manto suggests

that Washington should consider going for another war or at least start fueling or supporting one. Manto states: “Dear uncle, I have heard a troubling news that your (American) economy is passing through a difficult period. ... this crisis only occurred because you have stopped the Korean war. Now it is up to you to think where will your tanks, bomber jets and guns be sold?... You have stopped the Korean war. This is a big mistake... . you should start a war between India and Pakistan. ... this war will be such a profitable trade, all your armaments factories will begin to work on double shifts. India will buy weapons from you, and so will Pakistan. ... After all, our objective is to create world peace, right, my dear uncle? I really like what Dulles said that the free world’s objective is to defeat communism; this is the freedom laden language of the hydrogen bomb.” In his eighth letter, Manto criticized Saudi Arabia and its Monarchic ruler. In his ninth and final letter to his beloved uncle, Manto points to American and



Investigating

Subcontinental Crises

Sameer Lalwani & Hannah Haegeland

Nearly two decades after the last bilateral conflict at Kargil, India-Pakistan tensions simmer amidst continued instability in Kashmir and ongoing terror attacks perceived by India as having cross-border roots. Historically, these conditions are often the backdrop for bilateral crises. The study of subcontinental crises remains necessary for two primary reasons. First, trends suggest future crises are likely. Dating back to partition, South Asian history is riddled with conventional and subconventional conflicts. Ongoing developments reinforce this historical trendline, from regular ceasefire violations amidst the absence of sustained bilateral dialogue to growing fissile material stockpiles, evolving strategic doctrines, and developments in nuclear-capable delivery systems. Second, after India and Pakistan's 1998 nuclear tests, the escalation risks of subcontinental crises increased as incentives for brinkmanship grew amidst shrinking space for errors.

Both India and Pakistan have strong incentives to avoid another crisis. India's priorities include sustaining economic growth and buttressing its strategic relationships in the Indian Ocean amid Chinese challenges. Crises would stymie Pakistan's heavy investments in its domestic economy—especially in growing foreign investments—and its work with China to develop broader connectivity projects in Western Asia. Other unfolding dynamics to consider include the recent sharp decline in U.S.-Pakistan relations and China's deepening stakes in the region generally

and in Pakistan specifically. Many expect the next India-Pakistan crisis to emerge after a spectacular, high-fatality terrorist attack amidst heightened instability in Kashmir. Yet some evidence suggests the threshold for crisis onset may be lower, in part because what does and does not constitute a crisis is ultimately a political decision.

In a new Stimson Center ten-chapter edited volume authors from China, India, Pakistan, and the United States

“ Both India and Pakistan - together with key third parties like the United States and China—have a vested interest in learning management lessons from past crises as well as reviewing historical efforts at conflict resolution and confidence-building. ”

consider the past and possible futures of South Asian crises. Chapters offer historical lessons, assessments of evolving dynamics, and considerations of how unfolding strategic trajectories could impact future India-Pakistan crises. Both India and Pakistan—together with key third parties like the United States and China—have a vested interest in learning management lessons from past crises as well as reviewing historical efforts at conflict resolution

and confidence-building. For Pakistani analysts, understanding how and why crises emerge, nuclear signaling, shifting Chinese and U.S. interests, and failures in Indian intelligence, strategic assessment, and decision-making processes are particularly salient.

Lessons from Past Crises

Two chapters by retired foreign secretaries Riaz Mohammad Khan (Pakistan) and Shyam Saran (India), together with two chapters by veteran nuclear South Asia scholar Michael Krepon (United States), offer policy lessons extracted from decades of previous crises. Their analyses outline possible Indian, Pakistani, and U.S. policy solutions for crisis prevention and management, as well as for dialogue and conflict resolution.

A chapter examining how and when crises are triggered found that intense media coverage of a crisis provocation or candidate trigger event (typically a terror attack in India with presumed connections to Pakistan) is associated with escalation to a full-blown crisis. Two variables of provocations themselves that are associated with escalation include the duration and complexity of an attack. Further, candidate triggers were less likely to escalate to crises when they occurred during periods of high-level bilateral dialogue (e.g. the 2003-2008 Composite Dialogue). Ultimately, however, we found that the decision to treat a provocation as a crisis or not seems to be a political decision for Indian authorities. Understanding the dangers—and opportunities—presented by crises therefore requires

deeper study of how bilateral crises begin to unfold in India. This leads us to the chapters in this study that focus on the fraught history of Indian information management, strategic assessment, and decision-making during crises.

The flow of information during periods of crisis is a central factor in crisis management and escalation control. Stakeholders in the cycle of information acquisition and dissemination include government and military entities, the public, and the media. One chapter finds that vibrant media complicates government's task of information control in periods of heightened tension, but also serves as a tool for message control. In past crises, the Indian media has contributed to framing policy decisions by informing the public about an unfolding crisis and government responses. Newspapers and television talk shows have at times inflamed public opinion and prematurely spread (dis) information. These effects can result in galvanizing domestic audience pressure for government action and thus shorten the decision-making window. It can also indirectly affect future crisis management by shaping public opinion in a democratic society.

As media information comes from civilian and military authorities, organizational pathologies among the Indian intelligence and national security establishment can exacerbate the media's potential to play a harmful information-dissemination role in crises. In 2008, for example, one chapter highlights that poor coordination of information dissemination included the Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil compromising a tactical advantage of surprise by announcing in TV interviews during the three-day 26/11 attacks that 250 National Security Guard commandos were en route to Mumbai. Indian crisis management successes and failures have largely been a result of personality-driven decision-making processes. Studies suggest that more process-driven intelligence, assessment,

and communication could remedy the failures resulting from past Indian ad hoc crisis management.

Evolving Dynamics & Trajectories: Possible Futures of South Asian Crises

Shifting dynamics and regional roles suggest that future India-Pakistan crises may play out very differently. One such evolving trajectory is the role of and receptivity towards third-party interventions. U.S.-Pakistan relations have steadily worsened under the Trump administration, while U.S.-India relations, particularly through shared interests in the Indian Ocean Region, are on the rise. In a future India-Pakistan crisis, the United States may not be willing or well positioned to play the neutral, third-party crisis manager role it has played in the past. Meanwhile, a chapter on China finds that though it maintains distinctly different views on the role of third-parties in crises, the historical trajectory of China's increasing involvement in India-Pakistan standoffs suggest that Beijing has a growing stake in ensuring crises do not escalate. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and broader Belt and Road Initiative, together with China's longstanding policy of using Pakistan to balance India's growing geopolitical power, indicate growing Chinese stakes in South Asian affairs.

Another key trajectory is that of military modernization and development. A dynamic new typology for assessing the severity of nuclear crises suggests that nuclear risk-taking—measured by states' nuclear signaling—has decreased since the 1999 Kargil and the 2001-2 Twin Peaks crises. However, modernization and development of India and Pakistan's nuclear enterprises may result in more intense and risk-inducing nuclear signaling in a future crisis, very likely on a more compressed decision-making timeline. Conversely, new capabilities and the uncertainties they facilitate about evolving nuclear

postures could deepen what some assess as the stabilizing effect of nuclear weapons on South Asia.

Future crises may unfold in developing spaces (e.g., in a nuclearized Indian Ocean) with evolving capabilities and new players. Unfolding nuclear dynamics underline the need for creative new policy ideas to minimize the risks of nuclear escalation between nuclear-armed rivals around the world. For example, one Pakistani scholar's chapter proposes a South Asian arms control regime.

For three decades the Stimson Center has published analysis on the threat of conflict in South Asia. This volume continues that tradition by offering close empirical study of crisis behavior to illuminate causal processes, patterns, and lessons extracted from previous crises. We are hopeful that it will encourage and supplement further research on crisis dynamics, both on the subcontinent and beyond. Three critical gaps in research on crises in South Asia that merit new studies in particular include: the economic costs of crises, the role and trajectories of domestic audience pressure in foreign policy, and the impacts of new disruptive technologies on crisis dynamics.

Ultimately, the lack of clear "red lines" on both the Indian and Pakistani sides underlines the fluid and political nature of crisis onset. Understanding the settings in which major bilateral standoffs are triggered can help reveal the inherent risks—and possible opportunities—of crises.

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The Freedom House Index of Democracy

Sergey Radchenko

Earlier this year, the Freedom House (FH) published the latest democracy index. The conclusions are disheartening. We are in the 12th consecutive year of decline in global freedom. Democracy is “under attack” throughout the world, including, worryingly, the United States. The report has drawn wide attention. Some, like the former US Ambassador in the UN Samantha Power, lamented America’s fall in the rankings to the level of Belize and Croatia. Others, like Governor John Kasich, saw in the report the dangers of disengagement: “When we [America] retreat, the enemies of freedom fill the void.” Major media outlets ran stories on the dramatic development: the death of democracy, the rise of tyranny.

But close reading of the data raises doubts about the veracity of the findings. True, those doubts have always been there. Scholars have questioned the bias in the FH’s methodology, highlighting ideological proclivities of the authors, doubting its reliability as a research or policy tool. “The height of absurdity” was what one prominent Russia expert, Prof. Richard Sakwa, had to say of some of the awkward conclusions of the past Freedom House indices.

The observation still stands. Only,

this report is different. Forged in the atmosphere of soul-searching and heated political battles that have animated Washington since the Donald Trump’s inauguration, it is even more unreliable, even more politicized, even more bombastic than its predecessors. By making a number of preposterous claims about the state of democracy worldwide, the authors of the report unwittingly help those prone to dismiss human rights advocacy as a propaganda ploy.

As usual, Russia came in for a serious hammering, scoring at the bottom (7 out of 7) in political rights and 6 out of 7 in civil liberties. The country summary cites “controlled local elections” (in September 2017), corruption and lack of media freedom among the key pieces of evidence for the low rating. The methodology section makes it clear that the Freedom House sees Russia as a “draconian police state” with “few or no political rights because of severe government oppression.”

Is this a fair assessment? It is difficult to judge, because FH has not yet released the full report, so that one could check how Russia scored on specific points related to the electoral process, or corruption, or media freedom. Thus,

the fact that the latest local elections, despite being “controlled,” delivered a serious blow to Putin’s United Russia party, mars the picture of a totalitarian state, where all elections are a farce. Corruption is a huge problem in Russia but hardly worse than in nearby (and “partially free”) Ukraine. As for the media freedom, it is again a matter of comparisons. Despite Putin’s relentless effort to constrain the media, the Russian media space remains incomparably freer than, for instance, China’s. Opposition politician Aleksei Navalny’s runaway popularity has hinged on his use of Youtube, Facebook, and Twitter. Anyone wonders why there has not been a Chinese Navalny?

Interestingly, Belarus and Thailand (one, a long-time dictatorship, the other - a military junta), scored higher than Russia in political rights.

The report rates not just countries but (somewhat arbitrarily selected) “territories.” The big surprise here is Abkhazia, the partially-recognized state, occupied by Russia. Abkhazia is listed as “partly free,” with a 4 for political rights. Given the absence of a country report, we can only speculate how it managed to perform so well, much better even than Putin’s ostensible tyranny. It may



be because Abkhazia had a change of leadership in 2014, when the previous President was ousted in a popular uprising. But anyone who has ever lived in Abkhazia for any length of time (which probably does not include the authors of the report) will smirk at the notion that Abkhazia has a better record of protecting human rights and civil liberties than its occupier, Russia. This is one of the reasons why many residents of the breakaway republic have now availed themselves of the opportunity to obtain Russian passports.

One of the most interesting ratings is for Crimea. The country report is, once again missing, but what can possibly justify a rating of just 9, on par with the Central African Republic, which recently witnessed widespread militia violence and mass rape, and Libya, the world's leader in slave trade. Whom are they kidding?

Iraq? Why, it scores much higher than Russia (but have the authors checked in Mosul?)

The worst performer is, not unexpectedly, Syria, which, on a scale from 0 to 100, managed to score -1. (How is this even possible?) Then comes Tibet, with the aggregate score

of 1. According to the report, the human rights situation in Tibet is worse than in North Korea, and much worse than China as a whole, which itself is ranked lower than many war-torn, corruption-ridden, chaotic places. But here is the key question: would you prefer to live in China (scored 14) or Zimbabwe (scored 30)? China is more than twice as repressive as Zimbabwe but if promoting democracy worldwide means having more Zimbabwes and less Chinas, then few would be in favour.

There is no doubt that the state of democracy worldwide causes concern. But how serious are our problems, and, more importantly, what is to be done? The FH index may have excited a flurry of tweets but it is a poor replacement for intelligent discussion. The general message is that of a horror story, made worse by “the United States’ withdrawal from its leadership role in the global struggle for human freedom,” the sad development Michael J. Abramowitz of the Freedom House laments in the very first paragraph of his introduction to the report.

I would not lament that. Instead, let us lament something else: the death of facts. If wild exaggeration trumps analysis, then, blinded by our own bias,

we stumble from blunder to blunder, from the “height of absurdity” to... new heights of absurdity. It is not a good vantage point for coming up with answers to the formidable challenges of our complicated world.

Sergey Radchenko is Professor of International Politics at Cardiff University, U.K., and the author of several books on the history of the Cold War.

I WOULD NOT LAMENT THAT. INSTEAD, LET US LAMENT SOMETHING ELSE: THE DEATH OF FACTS. IF WILD EXAGGERATION TRUMPS ANALYSIS, THEN, BLINDED BY OUR OWN BIAS, WE STUMBLE FROM BLUNDER TO BLUNDER, FROM THE “HEIGHT OF ABSURDITY” TO... NEW HEIGHTS OF ABSURDITY.

Pakistan's Foreign Policy

Towards the Indian Ocean Region

Maria Bastos

The visibility of Pakistan in the Indian Ocean Region has been somewhat enhanced since the launch of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), nearly three years ago. This visibility, as the article will argue, is poised to generate yet another paradox for Pakistan and its foreign policy. Pakistan has a significant geographical presence in the IOR, with an extensive coastal

without a meaningful foreign policy towards the IOR that can go beyond China's interests? These questions can contribute in starting an urgent debate that Pakistan foreign policy makers, and those who frequently intervene in it, need to have in a very near future, given the quick pace of events the IOR region is currently experiencing.

harvesting additional security issues, but so is India. The latter's regional hegemony is co-constructed by a combination of factors - partly because of its geographical position, and partly due to her agility on mixing geopolitics with identity politics. The result is the construction of a discourse that portrays India as the natural, if not outright logic hegemon in the IOR.



Source: AFP

region along the Arabian sea, and the proximity with the Persian and Aden Gulfs is considerable, thus potentially enabling geopolitics to co-construct foreign policy discourses. The reality, is rather inconsistent with this scenario.

Pakistan appears to be destined to play an important role of connectivity in the Indian Ocean. But can Pakistan connect without belonging? Can Pakistan inhabit geopolitical discourses

China's access to the IOR, albeit not fully dependent on Pakistan, is enabled by Pakistan. The two-pronged role of Pakistan, as a connector and as an enabler of China's presence in two oceans is of immense significance for both countries. However, the fact that China has been granted full access and assured presence in the IOR, potentiates her aspirations to be fully legitimized as a great world power. As the facilitator of such a possibility, Pakistan is now

While the IOR region certainly owes its diversity, cultural and historical constructions to the very existence of India, the latter should not envisage ownership of the ocean, despite several attempts in the past. The Indian Ocean cannot and should not be understood as India's ocean. Therefore, the perception that a more consolidated Chinese presence in the IOR, enabled by adversarial Pakistan, has prompted India to become actively engaging and

building up the conditions to remain relevant, not only at the strategic-military level, but also at the social, political and cultural levels. Let's assess how these levels are currently being played in the IOR, so as to frame how Pakistan is connecting, but not belonging.

First, the social, cultural and political levels. India, together with twenty other countries, is a member of the Indian Ocean Rim Association where thus far, it has been able to sustain an active role, thus establishing dialogues which consolidate a sense of being and belonging. The IORA engages its members on constructive dialogues, ranging from sustainable development, to maritime safety and security, to trade and investment, to fisheries management, to disaster management, to cultural exchanges, among others. IORA is now twenty years old. These are also the number of years Pakistan has been continually absent in the IOR. Pakistan tried to become a member of the group, but alleged incompatibilities mostly fuelled by the India-Pakistan rivalry has prevented the country to enter the significant regional group. Pakistan does have friends among the members, including Indonesia. The latter appears to be supportive of Pakistan's membership. Furthermore, China is one of IORA's dialogue partners, significantly, together with the other key military powers that are entrenched in Djibouti. The non-membership of IORA is, in my view, an issue of major urgency. Pakistan's membership will not only work towards the country's own interests. It will also contribute for a more positive image of the country abroad, and, perhaps not as substantially as desired, contribute for better relations with India.

Second, the development of complex security drivers currently under development in the IOR is contributing

for a faster militarization of the region. Djibouti, a small country situated in the horn of Africa hosts military bases of five different countries: United States, France, Italy, Japan, and more recently China. All these countries, except Italy, are IORA's dialogue partners. The possibility of Turkey to establish a military base in Djibouti is currently being equated by Ankara, and India has reportedly showed interest on establishing an embassy in the country. This perhaps is being equated by New Delhi as the first step to join the group of military estate holders in one of the most exciting geopolitical scenarios of the world.

While the aforementioned countries do not have an indigenous geography in the IOR, hence from a strategic point of

CAN PAKISTAN INHABIT GEOPOLITICAL DISCOURSES WITHOUT A MEANINGFUL FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS THE IOR THAT CAN GO BEYOND CHINA'S INTERESTS?

view their presence in Djibouti is easy to imagine, India's alleged willingness to set foot in the horn of Africa appears to be at best a mix of sheer hegemonic designs and insecurity. Pakistan neither has diplomatic relations with Djibouti (a country with a predominantly Muslim population, should the need to invoke any 'emotional' bond arise) nor has it ever developed meaningful diplomatic relations with African countries. Given the crescent importance of the African continent into China's BRI, including Eastern African/IOR countries like

Kenya and Tanzania (at least in these two countries there is a Pakistan High Commission), Pakistan may well be condemned to sit at Gwadar, qua sentinel (perhaps for China), assisting to one of the most significant regional politics moments of the century developing before her eyes.

Unless Islamabad/Rawalpindi foreign policy makers will promptly realise that Pakistan is bound to miss the ship of IOR politics, and that imagining naval battles will prove insufficient to guarantee Pakistan own security, Pakistan will remain a connector without belonging. Active diplomacy, including naval diplomacy, must quickly engage the stakeholders in the Indian Ocean. Pakistan's engagement with African countries, including Djibouti need to be sought, preferably within the context of CPEC/BRI. Pakistan foreign policy elites need to envisage CPEC beyond Gwadar to Khasgar. CPEC needs to look South. The IORA needs to be approached in a frank manner.

Perhaps concessions need to be made, therefore political courage must take precedence over hubris. Compromising on certain aspects, including the MFN status of India, which allegedly has been used by the latter to block Pakistan's membership, need to be carefully thought-out not only, but also through the perspectives of the potential that 'blue economy' has on offer. Pakistan needs to be, and to feel that belongs to the IOR. If Pakistan foreign policy elite can fathom this, then the CPEC challenges that are arriving at its shores will be transformed into further opportunities. If Pakistan will fail, yet another paradox will be engraved into her even-otherwise troubled foreign policy.

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Deterrence, Compellence and the Cold Start Doctrine

Syed Ali Zia Jaffery

Conflict has been one of the most recurrent themes in history. It is apt to assert that war has been an oft-used instrument by actors to muster power and ensure survival. In his Magnum Opus entitled "On War", the celebrated military theorist Carl von Clausewitz referred to war as an "act of violence to compel our opponent to fulfill our will". This book acts as a complete guide and a must-read for practitioners, academics and theorists alike. Certainly, war is devastating and hence is used as a policy-option to counter current and potential threats to the state.

Wars and conflicts are intertwined; acrimony is festered by using war as an instrument of state policy. This is not merely an assertion but a reality in the conduct of Indo-Pak ties over the last 7 decades. Both India and Pakistan were physically dagger-drawn; all-out wars and some epic battles have prominently featured in the engagements between the two. Enemies imposing war on each other is not anomaly; it is a given and a constant occurrence. War always has some *casus belli*. In the volatile South Asian theatre, the reasons of animosity are deep-seated and known to one and all. But a war between a revisionist and a status-quo state, is what defines the Indo-Pak rivalry.

The past 7 decades have been spent in a conflictual environment and seemingly the future doesn't look one where this ever-simmering dispute will fizzle out. There are many reasons to believe that the temperatures may rise in the region. One of them is India's will and the resolve to "teach Pakistan a lesson". Besides, now Indo-Pak rivalry will be embedded in

the new "Great Game" in the region, something that merits a detailed analysis in its own right.

India considers Pakistan a rogue state that is allegedly involved in exporting terrorism. India assuredly asserts that Pakistan perpetrates terrorist attacks in India, including the dastardly 26/11 bloodbath in Mumbai. Thus, India wants to compel and deter Pakistan. Despite being courted by Washington, Delhi is not mollified with Washington's unwillingness and inability to pull the plug and go for the kill *viz* Pakistan.

However, there is a great deal of skepticism regarding India's ability to achieve deterrence and compellence. Can its decade-old proactive war doctrine, casually known as Cold Start Doctrine coerce Pakistan or is it a mere military plan that does not take into account a pertinent military adage: "No plan survives contact with the enemy".

The even-otherwise scant military options that India has in its arsenal, if carried through have the propensity to escalate the conflict to the highest end of the conflict spectrum. The idea is to use a credible military option to coax Pakistan to change its course: an important cog to actualize Compellence. The Indian political and military leaderships have enunciated their intent and determination to launch airstrikes and invoke the Cold Start Doctrine.

There were two important reasons that forced Indian strategic planners to overhaul the Sundarji Doctrine and move towards a proactive doctrine of limited war: one of them was the overt nuclearization in South Asia

and the other was the abysmally slow mobilization during Operation Parakaram. Much to the chagrin of India, the slow mobilization in the operation launched after the Delhi attacks allowed not only Pakistan to counter mobilize but also invoke third-party intervention. The belief that permeated in the Indian high command was that Pakistan was left off the hook.

Operation Parakaram was primarily initiated to punish Pakistan before foreign mediatory efforts could save the day. This hinged upon India's conviction that Pakistan, indeed, was the force behind the brazen attacks on the Indian Parliament. However, the mobilization was too slow to have attained the military-political objectives of Operation Parakaram. Thus, the Cold Start Doctrine was unveiled as back as 2004.

Reliant upon alacrity and mobility, Cold Start calls for reshuffling the old Holding and Strike corps. The former would create shallow bridgeheads into Pakistani territory. It would be followed by Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) attacking along various axes to further penetrate inside Pakistan. Thereafter, bolstered by air support, the 3-strike corps would apply massive firepower. In order to avoid a nuclear retaliation, forces will bite and hold territory up to 80 kilometers inside Pakistan.

The Indian Army is beset with multifarious challenges at the tactical and operational levels in launching Cold Start; this is the prime reason as to why the CSD continues to be a mere concept. A detailed analyses of simulations that were conducted to test the concept revealed that the much-needed synergy(



Source: AFP

a prerequisite to CSD) was not achieved. This was the reason why the military leadership in India discarded it long ago. However, the resolve and the desire to invoke the doctrine was reiterated in the Army Day address by the Indian Army Chief, General Rawat last year. What could this doctrine achieve is a matter of introspection, though.

The essence of deterrence is to dissuade an adversary from taking actions inimical to the interests of a country. India wants to deter Pakistan from supporting Non State Actors(NSAs). The military objectives of Cold Start inkle toward the concept of deterrence through punishment. However, there are two factors that are likely to deride India's quest for deterrence through Cold Start. One is the questionable ability of the Indian military in breaching Pakistan's first lines of defense, without invoking a strong response from the Pakistani Army. There is little evidence to suggest that the division-sized hybrid IBGs have imbibed the all-important concept of jointness. Two is Pakistan's hot pursuit of Tactical Nuclear Weapons under its quest of achieving Full Spectrum Deterrence. Indeed, if pronouncements from the country's strategic community are anything to go by, Pakistan's induction of low-yield nuclear weapons is a response to Cold Start; this leaves India with little space to punish Pakistan at lower ends of

the conflict spectrum.

India wants to compel Pakistan to clamp-down on forces that are alleged to be instruments of Pakistan's sub-conventional war against India . In 1966, Thomas Schelling coined the term "compellence", alluding to threats and actions taken by a state to make its adversary act differently. Experts are mindful of the fact that compellence is harder to attain than deterrence. This becomes all the more difficult and obfuscating when the escalation ladder has a nuclear rung in it. How could a limited war proactive strategy compel Pakistan to act commensurate with India's accord? What could be the implications on escalation of hostilities?

Compellence relies upon a credible military option which would encourage the enemy to take a different course than what it would normally would have taken. In a nuclearized theatre like South Asia, it is rather difficult to punish and frighten without pushing the engagement to the highest end of the conflict spectrum. Given the aims of Cold Start, holding territory is a compellent threat. However, the efficacy of this in compelling Pakistan is less and fraught with dangers. One that it could do exactly the opposite: Indian invasion may very well be repelled by the Pakistani military and alleged militants in unison. Besides, it will vindicate Pakistan's post-

1971 India-centric security orientation. Major Pakistani cities like Lahore and Sialkot are well within 80 kilometers' distance from the International Border and the Working Boundary. Hypothetically, if India manages to hold these cities, escalation up the ladder would be all but imminent. Thus, territorial occupation and compellence have an inverse relationship with each other. The second threat is drawn from Clausewitzian theory, for he also focused on targeting the enemy's war waging capabilities. Attrition through escalation may actually be an anathema to Indian compellence drive.

A weaken military will be reinforced forcefully and this could invoke a "nation in arms" riposte. Even otherwise an out of shape military will then have no levers to control anti-Indian elements and actors. If India goes on to attain its operational objectives, it is certain that Pakistan will have to apply massive force to ward-off the onslaught. India would have the urge to press on but if it is unable to breakthrough it would direct more firepower which will negatively affect the escalation ladder. Pakistan may invoke their tactical nuclear weapons and shift the burden of escalation on India as Indian inroads would not be deemed of as limited. Hence, Indian decision-makers will raise the likelihood of an Armageddon, should they promulgate this proactive war strategy.

It is reasonable to enunciate that a doctrine like Cold Start while being highly incendiary, is least likely to compel and deter Pakistan. But will the Indian military give up the proactive war strategy? Liddel Hart gives us an answer: "The only thing harder than getting a new idea into the military mind is to get an old one out."

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NUCLEAR PAKISTAN

Seeking Security and Stability

Edited by: Naeem Salik

Published by: The University of Lahore Press

The nuclearization of South Asia has merited a great deal of scholarship since the past two decades. Academic interests in this regard have shifted from analyzing horizontal proliferation to delving into vertical proliferation, induction of sophisticated delivery systems and assessing their impact on strategic stability. Professor Kenneth Waltz, a man renowned for being a proliferation optimist famously said: “If a country has nuclear weapons, it will not be attacked militarily in ways that threaten its manifestly vital interests. That is 100 percent true, without exception, over a period of more than fifty years.” Even a cursory glance at Pakistan’s nuclear journey tells that the spirit of this quote lies at the heart of “Nuclear Pakistan”.

Pakistan’s fast-paced production of nuclear warheads, its quest to attain Full Spectrum Deterrence and the safety and security of nuclear weapons, are the three elements of the Pakistani nuclear program that have attracted attention on part of scholars and also the international community, to include India and the US. While lamenting the dearth of literature bringing Pakistan’s perspective on these issues, Naeem Salik assiduously dealt with these delicate topics in separate chapters. His essays were part of a newly-published edited book entitled “Nuclear Pakistan: Seeking Security and Stability”, of which he is the editor.

Drawing from his experience of working closely with and in the country’s nuclear establishment, Salik skillfully traced the evolution of Pakistan’s nuclear

doctrine. While explaining the rationale for adopting Credible Minimum Deterrence (CMD) as the guiding principle of Pakistan’s nuclear strategy, Salik elucidated on why and how Pakistan’s doctrine has become dynamic and nuanced. By throwing light on India’s Cold Start Doctrine and the induction of the Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) capabilities, Salik explained the reasons of Pakistan’s efforts to deter India against a full spectrum of threats. The evolving security environment in South Asia and the changing threat perception from India have compelled Pakistan to look for Full Spectrum Deterrence, something that will give Pakistan the elements of a war-fighting nuclear doctrine. Salik stressed that this shift from CMD to FSD will expand the size of the country’s nuclear arsenal and will add to the variety of delivery systems.

While spelling out the incentives for Pakistan to increase the size of its nuclear forces, Salik debunked the myth that Pakistan will be the third-largest nuclear

power in the world, by pointing out the anomalies in the available estimates of Pakistan’s fissile materials. Also, Salik enunciated that even calculated estimates by reputed publications are based on assumptions and are hence speculative at best.

The author assesses how Pakistan has taken measures to enhance nuclear security and safety. The evolution of the nuclear security regime, from an assortment of retired and serving officers to the establishment of a dedicated security division in the National Command Authority (NCA), is a testament of Pakistan’s commitment to ensuring nuclear safety and security. Salik also dabbles into the issue of the insiders’ threat as mentioned in recent scholarly articles on Pakistan’s nuclear weapons. One of the most glaring references alluding to such threats was made in Christopher Clary and Ankit Panda’s paper on Pakistan’s sea-based weapons. Salik derides these assertions by penning down the range of measures



put in place to vet employees working in strategic organizations.

Watchers of South Asian security affairs show a great deal of consternation over how rungs of the escalation ladders can be crossed quickly; this makes discussion on nuclear management all the more important. Adil Sultan's chapter on Pakistan's command and control (C2) structure analyzes how the country's nuclear management mechanism changed as the status of the program modified in-line with ever-changing security milieus. The author did not find substance in the fears expressed by scholars over Pakistan's plans to pre-delegate launch authority to field commanders. While iterating that Pakistan's focus on assertive control is suitable given India's posture, Dr. Sultan correctly states that the Never-Always equation may change if Delhi decides to review its No First-Use (NFU) policy, something that is even otherwise not comforting.

Dr. Sultan sheds light on the role of Strategic Force Commands under the aegis of the National Command Authority(NCA), laying to rest concerns about pre-delegating authority to battalion commanders deployed on the Line of Control, International Border and the Working Boundary.

The book also includes invaluable contributions from Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal. While concluding his chapter on the current nuclear debates, Dr. Zafar says that the reliance of nuclear weapons' states on nuclear weapons for their security is not likely to mitigate. Dr. Zafar pinpoints the discrepancies in the non-proliferation regime which according to him and many scholars, have only served the interests of the great powers. Citing the special Nuclear Suppliers' Group(NSG) waiver to India in 2008 as an example, Dr. Zafar asserts that various non-proliferation arrangements are disrupted by shifts in strategic orientations of great powers. More

menacingly yet realistically, Dr. Zafar writes that rapid vertical proliferation in South Asia implies that any future conflict between arch-rivals, India and Pakistan will take place under the nuclear umbrella.

The book takes a deep dive into various aspects of the 7th Nuclear Weapon State. To corroborate why Pakistan cannot be a reckless nuclear power, there is a need to fathom what the nuclear program means to Pakistan. Albeit focusing on the technical and scientific sides of Pakistan nuclear journey, Mansoor Ahmed's riveting chapter on how Pakistan mastered the nuclear fuel cycle is instructive. It shows how the men that matter have remained committed and unfazed in ensuring the development, credibility and continuation of the nuclear program. Ahmed unequivocally calls the mastery of the fuel cycle as the greatest feat in Pakistan's nuclear excursion. The author says that Pakistan is still kept at bay when it comes to transferring sophisticated technology as evidenced by the politics surrounding the NSG membership, but this is matched by the country's indomitable resolve to improve its strategic program and use nuclear power for peaceful purpose. Ahmed's chapter is instructive, for it tells the world that the country will take all what it takes to embellish its nuclear program.

Ahmer Bilal Soofi's chapter on Pakistan nuclear legislative regime is a fresh addition to a largely less-talked-about aspect in the discourse on Pakistan's nuclear-related efforts. Soofi informs readers how Pakistan adapted to enactments and treaties. In a bid to assuage fears of the international community and recover from the fallout of the AQ Khan saga, the Parliament adopted the National Command Authority Act (NCA Act). A step in the right direction, the act establishes Pakistan's legislative control over its nuclear program. While deterrence-enhancement measures are important to add credibility to Pakistan's nuclear forces, legislative correctness

acts as bulwark against the barrage of opprobrium; Soofi's chapter has amplified this fact and also challenges the assertions that it was only after UNSC 1540 that Pakistan took nuclear legislation seriously.

Ali Sarwar Naqvi and Samia Sial's chapter on Pakistan's cooperative relation with the International Atomic Energy Agency(IAEA), will go a long way in dispelling the impression that Pakistan is not a normal nuclear state. The authors delve on the establishment of the agency, its functions and Pakistan's multi-faceted cooperation with it. This detailed chapter apprises readers as to how transparent Pakistan has been with the agency, and in the process challenges those who questions its credentials as a responsible nuclear-weapon state.

Sannia Abdullah's chapter on Pakistan's approach to non-proliferation across decades and security situations is lucidly articulated. It is also a testimony to the fact that, security, by virtue of being a vital interest, was preferred over non-proliferation. The thrust of Sannia's work, if understood rightly, could be instructive for further non-proliferation efforts. Sannia succinctly looked at nuclear diplomacy conducted by Islamabad, which was primarily driven by security consideration and distrust of allies. Valuable lessons can be elicited from this chapter, especially in regard to trying to balance off the lofty goals of non-proliferation and hardcore security and survival.

In Sum, this compendium of scholarly chapters is an all-important addition to the ever-increasing literature on Nuclear Pakistan. While the book duly focuses on doctrinal aspects and those of C2, it delves into the often times ignored issues of nuclear diplomacy and lawmaking. It is a must-read for anyone who wants to understand what "Nuclear Pakistan" is, what drove its past and what will determine its future trajectory.



Developing Regional Consensus on Security

Source: AFP

Umair Jamal

The rise of the Islamic State (ISIS) in Afghanistan has set off alarm bells throughout the region. The group's likely defeat in the Middle East means the militant organization is in search of new sanctuaries in other parts of the world. In a very short span of time, the group has not only managed to gain considerable strength in Afghanistan by establishing links with a number of local militant groups but has also shown atrocious capacity in terms of planning and executing major militant attacks in the country. The rapidly deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan means the country is increasingly vulnerable to ISIS's threat and provides enabling an environment for the group to foster its transnational terror agenda.

The mounting and multifaceted security challenge in Afghanistan doesn't bode well for the majority of regional states. Compounding the situation is the United States current policy of forcing a military solution in Afghanistan which directly undermines the regional states role and capacity when it comes to building a workable consensus to find a political solution to the Afghan security problem. Washington's hostile and misguided policy preferences concerning Afghanistan's militancy problem can only be counteracted if regional states formulate an active and united front which not only effectively contains the growth of ISIS but also brings the Afghan Taliban to the negotiating table.

Clearly, the worsening security situation

in Afghanistan has directly threatened emerging regional geo-economic order. The United States has come out strongly against regional economic projects spearheaded by China. Considerably, U.S. considers China's rapidly growing diplomatic, political and security leverage in the Asian region and beyond a direct threat to its own global diplomatic influence and outreach. In the South Asian context, Washington under President Trump's leadership has openly opposed Beijing economic plans, which arguably accommodate states that, one way or the other, have had a long history of hostility and mistrust with the U.S. In this regard, Washington criticism of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which forms the backbone of China's global One Belt, Once Road

(OBOR) infrastructure and connectivity project has grown considerably.

This context arguably informs that Washington's current policy in Afghanistan is more focused on countering growing regional competition in the country in particular and the region in general than solving Afghanistan's security problem. Speculations are rife that some level, Washington is involved in covertly supporting ISIS's growth in Afghanistan. Iran and Russia recently accused the US of supporting ISIS's agenda to undermine the security of the region. From Washington's perspective, any argument supporting such covert or overt support cannot be simply written off: to push back against China's assertive diplomacy and mega economic initiatives that are eyeing regional connectivity which the US considers to be at its expense, proliferation of a militant organization with a clear transnational terror agenda benefits Washington strategically. While evidence in this regard so far remains one-off, any such practice not only allows Washington leverage when it comes to weakening the Afghan Taliban and their allies in the region such as China, Pakistan, Russia, and Iran but also offers legitimacy to Washington's extended stay in Afghanistan which gains support from the escalating militancy in the country.

Clearly, ongoing instability and a new phase of a global power struggle in Afghanistan have been driving a realignment of ties among regional powers such as Pakistan, China, Russia, and Iran. However, this development still requires a calculated strategic push on the part of the regional states in order to create a considerable impact that not only reverses the ISIS's growth in Afghanistan but also contains Washington's ability to sideline regional peace efforts.

In this regard, a number of key issues remain to be resolved among regional states. Regional states inability to develop consensus and an executable plan to

deal with insurgent groups which still continue to enjoy state patronage at different levels in the region and have certainly become a reason for mistrust among Iran, Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan is still a major issue. Pakistan has been accused of following a selective counterterrorism policy that targets some militant groups while allowing others to operate which has added to regional security woes. Afghanistan, on its part, continues to offer sanctuaries to militant groups which target Pakistan's interests while demanding action from the latter against the leadership of Afghan Taliban which the former believes enjoy Islamabad's support. For the most part of the past two decades, Iran and Pakistan bilateral relations have always remained strained, with both countries prioritizing sectarianism in their respective foreign and domestic security policies. On the other hand, while China's economic rise has matured its political and diplomatic clout in the region, the country is still not in a position to radically alter regional security environment. For instance, China has been pushing Pakistan for action against a number of insurgent groups that the former considers a long-term threat to regional peace and stability. Yet, while Pakistan's recent economic and diplomatic isolation by the U.S. has further increased the country's dependency on China, the policymakers in Islamabad are not ready to give up their longstanding policy of keeping ties with hard-line groups as part of its regional security policy.

However, the rise of the ISIS in Afghanistan and urgency on the part of the regional states to facilitate China lead economic connectivity projects to boost trade and financial links in order to meet their population's economic needs, mean regional states have no other option but to join forces to overcome underlying regional security challenges. It's undeniable that Regional economic plans cannot succeed unless coordinated

regional efforts are put in place to develop consensus on emerging security issues. Any such regional approach would involve China, Russia, Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan as well which have immediate stakes in Afghanistan's future.

India, so far, has shown a reluctance when it comes to joining China lead emerging economic block. Moreover, New Dehli has never eagerly supported any regional effort aimed at bringing peace in Afghanistan that involves Pakistan's central role. Still, the process of pushing New Dehli toward changing its current regional policy which is antithetical to China lead efforts to resolve the region's economic and security woes should also be expedited. In this regard, addressing existing mistrust between India and Pakistan should be Beijing's utmost priority, for any eventual reconciliation process in Afghanistan and elsewhere in the region could get a boost if Islamabad and New Dehli together becomes its support base. Clearly, current American approach to isolate regional efforts, aimed at addressing Afghanistan's security problem and competing global economic and security interests have put the country on a direct collision course with a number of regional states which have stakes in Afghanistan's future overall security and stability of the region. Washington needs to understand that its confrontational policy in the region will only serve to undermine its regional interests.

It's the need of the hour that regional states join forces to tackle the looming militancy challenge in Afghanistan. If left unaddressed, the issue can certainly have far reaching regional ramifications, potentially serving to destabilize emerging economic connectivity networks and complicating existing security challenges.

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Pakistan Census 2017:

What does the data indicate?

Farhan Hanif Siddiqi



Source: AFP

Pakistan held its sixth census in 2017 which put Pakistan's population at 207.7 million people with an average annual growth rate of 2.4% over a period of 1998-2017. Compared to the last census held in 1998, the results show an overall increase in population by 57%.

However, an interesting trend is witnessed at the provincial level. The results indicate a percentage decrease in the share of Pakistan's largest province Punjab (from 55.6% of the total population in 1998 to 52.9% in 2017) while an increase is observed in the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (13.4% in 1998 to 14.6% in 2017), Balochistan (4.9% in 1998 to 5.9% in 2017) while the share of Sindh has remained constant, 22.9% in 1998 and 23% in 2017. The results are still preliminary while conclusive results will be confirmed in April 2018.

According to provisional results,

Pakistan's urban population shows a growing trend with 36.38% of the population living in urban areas. In 1998, the share of the urban population was 32.52%. This means that approximately 64% of Pakistan's population still lives in rural areas. This ratio was 65.6% in 1998. All four provinces shown an increase in urbanization indicators with a majority of Sindh's population (52.02% up from 48.75% in 1998) residing in urban areas, followed by Punjab (36.71% up from 31.27% in 1998), Balochistan (27.55% up from 23.89% in 1998), KP (18.77% up from 16.87% in 1998), while ironically Islamabad, Pakistan's capital, shows a radical decline in urbanization with 50.58% living in urban areas down from 65.72% in 1998.

Karachi is still the largest city in Pakistan with a population of approximately 14.9 million, followed by Lahore 11.1 million and Faisalabad 3.2 million. Figures indicate that Lahore is Pakistan's fastest

growing city with a population of 5.1 million in 1998 which has now doubled while Karachi's population in 1998 was 9.3 million. Women's share in the total population has increased by 1% which now stands at 48.8% while in 1998, the female population ratio was 47.9%.

Three areas where census results have led to debate and criticisms are:

A. Definition of urban areas and census results

Many economists and social scientists in Pakistan contested the "administrative" definition of what constitutes urban areas as opposed to "characteristics" such as common utilities, roads, sanitation, schools, centres for trade and commerce and health and high literacy rate. The administrative criterion used by the government defines urban areas as a municipal corporation, a town

committee or cantonment board, a criterion that has purported to understate Pakistan's urban population. People residing outside these administrative boundaries are thus classified as rural even though many who live only slightly outside this boundary are deemed "rural" while all their social and economic activities are concentrated in the city. Political economists contend that agriculture now contributes to only 20% of Pakistan's GDP and rural areas have now become peri-urban developing linkages with urban areas.

B. Constituency delimitation for the 2018 elections

The constituency delimitation bill has now been passed both by the National Assembly and Senate. Because of a decline in its population, the largest province, Punjab, has its seats in the National Assembly reduced by nine while the smallest province, Balochistan will witness an increase of three seats, KP province 5 seats and Islamabad one more seat. The reduction in the seats of Punjab is a drastic development as it is the dominant power wielder in Pakistan's multi-ethnic state. The overall number of seats in the National Assembly though remains the same, that is, 272.

C. Ethnic Politics and Conflict

The Sindhis and Mohajirs, have challenged census results stating that the government has deliberately understated Karachi's and Sindh's population with the MQM alleging pre-census rigging specifically the enumeration of census blocks. The issue is important because it impacts the allocation of funds and resources from the central government although it must be emphasised that the new financial distribution formula after the 7th NFC Award also includes besides population, revenue generation, inverse population density and poverty/backwardness.

Following are the major expectations and implications for the future:

1. The definition of rural and urban areas in the census does not reflect Pakistan's growing middle class population which resides in urban areas. Marked social change has taken place in Pakistan leading economists to contend that 42% of the population belong to the upper and middle classes with 38% counted as the middle class. According to Akbar Zaidi, "if these numbers are correct then 84 million Pakistanis belong to the upper and middle classes, a population size which is larger than that of Germany."
2. A rising middle class means that consumer durables and electronic items such as TVs, refrigerators, deep freezers, mobile phones, automobiles are in high demand and consumer confidence is strong in the country, a fact cited by the State Bank of Pakistan.
3. A rising population and consumerist middle class also means added pressure on the government to satisfy people's essential demands including health, education, development and growth, security, transportation and sanitation. In concerted sectors, the state is inviting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) with plans for foreign car manufacturers to set up their factories and plants in Pakistan including Volkswagen, Hyundai, Renault and Kia Motors.
4. The census indicates a decline in Pakistan's major administrative unit, the Punjab, a consequential development which will not only impact constituency seats but also the financial distribution formula between the provinces, with Punjab percentage share likely to go down

further. This may well be a palliative for Baloch nationalists who contend that Punjab takes the predominant financial share while their position is undermined. With the stated upsurge in Balochistan's population figures, their share in the financial distribution formula will register a further increase.

5. While the figures may well be soothing to the Baloch, Mohajir and Sindh ethnionationalists will utilize their alleged understated census figures to shore up their respective constituencies and electoral votes in the general elections. Ethnicity will be a major election slogan in rural and urban Sindh in 2018.
6. For KP, the projected inclusion of FATA as part of the province elevates its population numbers but also presents a challenge on how to address social, political and economic neglect in the war-torn region.
7. Finally, Sikh and Hindu minorities were not entirely satisfied with the census. Hindu civil society activists protested the separate category of "scheduled caste" demanding that they should have been included within the Hindu count while Sikhs were completely excluded.

In all, the census has left ethnic groups in Sindh and Sikh and Hindu minorities unsatisfied while also understating Pakistan's urban population. While conclusive results are awaited, it is imperative that faults identified in the present census are addressed amicably and the next census takes place within the stipulated time reflecting Pakistan's rapidly transforming socio-economic landscape.

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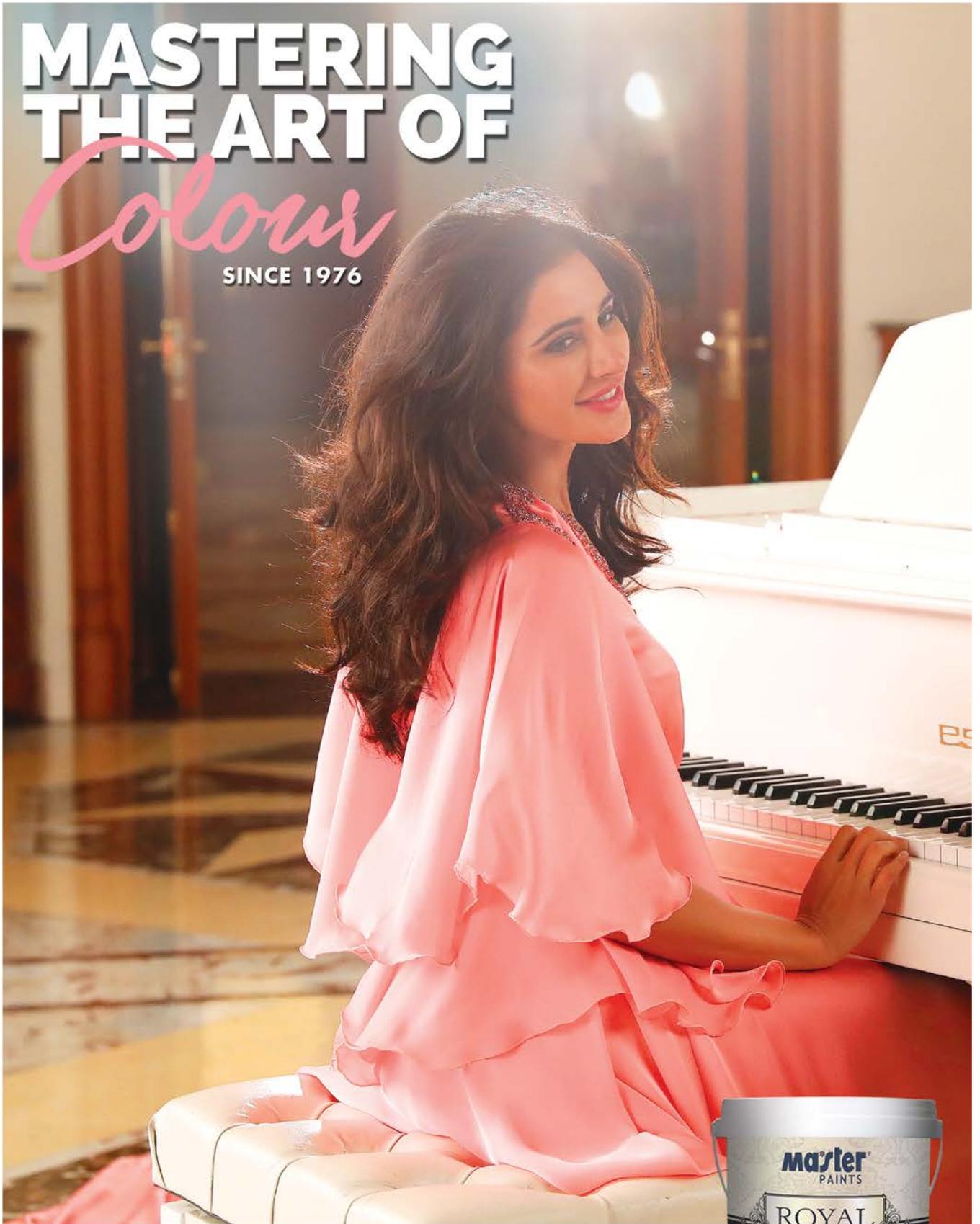
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